



Chester County Council, BSA

High Adventure Committee

Philmont Trek Selection



Making your trek selection can be a daunting task: attempting to make an intelligent choice among the 35 itinerary possibilities for a once in a lifetime experience is difficult. Add to that the varied interests, desires and ability levels of a crew along with the knowledge that failing to be punctual will result in your crew not getting one of their top choices, and the task can be overwhelming.

The Chester County Council trek selection process is designed to provide structure and support to the process with the goal of maximizing your ability to make intelligent trek selections and being successful in getting them.

The trek selection process shouldn't be rushed; much angst will result under just about any scenario, usually from the adult advisors. The key is to deliberately and systematically determine what the crew cares about, what they don't care about and what they are capable of and use that information to narrow down and ultimately select the best itinerary options for your crew.

This process has evolved over several years and represents a method that works. It is not perfect, suggestions are encouraged and welcome, and it is offered as an option to you – you are not obligated to use it. As a result of your experience and feedback it will continue to evolve.

Finally, it is important to make the choice the crew's choice rather than the advisor's choice. This means that the adults must exercise extreme restraint in influencing the process. Philmont Crews are youth led, let them start now.

1. January / February Crew Meeting

Goal: Understand what the crew cares about and what they don't care about.

- a. An informal, but structured presentation on Philmont's programs, features, geography and topology as well as a discussion of Trek Difficulties and their meanings is made by an experienced Philmont Advisor and perhaps a veteran Crew Leader. Once the presentation is complete. The front matter from the previous year's treks book is left behind for the lead advisor along with an Advisor's commentary on the previous year's treks and sufficient trek selection worksheets for the crew. The process is now in the hands of the crew.
- b. A [Trek Selection Worksheet](#) is filled out by each youth participant, but not advisors and turned in to the lead advisor.

2. Before March 15

Goal: Be prepared to make trek selections

- a. Hold as many crew meetings as required to gather participant input
- b. Use modeling tools like the previous year's trek's book or PhilSearch to estimate the number of possible treks that meet the crews criteria with 5 to 10 being the goal

3. Late March Meeting

Goal: Know which treks are the crew's top 5 and why.

- a. Review the Treks Book provided by the ranch and correlate the crews preferences with the possible itinerary choices
- b. Use tooling such as PhilSearch to refine the Crew's choices to the top 5.
- c. Discuss crew abilities with the entire crew, along with general preferences and top treks. (For example - The Mexican Dinner was a preference because it wasn't trail food, not because it was Mexican - so Chuck wagon Meals are suitable substitutions)
- d. This is a good opportunity for the Crew Chief to lead and make decisions on behalf of the crew ... he/she should lead this process if possible.
- e. Advisors should consider difficulty/terrain preferences and using a subjective view of the abilities of the crew coach the crew chief as appropriate
- f. The Crew chief determines the top five with help from the advisors.

4. Make Selections

Goal: Transmit the Crew's choices to the ranch on the appointed day

Note – Follow the special instructions if you crew is 'sistering'

- a. The lead advisor uses the sign-on credentials provided by council to register the crew's selections
- b. Philmont provides confirmation