



Philmont Scout Ranch

PHILMONT SCOUT RANCH ANNOUNCES CLOSURE FOR 2018 SUMMER SEASON

7/5/18

After careful consideration of the situation and available options, the difficult but prudent decision has been made that the Philmont backcountry will remain closed for treks and individual programs for the remainder of the 2018 summer season. This means that the following programs scheduled for this summer are canceled: 7- and 12-day treks; and individual backcountry programs, including Rayado, ROCS, Trail Crew, STEM and Ranch Hands.

Refund Checks for all affected crews will be sent to the lead contact advisor on Monday, July 9, 2018. Over the next few days, our staff will be contacting the lead advisor or contingent leader of these crews confirming the refund, offering a trek at Philmont for the 2020 season, and answering any questions. Please wait and allow the Philmont team to contact your crew – your assistance will help make sure that Philmont phone lines remain open. Your cooperation will be most appreciated. While High Adventure opportunities are at capacity at Northern Tier and the Florida Sea Base, there are opportunities at The Summit and they would be happy to accommodate your crew.

This has been a difficult and at the same time inspiring summer at Philmont. For the first time in its history, Philmont is closing its backcountry. As difficult as this situation has been for our Philmont family and for Scouts across our country, we have been truly inspired by the incredible enthusiasm and perseverance shown by our staff, the resourcefulness displayed by displaced crews to find other summer adventures, and the understanding and good wishes from thousands of Scouts and Scouters from around the world. For all of these blessings, we are truly grateful.

Fire danger in northern New Mexico is currently classified as “extreme.” The fire danger has led to closure of most public lands near Philmont. The Carson National Forest’s nearby Queta and Camino Real Ranger Districts, including the Valle Vidal area that Philmont utilizes, have been closed to public access. The New Mexico Game and Fish Department has similarly closed all of its properties that border Philmont, including the Colin Neblett Wildlife Management Area on our western border and the Elliott S. Barker Wildlife Management Area adjacent to our North Country. Links to these closure notices are included at the end of this release.

On Friday, June 29, 2018, the Morris (Moras) Creek fire started south of the Philmont property line on private neighboring property near the Rayado River Canyon. This fire is currently more than 1500 acres and is burning on Philmont property.

Our ranch managers, volunteer leaders, and national staff have monitored the situation since

the Ute Park fire began and attempted to plan alternate trek routes and procedures required by Philmont to manage backcountry emergencies. Because of the Morris (Moras) Creek fire, these alternate trek routes have now been eliminated. The safety of our youth participants, volunteers and staff is the priority at Philmont Scout Ranch and for the Boy Scouts of America.

This decision applies only to Philmont's backcountry programs. Philmont's Camping Headquarters and Base Camp area, the Philmont Training Center, the new National Scouting Museum, the Chase Ranch, and the Kit Carson Museum at Rayado will remain open all summer. Training courses at the Philmont Training Center and the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE) will proceed as scheduled. This decision does not affect Philmont's fall programs, including Autumn Adventure and fall PTC training conferences.

The Philmont ranger motto is "scramble – be flexible." That's what we at Philmont have been doing all summer as we deal with these unexpected and unfortunate circumstances. Our terrific summer staff has embraced challenges that they didn't anticipate when they signed on. They expected to be delivering awesome backcountry programs and inspiring high adventure experiences to thousands of Scouts and Scouters. Instead, they have enthusiastically taken on difficult and physically taxing timber stand improvement projects, backcountry fire abatement work, community service projects, and staff jobs at other camps. They are making sure we will be ready to re-open next year! Their willingness to roll up their sleeves, pitch in and meet the challenges we have faced reflects the very best on Scouting and our nation's youth. They have our sincere thanks!

Our National BSA leadership has been working with airlines to assist crews with refunds, changes, and credits. Please refer to the following contacts for support.

American Airlines----1-800-221-2255

Southwest Airlines---1-800-435-9792

Alaska Airlines-----1-800-654-5669

Amtrak -----1-800-872-7245

Our entire Philmont family thanks you for your continued understanding, your support, and your cooperation.

Links for information on area closures and fires:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/carson/home>

<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/.../state-game-commission-lan...>

<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/>

<https://nmfireinfo.com/>