



Long before backpacking became a popular sport, the Boy Scouts of America was promoting this exhilarating activity. For more than 50 years, Philmont Scout Ranch in northern New Mexico has provided hundreds of miles of trails for thousands of Scouts across the country. In addition, BSA high-adventure bases and local councils throughout the country can provide Scouts with a stimulating backpacking experience.

Backpacking can be a single-day activity of 8 miles or a weeklong trip of 50 miles or more. But no matter what length, participation requires hikers who are in top physical condition and prepared to meet the challenge. New Scouts can learn the basics of hiking and low-impact camping so that many thousands of people can enjoy the same trail for decades to come.

## SCOUTING OUTCOMES

This month's patrol and troop activities should give your Scouts:

- Improved physical fitness.
- A sense of communion with nature and God.
- Greater appreciation for the outdoors and a determination to follow the Outdoor Code.
- Growing self-confidence in their ability to be comfortable on the trail and in camp.

## ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

By the end of the month, all Scouts should have met the majority of their basic hiking and camping requirements through First Class. Depending on the outing activities, they may also complete all or part of the following rank requirements:

### *Tenderfoot*

- Outdoor—Cooking, hiking, camping
- Citizenship—Flag ceremonies, first aid
- Patrol/troop participation—Patrol identification
- Personal development—Scout Oath and Law

### *Second Class*

- Outdoor—Cooking, camping, hiking, nature
- Citizenship—Flag ceremonies, first aid
- Patrol/troop participation—Patrol identification
- Personal development—Scout Oath and Law

### *First Class*

- Outdoor—Cooking, camping, nature, hiking
- Citizenship—Flag ceremonies
- Patrol/troop participation—Patrol identification
- Personal development—Scout Oath and Law

*Merit Badges.* Older Scouts can concentrate on the Backpacking and Hiking merit badges this month; they should be able to complete many of the requirements. Depending on activi-