

PhilSearch vA24 - News for January, 2007

In retrospect December proved to be another productive month. Just a couple of days ago I was feeling like a slacker in that I didn't feel like I made the progress I wanted to ... but it seems to be a pattern that while I might not make the progress I want in one area, progress is made elsewhere. Key changes this month include:

- Over 100 new photos were added to the database – thanks and keep them coming.
- Major enhancements to Trek Search.
- Addition of Chester County Council's Trek Selection docs which dovetail with PhilSearch.
- The addition of another 60 or so routes with elevation profiles bringing the total to about 120

Another hundred or so photos have been added this month which caused the enhancement of a feature that debuted last month, "photo sets", to include a category for recently added photos.

The fifth generation of Trek Search benefits from a new feature suggestion several months back to provide a way to exclude items, Burros being the cited example. While I like the idea of the feature, I had second thoughts because folks seem to want to avoid the burros, and the burros are something special about Philmont. Frankly everyone that I've talked that has had the opportunity to take the burros enjoyed them ... check out the burro racing shots. Anyway, I digress, Trek Search now allows you to specify items (camps, programs, difficulty & composites) that if present remove a trek from consideration, a category I've chosen to call 'prohibited'. While I attended to some unfinished items as well. You now get a summary of the selection criteria along with the results, an item that has been deficient since day 1. This is also the groundwork for providing a way to save criteria and refine it. I'm inclined to let Trek Search stabilize for the next couple of months as we run up to trek selection for '07 ... but who knows.

Speaking of Trek Selection PhilSearch was originally conceived to support our council's trek selection process, a role Dan Yoder's site provided when it was being maintained. The tooling, however, is only part of the story. The documents that support the overall process were added under a new home page category "Crew Trek Selection Tools"

Last month I reported that I was moving my attention to mapping and routing and that I hoped for a major breakthrough. Well, while that breakthrough hasn't quite happened yet, good things have happened in the world of routes largely due to the efforts of Allen Jones of Oklahoma City, OK who has pitched in by

converting GPS tracks to routes and elevation profiles. Allen has processed some tracks of his own as well as some provided by Doug Latimer of Plano, TX. The result of Allen's efforts along with some of my own has resulted in significant progress in this area. Much remains to do but I think its possible to have 100% routing coverage for 2007 treks. If you have GPS tracks of the ranch please consider contributing.

I'm still looking for more photos, probably always will be. There are activities and campsites that still have no photos and others that could use better ones. I'm always looking for the special shots as well, please think of contributing.

For the moment the focus is back on mapping and routing, I hope to make a major breakthrough this month, although as I've previously indicated mapping probably won't be in time for '07 but rather will be more useful to '08 crews.

As always your comments, good or bad, and suggestions are welcome.

YIS

Jim

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