

Philmont Learnings

1. Expect problems and delays. Plan accordingly, be flexible.
2. Pack as light as possible. Gear shakedown is very important. You can expect at least 8-12 pounds of food and gear added to your bag.
3. Attend the Advisors coffee at each staffed camp. Talk with those who have been where you are going.
4. Look at and plan your agenda for the next day the night before
5. Do Thorns/Roses/buds every night. This may seem like a waste of time, but it will strengthen your crew.
6. talk to those who have been to Philmont before you go. Get all of the information you can.
7. Expect the trek to be longer and more difficult than you expect.
8. Bring 3 pairs of socks. Liners were very popular with our crew. Try hiking with and without the liners on your practice hikes.
9. Bring something to shoot at and/or to brand. Could be a hat or bandana.
10. Use a newer state of the art water filter/purifier. We found a new filter would do 1 liter a minute and an older style was 10 minutes per liter.
11. GPS is a good backup.
12. Look through tout the internet for advise on packing, and what to expect on different treks
13. Bring a wide brim hat. Sunburn on the ears hurts – our scouts learned that the hard way. A baseball cap is not the same.
14. Get to staffed camp early if possible to do the activities the same day. It is hard to catch up once you fall behind and hiking in the heat of the day is not pleasant.
15. Use the Gatorade once a day even if you don't like it. You need it for the electrolytes it provides.
16. Train hard before the trip. You will not regret working hard before you arrive. The trek is more difficult than you think.
17. Arrive early or to similar altitude if possible if you live at a low altitude. It will take 3-5 days to acclimate to the difference in altitude. Hard training does not compensate for the altitude.
18. Use showers when available and wash clothes when able. Have at least one extra rope for a clothes line. When hiking, hanging wet clothes on the back of the backpack does work well for drying.

19. Modify Philmont camp set up – instead of bear bags, dining fly and tents, do tents, bear bags, dining fly. Often we didn't even set up the dining fly, but put out packs by a downed tree and draped the dining fly over the packs to keep them dry.
20. Read the Back Packers Guide to Philmont. Everyone in our crew had a copy and it was a great book to give you a flavor of what was to come.
21. You will have at least 1 dry camp site. Have at least an extra 8-12 liter capacity of water. MSR makes a nice collapsible pouch as well as a platypus working well. For 10 people, we had an extra capacity of 10 liters of water. Everyone carried 4 liters of water in addition to this. Be sure to top off all water when possible when you are entering a dry area. Also swapping lunches for suppers works well to decrease water use.
22. Be sure to do a pack shakedown using one of many lists available. We used the list in the Back packers guide to Philmont. Weed out what is not needed before leaving for Philmont. You will repeat this with your Ranger, but if you have done this previously, it will go much faster with the ranger.
23. Share tents wherever possible. This includes advisors. For 10 persons, we were able to get by with 4 tents, 2 3 person tents and 2 2 person tents.
24. At base camp, close inside and outside Velcro straps even if you are inside the tent, but especially if you leave. Big storms come up very quickly and it doesn't take long to soak all of your gear.
25. Go over orienteering skills with your scouts before arriving at Philmont. Some rangers seem to do a better job reviewing this than others. This is a skill they will use everyday that they are the navigator. A bad navigator can mean extra miles for the crew.
26. I highly recommend trekking poles, at least for the advisors. These are very helpful for the uphill and downhill portions of the hikes. They are also really helpful over the many stream crossings. Spend the money on good poles, you won't regret it, the cheap ones will break quickly.