

PHILMONT AMBASSADOR NEWSLETTER

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Promoting wilderness and learning adventures that last a lifetime

March 2026

Entirely new Scouting U format at PTC

By John Gunyon, course faculty

PTC is rolling out an entirely new way of training Scouting leaders from June 14 to 20.

Instead of enrolling in a single week-long class, participants will choose seven half-day sessions from 21 unique course offerings, creating a fully customized leadership development experience. This “*University of Scouting*” format allows Council and District Training Chairs, Program volunteers, and Commissioners to design a schedule that directly matches their role, priorities, and council needs.

Every course has been intentionally designed to deliver immediate, practical impact. Whether participants are strengthening their training culture, recruiting, and developing staff, improving trained leader percentages, aligning with national strategy, enhancing roundtables, or leveraging technology and Artificial Intelligence, they will return home with tools they can implement right away.

Each session is facilitated by an experienced Scouting volunteer leader who understands the realities of council and district service. These are not abstract lectures — they are focused, actionable conversations led by peers who have successfully improved training systems in their own councils.

The goal? More flexibility. More relevance. More collaboration. More immediate results. Shifting from offering a few week-long classes to a “*University of Scouting*” model fundamentally changes the ex-



perience from passive attendance to personalized leadership development.

The design of this year’s Scouting U program at Philmont is focused on six elements:

1. Greater Customization = Greater Relevance

In the traditional week-long model, attendees gain depth in one subject. While valuable, that format can limit cross-functional learning. The 2026 University of Scouting model allows:

- A Council Training Chair to blend training culture, staff recruitment, evaluation, and technology sessions.
- A District Training Chair to combine membership impact, program alignment, and hands-on training design.
- Commissioner and Program volunteers to intentionally select courses that intersect with their service area.

This creates a role-centered, mission-aligned learning plan, which allows practical application when leaders return home.

2. Designed Specifically for Council & District Training Leaders

Scouting U Week has been intentionally built for:

- Council Training Chairs
- District Training Chairs
- Volunteers engaged in Program support
- Volunteers serving in Commissioner roles

Each of the 21 course topics was developed with a single goal: Equip training leaders with tools they can implement immediate-

Scouting U (Continued on page 2)

PTC Scouting U offers entirely new learning experience

Scouting U (Continued from page 1)

ly. Rather than theoretical discussions, classes will focus on:

- Building and sustaining a training culture
- Increasing trained leader percentages
- Recruiting and retaining high-quality training staff
- Aligning local training with national strategy
- Measuring effectiveness and outcomes
- Leveraging technology and AI to expand reach
- Connecting training to program quality and youth retention

Sessions have been designed to answer the question: “What can I take home and improve next month?”

3. Broader Exposure, Deeper Impact

Seven half-day classes allow participants to:

- Learn from multiple faculty perspectives
- Cross-pollinate ideas between councils
- Identify best practices in diverse geographic contexts
- Build a broader professional network

Instead of one week-long immersion, attendees leave with a portfolio of actionable strategies across multiple dimensions of training leadership.

4. Immediate, Practical Application

Each of the 21 topics has been structured around:

- Real-world case studies
- Finding solutions for today’s biggest training challenges
- Templates and tools
- Discussion of implementation barriers
- Strategies for measurable improvement

Council and District Training Chairs return home not just inspired, but equipped with:

- A focused improvement plan
- Staff development strategies
- Recruitment messaging ideas
- Evaluation metrics
- Learning from fellow volunteers that helped write today’s critical training courses such as BALOO, Cub Scout Leader, and Training New Unit Organizers.

- Technology integration steps

This design accelerates their personal impact.

5. Peer-Led, Volunteer-Facilitated Excellence

Every class is facilitated by a select experienced Scouting volunteer leader. Participants will not hear abstract theory. They will be learning from:

- Leaders who have built successful training cultures
- Commissioners who have improved unit service metrics
- Program volunteers who have increased engagement and retention
- Councils that have raised trained leader percentages

This peer-facilitated learning model builds credibility and ensures conversations remain practical, relevant, and grounded in the realities of volunteer leadership.

6. Signals Modernization and Responsiveness

For younger, new, adult volunteer leaders, this new model shows how Scouting U:

- Respects time and choice
- Encourages autonomy in learning
- Promotes collaborative environments
- Emphasizes measurable outcomes
- Feels dynamic and innovative

It reflects how modern adults expect to learn: modular, customizable, engaging, and purpose-driven.

Strategic Outcomes

Moving to a University of Scouting model transforms Scouting U Week from a single-course training event into a strategic leadership development experience.

- It broadens learning.
- It increases implementation.
- It multiplies council impact.
- It empowers training leaders.
- It modernizes the culture of adult leadership development.
- And ultimately, it strengthens the delivery of Scouting to youth.

Scouting U Week is not just training. It is a strategic investment in the leaders who train the trainer.

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Scouting U Courses

These are the courses being offered during the week of Scouting U from June 14 to 20 this summer. All but NYLT Power Up are half-day sessions.

Monday and Tuesday

- Developing a Training Culture
- Training New Member Coordinators
- Understanding Volunteer Motivation
- Training to Make a Difference
- Coaching and Supporting Other Volunteers
- Direct Contact Leader Training
- Training That Works: Leadership Training for a New Generation
- Intent & Design of the New Cub Leader Training
- Recruiting Quality Training Staff
- Facilitation Skills & Group Dynamics
- Foundations of Adult Learning

- Roles & Responsibilities of Council & District Training Chairs

Thursday and Friday

- Intent & Design of the New BALOO
- Stronger Together: Building Partnerships That Move Training Forward
- Using AI to Improve Training
- Marketing & Promoting Volunteer Training
- Evaluating Training Effectiveness
- Conducting a University of Scouting
- Planning a Training Program
- Engaging Methods for Volunteer Learning
- Using Technology in Training

Full week course

- National Youth Leadership Training Power Up

Ambassador reunion June 14 - 20

There's no better way to learn about Philmont than by being at Philmont. There's also no better people to learn about ways to enthuse Scouts about Philmont than being with other Ambassadors. That's why every Ambassador should consider attending the **Ambassador Reunion** during the week of June 14-20.

You'll be getting first-hand reports on Camping, PTC and Ranch operations direct from Matt Hart, Amy Hutcherson, and Andrea Watson. You'll get out to the backcountry to see the beauty of the ranch and the enthusiasm of Crews on the trail.

You'll learn how to develop displays and presentations that fire up Scouts and families to make the trip to Scouting's corner of enchanted New Mexico. Be there!

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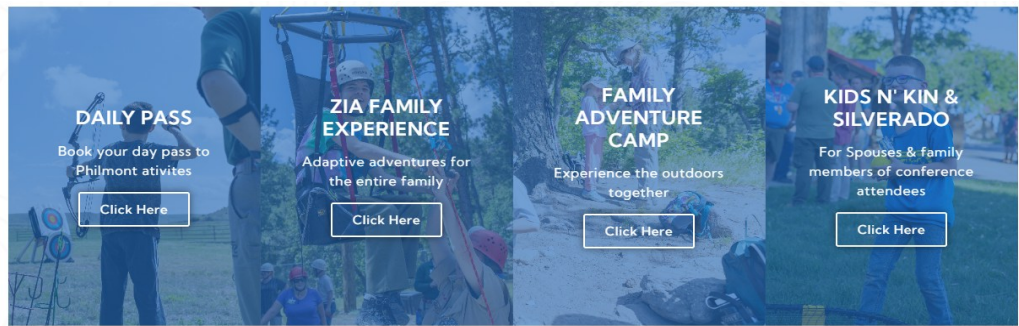
Ambassador Mountain Trek June 14 - 20

The first Philmont Ambassador **Adult Mountain Trek** is being offered concurrently with the Philmont Ambassador Week and Reunion. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get a Philmont Semi-quincentennial arrowhead patch. Sign up now to claim one of the first come/first serve 12 limited spots available.

You must meet Philmont's medical screening requirements and be physically fit to hike the backcountry for six days and five nights. This means you should read all the

This adult-only Philmont Ambassador Adult Mountain Trek will have its own separate registration, own schedule, and own fee. To reserve one of the 12 limited spots, please send an email with your contact information to PhilmontAmbassadors@scouting.org.

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The Philmont catalog page has links to all its programs arranged according to the type of participant who would enjoy it. Shown above are the Family Programs.

View all Philmont programs on new 'Philmont Catalog' page

When you start to explain Philmont to someone who is unfamiliar with it, you may have a hard time recalling all the programs and activities that the Ranch has to offer. Fortunately, there is a new web site that lists everything on the ranch and has links to go to the right pages to find out more.

On the Philmont Home Page, click on the "More" tab at the top of the page. There you will see an item named "Program Catalog". Following that link takes you to a page titled **Philmont for All Ages**. Here you will find all the programs happening throughout the year broken down into a few basic categories.

Under **Family Programs**, you'll find links to

- Daily Pass
- Zia Family Experience
- Family Adventure Camp
- Kids N' Kin and Silverado

Under **Youth Experiences**, you'll find links to

- Trek
- Zia Trek
- Unit Adventure Camp
- NAYLE

The **Philmont for Adults** links include:

- Family Adventure Camp
- Philmont Fastpack
- Philmont Trail Race
- Training and Conferences
- Hut-to-hut
- Fall and Winter Activities
- Sportsman Adventure
- The Founders Ride

More Philmont has links to

- Stay and Play
- Film at Philmont (site coming soon)
- Host your Event at Philmont

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Philmont Ambassador Newsletter

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Family Adventure Camp has many options

Families looking for economical ways to spend their precious vacation time and limited budgets need not look any further than Philmont. It's a place where everyone can have fun.

Philmont's Family Adventure Camp can provide adventures for everyone from toddlers to teenagers. Unlike the Kid N' Kin program for the families of conference attendees, at Adventure Camp everyone stays together and shares the same experiences during the day. It's an unique opportunity for bonding as a family.

The Mini-Bear Itinerary is designed for families with kids 5 to 10, while the Philhistorical, Happy Hiker, and Adventure Seekers Itineraries are more fitting for families with older youth.

Adventure Camp Sessions can be for a

full week or just a half-week so the experience can be the whole vacation or a nice break in the middle of a longer trip. There is even a daily Adventure Pass option that let guests stop by Philmont to spend a just a day of activity on their way to or from another destination

Family Adventure Camp also lets guests see a bit of what Philmont is like should they decide to attend a conference in the future. It's also a great way for grandparents to treat their grandkids to a week of adventure at Philmont.

While staying at PTC, guests can stay in the traditional Terrace Tents which sleep 2 each. Cribs are available for very young children to sleep in the same tent as their parents. Older children will be in a tent next door. Guests can also opt for Deluxe

Family Tents that have a queen size bed along with a separate sleeping area with two bunk beds for a total capacity of 6.

While most guests arrive during the summer, there are also spring, fall and even winter options. Available heated roofed housing during the off-season makes these opportunities much more attractive during cooler weather.

Family Adventure Camp's unique combination of housing and activities requires some special considerations for what guests should bring to camp. These include:

- Towel, Washcloth, Shower Shoes, Toiletries
- Breathable, active clothing for warm days and cool evenings
- Warm sleeping garments
- Warm Jacket
- Walking/hiking shoes or boots*
- Hiking Daypack/Comfortable School backpack *
- Rain jacket and rain pants*
- Three 1-Liter water bottles or a 3-L water bladder *
- Sunscreen *
- Long pants – *required for Horseback Riding*
- Hat or cap
- Flashlight
- Insect repellent
- Extra batteries for cameras and flashlights
- Pillow **
- Sleeping Bag for Sheets & Blankets **

* Required for all backcountry activities

** Philmont provides these for guests in Deluxe Family Tents or roofed housing, Terrace Tents guests have the option to bring their own bedding or rent a Bed-In-A-Box (\$7/person-night) which includes bedding and a towel.

In case anyone forgets anything, the Tooth of Time Traders can provide most of the essentials along with an abundance of souvenirs. PTC also has a laundry facility so guests don't have to pack a lot of extra cloths "just in case things get a little dirty" because chances are that they will out in the backcountry or gaga ball pit.

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This beautifully crafted ornament from our WPA line collection features an intricate design of the iconic Tooth of Time. Celebrate the spirit of adventure and the legendary Philmont landscape with this unique ornament.

**WPA
FLAT GLOBE
ORNAMENT**





Hidden treasures around Philmont

Historic murals adorn Taos County courthouse

When the old Taos County courthouse was completed in January 1934, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) commissioned four of Taos' premier artists to paint ten murals in the facility as part of the New Deal to alleviate some of the crunching poverty resulting from the Depression. PWAP hired artists Emil Bistram, Ward Lockwood, Bert Phillips, and Victor Higgins who would become known as the 'Taos Fresco Quartet.'

The murals are among the hidden treasures that can be found by exploring the area around Philmont. The courthouse is at 104 North Plaza Street in Taos.

The original intent of the project was to have 13 panels of murals – 11 narrow vertical ones, a round medallion over the entrance, and Higgins' large central Ten Commandments piece—located around the building.

The murals were originally intended to recount events in Taos history. However at some point either the artists or their directors

changed the subject of the murals to a much more serious and dramatic theme – the use and misuse of the law – described artistically in vivid scenes and titled in both English and Spanish. Commentators and contemporaries at the time of the murals noted that none of the works tended to be authentic to the "place" or "people" of Taos, explaining that "the compositions are allegorical because the historical events of Taos are yet subjects of bitter controversy."

The murals were completed in March of 1934 after three months of work. The murals are constructed of tempera pigment mixed with distilled water and applied to a fresh coat of wet lime plaster, laid on several base coats of plaster.

The **Works Progress Administration** was an American New Deal agency that employed millions of jobseekers (mostly men who were not formally educated) to carry out public works projects, including the construction of public buildings and roads.

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It's in the Guidebook!

Youth leadership is essential for every Crew



Editors note: Leaders frequently call Philmont asking questions about Treks. Most of these are answered in the Guidebook to Adventure and Advisors Guidebook. This series covers important topics from the guides so that Ambassadors can be familiar with them.

A trek at Philmont is a “youth-led” activity. This is why the rules for crew makeup require a majority of youth participants. The leadership of the crew while at Philmont comes from these youth participants, not the adult advisors!

Throughout the history of the Ranch, the leadership growth of each youth member while practicing the Patrol Method has been a critical part of the total experience.

Key leaders practicing servant leadership ensure that the crew has an enjoyable and successful trek. This is particularly true for the *Crew Leader*, *Chaplain's Aide*, and *Wilderness Pledge Guía*.

Crew Leader

A well-qualified Scout should be elected as Crew Leader before training begins. The Crew Leader is responsible for organizing the crew, assigning duties, making decisions, and recognizing the capabilities of each crew member. They lead by example and discuss ideas and alternatives with the entire crew to arrive at a consensus before acting. This responsibility requires someone with leadership ability who is respected by everyone. The adult Advisors will work closely with this individual.

The Crew Leader's responsibilities include:

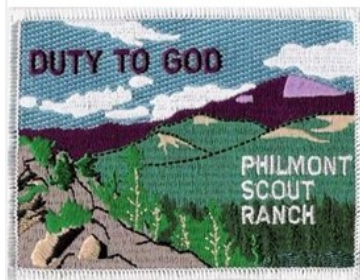
- Incorporate the principles of the Scout Oath and Law into the Trek experience.
- Follow the assigned itinerary.



- Complete and manage a crew duty roster.
- Adhere to all Philmont bear and wildlife procedures.

Crew Leaders will receive more information/training in Logistics and a meeting with other Crew Leaders on the day of your trek (Day 1). Please print the Crew Leader's Orientation sheet and give it to your Crew Leader as soon as they are elected

(www.philmontscoutranch.org/treks/expeditions/2024crewpacket)

**Chaplain's Aide**

Each crew should also select a Chaplain's Aide, perhaps a member of the crew who has received a religious award in Scouting. The Chaplain's Aide is responsible for assisting the crew in being reverent

during their time in the backcountry, as well as working with the Crew Leader and Lead Advisor to ensure the smooth operation of the crew. The Chaplain's Aide will be asked to lead daily devotionals from the *Eagles Soaring High* booklet, lead grace before meals, and encourage participation in religious services. The Chaplain's Aide will guide the crew's participation in the Duty to God program and will certify completion of the Duty to God Award requirements for each crew member. (Awards will be available to purchase at the Tooth of Time Traders at the conclusion of the trek; proceeds support the Chaplain Program at Philmont).

The Chaplain's Aide's responsibilities include:

- Set a good example by living the principles of the Scout Oath and Law.
- Teach the Philmont Grace to crew and use it before meals.
- Lead Roses, Buds, and Thorns each night.
- Assist the Crew Leader and Advisors in conflict resolution.
- Provide support to fellow crew members that are having difficulties.

Leadership (continued on page 7)



Youth leadership is evident right from the beginning as it is the Crew Leader who meets with Rangers and Staff to plan their crew's itinerary in the backcountry. (*Philmont Photo*)

Youth leadership is key to crew having full Philmont experience

Leadership *(Continued from page 6)*

- Encourage fellow crew members in their own personal walk with God.
- Lead crew in daily reflections from *Eagles Soaring High* booklet.
- Encourage the crew to attend chapel services in Base Camp and in the back-country if services are available on the crew's itinerary.

Chaplain's Aides will receive more information/training in a meeting with other Chaplain's Aides on the first day of your trek (Day 1). Please print the Philmont Chaplain's Aide Orientation sheet and give it to them.



Wilderness Guia

Each crew will select a Wilderness Pledge Guia (*Guide*). This individual will help the crew understand the principles of the Philmont Wilderness Pledge and Leave No Trace principles. This person helps the crew focus on camping practices that adhere to wilderness ethics outlined in the two approaches and ensures that the crew follows all Philmont camping practices. With more than 20,000 participants camping each summer at Philmont, it is important that each person does their share to ensure that we protect Philmont and our neighbors' properties for generations to come.

The Wilderness Pledge Guia's responsibilities include:

- Learn the principles of Philmont's Wilderness Pledge and Leave No Trace .
- Assist the crew in implementing Philmont's Wilderness Pledge and Leave No Trace principles throughout your trek.
- Guide the crew in discussions about wilderness ethics by focusing on a

different principle of Leave No Trace for seven days on the trail.

- Help the crew follow all camping practices as outlined by their Ranger and strictly follow Philmont's bear and wildlife procedures.
- Help crew members earn the Wilderness Pledge Achievement Award with the help of the Ranger/Horseman/Wrangler.
- Lead the crew in preparation and completion of the scheduled conservation project while on the trail.

The Wilderness Pledge Guia will receive more information/training in a meeting with other Wilderness Pledge Guías on the day of your crew's arrival at Philmont (Day 1).

The Wilderness Pledge Guia will certify completion of the Wilderness Pledge Achievement Award requirements for each crew member. Awards may be purchased at the Tooth of Time Traders at the conclusion of the trek; proceeds support the Sustainability Program at Philmont.

Youth Experience

Philmont Scout Ranch is designed to be a youth experience. Waite Phillips set forth the following statement at the time of his gift to [Scouting America]:

"These properties are donated and dedicated to the Boy Scouts of America for the purpose of perpetuating faith, self-reliance, integrity, and freedom—principles used to build this great country by the American pioneer. So that these future citizens may, through thoughtful adult guidance and by the inspiration of nature, visualize and form a code of living to diligently maintain these high ideals and our proper destiny."

Waite Phillips wanted the Philmont experience to focus on the youth participants!

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Cross-training part of Philmont fitness

The Winter Olympics are over, and we cheered on the intrepid athletes from the all over the world. While most of them hail from "snowbelt" areas which have the cold weather that helped them to become winter athletes, that snow doesn't last all year. How do they keep fit during the summer months?

"Cross-training" is the answer. It means participating in sports and activities which keep your heart active and muscles fit even when you are not focusing on your primary sport.

Cross-country skiers bicycle. Acrobatic snowboarders use the trampoline. Down-hill racers lift weights. Every athlete runs to keep their cardiovascular system at its peak.

Getting in shape for Philmont requires the same kind of dedication and training. Everyone should hike or run for basic fitness. Having a second sport like basketball, lacrosse, soccer, football, or volleyball keeps Scouts active. Though not a traditional sport, even playing chess develops strategy planning and thinking ahead.

If a Scout's Trek is coming up in the summer of 2026, picking up a spring activity is a great way to cross train their body for the trail. If their trek is in 2027, they have a whole year ahead to take up a new sport or intensify their activity in one they already do.

Besides developing those other muscles, cross-training also keeps activities and interests varied. Doing the same thing all the time is boring. Mixing things up gives time for other muscle groups to work while letting tired ones rest.

So when someone asks how to prepare for Philmont, explain cross-training to them.

P2

DIY display is adaptable to stay current

Cardboard tri-fold boards are a convenient way to make a tabletop display. It's easy to glue or tape photos or material to the boards. However, sometimes information changes, and we need to tear off the old material or cover it over with a new piece. This can detract from your display, or you have to buy a new board.

Commercially available tabletop displays use Velcro fasteners to make them versatile. These displays have a "loop" material on them and use Velcro "hooks" to attach material like photos and text. This makes them easy to change.

Here's a way to make an adaptable tri-fold display that uses these fasteners.

Materials:

- Cardboard tri-fold display (Figure 1) The one shown is 3 ft. high by 4 ft. wide. (2x3 center panel with 1x3 side panels). You can use other sizes of board and adapt these instructions accordingly.
- Light weight indoor/outdoor polyester needle punch carpet which is available at most big box home improvement stores or carpet stores. If you can locate a store that sells 6-foot-wide carpet by the foot, you only need a piece 6 feet wide by 25" inches long for the tri-fold. (Figure 2) You can also get 2 feet of a 12 foot wide carpet and cut accordingly. This size would work well for 3 — 2x3 panels (Figure 4). Note that stores often cut carpet a few inches longer.
- An appropriate permanent adhesive. This can be 3M adhesive spray #77 or #90 or equivalent. Some glues like contact adhesive do not work well on a loose-woven material like light outdoor carpet. Always test first.
- Wide duct tape, carpet tape, or similar width tape. You can also overlap tape to make it wider.

Assembly

- Cut the carpet using a sharp utility knife to fit the size of each of your panels.
- Cut 1 inch wide strips of carpet to the same length as the height (3 ft. in this example) of your panels.
- Apply adhesive to one side of each panel.
- Attach the carpet to panels. Allow time for the adhesive to cure fully.
- Assemble the boards with the carpet sides face-to-face. Place the 1" strip of carpet along the edge of the boards and tape it to the boards to form a "hinge" along their length as shown in Figure 3. Repeat for the other side. Constructed in this way, the strip of carpet hides the tape when the display is unfolded.

Now you have a display board that you can attach photos, maps and other pieces of material using small pieces of Velcro "hooks" attached to their back. Whenever you want to make a change, just pull one off and apply another item.

To make larger displays, use 2 x 3 foot panels instead of the 1 x 3 foot side panels using the same techniques and adjust the carpet piece you buy accordingly. You'll then have a six foot wide display with plenty of room to promote Philmont!

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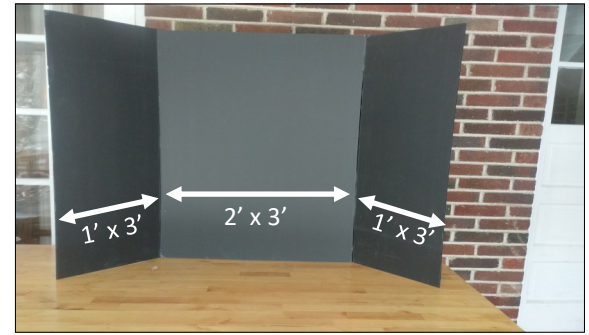


Figure 1. Start with a basic tri-fold that is cut apart at the "hinges". Foam core poster boards or hardboard panels can also be used.

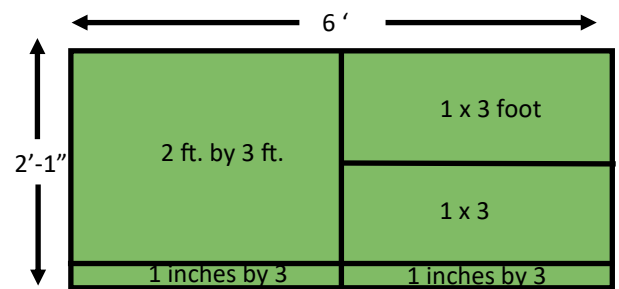


Figure 2. For a tri-fold panel, use a 2'-1" by 6 foot piece of outdoor carpet cut as shown here. (Not to scale)

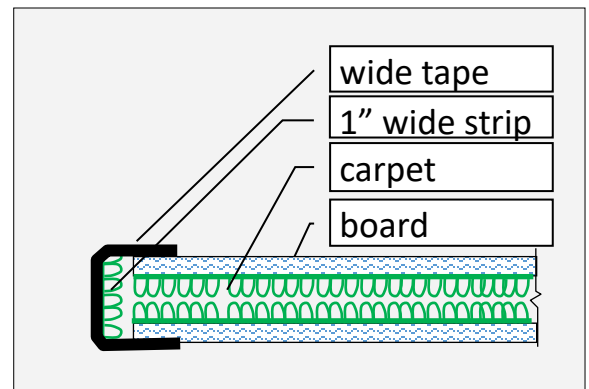


Figure 3. Lay the strip of carpet along the long edge of two boards placed face-to-face. Use a wide piece of sturdy tape to make a "hinge" along the length of the boards.

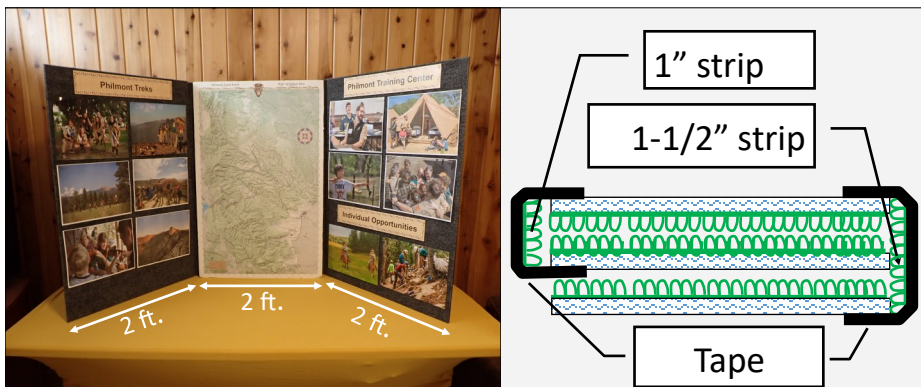


Figure 4. This display uses three 2 x 3 foot panels. Note that a wider piece of carpet strip (1-1/2") is needed to form the hinge on one side to let the three panels fold together.



Figure 5. The completed display can be changed as much as needed and used for other promotions.