

# Philmont Scout Ranch

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 The [Tooth of Time](#), an icon of Philmont Scout Ranch.

**Philmont Scout Ranch** is a large, rugged, mountainous [ranch](#) located near the town of [Cimarron](#) in the [Sangre de Cristo Mountains](#) of the [Rocky Mountains](#) of northern [New Mexico](#). The ranch, formerly the property of oil baron [Waite Phillips](#) and now that of the [Boy Scouts of America](#), is currently in use as a National High Adventure Base in which crews of Scouts and Venturers take part in [backpacking](#) expeditions and other outdoor activities. Of the four national high adventure bases operated by the National Council of the BSA, Philmont is the most popular.

Philmont is also home to the [Philmont Training Center](#), which is the main center for BSA's national-level training for volunteers and professionals.

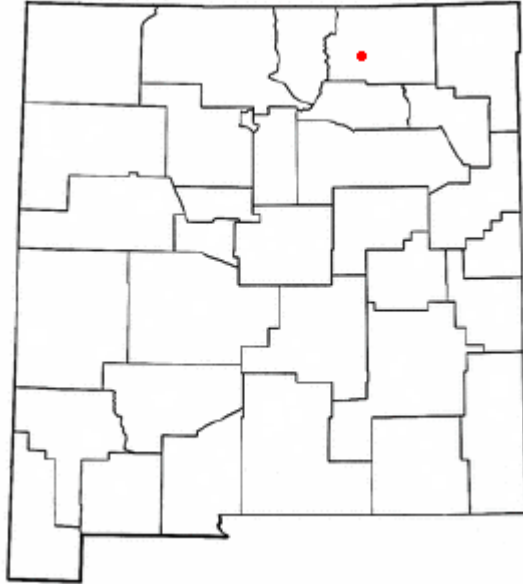
In addition to its extensive BSA programs, Philmont continues to operate as a ranch, maintaining a relatively small stock of [cattle](#), [horses](#), and [bison](#).

## Location and geography



Visto Grande

Philmont is located in the [Sangre de Cristo Mountains](#) of the [Rocky Mountains](#) of [New Mexico](#). The closest village is [Cimarron, New Mexico](#), which sits at 36°30'34" North, 104°54'56" West (36.509467, -104.915496).<sup>GR1</sup> The address of the ranch is usually given as 17 Deer Run Rd., Cimarron, NM, 87714. It is also about 20 miles (30 km) west-northwest of [Springer, New Mexico](#), and 35 miles (56 km) southwest of [Raton, New Mexico](#). The Ranch is shaped somewhat like the letter 'I,' with the bottom section larger than the top. It is about 12 miles (19 km) across (east to west) at its widest point, and about 30 miles (48 km) long. There are no mountains to the south of Philmont, or to the east (indeed, part of the eastern fringe of the ranch is [prairie](#)) but the interior is quite mountainous.



Mount Baldy, from the peak of Mount Phillips

The lowest elevation is 6500 feet (1981 m), at the southeast corner. The highest point is the peak of [Baldy Mountain](#) (or "Mount Baldy") at 12,441 feet (3792 m), located on the ranch's northwest boundary. The most recognizable landmark is the [Tooth of Time](#) at 9003 feet (2744 m), a granite monolith protruding 500 feet (150 m) vertically from an east-west ridge. Tooth of Time Ridge, and the latitude line on which it sits, mark the boundary between the central and southern sections of Philmont. The boundary between the central and northern sections is the narrowest part of the 'I'-shape, only a few miles across. [U.S. Route 64](#) runs through Philmont just south of this line.

Aside from Baldy, the ranch contains a number of prominent peaks. Directly south of Baldy lies Touch-Me-Not Mountain, which is located in Cimarron Canyon State Park. The South Country is home to a series of six difficult peaks, namely Mount Phillips, Comanche Peak, Big Red, Bear Mountain, Black Mountain, and Schaefer's Peak; the popular "Super Black Death" challenge consists of summiting all six in a day, concluding with the hike over the Tooth of Time and into Base Camp. The less-strenuous "Black Death" challenge comprises only Trail Peak, Bear, Black, Schaefer's, and the

Tooth, and likewise ends in Base Camp. The final prominent South Country peak is Trail Peak, which is popular for its relative ease, its nearness to [Beaubien](#), and the wreckage of the crash of a [B-24](#) bomber in 1942 near its summit.

Of the ranch's various hikeable peaks, Black Mountain is widely considered the most difficult, followed closely by Baldy and Big Red. Other prominent landmarks on the ranch include Grizzly Tooth, Window Rock, Deer Lake Mesa, and [Urraca Mesa](#), the last of which is notorious for being allegedly [haunted](#).

## History

[Native Americans](#) of the [Jicarilla Apache tribe](#) and [Ute](#) tribe once inhabited Philmont. A few Native American [archaeological](#) sites exist in the northern section nearby the 'Indian Writings' camp, and various camps seek to preserve Philmont's Native American heritage.

### Private ownership

In the mid-[19th century](#), the [Santa Fe Trail](#) crossed the plains just southwest of Philmont. The [Tooth of Time](#) owes its name to this trail; travelers knew that once they passed it, they had only a few weeks to go until they reached [Santa Fe, New Mexico](#). Philmont's strategic location along the trail spurred some interest in it. In 1841, [Carlos Beaubien](#) and [Guadalupe Miranda](#) obtained a large land grant from the [Mexican](#) government, including the present ranch. Soon the grant fell into the hands of Beaubien's son-in-law [Lucien Maxwell](#), who played an important role in developing and settling it. Maxwell sold the ranch to the [Maxwell Land Grant and Railroad Company](#), which gave up and handed it on to a Dutch development company, which decided to parcel it out to ranchers.

One of the most prominent ranchers was [Jesus Gil Abreu](#), who ran the Abreu Rayado Ranch from the [1870s](#) to his death in 1901. Operating from the Rayado Settlement, he raised [cattle](#), [goats](#), [sheep](#), as well as growing limited amounts of crops. The family owned this property until 1911, when they sold most of it off. One of the sons remained on the ranch near the site of [Abreu](#), a present staffed camp, and his [homestead](#) was preserved for years. However, the building was made from [adobe](#) and collapsed. The foundation of this building now serves as the foundation for the Abreu cantina. The house was reconstructed in 1998 about 100 [feet](#) uphill.

The history of [mining](#) at Philmont dates back to the years immediately after the [Civil War](#). At the time, many [U.S. soldiers](#) were stationed in the West, as

the [U.S. Army](#) was driving out the [American Indians](#). The story is that one of these soldiers befriended an Indian, who happened to give him a shiny rock. The shiny material in the rock was found to be [copper](#). According to the story, the soldier and two of his friends went up to investigate, and found [gold](#). However, they could not stay and mine the gold, and by the time they returned the next year, the area was overrun by miners. [Scores](#) of gold mines were [excavated](#) in Philmont, and operated into the early 20th century. A large vein of gold is said to lie under [Mount Baldy](#) to this day, but extracting it has not been feasible. The Contention Mine, located at Cyphers Mine, is open to guided tours.

The penultimate owner of Philmont was wealthy oil magnate and wilderness enthusiast [Waite Phillips](#), who amassed a large part of the old land grant in the [1920s](#), totaling over 300,000 [acres](#) (1,200 km<sup>2</sup>). Phillips built a large residence in the lowlands of Philmont, and called it the [Villa Philmonte](#). The ranch became a private game reserve for Phillips and his friends, and a number of hunting lodges and day-use camps were built. It would not have been beyond his means to bring [electricity](#) to those camps, but he decided not to. Some of these camps, including Fish Camp and the Hunting Lodge, have been preserved, complete with [wood-burning stoves](#), [oil lamps](#), and unique design features indicative of Phillips's often eccentric taste.

## Boy Scout involvement

Phillips sometimes allowed others to visit his ranch, including a few Boy Scout troops. He was so impressed with the Scouts that in 1938, he donated 35,857 acres (145 km<sup>2</sup>) to the [Boy Scouts of America](#). They initially named it the "Philtorn Rockymountain Scoutcamp" [*sic*].<sup>[1]</sup> The word 'Philtorn' comes from Waite Phillips's name, together with the "Good Turn" he did by donating the property. In 1941, Phillips added more Philmont property, including the Villa Philmonte, bringing the total to 127,395 acres (516 km<sup>2</sup>). (Contrary to popular belief, Phillips did not give his entire ranch to the BSA, but only those properties that would have the most recreational value. The total donation comprised about 40% of the ranch.) To help fund the upkeep of Philmont, he threw in his Philtower office building in [Tulsa, Oklahoma](#). The ranch's name was changed at this time to the "Philmont Scout Ranch and Explorer Base".

Philmont was run differently in the early years than it is now. Half a dozen "base camps" were constructed at strategic locations. A visiting group of Scouts would stay at one of these camps for a week, and day-hike to surrounding locations of interest. If the Scouts wanted to visit a different area, they would pack up their gear, hoist it onto [burros](#), and hike to another base camp. Eventually, possibly due to the advent of modern lightweight

metal-frame backpacks and other [backpacking](#) technology, the program was restructured to be backpacking-based.

In 1963, through the generosity of Norton Clapp, vice-president of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America, another piece of the Maxwell Land Grant was purchased and added to Philmont. This was the Baldy Mountain mining area, consisting of 10,098 acres (41 km<sup>2</sup>).

In recent years, Philmont has also been able to gain use of the [Valle Vidal](#) section of the [Carson National Forest](#). Since 1989, Philmont has had a series of five-year special-use permits from the Forest Service, allowing crews to hike and camp in the Valle Vidal as part of their Philmont treks. Philmont operates three staffed camps—Whiteman Vega, Seally Canyon, and Ring Place—and two trail camps in that part of the Valle. Those camps serve around 3,000 Philmont campers each summer. Each camper performs four hours of conservation work in the Valle on projects approved by the Forest Service.

In addition, Rich Cabins, a historical farming cabin on [Ted Turner's Vermejo Park Ranch](#), is also operated as a staff camp.

## Programs and activities

### Trek

The standard and most popular Philmont program is the *trek*. A typical Philmont trek lasts 10 days and covers anywhere from 50 to 100 miles (80 to 160 km) of trail. In 2006 there were 35 different trek itineraries, ranging from challenging to super strenuous. Each trek is unique, covering distinct regions, peaks, and camps. A group of Scouts on a trek is called a *crew*; most crews are assembled by troops, Venturing crews, or local councils. A crew consists of eight to twelve people, with two to four adult leaders and a crew leader. A *contingent* consists of one or more crews from the same council traveling together. *Sister crews* are crews that follow the same itinerary and are usually from different troops. Around 360 trekkers arrive at base camp every day of the season.



A sign on the way to the closing campfire.

A typical crew's experience is as follows:

The crew arrives in [Base Camp](#), checks in at the Welcome Center, and meets its [ranger](#), a trained staff member from the Ranger Department. He or she assists them in the various registration ("processing") procedures, which consist of verifying their itinerary with Logistics and checking out gear, such as a dining fly, bear ropes, bear bags, and water purification tablets, from the Services building.

A crew also receives several days' worth of Philmont trail food, packaged in bags which feed two people each; the exact quantity depends on the crew's itinerary and the day on which it is scheduled to reach the next commissary (see [below](#)). Philmont also provides optional cooking supplies.

The crew spends its first night in Trailbound Tent City where the trekkers sleep in tan canvas tents. The next morning, they eat breakfast at the dining hall and board a bus to one of the ranch's several trailheads, called "turnarounds" because they consist of a loop in the road for the bus to turn around.



A crew ready for their trek

The ranger verifies the trekkers' general backpacking knowledge, and teaches them specific Philmont procedures, such as bear procedure and latrine usage. Rangers stay with their crews for two days, and depart on the morning of the third day. In the next eight days the crew will hike through the Philmont wilderness, staying at various [staffed camps](#) and unstaffed "[trail camps](#)" scattered about the Ranch. On the final day, the crew returns to Base Camp, sometimes by bus from a turnaround or by climbing over the [Tooth of Time](#) and hiking directly into Base Camp. During the final day at Base Camp, the crew cleans up, returns various Philmont-issued supplies, and attends the closing campfire.

## Awards

By meeting the challenge of Philmont, participants are considered to be worthy of awards. The awards represent the Philmont experience that can never be sold or traded; only earned.



The Arrowhead Award patch

### *Arrowhead Award*

An individual camper award is presented by their adult advisor when they have:

- Attended opening campfire--"The New Mexico Story."
- Completed a Philmont-approved itinerary (except for medical reasons) with your crew.
- Completed three hours of staff supervised conservation work or a camp improvement project on Philmont.
- Fulfilled the personal commitment to the Wilderness Pledge.
- Taken advantage of every opportunity to learn about and improve our ecology, and practiced the art of outdoor living in ways that minimize pollution of soil, water, and air.

### *"We All Made It" [plaque](#)*

An award presented by Philmont to each crew that:

- Demonstrated good camping practices and Scouting spirit.
- Followed an approved itinerary and camped only where scheduled.
- Fulfilled the commitment to the Wilderness Pledge.
- Took advantage of every opportunity to learn about and improve our ecology, and practiced the art of outdoor living in ways that minimize pollution of soil, water, and air.

### *[50-Miler Award](#)*

All Philmont itineraries can qualify crew members for the 50-Miler award as it relates to distance. 3 of the 10 required service hours must be done at Philmont. The award is secured through participant's local council service center.

### *"Duty to God" Patch*

Under the guidance of a crew Chaplain's Aide, each participant in a trek may work to fulfill the requirements of the *Duty to God* Award. The Requirements are:

1. Participants must attend a religious service while at Philmont, participate in at least three daily devotionals with their crew, and lead Grace before a meal.
2. Participants must obtain a Chaplain's Aide signature to certify completion of requirements.
3. Chaplain's Aide must secure a *"Duty to God"* brochure for the crew upon completion of the trek.

Once these have been fulfilled, one may obtain the *"Duty to God"* patch from the *Tooth of Time Traders* Shop.

## **Other programs**

- [Cavalcades](#), which are similar to standard treks, but are conducted on horseback.
- [Rayado](#), a prestigious and very strenuous twenty-day program. Scouts are challenged physically, mentally, and spiritually. Rayado crews, accompanied by two of the Ranger Department's best qualified

members, are put together by Philmont staff, and consist of people from different parts of the country. A person may only be a Rayado participant once; a ranger may only be assigned to a Rayado crew once; and staff members are disqualified from participation in Rayado treks except as rangers.

- **Mountain Treks**, which last five days and are conducted by the Philmont Training Center for trainees' families. PTC offers a variety of other programs for younger children and spouses.
- The [Roving Outdoor Conservation School](#) (ROCS), which teaches participants about ecology, conservation techniques, and trail construction methods. ROCS also is noted for being the only program to eat regular food while on the trail, instead of the normal freeze dried food.
- **Order of the Arrow Trail Crew** is a 14-day program for [Order of the Arrow](#) (OA) members between the ages of 16 and 20, inclusively, allowing participants to work on various conservation projects around the ranch before embarking on a self-devised, week-long trek.

In Trail Crew, participants are led by Foremen, employed by the Philmont Conservation Department, and spend the first week of the program building a trail to be used by the thousands of scouts and scouters who visit the ranch each year. As of 2006, OATC is working on a trail from Copper Park camp into the Greenwood Canyon, on a ridge across a valley from Mount Baldy.

During the first week, participants stay as a large (20–30 person) group in a special campsite which has been outfitted for the program's purposes with large bear boxes to store food. In the second week, participants split into two groups, each led by two Foremen, in order to take a trek through the ranch based upon activities requested by the group. On the trek, participants have the opportunity to enjoy the ranch which they have given service to, and take part in many program activities. Trail Crew is very popular because of the unique experience which it provides and its attractive price tag. Compared to a regular Philmont trek, OATC is a bargain at \$175 (plus transportation), and is used by many scouts as a way to get to the scouting mecca of Philmont at a much more affordable price. Although the program is inexpensive, many OA lodges and sections will give scholarships to arrowmen in need of assistance with the program or travel costs.

- [Philmont Autumn Adventure](#) program

- [Kanik](#), a winter program similar to [Northern Tier's Okpik](#).
- **Ranch Hands** is a program in which young men and women can earn an eight day [Cavalcade](#) trek at Philmont by participating in an eight day work session. Participants work with the Horse Department staff taking care of Philmont's 250 head of horses and 80 head of burros. Participants help by hauling hay and feed, saddling horses, helping keep the horses shod, and assisting on Philmont trail rides. The work can be strenuous and requires top physical and mental conditioning. After the eight day work session, the Ranch Hands crew gathers together and embarks on an eight day Cavalcade under the leadership of a Horseman and Wrangler.
- Guided activities such as fishing, winter camping, and skiing, are offered throughout the year.
- [Philbreak](#), an 'alternate spring break' program started in 2003 to help restore Philmont from the devastating fires. Since 2004, the participants have been working on the Urraca Trail, which is intended as a day hike for those attending the Philmont Training Center.
- The **National Advanced Youth Leader Experience (NAYLE)** is a new high-intensity Boy Scout leadership course taught exclusively at Philmont Scout Ranch. It is based on backcountry high adventure skills and began in the summer of [2006](#). The course is available to Boy Scouts age 14 through 17 who have completed their local council [National Youth Leadership Training](#) (NYLT) course, or the local council's former JLT training course, and will be held during six one-week sessions. Based at Philmont's Rocky Mountain Scout Camp and taught at various locations across Philmont Scout Ranch, NAYLE replaces the National Junior Leader Instructor Camp (NJLIC), known in its last year as the National Youth Leader Instructor Camp (NYLIC). Unlike NYLIC, NAYLE is not intended to specifically train staffers for local NYLT courses. The program hones youth leadership skills through ethical decision making and participation in Philmont Ranger backcountry training.

#### Program components

- Patrol planning and goal setting
- Wilderness first aid
- Project COPE
- [Leave No Trace](#) camping
- [GPS](#) land navigation

- Search and rescue methods
- Conservation

## Camps

For an article covering each individual camp, see [Philmont Scout Ranch camps](#).

Philmont now has one large base camp, 34 staffed camps, and over 50 unstaffed camps, known as "trail camps", which are generally set no more than a couple of miles apart.

### Base Camp



Base camp's "Tent City" where departing and returning treks are staged.

Base Camp is the center of all Philmont administration, ingress, and egress. Most of its area is occupied by Camping Headquarters; ancillary facilities include the [Seton Museum](#) (devoted to [Ernest Thompson Seton's Woodcraft Indians](#) and other works), the [Philmont Training Center](#) and [Villa Philmonte](#), the fire response facilities, the cattle headquarters, and the administration area. Its population exceeds that of Cimarron on most nights of the summer. [\[citation needed\]](#)

Its primary facilities are:

- The Welcome Center, a large pavilion, which serves as a waiting area for crews arriving or departing from the ranch, as well as crews leaving or returning on a trek. The Welcome Center's small office offers check-in instructions and general information.
- Camp Administration/Logistical Services, which manage registration and orchestrate all the ranch's operations.



A Scout throws his boots over the Philmont entrance sign at Base Camp, a famous tradition.

- Two dining halls, one for campers and one for staff.
- Services, a large L-shaped building whose facilities include:
  - Rental and return of gear and issuance of trail food
  - Lockers, where crews may store anything they have brought but do not want to take on the trail
  - A post office, which handles mail for staff and crew members
- The Health Lodge. Health officers communicate with backcountry staff by radio, and can dispatch Suburbans to retrieve patients if necessary.
- Tooth of Time Traders, which sells all manner of camping and backpacking gear as well as a large selection of souvenirs.
- The Snack Bar, in the same building at the trading post, which sells a variety of snack foods, beverages, and ice cream.
- Four chapels of four different faiths: [Catholic](#), [Protestant](#), [Jewish](#), and [Latter-day Saints](#). Each chapel holds services every evening, and most incoming and some outgoing crews attend these.
- Three tent cities: Trailbound, Homebound, and Staff. Each contains several showerhouses. The staff tent city's capacity is roughly 900, though it is rarely full; Trailbound and Homebound each hold between 400 and 500 trekkers.



A sunrise from base camp

## Trail camps

A trail camp is simply an unstaffed camp. Trail camps contain several campsites, but they are often spread out over half a mile of trail or more, so that there is no sense of crowding. Each trail camp is marked by a map, attached to a tree or the side of a latrine at every trail which passes through it. Campsites are marked by:

- A wooden sign nailed to a tree which indicates the campsite number. No signs are supposed to be touched by anyone, in order to preserve them.
- A metal [fire ring](#). This may be used for small fires unless a fire ban is in place, which is almost always the case, given Philmont's dry climate. Campfires were permitted at the start of the 2005 season until fires broke out on the nearby Angel Fire Ski Resort in July, prompting an immediate fire ban.
- A [sump](#). This is an L-shaped plastic pipe, with a six-foot vertical section and a seven-foot horizontal section perforated like a sieve. Most of it is underground, and the top is capped with a piece of mesh. Sumps are used to dispose of dirty dishwater.
- Several campsites share a bear cable. This is a metal cable strung between two sturdy trees at least ten feet above the ground; it is used to hang [bear bags](#).
- Several campsites also share a latrine or toilet. These come in numerous configurations:
  - The enclosed configuration, with walls and a red roof, is known for obvious reasons as a Red Roof Inn. Older Red Roof Inns contain two adjacent seats and no door, while newer models have two back-to-back seats, with a wall between.
  - The open-air style with two adjacent seats is affectionately called the "pilot to copilot" design; this results from the joking

conversation which often takes place between two campers using the toilet simultaneously.

- The other configuration, called the "pilot to bombardier", is generally preferred because its two seats are back-to-back and offer somewhat more privacy than the "pilot to copilot".
- Occasionally a "single pilot" - one open-air seat - may be found. Philmont latrines of all types are known to house spiders, whose bite induces a rash, which is why campers are encouraged to check the underside of the boards with a stick.
- The most preferred latrine is the White Roof Inn, which is a port-a-pot. This is named for the white roof. These are so rare that campers will go merely because it is available, regardless of whether there is any need.

## Staffed camps



Scouts spar-pole climbing at Pueblano.

Many camps have several live-in staff members who are in charge of the camp's "program", which consists of a wide variety of activities. Camps often carry a historical or modern theme, such as logging (Crater Lake and Pueblano), mining or blacksmithing (French Henry, Cypher's Mine, and Black Mountain), fur trapping and mountain man life (Miranda, Clear Creek), land navigation (Zastrow) or western lore (Beaubien, Clark's Fork, or Ponil). The program in a camp is run by staff known as Program Counselors. These Program Counselors are supervised by a Camp Director.

Specific program activities include [black powder](#) rifle loading and shooting, [shotgun](#) shooting and reloading, [.30-06](#) shooting, trail rides on horseback, [burro](#) packing and racing, rock climbing (on artificial towers as well as actual

rock faces at Miners Park), tomahawk throwing, [branding](#), [search and rescue](#) training, mountain bicycling, Mexican homesteading, blacksmithing, goldpanning, obstacle courses, archeological sites, spar pole climbing, and a variety of campfires and evening programs.

Most staffed camps contain several campsites of the same sort which appear in trail camps (with the exception of French Henry); however, the primary distinguishing factor is the presence of one or several cabins. There is always a main cabin, where an arriving crew is given a "porch talk" by one of the staff members. This includes information about available program, location of trash receptacles, and other timely information such as the presence of "problem bears." Camps in the [Valle Vidal](#) (Seally Canyon, Ring Place and Whitman Vega) have [yurts](#), large circular semi-permanent tents which allow for bear defense but may be removed in the off-season in the interest of [leave no trace](#) camping, rather than cabins.

Most staffed camps have a swap box—a box in which crews may place unwanted food and take anything they might desire. Predictably, swap boxes tend to fill up with foods that people tend not to like, get to much of, or food no one want to carry. The swap boxes are usually filled with: canned meats, dried peaches, raisins, polynesian chicken freeze dried meals, HOO-AH bars and drink mixes.

With several exceptions, staffed camps accept trash, send and receive mail, and offer purified water. The exceptions are those camps which have no road access or where the camps receive their supply shipments by burro. All staffed camps also contain [radios](#), by which staff members can communicate with Logistical Services, the Health Lodge, or each other. The radio is used for all manner of communication, including notifications of the movements of the ranch's various vehicles, logistical inquiries between camps and Base, major and minor medical issues, and a nightly itinerary read-out which often includes world news and a weather forecast. The ranch's non-stationary staff are assigned unit numbers, by which they identify themselves on the radio. The ranch also employs a variety of esoteric radio [ten-codes](#) for rapid communication.

In all, there are 32 staffed camps currently at Philmont Scout Ranch, by name: Abreu, Apache Springs, Baldy Town, Beaubien, Black Mountain, Carson Meadows, Cimarroncito, Clark's Fork, Clear Creek, Crater Lake, Crooked Creek, Cypher's Mine, Dan Beard, Dean Cow, Fish Camp, French Henry, Harlan, Head of Dean, Hunting Lodge, Indian Writings, Miners Park, Miranda, Ponil, Phillips Junction, Pueblano, Rich Cabins, Ring Place, Sawmill, Seally Canyon, Urraca, Ute Gulch, Whitman Vega, Zastrow.

## Commissaries

A commissary is a small warehouse which is stocked with trail food for campers, real food for backcountry staff, and various other supplies, by periodic truck shipments. A small room in the warehouse holds a trading post, which sells a small variety of odds and ends, including postcards and postage. Commissaries also sell [white gas](#) for crews' stoves. A crew typically stops by a commissary every few days so that it does not have to carry a huge amount of consumables. Food is also issued by the Services building in Base Camp, and if necessary can be supplied by vehicle at a predetermined location.

## Conservation

The Conservation Department is the blood that flows through Philmont and allows it to survive. The first Conservation staffers begin hiking and clearing the trails one month prior to the first participants' arrival. These groups of trail workers are affectionately known as "A-team."

During the summer, the Conservation staff consists of conservationists that aide crews on their conservation project, GIS staff that works on maps, and work crews that maintain trails and campsites throughout the backcountry. These work crews carry their food & tools for more than one week and almost always have packs over sixty pounds.

The five divisions of the Conservation Department, each led by an Associate Director of Conservation (ADC), are Conservationists, GIS, Order of the Arrow Trail Crew (OATC), Roving Outdoor Conservation School (ROCS), and Work Crew.

Conservationists live in staff camps and lead conservation projects for treks passing through their camp. The GIS staff map trails, campsites, and other features of the Philmont Backcountry. OATC leads Order of the Arrow members on a two week experience - 1 week building trail and 1 week on a trek of the participants' design (not a standard pre-determined itinerary). ROCS leads both male and female crews on a 20 day experience that typically encompasses most of Philmont and the Valle Vidal, in which participants learn conservation techniques, hydrology, geology, land management practices, ecology, and other conservation-themed lessons. Finally, Work Crews are staff groups who are responsible for maintaining and sometimes creating campsites and trails.

Also see: [Roving Outdoor Conservation School](#)

# Rangers



A ranger helping scouts on their first day at Philmont.

*"It was decided to call them Rangers." - Jack Rhea*

When Jack Rhea, former Assistant Chief Scout Executive of Operations for the [Boy Scouts of America](#), became Director of Camping at Philmont, there was no Ranger program. But, as Philmont became more and more popular, he and his staff developed what they called the Ranger Program, which is now mostly responsible for teaching backpacking skills, first-aid skills, and developing the leadership of the crew leader. Rangers are responsible for ensuring that all participants know all required skills and procedures needed for backcountry treks. They generally will also hike along with crews on the 10-day treks for the first two days in which they teach and observe the crew. The Ranger department is also responsible for maintaining a ready search-and-rescue team at all times for use on Philmont land or in surrounding areas. The Ranger department also consists of Mountain Trek Rangers that are responsible for taking out the week-long mountain treks associated with the Philmont Training Center. Ranger Trainers are at least second year Rangers that are responsible for training and supervising other Rangers.

## Philmont Museum and Seton Memorial Library

Philmont is also home to the Philmont Museum and Visitor Center, which offers exhibits relating to the ranch's history, as well as the [Ernest Thompson Seton](#) Memorial Library, a research library containing Seton's personal collection and an extensive collection of volumes pertaining to western lore and the history of the area.