

Selecting Your Itinerary (Part 1)

In March each crew's Lead Advisor will receive an Advisor's Orientation Package directly from Philmont. Among other things, the package will include the [TREKS Itinerary Guide](#) (one per crew) and [Guidebook to Adventure](#) (one for each crew member). These books will contain detailed descriptions of the programs available and trek itineraries for this summer. All crew members should carefully read their personal copy of the outstanding and fun *Guidebook to Adventure* cover to cover - it is jam-packed with information. In fact, so much that you will gain valuable insights each time you read it. It is recommended that you re-read it several times in the coming months.

You will also be receiving instructions for the on-line trek selection process, which will be reviewed at the March Briefing. The youth members of your crew must select their top five itinerary choices (routes and the programs available on them) for their Philmont adventure. With that information, you should promptly log on to the Philmont Web site when the trek selection process opens and submit their choices. Approximately 85% of crews receive either their first or second choice. Since it is easy to select two or three similar itineraries, most crews get exactly what they want.

The other 15%, in many cases, neglect to respond to Philmont with their selections in a timely manner. So take your time but don't delay. Before the package arrives, draw on the knowledge gained studying the trek [planning materials](#) presented at the January briefing to help your crew make choices which fit their skill and fitness level, their program interest, and geographic interest. When it arrives, study the new Philmont material carefully, particularly for changes from last year (Philmont's new partnership with the Chase Ranch Foundation in 2014 and the 2015 purchase of the adjoining Cimmaroncita Camp will likely mean changes to 2017 itineraries). Give your Scouts an opportunity to study the material. Brief the crew on the available choices. Then promptly log-on and submit your crew's choices. Philmont will respond via e-mail with your assigned itinerary.

In addition to submitting your itinerary choices, Philmont will request information concerning your travel "to and from" Philmont. This must be filled out and submitted. The information required will be discussed at the March Briefing.

Important Note: Advisors, you should coach your crew and provide all the assistance they might need, including your point of view. But in the end the Scouts make the final selections.

70 Opportunities: There are 35 different Philmont itineraries. Each itinerary is designed to accommodate two crews per day, for a total of 70 opportunities each day. Approximately 30 crews leave Base Camp for the trail each day. Each of our expeditions will make up four of those crews. So about 30 crews are selecting from 70 opportunities, and 3 of the other crews competing with yours are sitting in the room at our Watchu briefings.

What a Great View! For a 360 degree panorama of Philmont from the Tooth of Time, check out http://www.troop116.org/philmont/phl03_0325p.htm. It starts out facing west.

Got a Question? You probably will find the answer in the "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)" (FAQs) pages of the [Watchu Experience](#) Web site (www.watchu.org). In fact, it is worth reviewing them even if you don't have a question at the moment - there may be an answer there to a question you haven't even thought of yet! If you have a question for which you can't find the answer on the Web site, send it to ChiefWatchu@watchu.org for a quick response. Do appreciate the answer may be in a coming Watchu Gram - the topics of the messages are arranged to provide information just before you need it. Organizing your crew is the next topic after trek selection.

Phil Fact: "Chope" Phillips was the son of Waite Phillips and a member of the Philmont Ranch Committee until his death in 2015 at the age of 97. His long history with the ranch includes leading the party to the site of the B-24 Liberator bomber crash on Trail Peak in 1942.

Happy trails - or rather I should say, happy itineraries,

Elliott "Chope" Phillips

Valmora New Mexico