

## The Philmont Experience

The Philmont Experience is a two week backpacking trek in the Sangre de Cristo range of the southern Rocky Mountains in northern New Mexico. Philmont is a BSA national high adventure base that occupies 215 square miles of rugged mountain wilderness with elevations ranging from 6,500 feet to 12,441 feet.

A Philmont trek typically consists of the following elements – three days of travel and sightseeing on the way out for the purpose of acclimating to the Rocky Mountain elevations, one day and night of orientation at Philmont base camp, eleven days and ten nights on the trail, a final night of celebration and recognition at Philmont base camp, and a day of travel home. The schedule for 2011, based on the results of the reservation lottery selection process, is likely to start with a departure on Wednesday, July 27, 2011 and end with a return on Thursday, August 11, 2011.

A Philmont crew has a maximum of 12 scouts and adults with the crew typically consisting of 8-9 scouts and 3-4 adults. Troop 131 has a 2011 reservation for 2 crews, so there is an opportunity for 16-18 scouts and 6-8 adults to participate. A scout must have completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade or be 14 years of age by January 1 preceding the trip to be eligible for participation. The troop roster indicates that there currently are 43 scouts who would be eligible to participate.

Participation in the Philmont Experience requires a significant commitment of time and energy to train and prepare. Troop 131 has had a very successful track record at Philmont because the program is based on a year-long series of events that develops backpacking skills, individual confidence and team interaction. Although the hiking can be very physically challenging, many scouts find that the wilderness conditions, the daily routine, and the work required on the trail can be even more challenging. Our training program is based on the premise that there should be no surprises when anyone gets to Philmont, and that with adequate preparation a Philmont backpacking trek should be a fun and rewarding experience.

There are 35 different Philmont treks to pick from, with various degrees of difficulty and combinations of trails, mountain peaks, camp sites and programs. Evaluating all of the possible trek options and picking a trek that meets the crew's objectives, is one of the many team building processes undertaken during the crew development program.

Participation in the Philmont Experience also requires a significant financial commitment. The total cost per person was approximately \$1300 in 2005 and has increased to approximately \$1700 per person in 2009. The total cost is a combination of fees charged by Philmont along with costs for airfare, lodging, ground transportation, meals and activities while traveling to and from Philmont. The 2011 Philmont fee is \$725 per participant. The first \$100 down payment per participant payable to Philmont must be collected by the end of January 2010. A subsequent Philmont progress payment of \$312.50 per participant must be collected by the end of September 2010, at which time travel reservation costs are also collected. Final payments to Philmont are due by the end of February 2011 and final costs for the remainder of the trip will be due later in the spring of 2011. Total trip costs are typically finalized after travel reservations are made and sightseeing activities are selected.