

Boy Scouts Conquer Four Mountains at Philmont Scout Ranch

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Six Boy Scouts have just returned from a 2-week high-adventure, backpacking trip in the 137,493-acre Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, NM. They were accompanied by five adult leaders, and the group included one scout and one adult from Texas. The trip was sponsored by Troop 113 from Franklin Township, Somerset County.

Philmont is located in the Sangre de Cristo range of the Rockies. The crew's journey covered 116 miles and a total of 21,000 feet of elevation over 10 days.

On the way to Philmont, the group went white-water rafting on the Rio Grande River. This was a great experience for everyone. After rafting they headed for Philmont. The first night was spent at base camp.

The trek began with a hike from base camp that included a rigorous check-in procedure. Each hiker's backpack goes through a thorough shakedown and weigh-in, so as to ensure that essential gear is packed and unnecessary extra weight is left behind.

The trip then started out with a short two-mile hike to the Sioux camp. For the first two days of hiking the crew was accompanied by a Philmont staff ranger, who taught them the basics of Philmont. This included how to throw and tie a bear bag, safely get rid of food, and cook and clean the bear-safe way.

The trip included hiking four different mountains. They were the Tooth of Time, Mt. Baldy, Mt. Phillips and Comanche Peak. The highlight was Mt. Baldy at 12,441 feet. The views were spectacular.

Along the hike the scouts went horseback riding and spar pole climbing. At one point they used donkeys to help carry gear.

Hiking for 10 days with just the bare essentials required a great deal of team work. The scouts and their leaders worked together and made this trip amazing.

Troop 113 meets Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. at Somerset Presbyterian Church, 100 Kennedy Boulevard, Somerset. Those wishing further information should visit www.Troop113.com.