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Planning Your Trek

Wow! What a Watchu Mountain Adventure that was - Trek Planning, Navigation, Campsite Set-Up, Sanitation, Hiking, Cooking, Packing, Backpacking, Thorns and Roses, BEARmuda Triangle, Health and Safety, Planning Your Backcountry Spiritual Service, Water Purification, Gear Shakedown, Bears and Bear Bags, Philmont Food, and Lightning. It covered just about everything! And it is a lot to digest in one gulp. If you need to refresh your memory, please check the [Watchu Grams](#) and the [Training Videos](#) - virtually everything covered at Watchu is detailed in them.

Let's review some of the important trail planning information from your Watchu Trail Planning session. As with all BSA hikes and backpackers, there is a simple rule that comes into play. That is, every member of the crew should know the entire trek plan, backwards and forwards, and in all its details. This rule serves us in many ways.

First: It is a common sense rule of safety - everyone knows the plan.

Second: It gives all the crew members an opportunity to visualize the adventure before getting to Philmont. If all know the plan, everyone will experience the excitement of anticipation. On the trail the conversation will remain focused on what has been done together and what's ahead - "Wow, wasn't Fish Camp something!" "What will Miners Park and rock climbing be like tomorrow?" "What programs do you want to attend?"

Third: It keeps all the crew members involved throughout the training and on the trail at Philmont. There is nothing worse for crew spirit than having one person direct and narrate the entire experience. It is especially destructive if that narrator is an advisor. Everyone taking part in the evening discussion, known at Philmont as [Thorns and Roses](#), about "things accomplished" and "things to come" is what a Philmont trek is about. By the way, don't forget this reflection time will be led by your Chaplain Aide. Your Ranger will help you with this very important and inspiring element of your Philmont trek.

Fourth: It's great fun when everyone is engaged in the details of planning and experiencing the adventure.

As you did at the Watchu Mountain Adventure bring your crew together for a planning session. It could be on one of your remaining backpackers or a rainy Saturday afternoon. Have all your reference material handy, including your Philmont *Guidebook to Adventure*, *Philmont TREKS - Itinerary Guide*, the maps that cover your route (both the detail maps and the one used during your WMA Trail Planning session), and the *Philmanac*. Visualize together the details of the adventure. For certain it will enhance the experience ahead. Years ago our advisors came up with the "[12 Card Planning Process](#)" where the pertinent information for

each day is summarized on a card. These cards will serve as your crew's AAA Trip Planner. Reviewing the next day's card each evening after your [Thorns and Roses](#) time is a sure way to keep all tuned in to the next day of adventure. Be looking for opportunities to enhance (or optimize) your backcountry experience.

Reminder: For navigating the Philmont backcountry you must use the section maps listed for your itinerary in the TREKS book (North and/or South) required for your itinerary. You should order TWO copies of each section map your crew needs from the [Tooth of Time Traders](#) (505-376-2281.) The single overall (wall) map of the entire ranch your crew received in the March package will only be used during trail planning at Philmont Logistics. This map is NOT adequate for providing navigational information for your trek.

Philmont Hiking and Camping Policy: Hiking in the dark is not allowed and you must camp in your assigned trail or staffed camp each night. Both of these are absolute health and safety issues - the first to help prevent injuries and the second so your crew can be located by staff quickly if necessary in an emergency.

Advisor question: Where are the youth leader office badges (Crew Leader, Chaplain Aide, Wilderness *Guia*, and Crew Reporter) presented at the Watchu Mountain Adventure closing ceremony placed on uniforms?

Answer: The office badges should be worn below the right pocket. Chief Watchu also recommends that all crew members hang their Watchu Mountain Adventure arrowhead patch from the button on that pocket. After completing your Philmont trek, he suggests that the Crew Leader present the Philmont arrowhead patch in a crew ceremony and that crew members change to that patch on the right pocket.

Phil Fact: Thomas Harlan, an attorney, was the chief proponent of the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific Railroad. A spur of the railroad reached Cimarron in 1905, and was extended west through Cimarron Canyon to Ute Park but never any further. The track was abandoned by 1942, though some of its rail bed can still be seen along the Cimarron River and Route 64.

The sky is azure at Harlan camp,

Thomas B. Harlan

St. Louis, Missouri