

Selecting Your Itinerary (Part 1)

The [TREKS Itinerary Guide](#) (one per crew) and [Guidebook to Adventure](#) (one for each crew member) are available on-line at the Philmont website. These books contain detailed descriptions of the programs available and trek itineraries for this summer. Individual copies of the *Guidebook to Adventure* will be sent to all crew members in March. Everyone 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 before you complete your trek selection in the next few weeks.

The instructions for the on-line trek selection process, were reviewed at the January Briefing. The youth members of your crew must select their top six itinerary choices (routes and the programs available on them) for their Philmont adventure. In the past, 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.

Take your time but don't delay. 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. Study the new Philmont material carefully, particularly for changes from last year. The Ute Park Fire from 2018 forced major changes to itineraries in 2019, and there have been further changes in 2020. Give your Scouts an opportunity to study the material. Brief the crew on the available choices. Then log-on and submit your crew's choices. Philmont will respond via e-mail with your assigned itinerary in mid February; please FORWARD that e-mail to Chief Watchu at ChiefWatchu@watchu.org when it arrives.

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 was discussed at the January 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.

Trek selection: The month-long window for inputting (or changing) your trek selections is now open. While the rush of the prior years process being driven by where you were in the queue of inputting your choices has been eliminated this year, do not wait until the last minute - if there is any glitch on their end or yours (blizzard

caused power failure, your ISP going on the blink, etc.), you want some time to resolve the issue.

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/phi03_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