

# Personal Gear and Crew Equipment

Carefully check the [personal](#) and [crew equipment](#) in the Philmont *Guidebook to Adventure*. These are the result of 60 years of Philmont backcountry planning. They work! Although, there are always possibilities for minor variations, you will be well advised to follow these equipment lists religiously. But remember the prior Watchu Gram; the objective is to collect the lightest combination of these required items.

You will have an equipment shakedown at the Watchu Mountain Adventure as well as a shakedown by your Ranger during your Philmont check in. However, before Watchu, and again before you leave for New Mexico, you and your crew should run complete crew member personal gear and crew equipment shakedowns using the equipment lists of your *Guidebook* to make sure everyone and everything is covered.

Each crew member should be assigned specific items of the crew gear to carry in their pack and be responsible for throughout the entire trek. This is one way to reduce loss - the person carrying the bear ropes knows that they were not left on the ground at the bear cable. It also eliminate frustration of not knowing "who has what" when a need comes up while hiking, for example, "Who has the toilet paper?" Don't forget to weigh all crew items so the load can be fairly shared. As noted in the *Guidebook*, your pack weight should not exceed 25 to 30% of your body weight. At Philmont your Ranger will help you distribute the load so that the "big guys" and "not so big guys" carry appropriate loads.

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**Feedback from MANY prior advisors:** Believe the equipment lists in the *Guidebook to Adventure* !! If something is on the list, you need it, and if it is not, you don't.

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**Advisor Questions:** The "Every Ounce Counts" Watchu Gram included "a good target for overall pack weight, without crew gear, food and water, but including your backpack and everything else is 20 to 25 pounds." Does the 20 to 25 pound guideline include the tent, or is that included with the crew gear? What about clothes you are wearing, including boots? It looks like crew gear (not counting the tent), 4 liters of water and 3 or 4 days of food will add 17 to 19 pounds to each pack. Does that sound about right?

**Answers:** The 20 to 25 pound range would be for all personal equipment in the list in the *Guidebook to Adventure*. Tents are listed with "Crew Equipment Issued at Philmont," and would not be included in that target. While boots are on the "Personal Equipment" list, they rarely, if ever, are in the pack and most would not include them in evaluating the weight of personal gear. On the other hand, while one set of clothes will be on your back and not in the pack, most would put all the clothes from the personal equipment list in the pack when weighing it.

Regarding the additional weight that will be added to that of the personal gear, the *Guidebook to Adventure* list of "Crew Equipment Issued at Philmont" includes approximate weight for most items, including tents. Water is a significant weight item - a quart is two pounds. While there will be times you will want to have 4 quarts of personal water, that will vary day by day and must be evaluated based on your specific itinerary. Philmont meals are as much a bulk issue as weight - they take up a lot of room. Breakfasts and suppers weight about a pound each, lunches about a pound and a half - and that 3-1/2 pound total for a day would be divided in half for one person since the meals are all packed for two. Adding it all up, 7 pounds for a 4-day meal pickup, 3 pounds for half a tent, 6 pounds for 3 quarts of water plus a few pounds of other crew gear would be a little more (including the tent) than your 17-19 pound estimate.

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**Advisor Question:** I've seen conflicting information on the Web that indicates the Philmont-issued tents are heavy and recommendations to bring your own tents. What is your opinion?

**Answer.** Philmont issues excellent tents of the "Explorer" type, designed specifically for the conditions at Philmont. They are rugged, stable in high winds, kid friendly, provide plenty of room for two adults, and meet the current state of the art weight target of approximately 3 pounds per person. There will be Philmont tents on display for inspection at the Watchu Mountain Adventure. While we highly recommend them, in the end whether to use the Philmont-supplied tents or to bring your own is a crew decision.

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**Advisor Questions:** In the *Guidebook to Adventure*, I see we are supposed to have 10 tent pins per person. Are these tent stakes? Do we really need twenty of them per two-man tent? If every ounce counts, that seems excessive.

**Answers:** Yes, "pins" are tent stakes. Philmont-issued tents rely on guy lines for stability and require 14 to 20 pins (the lowest number if two lines are run to a single pin in six cases). In addition 8 more of these pins are needed for the Philmont tarp. A few spares to replace ones bent or gobbled by a stake eating creature that lives high in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains results in the total of 10 per person. If you bring your own tents and /or tarp, you will need to reconsider the number of stakes you need.

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**Fantastic Tent Tip:** If you use Philmont tents you must supply, and use, a ground cloth. If you use your own tents you should use a ground cloth as well. Camping store versions can be \$10 to \$15, and are heavy. Save your crew some money and a lot of weight - use a very lightweight plastic party table cloth, cut to size listed in the *Guidebook to Adventure*. The cost is a dollar or two at any party shop or supermarket. A green one is environmentally and Leave No Trace correct.

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**Leave No Trace:** At Philmont, like on all outdoor BSA activities, every crew member should know and practice Leave No Trace (LNT). The [principles](#) of LNT are listed below; check out [Leave No Trace](#), linked from the [Scouting](#) tab of the [Favorite Links](#) page of the [Watchu Experience](#) Web site ([www.watchu.org](http://www.watchu.org)) for more information. The crew's Wilderness Pledge *Guia* will help each crew member to understand and implement these principles, as well as those of Philmont's Wilderness Pledge.



**Plan Ahead and Prepare** - research your destination. Know the regulations and be ready when you get there.



**Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces** - stay on trails and use existing campsites whenever you can.



**Dispose of Waste Properly** - there are safe ways to get rid of dishwater and human waste. Use them.



**Leave What You Find** - future visitors will want to enjoy the same environment you do. Help them out.



**Minimize Campfire Impacts** - follow local guidelines on when and how to use open fires. Camp stoves are always a good option.



**Respect Wildlife**- give animals the space and quiet they need to stay safe.



**Be Considerate of Other Visitors** - a Scout is Courteous and Kind. Be aware of others on the trail and in camp grounds, and show them that Scouts know how to behave.

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**Phil Fact:** Jesse James, the notorious bank robber and outlaw, was a guest at the St. James Hotel several times, always staying in Room 14 and registering using his alias, R. H. Howard.

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Leaving no trace,

*Jesse James*

St. James Hotel, Cimarron, New Mexico Territory

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**Bonus Question:** What should be on an ideal "Leave No Trace" uniform patch?

**Answer:** How about "Nothing"?