

## Important Tips

1. You must know the health and medical status of each member of your crew before you embark on any rigorous training such as day hikes, COPE, camping, and backpacking. The *BSA Annual Health and Medical Record* includes two parts to be completed by the participant and family. Copies of those two parts and a prior physical (summer camp, sports, etc.) will give you that health status information until the Philmont physical is completed.
2. All Philmont treks are physically challenging adventures and a rigorous conditioning program is absolutely important. Body weight and blood pressure must be under control and well within the recommended ranges (not just below the limits).
3. Crews are led by a youth member called the Crew Leader or Crew Chief, elected by the youth members of the crew prior to the Watchu Mountain Adventure in May. Throughout the months of crew development all youth members of the crew should be given the opportunity to experience each of the many crew jobs, including the leadership positions of Crew Leader, Chaplain Aide, and Wilderness Pledge Guide.
4. At least two crew members certified in both Wilderness First Aid and CPR must be with the crew at all times on the trail. The Watchu recommendation is:
  - At least three crew members (adults or youth) be certified in Wilderness First Aid and all other crew members be certified in Standard First Aid.
  - All crew members have CPR training.

# Advisor Guide



for the

## Watchu Experience

and

## 2023 Philmont Expeditions

**Patriots' Path Council, BSA**

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The Watchu Mountain Adventure patch is awarded to all crew members who attend and complete the training weekend in May

*This guide was developed by the Patriots' Path High Adventure Committee to support our contingent crew advisors in preparing their crews for Philmont treks.*

The links (underlined and blue) in this printed guide are "live" in the online version at [www.watchu.org](http://www.watchu.org).

## Wilderness First Aid Training

Philmont requires at least two crew members to be certified in [Wilderness First Aid](#) (WFA, a 16-hour course). CPR Training is a pre-requisite for WFA. Knowing it can be both difficult and expensive to obtain CPR and WFA training, Patriots' Path Council established a program using BSA volunteer trainers to keep the costs to a minimum. Training sessions are limited; check the [Wilderness First Aid](#) page on the Watchu Web site for the [available dates](#), fees, and a link for [online registration](#).

Chief Watchu recommends that each crew have at least three members certified in WFA; the Philmont requirement for Wilderness First Aid certification can be met by adults or youth members of the crew. Watchu participants may be given priority for the November session. Registration for all other sessions will be first come, first served.

## Useful Contacts

**Patriots' Path Council** <https://ppcbasa.org>  
1 Saddle Road telephone: 973-765-9322  
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927 fax: 973-267-3406  
Andrew Joiner x252, [andrew.joiner@scouting.org](mailto:andrew.joiner@scouting.org)

**Chief Watchu** [chiefwatchu@watchu.org](mailto:chiefwatchu@watchu.org)

**Philmont Scout Ranch** <http://www.scouting.org/Philmont/>  
17 Deer Run Road telephone: 575-376-2281  
Cimarron, NM 87714 fax: 575-376-2636

*Note: The Philmont telephone number is answered 24-hours a day during the summer and during regular business hours at other times.*

## Leader Positions in a Crew

Philmont crews are youth-led. A key to a successful trek is for the youth members of the crew to select the most capable of them to be the [Crew Leader](#) (also known as the Crew Chief). Throughout the next nine months of the Watchu Experience it is the responsibility of the adult [advisors](#) to make sure that each youth member of the crew is given the opportunity to lead on a shakedown hike or during other activities. Just prior to May's [Watchu Mountain Adventure](#), the youth members of the crew select their Crew Leader - if the advisors have done their job, the youth WILL select a good leader. The Watchu Mountain Adventure will provide opportunities for that youth to begin to take charge of the crew.

Other youth leadership positions in a crew are the [Chaplain Aide](#), who works with Philmont's Chaplain staff and the Crew Leader to encourage spiritual awareness and growth in the lives of the crew, the [Crew Reporter](#), who prepares a press release for local media before departure and after the crew's return home to promote and recognize their accomplishment, and the [Wilderness Pledge Guia](#) (Guide).

These three positions need to be filled after the Crew Leader is selected and before May's Watchu Mountain Adventure. At the Watchu Mountain Adventure there are briefings for the Crew Leaders, Chaplain Aides, Crew Reporters, and Wilderness Pledge Guias. The youth select who they think will best fit these positions. Additional information regarding each of these positions and the process of [selecting the Crew Leader](#) is available on the [Crew Development](#) page of the Watchu Web site .

## Watchu Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Watchu Team to assist all of our Philmont advisors in their responsibility to prepare, train, and develop the team skills required to achieve a successful, exciting, healthy, and fun adventure.

We are dedicated to the proposition that Patriots' Path Council crews will gain the reputation of best in class. Best prepared physically and mentally. Best equipped to cope with the extreme environment encountered on the trail. Best in personal conduct while traveling, on the Colorado Tour, and while at Philmont.

And most of all, best in the application of manners in concert with the Scout Oath and Law.



**Prepared. For Life.®**

Each Philmont trek is a physically demanding backpacking hike at high altitude and in a hot and dry environment. The goal of the Watchu Experience is to give you the information you need to prepare yourself and your crew so you can meet and enjoy that challenge.

## The Watchu Experience

### *Patriots' Path Council's Trail to Philmont*

You and your crew have completed the first phase of the Watchu Experience, **Starting the Adventure**. Hopefully you have used these nine months to take care of financial matters, required training and team building. Review pages 4 to 7 of your [Crew Member and Parent Guide](#) to evaluate where you and your crew are in your preparation for the adventure of Philmont.

The Watchu Experience has four remaining phases:

- **Getting It All Together** - seven months of anticipation and training.
- **Are You Ready?** - two months to evaluate the preparation of your crew. Are you ready? Where are the gaps? .
- **Traveling and Touring** - two days of fun, excitement, and learning about the Old West.
- **Your Philmont Trek** - twelve days climbing the high peaks at Philmont. Savor the moments - they are what these ten months of preparation are all about.

Each of these phases is described in more detail on pages 8 to 11 of your [Crew Member and Parent Guide](#) .

This *Advisor Guide* has been prepared to assist you in your responsibility to motivate, equip, and train your crew. Use the guide as a framework for scheduling and executing the tasks and [responsibilities](#) required of Philmont advisors. Those who do will find themselves and their crew fully prepared for the rugged challenge ahead.

The guide includes a [Crew Preparation Checklist](#), an easy to follow timeline of all the steps necessary to prepare your crew for its Philmont adventure. Checking off your accomplishments as you and your crew progress toward

## Preparation Resources

The following documents are available for the preparation of your crew. They are listed in the order issued with a short description of their contents.

- Philmont [Council and Unit Planning Guide](#) - general information - available online
- BSA [Annual Health and Medical Record](#) - 3-part form, including participation advisories and height/weight chart - available online
- *Philmanac: A Trekker's Guide to the Philmont Backcountry* - information about every camp at Philmont (one per crew) - January Advisor Briefing. Additional copies available from the Watchu Mountain Outfitters.
- Philmont [Itinerary Guidebook](#) - detailed description of each available itinerary, including camp information and programs - posted online in December
- Philmont [Guidebook to Adventure](#) - invaluable pocket-sized reference, including equipment lists, health and safety guidelines, program descriptions and much more (one per crew member) - mailed to crew's Lead Advisor in March
- Philmont *Overall (Souvenir) Map* - a map for planning purposes (one per crew, additional copies available from Tooth of Time Traders) - mailed to crew's Lead Advisor in March
- Philmont *Eagles Soaring High* - pocket-sized devotional booklet for Christians, Muslims, and Jews - (one per crew Chaplain Aide usually provided during May's Watchu Mountain Adventure, plus one per crew member issued after arrival at Philmont)

## Selecting a Great Trek

Philmont provides a series of pre-planned backcountry itineraries, 35 in recent years. Each has its own combination of challenges and available programs, such as rock climbing, horse rides, etc. All offer an outstanding high adventure experience - veterans of several Philmont treks will tell you "there are no bad treks."

In January, the youth of each crew will select and rank the six (plus three backup) itineraries that most interest them and suit their abilities. Most crews receive either their first or second choice if they respond to Philmont in a timely manner.

The "[Selecting a Great Trek](#)" presentation during the October Advisor Briefing describes the resources available about the prior year's treks and has suggestions that crews in the past have used to determine which treks match their interests and abilities. At the January Advisor Briefing the procedures of the [Trek Selection Process](#) for informing Philmont of the crew's trek choices will be discussed.

A wealth of data for crews to use during their trek selection process is available on the Watchu Experience Web site. The current version of the resources listed on the next page will be provided to each crew during the coming months; prior versions are available online in the [Philmont Document Archives](#). As much of the information does not change year-to-year, crews are encouraged to review the prior documents and to become familiar with them before the current ones are available.

Selecting a great trek is an important team-building exercise. The crew members learn each other's interests as they participate in the give-and-take of narrowing all the available choices down to a final nine, ranked in order of preference.

Philmont will keep you on track - on track with all crew specific, Patriots' Path Council, and Philmont requirements. These are summarized on your crew's [Watchu Passport](#).

The [Watchu Experience Web site](#), Watchu Grams, and Watchu Alerts are important companions to this guide. The Web site has detailed information and instructions to assist you in executing your [responsibilities](#) as an advisor. [Watchu Grams](#), transmitted to you via e-mail on about a weekly basis, both supplement the information on the Web site and provide a trail for navigating through all of it. Watchu Alerts will have the latest news and bulletins.

The four [Advisor Briefings](#) and the [Watchu Mountain Adventure](#) in May will be of great value to you, your crew, and your families. It is expected that all advisors will attend all briefings and all crew members will attend the [Watchu Mountain Adventure](#).

Bringing all crew families into the Watchu Experience will give them an opportunity to participate in the adventure ahead and provide you with valuable assistance and resources. Start now by gathering your crew families together for an exchange of information, an opportunity to address family questions and concerns, a discussion of required equipment, and a review of the important health and safety requirements detailed in the BSA [Annual Health and Medical Record](#).

**Happy Trails!**

Chief Watchu

**The Allamuchy Tribe at Watchu Mountain**

## Advisor Responsibilities

A crew advisor's primary responsibility is for the health and safety of each member of the crew.

The Watchu Experience provides the framework and time-tested methods to help you prepare and train the members of your crew for a successful trek. Each advisor is expected to attend the four Advisor Briefings, in official BSA uniform, where essential information will be presented to assist you in preparing your crew.

Communication with your crew, including the parents of youth crew members, is critical. Creating a crew family e-mail network will allow you to share Watchu Grams and other information. Everyone must understand what is expected of them and what a Philmont trek is, especially that it is not "just a hike."

The [Crew Preparation Checklist](#) in this guide is an outline of the items necessary for preparing your crew. These items include:

**Medical:** You must be familiar with the medical condition of each crew member by reviewing their completed BSA [Annual Health and Medical Record](#).

**Equipment:** Each crew member must have the proper personal gear for a rugged mountain backpacking trek. Crew equipment provided by Philmont (such as pots, tents, etc.) must be obtained for training purposes. Other crew equipment not provided (such as backpacking stoves, water containers, etc.) is needed for both training purposes as well as for use at Philmont.

**Crew Development:** Philmont crews are youth-led. Through shakedown hikes and other crew activities, you provide the opportunities for all youth of your crew to both experience the leadership positions and to view the

### June 2023

Su	Mo	Tue	We	Th	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

### July 2023

Su	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

- [June Advisor/Crew Leader Briefing](#) ■
- Have [Watchu Passport](#) certified as complete
- Hold family gathering/picnic prior to departure to discuss travel arrangements and answer any last-minute questions
- Make plans for a crew reunion with crew families after your return
- Travel dates for Philmont crews ■

Expedition	Depart for Colorado	Arrive at Philmont	Return to New Jersey
629	June 27	June 29	July 11
630	June 28	June 30	July 12



## April 2023

Su	Mo	Tue	We	Th	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

- Complete the requirements on the [Watchu Passport](#) to qualify for WMA [Fast Pass](#) check-in
- April payment due, if necessary
- Youth crew members select Crew Leader, Chaplain Aide, Wilderness Pledge *Guia*, Navigator, and Crew Reporter.
- Review each crew members' progress assembling all personal equipment listed in the [Guidebook to Adventure](#)
- Assemble all [crew gear](#) necessary for May's [Watchu Mountain Adventure](#)

## May 2023

Su	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- [Watchu Mountain Adventure](#)
- Work on eliminating all "gaps" in the crew's development identified during the [Watchu Mountain Adventure](#)
- Continue to work on completing any remaining requirements of the [Watchu Passport](#)

performance of the other crew members in those positions.

**Trek Preparation:** Shakedown hikes and other crew activities provide the opportunity for you to teach your crew Philmont backpacking and camping techniques.

**Trek Selection:** You must be familiar with the specifics (programs and physical challenge) of the available pre-planned Philmont itineraries. This information will allow you to be a knowledgeable coach to the youth of your crew as they proceed through the process of selecting the itineraries best suited to their abilities and interests.

You are also responsible for recruiting Scouts and Scouters so you have a full crew of 12, with no more than 4 who are 21-years-old or older. An unfortunate fact is every year some who plan to go to Philmont must drop out of the contingent, and you should be prepared to fill such openings in your crew, if necessary.

Lastly, the Lead Advisor will work with the Contingent Administrator to make sure all administrative requirements for participation, detailed in the [Watchu Passport](#), have been satisfied.

Do you have questions? The answers to years of advisor and parent questions have been collected in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the Watchu Experience Web site, [www.watchu.org](http://www.watchu.org).

## The Watchu Passport

The [Watchu Passport](#) is a summary of all Patriots' Path and Philmont requirements. Every item of the Passport must be completed and certified no later than the June Advisor Briefing. At each Advisor Briefing your crew's Lead Advisor will have an opportunity to check your status with the Contingent Administrator. The items of the passport are:

1. Each crew must have a completed online Philmont Camping Gateway [Crew Roster](#).
2. The fees for each member of your crew must be paid in full according to the Payment Schedule.
3. Each member of your crew must be registered members of the BSA.
4. Each member of your crew must wear a complete [official BSA uniform](#).
5. Each member of your crew must agree to abide by the [Watchu Wilderness Pledge](#).
6. Each member of your crew 18 years of age or older must have completed [Youth Protection training](#) and have a current certificate.
7. At least two crew members certified in [CPR](#) must be with the crew at all times while in the backcountry.
8. At least two crew members certified in [Wilderness First Aid](#) must be with the crew at all times while in the backcountry.
9. At least one crew member certified in [Weather Hazard Training](#) must be with the crew at all times while in the backcountry.

## March 2023

Su	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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- [Airline Ticketing Information Form](#) due (by e-mail) ■
- [March Advisor Briefing](#) ■
- Work on completing the requirements listed on the [Watchu Passport](#) to qualify for [Fast Pass](#) check-in at May's [Watchu Mountain Adventure](#)
- Continue to access the online Philmont Camping Gateway to enter your crew roster, travel plans, and other data

## Philmont's Cattle and Horse Brands





## January 2023

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- [January Advisor Briefing](#)
- Youth make final choice of the itineraries that best match the crew's abilities and interests
- Online [Trek Selection Process](#) starts  (tentative)
- Distribute the BSA [Annual Health and Medical Record](#) to each crew member, and go over the importance of getting a physical as soon as possible - see [Medical Form - Example with Tips](#) for common problems in completing it

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## February 2023

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

- Online [Trek Selection Process](#) closes  (tentative)
- February payment due

10. Only crew members who are swimmers (have passed the [BSA Swim Test](#)) will be allowed to participate in whitewater rafting.
11. Each crew must have at least one adult certified in [BSA Safe Swim Defense](#).
12. Each crew must have at least one adult certified in [BSA Safety Afloat](#).
13. Each crew must have a completed [Airline Ticketing Information](#) form.
14. Each member of your crew aged 18 or older must have a government-issued picture ID for airline travel. It is recommended that each member aged 17 or younger have a picture ID.
15. Each member of your crew must have a completed three-part BSA [Annual Health and Medical Record](#), including physician signature and copy of medical insurance card for all and a guardian signature for youth.
16. Each member of your crew, both youth and advisors, participating in whitewater rafting must have completed the [Rafting Permission / Release Form](#), (parents or guardians complete for youth) either online or hard copy, as requested by the rafting provider.
17. Each member of your crew must have completed a [Colorado Tour Release Form](#) for the tour operator, including guardian(s) signature(s) for youth.

## Crew Preparation Checklist

Check off items as they are completed to keep track of your progress.

### Color codes for calendars:

- Advisor Briefings
- Snow and backup dates for briefings
- Payments due
- WMA Fast Pass Deadline
- Online Trek Selection Process
- Watchu Mountain Adventure (WMA)
- Philmont travel dates

### FEBRUARY - SETEMBER 2022

The following items should have been completed or are being worked on

- Review the [Crew Member and Parent Guide](#) (provided at the February Orientation session)
- Crew members looking for financial assistance through [Council Adventurships](#) must file applications
- Scouts should be pursuing ways to help pay the cost of their Philmont trip - see [Making High Adventure Affordable](#) for suggestions
- June and August [payments](#) due
- Set up a crew family e-mail network for sharing information with the crew and their families
- Log onto the online [Philmont Camping Gateway](#) when it opens and begin entering your crew's information

### October 2022

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

- [October Advisor Briefing](#)
- October payment due (10/15)
- Hold crew meeting, with parents
- Prepare a Crew Development Calendar, which will vary crew to crew based on the crew members' prior Philmont and high adventure experience - see [Sample Crew Development Calendar](#) for the activities that should be included
- Review prior year's [Itinerary Guidebook](#), preparing for the issuing of the current version

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### NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2022

- Using prior year's Philmont [Itinerary Guidebook](#) and [Guidebook to Adventure](#), assist the crew in indentifying the programs and activities that match their interests
- Review current year's [Itinerary Guidebook](#) and [Guidebook to Adventure](#) when issued online. Assist the crew in making their preliminary choices of the itineraries which best suit their abilities and interests
- Keep holiday gift giving in mind regarding [The Four Expensive Essentials](#) of personal gear

## Note from the Watchu Administrator

In an effort to assist you and help lighten your administrative load, I will be on hand at each Advisor Briefing. I will be open for business from 6:30pm until the beginning of the briefing at 7:30pm, and from the end of the briefing until all advisors have completed the necessary business. See you at the back of the room.

Happy Trails!

Andrew

**Andrew Joiner**

Patriots' Path Council, BSA

1 Saddle Road

Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

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Fax: 973-267-3406

E-mail: [andrew.joiner@scouting.org](mailto:andrew.joiner@scouting.org)

Home Page: <https://ppcbsa.org> and [www.watchu.org](http://www.watchu.org)

The Advisor Briefing schedule on the following page should be pulled out and posted for easy reference

# Advisor Briefing Schedule

Patriots' Path Council, BSA  
1 Saddle Road  
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

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All crew advisors, in full official BSA uniform, are expected to attend these important briefings.

<b>October 11, 2022</b>	Tuesday	7:30 to 9:55pm	Advisor Orientation <a href="#">An Introduction to Philmont</a> Administrative Requirements Trek and Tour Requirements Four Expensive Essentials <a href="#">Selecting a Great Trek</a>
<b>January 11, 2023</b>	Wednesday	7:30 to 9:30pm	<a href="#">Online Trek Selection Process</a> Crew Development Health and Safety Crew and Personal Equipment
<b>March 14, 2023</b>	Tuesday	7:30 to 9:30pm	Watchu Mountain Adventure (WMA) WMA Crew Readiness WMA Crew Check-In WMA Fast Pass Certification
<b>June 14, 2023</b> (Bring your Crew Chief to this Final Briefing)	Wednesday	7:30 to 9:55pm	Base Camp Check-In Air Travel and Bus Tour Shipping Your Stoves Packing for Travel

# Watchu Mountain Adventure

Camp Wheeler, Mount Allamuchy Scout Reservation

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All crew members, in full official BSA uniform, are expected to attend this great adventure!

<b>May 5, 2023</b>	Friday 5:00pm	to	The Watchu Mountain Adventure is a simulated backcountry experience. It will serve as an opportunity for the crew and advisors to assess the backcountry and trek readiness of their crew.
<b>May 7, 2023</b>	Sunday 1:00pm		