



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 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. Between meetings

Goal: Collect the information necessary so that 10 or fewer choices can be presented for consideration

- a. An Advisor creates the [Trek Prefs Spreadsheet](#) based on results from step 1.
- b. PhilSearch or a similar trek modeling tool is used to narrow in on potential treks.
- c. A [criteria summary](#) and an [itinerary summary](#) are created as a result.

3. February Crew Meeting

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

- a. The Crew Chief presents the criteria & itinerary summaries from step 2.
- b. The Advisors share the commentary of the previous season's treks.
- c. The Crew leader leads a discussion of the options
- d. Participants ballot their top 5 choices, ranked in order.

4. After the meeting the advisor(s) and crew chief(s)

Goal: Know what the top five itineraries are and the order of preference and why.

- a. [Tabulate ballots](#). The spreadsheet gives rank additional weight in scoring to help determine the top five crew preferences
- b. Discuss crew abilities, 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)
- c. This is the first opportunity for the Crew Chief to make decisions on behalf of the crew – he should treat the tabulated ballots as input, not the final result
- d. Considering difficulty/terrain preferences and with a subjective view of the abilities of the crew the crew chief (not the advisor) determines the top five with help from the advisors.

5. Crew Chief / Lead Advisor meeting as soon as possible after the Treks Books Arrive (Mid March)

Goal: Fill out the trek selection card knowing that the choices fit the crew's needs & desires and return them to the ranch within 24hrs of receipt.

- a. Examine the descriptions of the top five using the current years Treks Book and determine if changes invalidate any choices.
- b. Consider other treks that have changed from the previous year and are better aligned to the crews wishes now

Note: If the top five treks are unchanged no meeting is necessary. If the changes are minor a phone call may suffice.

6. Lead Advisor copies & mails trek selection card ASAP.

Goal: Return the trek selections to the ranch ASAP to maximize chance of getting first choice.