

XPEDITION CAMP

LEADER GUIDE

Learn, Practice, Review
Backpacking Weekend

Latimer Reservation | April 2026



WWW.MTCSCOUTING.ORG

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Welcome to the Mini Xpedition

Learn, Practice, Review

Backpacking Weekend

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This event is specifically designed to provide troops, crews, ships, and individual scouts with a high-fidelity, low-stakes training environment to prepare for extensive high-adventure trips, particularly Philmont Scout Ranch.

In just one weekend, participants will immerse themselves in critical backcountry skills, test their physical endurance, and validate their gear, all while building essential team unity. Whether you bring a full Troop, Crew, Ship, or come with a single buddy, this event is your essential preparation checkpoint.

Expert Instruction and Mentorship

All classes and training sessions will be instructed by Philmont experienced volunteers who have completed treks at Philmont Scout Ranch.

Participants will benefit from learning directly from these experienced Scouters, gaining firsthand knowledge, trail-tested tips, and best practices essential for success at Philmont. This commitment to expert instruction ensures a relevant and high-quality learning experience for every scout.

Key Detail	Description
Event Name	Mini Xpedition: Learn, Practice, Review Backpacking Weekend
Location	Latimer Reservation
Duration	2 Days, 2 Nights (Friday Evening to Sunday Afternoon)
Participants	Troops, Crews, Ships, or Individual Scouts Welcome ages 13 and up
Focus	Skill Review, Physical Endurance Check, Gear Shakedown, Team Building

2. DATES, COST, AND REGISTRATION

Available Weekend Treks (Choose One)

Option	Dates (Friday Check-in to Sunday Check-out)
Weekend 1	April 10 – April 12, 2026 (Natural Rock Rappelling)
Weekend 2	April 17 – April 19, 2026 (Natural Rock Rappelling or Chalk Ball)

Cost and Inclusions

The all-inclusive cost for this comprehensive training weekend is:

- Early Bird fee **on or before March 1, 2026 - \$80**
- Regular Fee **after March 1, 2026 - \$90**
- Registration closes on **March 15, 2026**
- Registration is limited to the first **30** participants

Inclusions:

- Friday
 - Light Snack
 - Campfire Program
 - Cracker Barrel
- Saturday
 - Breakfast in the Dining Hall
 - Philmont Style Trail Lunch
 - Philmont Style Trail Dinner
- Sunday
 - Philmont Style Trail Breakfast
 - Lunch To Go
- Lodging: Friday night in Base Camp "Tent City" (**tents provided**), Saturday night in personal (**not provided**) backpacking tents (on the trail).
- Skill Instruction: Access to all Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced skill tracks.
- Adventure Activities:
 - Weekend 1: Natural Rock Rappelling and Tomahawk Throwing sessions
 - Weekend 2: Natural Rock Rappelling or Chalk Ball and Tomahawk Throwing sessions
- Evening Program: Campfire Program and Cracker Barrel

3. PROGRAM TRACKS AND CORE SKILLS

The Mini Xpedition will provide every participant the opportunity for practical experience in all three skill tracks, plus the adventure elements. This structure is built on the Learn, Practice, Review model, giving scouts the crucial opportunity to immediately apply taught skills in a real-world backcountry setting right after instruction. All three tracks will be taught and practiced on both weekends.

Skill Tracks (Learn, Practice, Review)

Track	Focus	Key Learning Outcomes
Beginner: Backpack Blitz	Mastering Pack Efficiency & Ergonomics	Proper load distribution, reducing pack weight, customizing fit, and essential shakedown techniques.
Intermediate: Trail Cooking Philmont Style	Backcountry Nutrition & Meal Planning	Hands-on preparation of Philmont-style meals, efficient stove use, menu planning, and bear-bagging/food security.
Advanced: Finding Your Way (Land Nav for the Long Haul)	Map & Compass Mastery	Practical field exercises in bearing calculation, triangulation, pacing, contour reading, and navigating off-trail routes.

Adventure & Unity Activities

- **Backpacking:** The route is intentionally moderate at 2-3 miles out and 2-3 miles back to prioritize skill-building over mileage. By keeping the distance manageable, we ensure newer Scouts have the time and energy to practice backcountry skills and enjoy the experience without feeling overwhelmed.
- **Natural Rock Rappelling:** An event designed to push comfort zones, build confidence, and introduce basic rope handling safety, run by certified instructors.
- **Tomahawk Throwing:** A fun, competitive event designed for skill development and stress relief, promoting unity through friendly rivalry.
- **Chalkball Range:** currently in approval stages with council office, TBD.

Important Additional Information

- Age requirement for these adventures is 13
- Scout Buddies: Individual Scouts are welcome to attend this adventure. We will do our best to set up buddy or truddy (3 Scouts) groups that are comfortable to each scout and divide equipment for setting up camp and cooking.

4. LOGISTICS AND PACKING LIST

The Mini Xpedition Advantage

This weekend provides a unique opportunity to validate commitment and test equipment before a major investment in a full trek. Leaders can observe:

- Commitment: Which individuals show genuine preparedness and leadership under trail conditions.
- Endurance: The physical and mental stamina of the crew over a sustained 48-hour period.
- Equipment: The suitability and durability of every item of personal and crew gear.

Gear Requirement & Shakedown

It's highly suggested each participant bring and use the backpacking gear they intend to use on their extended trek.

The Philmont Scout Ranch ["what to bring"](#) page is a great place to start your packing journey.

Important items for individuals include: This gear is **NOT provided and scouts will need to bring with them.**

- Backpack: Internal frame backpack with a padded hip belt
- Sleeping System: Bag (rated 20°F or lower) & sleeping pad
- Waterproof stuff sack
- 1 Liter Water Bottles: Two bottles minimum
- Personal Mess Kit & Utensils
- Weather Appropriate Clothing: Layers for rain, cold, and variable conditions
- Boots: Mid- to high-top hiking boots broken-in and waterproof
- Socks: hiking socks
- Sleep clothes
- Warm sleeping hat and day cap
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Sunscreen and toiletries
- Parts A & B Health Form **(required or cannot participate)**
- Cash, Card, or Apple Pay for Trading Post snacks and souvenirs

The following items are required for every pair of scouts and **NOT PROVIDED.**

Scouts should partner up ("buddy system") to distribute the weight of these items, as only one set is needed for every two hikers.

- Two person closed wall tent (1 per buddy pair)
- Two 8 quart pots (per crew)
- Camp stove with fuel (Philmont recommended models)
 - MSR WhisperLite
 - MSR DragonFly
 - Optimus Nova

Weekend Timeline Summary

Day	Location	Primary Activities
Friday Evening	Base Camp (Tent City)	Check-in (5 PM), Briefing, Light Dinner, Campfire Program, Cracker Barrel
Saturday	Tent City, Trail	Learn, Practice, Review Beginner - Backpack Blitz: Master the Art of the Pack Advanced - Finding Your Way: Land Nav for the Long Haul Trail Lunch, Hike to Wilderness Camp
Saturday Night	Wilderness Camp	Setup camp, Tomahawk Throwing, Intermediate - Trail Cooking Philmont Style, Trail Dinner, Campfire
Sunday Morning	Wilderness Camp, Rappelling Site	Break Camp, Hike back to Base Camp, Rappelling or Chalk Ball, Lunch To Go, Wrap-up, Check-out (12 PM)

5. CAMP RULES

As a Scouting facility, the foremost rules for personal and group behavior are the ideals found in Scouting. Beyond the ideals of the Scout Oath and Law, and Outdoor Code, the following rules are enforced at Latimer Reservation:

- All cars must be parked in designated parking areas.
- No UTVs or ATVs are permitted.
- Closed toed shoes must be worn at all times at camp.
- Sandals are allowed only at the showers.
- Throwing rocks is strictly forbidden.
- No flames, fires, or fuels of any kind are permitted inside tents.
- Personal firearms and bows are not permitted.
- Sheath knives are not permitted.
- No alcoholic beverages or illegal substances are allowed on camp property.
- No fireworks of any kind are permitted on camp property.
- All guests are required to check-in at the Dining Hall upon arrival.
- No underage or non-registered youth are allowed in camp.
- No pets are allowed in camp.
- No running in camp.

6. ADULT LEADERSHIP

Unit Adult Leaders are welcome to register and attend with their youth participants, provided they are currently registered adult leaders with the Scouting America. We will need at least 2 adults with Wilderness First Aid training to register and attend for this event.

While we encourage units to attend with their own leadership for the best experience, we understand that may not always be possible for individual scouts. Therefore:

- **For Individual Scouts:** We will have registered adult leaders and experienced Scouters on-site at camp to provide the required two-deep leadership and supervision for individual Scouts who attend without their unit's leadership.
- **For Units:** All participating units are **required** to bring their own leadership. Unit leaders should ensure they meet the BSA's guidelines for two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over present at all times for any Scouting activity.
- **Safety Requirements:** All adults staying overnight in connection with this Scouting activity must be currently registered as an adult volunteer or adult program participant (Venturing or Sea Scouts over 18). A registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over must be present for any activity involving female youth or female adult program participants.
- Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including all meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over in every unit serving females. A registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over must be present for any activity involving female youth or female adult program participants.
- Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided.
- All adults staying overnight in connection with a Scouting activity must be currently registered as an adult volunteer or an adult program participant. Adult volunteers must register in the position(s) they are serving in.

7. CREW GUIDES AND ON-TRAIL MENTORSHIP

Experienced crew guides will be assigned to each participating unit or group of individual scouts to aid in the learning and practicing of skills throughout the weekend. These guides will backpack with their assigned crew to the wilderness camp outpost and spend the night with them to provide continuous, high-quality mentorship and support on the trail.

8. NAVIGATING TO LATIMER RESERVATION

Latimer High Adventure Reservation
334 Plantation Road
Spencer, TN 37138 (Van Buren County)

From the north, take I-24 E to Nashville to I-40 E to Exit 288, turn south onto Highway 111. Follow Highway 111 for 28.3 miles (Spencer), turn left onto spur for .1 mile, turn right onto Highway 30, follow Highway 30 East for 7.8 miles, turn left onto Highway 285 East, follow Highway 285 East for 7.1 miles, turn left onto Van Winkle Road (Lonewood Church on your left), follow Van Winkle Road for .8 mile, turn left onto Wilson Road for .4 mile, turn right onto Lewis Road for .6 mile to entrance.

From the east or west, take interstate 40 East or interstate 40 West to Exit 288 (Cookeville/Sparta), turn south onto Highway 111. Follow Highway 111 for 28.3 miles (Spencer), turn left onto spur for .1 mile, turn right onto Highway 30, follow Highway 30 East for 7.8 miles, turn left onto Highway 285 East, follow Highway 285 East for 7.1 miles, turn left onto Van Winkle Road (Lonewood Church on your left), follow Van Winkle Road for .8 mile, turn left onto Wilson Road for .4 mile, turn right onto Lewis Road for .6 mile to entrance.

From the south (Chattanooga), follow Highway 27 N to Highway 111 N to Highway 30 E. follow Highway 30 East for 7.8 miles, turn left onto Highway 285 East, follow Highway 285 East for 7.1 miles, turn left onto Van Winkle Road (Lonewood Church on your left), follow Van Winkle Road for .8 mile, turn left onto Wilson Road for .4 mile, turn right onto Lewis Road for .6 mile to entrance.

From the east (Option B), take I-40 W to exit 322. Take Highway 101 (Peavine Road). Follow signs to Highway 70/101 (Lantana Road). Travel from I-40 approximately 24 miles to Highway 285 W. turn right for 4.9 miles onto Van Winkle Road (at the Lonewood Baptist Church of Christ on your right forward), follow Van Winkle Road for .8 mile, turn left onto Wilson Road for .4 mile, turn right onto Lewis Road for .6 mile to entrance.

9. REGISTRATION DEADLINE & CONTACT INFO

Registration Deadline: March 15, 2026

To register your troop, crew, ship, or scout, please visit mtcscouting.org

Kevin Phillips at kphilipsbsa@gmail.com or call **615.478.3489** for more information

10. EMERGENCY & MEDICAL PROTOCOLS

A quick, organized response is critical for any emergency. Leaders must be prepared to enact the following protocols:

Emergency Contacts

Role	Name	Phone Number
Latimer Reservation Director (Event Lead)	Kevin Phillips	615-478-3489
Latimer Reservation Ranger	Mark Smith	423-322-7310

Medical Support

Leaders must ensure they have and carry Parts A & B of their unit/scout's Health Forms. While medical personnel will be available at base camp for emergencies, leaders are strongly encouraged to take Wilderness First Aid. This training is a valuable asset for wilderness adventures and is mandatory for all national high adventure treks.

- **Nearest Medical Facility:** Erlanger Bledsoe Hospital
- **Address:** 71 Wheelertown Ave, Pikeville, TN 37367
- **Phone Number:** 423-447-2112

On-Trail Emergency Procedure

1. **Secure the Area:** Ensure the immediate safety of the injured/ill person and the rest of the crew.
2. **Provide First Aid:** Administer first aid as trained (e.g., WFA, WAFA).
3. **Contact Base Camp:** Use cell service (if available) or send two responsible, fully-equipped adults to hike to a service point or return to Base Camp to notify staff (Kevin Phillips, Mark Smith, or the designated medical personnel).
4. **Report Information:** Be prepared to provide the injured/ill person's name, nature of the emergency, current grid coordinates/trail location, and the status of the patient.

Severe Weather Protocol

- **During Trail Hike:** Leaders should seek shelter away from tall trees and open areas in the event of lightning. Participants should spread out (approx. 50 feet apart) and minimize contact with the ground.
- **In Base Camp:** The designated severe weather shelter location is the Shower House. Staff will direct units to this location if a weather watch or warning is issued.

11. LEAVE NO TRACE (LNT) & CONSERVATION

The Mini Xpedition is designed to model ethical backcountry practices required at high-adventure bases. All participants are expected to adhere to the seven **Leave No Trace Principles**.

- **Pack It In, Pack It Out:** All trash, including food scraps, wrappers, and hygiene products, must be carried out in a separate trash bag.
- **Human Waste Disposal:** Solid human waste must be buried in "catholes" that are 6-8 inches deep and at least 200 feet (70 large paces) away from water, trails, and campsites. Toilet paper must be packed out with other trash—do not bury it.
- **Stove & Fire Safety:** All cooking must be done with the approved backpacking stoves listed in the Gear Requirement section. Stoves must only be operated on mineral soil or a designated cooking surface, away from tents and dry vegetation.

12. EXPANDED PROGRAM SCHEDULE

A detailed program schedule will be provided to the adult leaders at a later date.

13. DETAILED LOGISTICS & WATER STRATEGY

Water Sourcing and Treatment

- **Water Availability:** Potable water is available for filling water bottles at the Base Camp.
- **On the Trail:** Crews **must** be self-sufficient for water on the trail and at the Wilderness Camp.

Vehicle and Arrival Logistics

- **Check-in:** All guests are required to check-in at the **Dining Hall** upon arrival on Friday starting at 5:00 PM.
- **Gear Unloading:** Vehicles may briefly pull off to the side of the road near Base Camp (Tent City) for quick gear drop-off. Once unloaded, all vehicles **must** be immediately moved to the designated parking lot, as only specially authorized vehicles are allowed in campsites.
- **Check-out:** Final check-out is at 12:00 PM on Sunday. Unit leaders must confirm with a staff member that their campsite and surrounding area are completely clear of trash before being released.