

PHILMONT AMBASSADOR NEWSLETTER

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Promoting wilderness and learning adventures that last a lifetime

Summer 2026

Know your audience when selling Philmont

"I got a call from a salesman the other day," laughed Tom. "He spent 10 minutes talking to me how his company can paint my house completely in one day, thereby protecting it with the finest paint on the market that is guaranteed to last 20 years. He can do all this at a very affordable price, too. He never gave me the chance to explained to him that my house is all brick and that what I was really interested in was aluminum soffit and fascia."

The one size fits all sales pitch fails because the salesman didn't take the time to find out what interested the customer. The pitch can be perfectly memorized, use all the right buzz words, hit all the price points, and yet completely fall flat.

So it goes with promoting Philmont. We may think that PTC is the best Scouter training place on earth, but if the Scoutmaster is struggling with how to retain older youth, we will have missed the opportunity to interest them in high adventure treks. Likewise, a Cubmaster new to the Scouting program is not interested in Treks that his youth may do in seven or eight years, but they might be interested in an affordable family vacation. A new Commissioner may not care to hear about Family Camp, but they would like to know that there is a conference on how to help their units be better organized.

Audience (Continued on page 2)



The Philmont Master Plan process is looking at how key aspects of the Ranch will operate for the long-term future for generations of Scouts. (Philmont Photo.)

Philmont Undergoing Master Planning Process

During the spring 2026 Webinar, Philmont leadership updated Ambassadors on new programs and plans for the Ranch. Leading off the presentations was General Manager, Andrea Watson. She explained that last summer, Philmont launched an 18 month master planning process to look at how the Ranch will look like thirty years from now. While it is too early to go into details of what the plan entails, Andrea outlined five pillars of focus upon which the plan will rest.

"The first pillar is *Expand the Philmont Community*," opened Andrea. "Whether that's within Scouting or outside of Scouting, many of you have probably heard me

talk about how Philmont could be a place that helps grow the membership of Scouting. Membership in the movement is so important for so many reasons. First and foremost, because it is how we change the lives of those individuals who have the ability to be part of what we do in Scouting, whether that's in Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and beyond. Expanding the Philmont community helps tie into the goals of the organization about membership growth as well, not just those who might come here."

She continued, "The second pillar is

Master Plan (Continued on page 2)

Promoting Philmont requires familiarity with its programs

Audience (Continued from page 1)

Before launching into any canned spiel about Philmont, it is important to connect with the person we are talking to and find out what their interests are. You should be having a conversation, not giving a speech, and connect with each persons' interest. That is why it is important to know everything that is going on at Philmont because you will then be able to connect them to a program that fits their need.

"My Troop is too small" can lead you to discuss the Trek Match System or Individual Opportunities.

"We don't have the equipment" lets you tell them about all the camping gear that Philmont provides crews such as tents, cookware, and tarps.

"Our leaders can't take two weeks off" brings up 7- and 9-day Treks.

"We have a youth with disabilities" opens the door to a conversation about Zia Treks.

"Our youth will age out soon" can prompt you to talk about Venturing Crews whose member can be up to 21 years old.

Philmont is a big place in more ways than just geographically. There is probably a program, camp, or activity that will appeal to everyone in Scouting, The first step is to find out what that person is interested in, then show them that there is a Philmont



Pat Wrath finds out what a Scouter is interested in before identifying a Philmont program to discuss.

program that will meet their needs. Keep the canned pitches in the can and start a conversation.

This approach requires much more effort than a memorized sales talk. It requires in-depth and first-hand knowledge of Philmont. This is why it is important for Ambassadors to have broad knowledge of Philmont's programs gained from personal experience.

The Ambassador Week is designed to do just that. It'll let you experience PTC if you have only been on a Trek. You can get out in the backcountry if you have only been to PTC. And you can see and feel

many of the other aspects of the ranch like Camping HQ, Villa Philmonte, Kids-n-Kin program, and more.

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**Sign up for
Ambassador Week
June 14—20**
[reservations.scouting.org/profile/
form/index.cfm](https://reservations.scouting.org/profile/form/index.cfm)

Master plan based on five pillars

Master Plan (Continued from page 1)

Honoring the Past and Preparing for the Future. "Ambassadors know how tremendous this special place is when it comes to the history that's existed here from the dinosaurs all the way to Scouting and everything in between. There's so much incredible history here, and it's a part of who we are, and how do we honor that, while also making sure we're forward-thinking about how we are."

Championing Landscape Stewardship is the third pillar. "We cannot use this beautiful facility if we don't take care of it. And we are, have been, and must be a place where people come and learn about what that looks like, not just those who are participating in our program, but also within the in-

dustry, within outdoor recreation, within land use beyond Scouting's borders," said Andrea.

A Scout is Thrifty leads to the fourth pillar: *Enhancing Operational Sustainability.* "It's not about saving money necessarily," explained Andrea. "It's about being good stewards of the resources we've been given and being thoughtful about how we use those. When we talk about budgeting here at the ranch, we talk a lot about how every time a Scout comes here, those dollars that they have paid represent some young man or woman sitting in front of a storefront selling popcorn, or going door-to-door selling chocolate bars, or whatever it is they've done to fundraise their way here. So we have to be thoughtful about how we use that. As we look towards our future and

this master plan, we've got to find a way to ensure that we are practicing operational sustainability."

The fifth pillar is *Fostering Innovation and Excellence in Outdoor Recreation.* Philmont has always been a place where people both in and out of Scouting look for leadership in outdoor recreation. The plan is examining new and exciting things that should be happening and how to improve the way that Philmont does things.

"So, these are just a teaser," added Andrea. "There are hundreds of pages of information I could share, but I won't today, but I'm eager to share more with all of you, especially those who are able to be with us this summer and in future presentations."

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Family Camp Cub Scouts get 50% off

Cubs are the future of the Scouting program, so getting them and their families to Philmont is vital to its future as well. Parents who are bringing Cub Scout youth to Family Camp will get a 50% discount for these youth.

"We're trying to get more Cub Scouts here," says Maddie Houk, PTC Assistant Director. "We need Ambassadors to get the word out about this opportunity. Philmont is for the whole family, not just for older Scouts."

Young Scouts Love Unit Adventure Camp

Unit Adventure Camp lets younger Scouts between the ages of 11 and 14 have Philmont-type adventures but in a traditional summer-camp fashion. Instead of hiking from camp to camp as on a Trek, activities are scheduled in and around PTC. There are opportunities for shooting sports, COPE Courses, horseback riding, rock climbing, and more. Units are housed at PTC and use the facilities there. During the day, they head out to activities around the ranch.

"After the success of last year, we're now offering Unit Adventure Camp every week of the summer," said Maddie Houk.

Hut-to-Hut and Founder's Ride

For those Scouters wanting a more leisurely trip through the backcountry, Philmont's Hut-to-Hut Trek and Founder's Ride are great options.

The Hut-to-Hut trek is a glamping hike with indoor lodging and prepared meals. All your gear is transported between comfortable sleeping cabins. Two trips are planned: **August 12-17** and **19-24**. www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc/hut-2-hut.

The Founder's Ride, **August 21-26**, lets you relive the joy that Waite Phillips found riding his horse through the backcountry. Upscale meals and social hours are just part of the experience. www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc/founders-ride/



There is plenty of special activities for families with Cub Scouts during the last week of July at PTC. (Philmont Photo)

Cub Family Fun Week offers discounts, special programs

The week of July 26 to August 1, Cub Scout families are invited to have a special *Adventure in the American West* at Philmont. They will enjoy a legendary destination where Scouting, adventure, and the spirit of the Wild West all come to life in the rugged beauty of New Mexico. This will be a special week for Cub Scout families, and it is offered a discount!

The Adult fee is \$370 (18+), youth are only \$395 for ages 11+, \$360 for 6 to 10 year olds, and \$190 for 0 to 5, plus housing.

Hiking, horse rides, range and target sports, climbing, nature exploration and crafts are just a few of the activities whole families will enjoy. During the evening, there will be campfires, BBQ, an Ice Cream Social, and relaxation time under the stars.

Cub Scout Leaders can expect to choose from optional opportunities to learn tips and tricks of the trade, Cub Scout Pack pizzazz and Pack meeting best practices.

One of the best things about being

a Cub leader at Philmont is the opportunity to meet other leaders from across the country. There's plenty of sharing and learning going on while having informal lunches and coffee together.

Families also have the opportunity to visit the Villa Philmonte, Kit Carson Museum at Rayado, and the National Scouting Museum. They get to feel a bit of the excitement of older Scouts getting ready for or coming back from a Trek. The opening and closing Trek campfires are open to all.

The Tooth of Time Traders can provide all the Scouting gear and clothing to show off to the folks back home that you have been to Scouting's Paradise.

Be sure to let Cub Scout Leaders know about this unforgettable family vacation experience.

www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc/ptc-conferences/#family

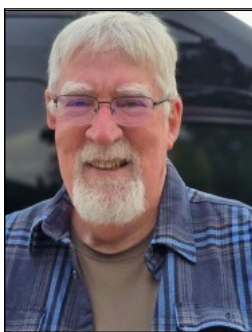
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Kampa, Wrath and Weyrick Awarded Silver Buffalo

Among the 14 recipients of the Silver Buffalo in 2026, three are Philmont Ambassadors. Dennis Kampa and Pat Wrath were among the first Ambassadors when the program started in 2012. Rev. Dennis Weyrick became an Ambassador in 2024, but his involvement with Philmont began years before.

Philmont has played an important part in the Scouting lives of these honorees.

Dennis said, "Being involved at the PTC has been in an invaluable tool while developing new programs for Scouting. While we were developing exciting new adventures and awards for



Dennis Kampa

Cub Scouts, in the back of my mind I was always thinking about 'How do we present this at Philmont?' Then being able to turn around and actually do it with real-life Scout leaders and sometime actual scouts was invaluable. Plus the other benefit of having the whole team together in a wonderful location can't be beat!"



Rev. David Weyrick

"I attended one of the few annual Walking Wood Badge courses which was part of course WWB-6 in 1981. It was a unique experience—imagine combining a trek through the backcountry with Wood Badge training, because that's exactly what it was."

As a national course, it also carried a

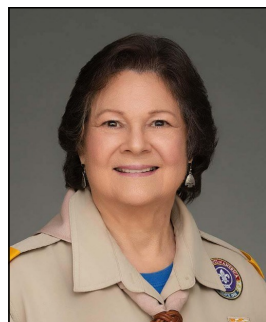


special distinction, and I was honored to be the first Scouter east of the Mississippi to participate.

"From that moment on, I was hooked. The Tooth of Time has been "chewing" on me ever since. But more importantly, Philmont didn't just inspire me, it redirected me. I came home with a deepened commitment to serve at the district level. My entire Wood Badge ticket focused on becoming a District Roundtable Commissioner, a role I faithfully carried for five years.

"What I experienced at Philmont that first time didn't stay on the mountain, it came back with me, fueling a renewed energy, enthusiasm, and sense of purpose in my Scouting journey."

Pat Wrath is known for her extensive experience and contributions to Scouting America. Pat's commitment to the development of next-generation leaders is evident in her various leadership roles within the organiza-



Pat Wrath

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Deluxe Family Tents can accommodate up to six with a queen bed for adults and bunks for youth. (Philmont photo)

Staying at PTC is easier than ever

Whether you are coming for a PTC conference, dropping off a Scout for an Individual Opportunity, or just passing by the area, arranging to stay overnight at Philmont has never been easier. The new "Book Your Stay" page on the PTC website lets you choose from the housing options available. (www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc/plan-your-trip/facilities/)

Visitors can choose from the traditional terrace tents, luxury deluxe tents, lodge rooms, and bungalows subject to availability. They have the flexibility to pick the days they want, and they can see a map depicting where their accommodation choice is within the PTC area.

The Family Adventure Program has added flexibility to its schedule as well. Instead of week-long or half-week options, now families can pick whatever days of the week they want to arrive and depart. They can sign up for activities each day they are at PTC, depending on availability.

PTC is also a great place to hold a family reunion because of the accommodations and amenities it has to offer.

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Some roofed housing offers comfortable resort-like arrangements. (Philmont Photo)



Range and Target Activities are among the most popular backcountry programs. This summer nearly every crew got its first choice of itineraries. (Philmont Photo)

Camping Roundup

Philmont is still hiring staff for the coming summer

An expected 13,500 Scouts will be on the trails this coming summer led by 1,000 seasonal staff. Philmont is still hiring staff according to Camping Director Matt Hart. “We can even do partial schedules,” says Matt. “Some folks are coming to work here when they finish their obligations to their local council camps, and we love talking to folks like that.”

Nearly all those on a Trek got their first choice of the itinerary they requested so there will be a lot of happy campers this summer.

The Base Camp Conservation project is continuing so that crews can complete their required conservation work before they hit the trail, leaving more time to enjoy being in the backcountry. This option combines well with those who come early for the Stay and Play program.

Crews in the backcountry will see some differences.

“The big change has been the Cowboy Action Shooting program which has moved from Ponil to Clarks Fork. This has allowed us to add an additional cavalcade,” explained Matt. Cavalcades are the most popular backcountry program because they fill

up so fast.

There are still construction projects going on such as the dining hall at Beaubien and the Fish Camp cabin restoration.

Something new that Philmont is trying this year is the Fast Packing program which is a “Trek on steroids” says Matt. “They’re going to do 10 to 20 miles a day. It’s a niche market that Philmont is willing to serve. Austin St. George has given great leadership to this program, and it has been well received. It’s doing its bit to bring more people to the Ranch in new ways.”

The Scholarship Program is also helping get Scouts on the trail. Over 530 scholarships have been given out representing over \$425,000. “We’re proud of this because it creates a positive impact for Scouts,” beams Matt.

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Philmont is still hiring
www.philmontscoutranch.org/jobs/

Tips on being an effective Ambassador

By John and Julia Lesko, Co-coordinators of the Philmont Ambassador Program.

How can you be an effective Ambassador? A few simple practices make a big difference:

- Tell your story often. Authentic enthusiasm is the best marketing and recruitment tool. Wear your favorite Philmont-branded apparel and be prepared to share a light-hearted story about why this brand means so much to you.
- Leverage Scouting networks. Share postings through the Order of the Arrow, National Eagle Scout Association, and campus outdoor clubs.
- Highlight the benefits. Emphasize adventure, leadership growth, résumé value, scholarships, and the new and lifelong friendships formed at Philmont.
- Support the Philmont Training Center. Remind Scouters of opportunities beyond the backcountry such as attending conferences and seminars held at PTC led by faculty considered to be experts in their field and the very best instructors available.
- Stay connected. Make a follow-up call or personal note often to keep in touch. As an Ambassador you are promoting all of Philmont.

Philmont is more than mountains and meadows. It is people, staff, and participants bound by shared experiences and growth. As Ambassadors, we carry the legacy of our time at Philmont. We also have the responsibility to welcome others into our HOmE. Becoming a Philmont Ambassador isn't a duty—it should be a joy. It honors the gifts we've received, strengthens Philmont's programs, and sustains Scouting America's mission.

The next time you share a Philmont story, remember: you are the best marketer and recruiter Philmont could ever have.

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During the Autumn Adventure, you can enjoy mild days and cool nights on the trails while trading stories and sharing experiences. *(Philmont Photo)*



Phil-A-Palooza weekend gets crews ready for Trek

“Be Prepared.” There is nothing like the prospect of going on a Philmont adventure that really brings home the meaning of this motto.

It can be a daunting task for most crews who do not live near backpacking trails or mountains. There is a lot to learn that may be outside of their normal outdoor program. Fortunately, some Ambassadors have helped crews from their Councils to “Be Prepared” by holding Philmont training sessions locally.

Ambassador Scout McAllister has been conducting a “Phil-A-Palooza” for several years. The event has grown to a training weekend that provides both lecture and hands-on experiences to prepare crews heading to Philmont.

Scott’s Longhorn Council hosts the training at its Sid Richardson Scout Ranch in the spring. Entire crews can participate or just a few key members like Crew Leaders and Adult Advisors. Some crews use the weekend as one of their shakedown hikes.

Upon arriving Friday evening, crews set up their own camps and assemble in the dining hall to learn from the staff.

Hiking topics include fitness training, health and safety, best practices, special diets, and map study. Choosing and using the right gear is essential so instructors cover tents, sleep systems, backpacks, footwear, camp stoves, cooking gear and procedures.

Philmont has its own ways of meal

preparation and clean-up which are essential in bear country and wilderness areas used by thousands of Scouts. Instructors go over all the steps, including using sumps.

During the day Saturday, crews practice their skills and check equipment. There is nothing like using the actual trail gear that you will have to determine if it will work for you. Selecting a campsite, the Bearmuda triangle, bear bag rope throwing practice, setting up tents and dining flies, and trail etiquette are all covered by instructors much like Ranger training at Philmont.

Instructors include Ambassadors and individuals who are or have been Rangers at Philmont. Because of the Council’s proximity to Philmont, some Philmont staff come for the weekend and demonstrate the actual equipment that crews will be using.

Scott will purchase surplus Philmont meal packages to allow for an authentic backcountry culinary experience or will put together meals using similar ingredients. Attendees are expected to bring all their own gear that they will be using at Philmont, including tents.

There’s a rousing Philmont-style campfire on Saturday night. After another practice hike on Sunday, crews return home confident that they have done their best to “Be Prepared”.

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Philmont Advisor Skills School immerses adults in backcountry skills

Trade the classroom for the trail itself at Philmont’s Advisor Skills School (PASS). This is an action-packed weekend to immerse adult leaders in the skills, procedures, and spirit of Philmont. Led by seasoned rangers and backcountry staff, PASS isn’t just a training—it’s a hands-on, boots-on-the-ground adventure that prepares you for the summer trek ahead.

Participants hike into the backcountry, sleep under the stars, and learn to lead like never before while mastering essential techniques—from hanging bear bags and firing up stoves to setting up camp in bear

country. This experience equips them with knowledge and confidence that can’t be found anywhere else—plus a few sneak peeks into new programs, meals, and gear.

After a wrap it up banquet at the end, participants return home with a patch to be worn with pride and a feeling of readiness for guiding their crew through the rugged beauty of Philmont.

www.philmontscoutranch.org/treks/secondseasonprograms/philmont-advisor-skills-school/

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Ambassador Fall Trek October 22-28

An Autumn Trek for Ambassadors is being organized by Steve Gold. Autumn is a great time to enjoy the backcountry like it was in quieter times of years long past.

During the trek, you’ll be able to connect with other Ambassadors from around the country to share your experiences as an Ambassador. You’ll also get to build the camaraderie that only comes from a shared experience in the backcountry.

The Trek is scheduled for October 22-28. It will be a 6 day and 5 night trip in Philmont’s South Country covering 25+ miles and at least one major peak. You can contact Steve Gold at s3a2bgold@gmail.com.

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**The next
Ambassador
Webinar is
November 12.**