




PHILNEWS

Is Anyone Not Ready? June 14, 2026



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AMERICA





CONTENTS

4 **Open For Business**
John Youngdale

6 **PSA: Silver Sage**
Heidi Wakefield

8 **Full-Time Staff Highlight:
Kate Warrick**
Urvi Thakker

10 **Gone Fishing?**
Heidi Wakefield

12 **The Best Investment a
Staffer Can Make**
John Youngdale

13 **Backcountry Music Festival
Wrapped**
Urvi Thakker

14 **Counselor's Corner**
Dr. Luke

16 **Poem of the Day**

17 **Meet The 2026 MPS Staff!**

18 **Phil-Lingo**
John Youngdale

19 **Prepared on the Trail**
Andrea Watson

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Matt Stepp

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Muriel Alldredge

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Becker Griffiin

Open For Business

What Staff Have Been Doing to Prepare for the Season

By John Youngdale

In the last few weeks at Philmont, departments ran through their own ambitious training schedules to prepare for the arrival of the first crews.

Philmont's conservation department gathered to work on building a trail between Miner's Park and Stockade Ridge, before breaking off to lead scouts to complete service projects.

"It's the best thing I've ever done at the ranch," Val Manzano said. "You're cleaning trail for everyone who's coming."

Climbing staff practiced teaching and helping crews through challenging climbing courses at Cimarroncito.

"The goal of this training is to get all the rock camps together, start building those inter-camp relationships," Miner's Park Camp Director Dontese Cocchio said. "[Also], get everyone trained to the exact same standard."

Interpretive programs held Living History Day at Rayado to teach staff how to make their programs immersive for participants.

"Part of getting into our character will be handling those chores and

daily small tasks," Beaubien Program Counselor Mason Macias said. "Doing those in front of the participants will definitely help bring them to the time."

The ranger department split into groups and went on a four-day training trek, concluding with 'Ranger Rendezvous' at Beaubien, where they practiced their skills for leading crews in the backcountry. Ranger Trainer Liam McLemore reflected on the importance of ranger training from his own experience as a Scout.

"In that moment I realized the impact our rangers had on our experience," McLemore said. "I thought maybe I could also make a similar impact as a ranger."

Back at basecamp, the logistics department has been training their staff to facilitate communication on the ranch. Logistics runs the radios, monitors the weather, and keeps Philmont operating smoothly.

"We set the crew leader up for success," Logistics Associate Manager John Bare said. "We want to give that crew leader as many tools he or she can possibly have."

Food service staff have been hard at

Open For Business



Photo By: Muriel Alldredge

work from the beginning, practicing their skills to keep Philmont's staff and participants fed while at basecamp.

"The fact that I get to serve the people of Philmont... is just everything to me," Dining Hall Assistant Manager Ian Davis said. "I'm excited to see people grow and see us work as a team."

Over at the Philmont Training Center, an important factor for staff training is the diverse range of visitors.

"We do 'ages-and-stages' as part of our training to determine how you interact with each age group," Challenge Course (a.k.a. COPE) Director Ivy Harrison-Laton said. "We meet people

where they're at."

PTC leadership is confident in their staff and ready to receive participants for the season.

"There is a lot of knowledge and wisdom that you can tap in on here at the PTC," Outdoor Guide Coordinator Austin Anderson said. "I'm really proud of everyone."





Photo By: Isaiah Mitchell

PSA honors Julie Puckett as the Silver Sage Recipient

By Heidi Wakefield

As the sun sunk below the Tooth of Time on the evening of May 29th, and seasonal staff gathered for Philmont's opening Campfire, Julie Phillips Puckett, granddaughter of Waite Phillips, received the Silver Sage Award for her dedication to serving Philmont.

As the daughter of Virginia and Elliott "Chope" Phillips, the first recipients of the award in 2005, the distinction means so much more than just recognition for her hard work. It is an acknowledgement of her continuation of her family's legacy of supporting and donating to Philmont. A legacy which started 88 years ago with the dedication of the Philmont Ranch by her grandfather Waite Phillips to the Boy Scouts of America.

For Puckett, growing up on a working

cattle ranch, frequently visiting Philmont as a kid and attending Cimarroncita girl's camp for 11 summers as a teenager sparked her "love of the land and the love of the area."

"I was just stunned; I had no idea," she said, after the Philmont Staff Association announced the award. Calling it a "really great honor." She expressed her gratitude, because to her Philmont is something she lives and breathes.

An exceptional honor, given only to those who represent Philmont's values, show casing the hard work and dedication of an individual or organization towards the long term and lasting impact for the betterment of Philmont

The Silver Sage award is among the

PSA honors Julie Puckett as the Silver Sage Recipient

PSA's highest honors, given only to those who have left a lasting impacts on Philmont and helped carry its mission - 'Change Lives' - forward for future generations of scouts.

Danielle Ballentine, Communication and Marketing Manager from the Philmont Staff Association described the Silver Sage recipient as someone who has made a "significant impact on Philmont in some special way."

Operations Manager of the PSA, Sandra White, said the award is about "giving back to Philmont in a variety of ways... raising money or providing service," which is exactly what Puckett has done.

For over two decades Puckett has committed herself as an advisor to Philmont, worked as a member of the Philmont Ranch Committee, and served as Co-Founder of Casting for Recovery Program helping breast cancer survivors. In addition to her

philanthropy work, through the Waite and Genevive Phillips Foundation she has donated sizable grants sustaining multiple projects across Philmont.

Puckett's distinction also comes from diligently leading restoration on Villa Philmonte as the Villa turns 100 years old in 2027. "I wanted to keep it as traditional as we could," said Puckett. The integrity of the building and its traditional accuracy is very important to her, and something she takes great pride in.

To Puckett, it's simple; "service is a family legacy and is something now my generation is the caretaker of," she said, expressing what her time working with Philmont meant to her. "Waite would be astonished that there have been over a million Scouts to come through here."

There is no doubt Puckett is a lifelong public servant to the development of Philmont and the Phillips family name. However, Julie Phillips Puckett is not just the granddaughter of the late Waite Phillips, but someone who has continuously showed up and dedicated her life to the advancement of Philmont, blazing her own path.



Photo By: Isaiah Mitchell

Full-Time Staff Highlight: Kate Warrick

The Role of a Marketing Manager at Philmont

By Urvi Thakker

Hailing from a family heavily involved with Philmont, including proud ranger parents and a grandfather who served as a chaplain, Kate Warrick worked at Philmont for seven summers before becoming a full-time Marketing Manager in 2024.

Warrick and her MPS (Marketing and Photography Services) team showcase Philmont to the world by managing its website, photo archive, social media, and its PhilNews publication. Since

Philmont's motto is "Change Lives," it seems fitting that the motto of the Marketing and Photography Services team is to "Capture Lives Changing." Her supervisor, Shelley O'Neill, describes her as someone who brings the ranch's mission into everything she touches. "Kate doesn't just document Philmont," Shelley said. "She shows them why it matters, and that comes through in every image, every caption, every story she and her team put out. She makes people fall in love with a place all over again or makes someone new want to come be part of it."

When asked about the importance of having a marketing team at Philmont, Warrick emphasized that it's impossible for people to picture how incredible this place is. Through the voice of publication, the videos shot by the videography team, and the documentation of the photo team, people get a glimpse into just that, from the look on a Scout's face as they summit Baldy to crews singing their hearts out during the campfires at Metcalf Station.



Photo By: Julia Manipella

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Gone Fishing?

Everything you need to know for a day on the water!

By Heidi Wakefield

Do you like fish? Do you often find yourself, nodding along, hoping your co-worker will stop talking so you can head out to the reservoir? Are you planning on fishing in the backcountry this summer? Here is everything you need to know!

First, make sure you have two things: A New Mexico fishing license and a habitat stamp. Both can be purchased either online at the New Mexico Department of Wildlife or at the Tooth of Time Traders at Base Camp. The fish have strong intuition and will not bite if they suspect you are without a license, they will also report you to logistics.

Before you hold up the line at the TOTT, typing in the wrong social security number three times in a row, register for a Customer Identification Number online through the Department of Wildlife site before arrival. Also, make sure, if purchasing a day pass, to register under the date you plan to fish, if the dates between purchase and fishing differ. Search Fishing License - Philmont Scout Ranch for more information.

Next, pick your perfect scenic spot. Fish like to spend their time in water, due to their aquatic ancestry so make sure to head to an area with a lake or river; puddles are not advised. Philmont has



Photo By: Truman Attaway

Gone Fishing?

a variety of areas to flyfish, the most popular being Cimarroncito Reservoir in Demolition Forest, Philmont Reservoir near Stockade Ridge, and Rayado River that runs through Fish Camp. Permission is required for the Cimarroncita camp.

Finally, know the water! Trout tend to form tight cliques with like minded fish, gravitating towards communal spaces. So, when trout fishing, make sure to look for Pocket Water, Deep Pools, Undercut Banks, and Riffles. Pocket water is the small current break between large boulders. Deep pools are hot spots for large brown trout, and undercut banks leave great hideouts for fish year-round. And given trout are partial towards extreme water sports, riffles- water breaking into small white caps – tend to be great areas for nymphing (subaquatic insect fishing methods).

In a recent survey across Cimarron, experts found fish prefer not to be eaten, quote one saying, “It’s tough out here man, I see my buddies every day get pulled out of the blue,” after being asked if he “had any concerns about the summer.” Philmont asks Scouts to respect the fishes’ requests, and for staff to cook responsibly. FISH ON! For more info check out: 2026-2027-FISH-RIB_Online.pdf

For those over the age of 70 and under the age of 12, the purchase of stamps and licenses are not required.



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Welcome HOmE



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\$20

SEASONAL MEMBERSHIP

Visit us next to the National Scouting Museum





Photo By: Isaiah Mitchell

The Best Investment a Staffer Can Make

By The Philmont Staff Association

Each summer, the Philmont Scout Ranch welcomes over a thousand seasonal staff. They come for the mountains, the mission, and the experience of a lifetime. Before the season slips away, there is one more thing worth doing: visiting the Philmont Staff Association office and becoming a PSA member.

Seasonal staff is automatically eligible to join the nearly 4,000 staff alumni who are members of the PSA. Membership makes it official. All 2026 staff who join the PSA are connected to a network of Philmont staff alumni stretching back generations and forward into every corner of professional and civic life.

One of the most compelling benefits available to PSA members is the PSA Seasonal Staff Educational Scholarship. Each year, the PSA awards scholarships to seasonal staff members pursuing higher education or certificate programs. In 2025, 62 staffers received \$1,000 scholarships each. The application is available digitally on the PSA website at philstaff.org under “Scholarships”. The deadline

to apply is August 31.

In addition to seasonal staff, volunteers who work at Philmont for seven consecutive days and faculty of Philmont Training Center conferences are also eligible to join the PSA.

Membership also brings staffers into the full life of the PSA community, including High Country magazine, Career Connections, reunions, treks and service opportunities at the Ranch, and a lasting bond with everyone who has ever answered the call of this place.

The PSA office is located next to the National Scouting Museum. The staff are glad to answer questions prospective members and other guests bring through the door. The office is open Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (including lunchtime) and Saturday-Sunday, 1:00-5:00 pm. You’ll also find the PSA staff at Philmont Brat Days.

The mountains will be here next year. Each season is its own singular chapter. Wise staffers make it count all the way to the end.

BACKCOUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL WRAPPED



BY URVI THAKKER

TOP SONGS:

- 1 Big Iron
- 2 New Mexico Rain
- 3 Ring of Fire
- 4 I Like Trains
- 5 Superstition

TOP ARTISTS:

- 1 Clarks Fork
- 2 Metcalf Station
- 3 Pueblano
- 4 Cyphers Mine
- 5 Crater Lake

Counselor's Corner

By Dr. Luke

Welcome to Philmont 2026. Whether this is your first year or your 46th (if I heard someone correctly), Philmont is a special place.

With the business of the beginning activities of the summer, the anticipation of the first participants, and all the mixed emotions that have been running through us, we all need to recharge not just our bodies but our minds and hearts, too. Regardless of faith or cultural traditions, each of us can benefit from time to nurture our inner well-being.

Here are some ideas for doing that: Reflect on what worked for you back home and then replicate it. If you regularly attend church, temple, mosque, or synagogue, journal or draw, or practice yoga regularly, find ways to replicate that experience within your location at Philmont. You might need to get creative and be intentional about scheduling this time. Build a support network, and don't be afraid to reach out. Being away from where you live means being away from your usual network of friends, family, and mentors. Look to build a supportive group of friends — and try to be that friend for others. Don't be afraid to reach out to leadership if you are feeling lonely. Be sure to reach out if you feel like a friend is struggling.

Create a sense of belonging. Feeling connected and welcomed is essential to staff members' and participants' positive adjustment, self-identification, and sense of trust in others and themselves. Building strong, positive relationships among participants and staff is important to promoting mental wellness.

If you would like to chat about anything, find me or the front desk in the infirmary can help you find a time to talk to someone. Here at Philmont, you have those to help with emotional or mental health needs. I am here several days a week, there are many chaplains to talk to, and we are continuing to develop teletherapy options.



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POEM OF THE DAY

When I Am Among The Trees

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."

— Mary Oliver



Meet The 2026 MPS Staff!



Kate Warrick
**Marketing
Manager**
Fav Ice Cream:
Coconut Pineapple



Erin Stahmer
MPS Manager
Fav Ice Cream:
Vanilla



Muriel Alldredge
MPS Assistant
Fav Ice Cream:
Cherry Garcia



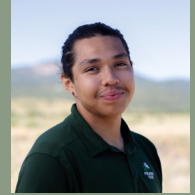
Becker Griffin
Photo Foreman
Fav Ice Cream:
Tin Roof Sundae



Sarah Peplow
Photographer
Fav Ice Cream:
Lemon Sorbet



Matt Stepp
Photographer
Fav Ice Cream:
Cookie Dough



Isaiah Mitchell
Photographer
Fav Ice Cream:
Mint Chocolate
Chip



Brendan Cox
Photographer
Fav Ice Cream:
Rocky Road



Ian Massidda
Photographer
Fav Ice Cream:
Salted Caramel
Cluster



Elena Scherry
Photographer
Fav Ice Cream:
Tillamook Mudslide



Thomas Carden
Videographer
Fav Ice Cream:
Banana Pudding



Zach Baic
Videographer
Fav Ice Cream:
Cookies and Cream



Urvi Thakker
Writer
Fav Ice Cream:
Lemon Gelato



John Youngdale
Writer
Fav Ice Cream:
Chocolate



Heidi Wakefield
Writer
Fav Ice Cream:
Rocky Road

Phil-Lingo

By John Youngdale

At Philmont, there are many acronyms, abbreviations, and other phrases that can be confusing to the untrained ear. PhilNews staff has prepared this column to prevent any reader, whether a participant or staff, from being overwhelmed by the ludicrous number of colloquial expressions Philmont has to offer.

T.O.T.T. ('The ToTT'): Not to be confused with its mountainous namesake, the Tooth of Time Traders is often shortened by staff to "The ToTT," because frankly, who has time to say all that?

'The Valle': The piece of Carson National Forest that lies north of Philmont, known as the Valle Vidal, is often shortened to just 'The Valle.' Make sure to pronounce the Spanish 'll' (y) sound correctly!

"No, you rock-a!": A phrase repeated (usually shouted) back at any unsuspecting person who makes a reference to Urraca Mesa. Make sure to use it in a thoroughly interrupting manner.

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Prepared on the Trail, Tested on the Way Home

Troop 73 returns to Philmont for the first time since the 2022 Amtrak derailment

By Andrea Watson

This summer, Scouts and leaders from Troop 73 of Appleton, Wisconsin, are returning to Philmont Scout Ranch for the first time since 2022. For most crews, returning to Philmont is a chance to reconnect with the mountains, the memories, and the adventure of the trail. For Troop 73, this return carries a deeper meaning.

In June 2022, Troop 73 had just completed what many Scouts dream about for years: a Philmont trek. The crew had spent days hiking together, solving problems together, and relying on one another in the backcountry. They were heading home by train when their journey changed in an instant.

On June 27, 2022, the Amtrak train carrying members of Troop 73, along with members of Troop 12, derailed near Mendon, Missouri, after colliding with a dump truck at a railroad crossing. Four people lost their lives, and more than 100 passengers were injured.

In the moments that followed, Scouts did what they had been trained to do. They helped call 911. They provided

first aid. They opened emergency exit windows. They assisted passengers out of overturned rail cars. They helped calm those who were frightened and comforted those in need.

Reflecting on that day, Eagle Scout Eli of Troop 73 said, “Our Scouting training had paid off and we knew we had made a difference. We knew we had lived up to our promises.”

The Scouts also assisted first responders as they arrived, retrieving supplies and helping where they were needed. Eli later shared that seven Scouts stayed with rescuers until survivors had been triaged and stabilized for transport.

“As their Scoutmaster and a dad, I am still profoundly proud of how they handled themselves during that tragedy and firmly believe their time at Philmont helped build the crew cohesion they needed to respond as effectively as they did,” said Scoutmaster Dan Skrypczak.

What happened that day was tragic. It was also a powerful reminder that Scouting prepares young people for more than campouts, merit badges, and high adventure. It prepares them

Prepared on the Trail, Tested on the Way Home

to lead, to serve, and to act with courage and compassion when others need help.

Eli said the patrol method, first aid training, emergency response skills, and years of outdoor leadership helped the Scouts respond as a unit. “These are just some of the many skills Scouting helps build in youth,” he said. “I have no doubt that every Scout would have acted the same had they been on that train instead of us.”

Now, as Troop 73 returns to Philmont in 2026, their story is not only one of bravery. It is also a story of healing and the lasting impact of Scouting.

Philmont treks challenge Scouts in the backcountry. Crews learn to work together, make decisions, support one another, and keep going when things are difficult. Most of the time, those

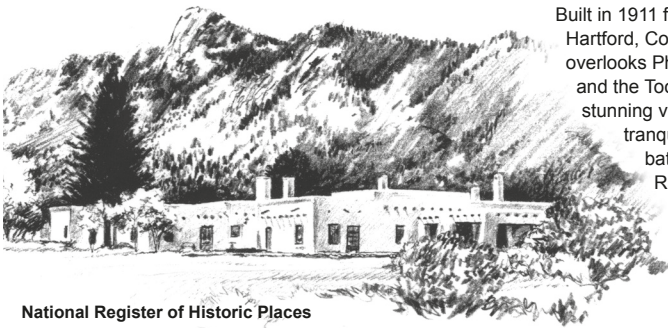
lessons are tested on the trail. For Troop 73, those lessons were tested on the way home.

Their return to Philmont is a meaningful reminder that the impact of a Philmont trek does not end when a crew reaches Base Camp or boards the bus for home. The lessons of Philmont travel with each Scout into their families, schools, communities, and sometimes into moments no one could ever expect.

Troop 73’s story reflects the very best of Scouting: young people prepared to help, trained to lead, and willing to serve when it matters most.

Welcome back to Philmont, Troop 73. We are grateful for your example, your courage, and your reminder that being prepared is more than a motto. It is a way of life.

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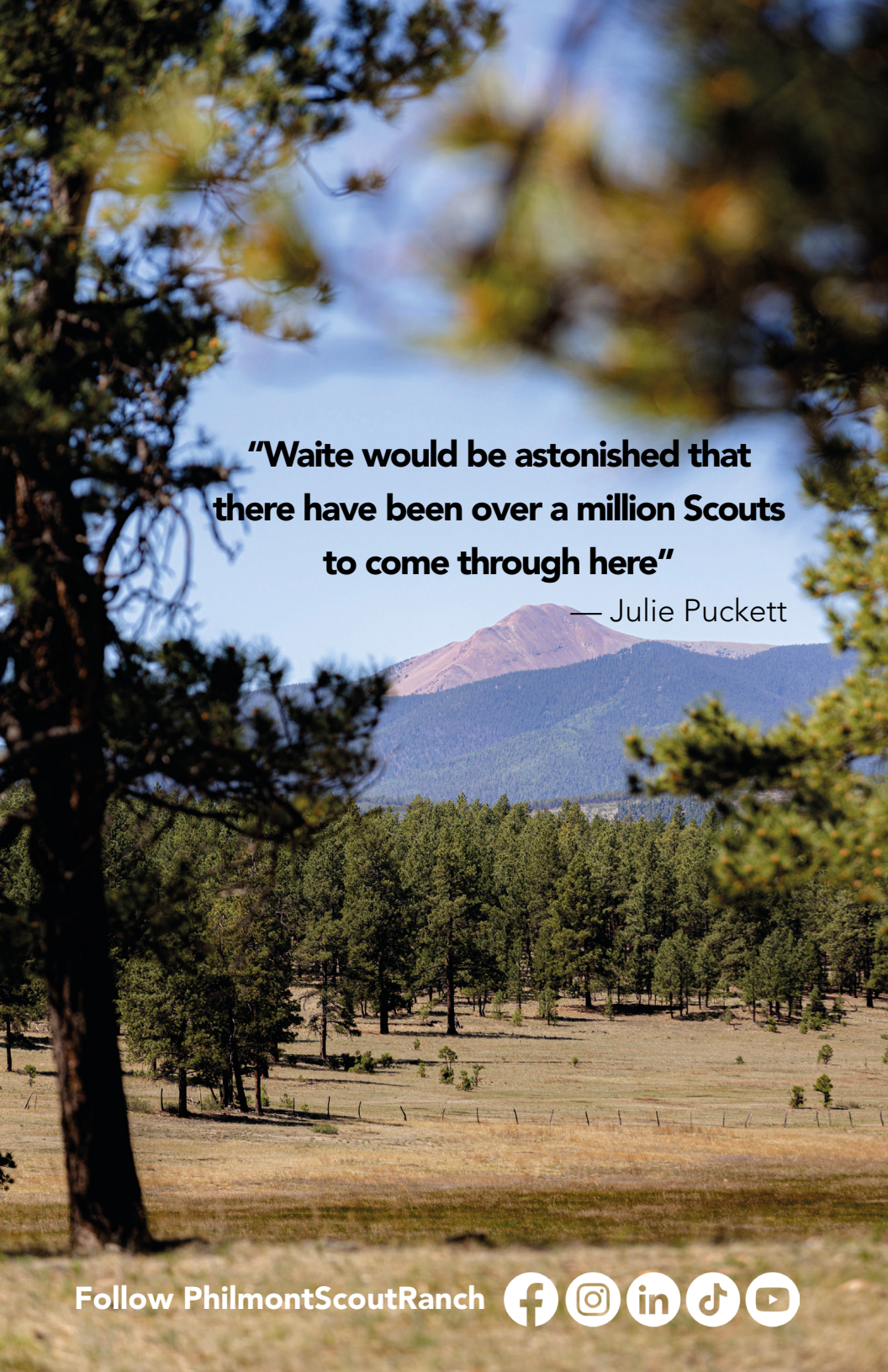




Photo By: Muriel Alldredge



Photo By: Matt Stepp



**“Waite would be astonished that
there have been over a million Scouts
to come through here”**

— Julie Puckett

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