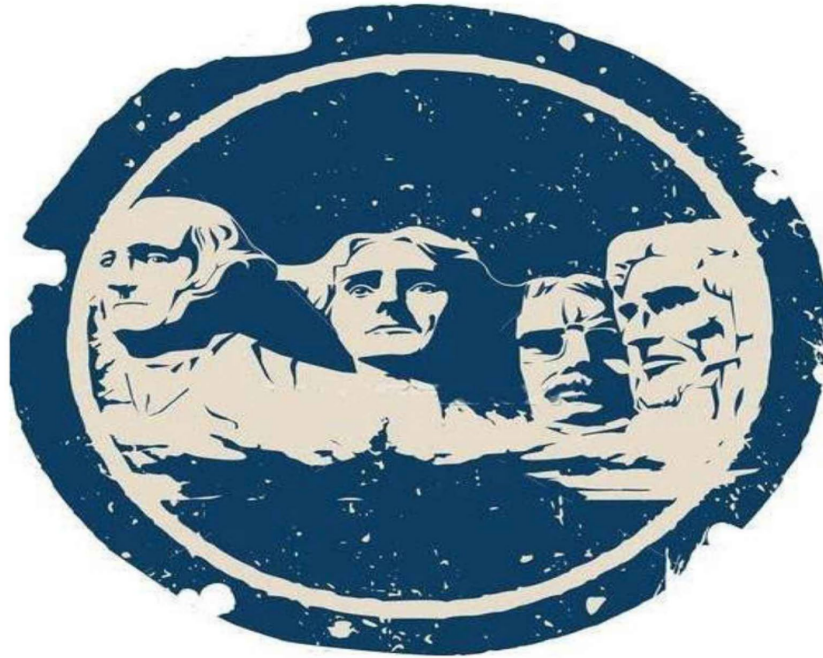




September 11-13, 2026
88th
MOUNT RUSHMORE
PILGRIMAGE



Come Hike the Faces

The Mount Rushmore Pilgrimage has been a tradition since 1938. At the first hike, there were only images of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln on the Mountain. The final carving, Teddy Roosevelt, was still under construction.

Hikers will depart from locations throughout the Black Hills and end at Mount Rushmore. The Award Ceremony and Keynote Speaker will start around 4pm on September 12th, 2026.

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This Year's Event: This year's event will start at Medicine Mountain Scout Ranch (MMSR). In past years we have had participants from Troops throughout South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin and Iowa, just to name a few. Buses will take hikers from MMSR to each of the Trail Heads.

Come Hike the Faces:

Hikers depart from locations throughout the Black Hills, following the Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Lincoln Trails to Mount Rushmore. The four Scout hiking trails range from approximately 10 miles to approximately 14 miles. Age appropriate trails for Webelos/ AOL (@ 5miles) and Cub Scouts (@1 mile) are also available. Only BSA registered scout and scouters are allowed to hike the five main trails (Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and the Borglum Trail). The four main trails are strenuous to extremely difficult hiking trails, based mainly on elevation changes. As a result, the four BSA trails do require A, B, **and C** sections of the Health Form for all Hikers. There is a sixth trail, the Cub Scout Trail that is open to family members to participate in as well as any Cub Scout.

Leader Responsibilities:

Provide adequate food, water, equipment and transportation for your Scouts. Make sure that everyone is dressed for the weather conditions. For safety reasons, the Trail's Hike Master and/or medical services staff will have the final approval of all Scouts, Scouters and guests on the trail.

- **Two Deep Leadership is required while in camp and on the trail. Remember, you are responsible for the conduct of your Scouts- not the Hike Master.**
- Units must check-in with the Camp Master/Camp Host between 5pm-7:30 pm on Friday, September 11th @ MMSR. Those that are only hiking (not camping with a unit) must check-in with the Hike Master at camp prior to when the individual hike begins.
- At Check-in, units must have the following Required Forms:
 - Copy of registration form
 - Proof of payment or a check for payment amount
 - Provide a list of Scouts, Scouters staying overnight and/or hiking the trail.
 - For Troops and Crews any adult staying at camp overnight with your unit must be registered in a fee-paid position and have passed a background check to camp with your troop or crew
 - Copy of current year Annual Health and Medical Record for each participant (**Parts A, B & C**)
- There will be a **Leader's Cracker Barrel** at Townley Training Center Friday night @ 8:30 pm. Hiking plans, Unit hiking rosters and other activities will be confirmed during this meeting. One Unit Leader and One Senior Patrol Leader should attend. Webelos leaders from each pack should attend, also if you are camping @ MMSR. Breakout sessions for each trail will be conducted after the general meeting.
- Unit leaders should thoroughly review the **RISK ADVISORY and PHILMONT WEIGHT LIMITS FOR BACKPACKING AND HIKING guidelines contained within this Leader's Guide**, to ensure their registrants are prepared to meet the physical demands of the hike.
- Hike Masters for each trail should notify the **Camp Master** (or designated Master of Ceremony) of what skit/song they will be performing at the Saturday night **Campfire**. An inspiring message will be given at campfire instead of a church service on Sunday Morning. If units would like to have their Scouts Own service at their campsite, that is up to each unit.
- Each Scout must have an **Adequate Water Supply**. The recommendation is at least 2 liters per Scout (3 liters for hikers on the Lincoln and Roosevelt Trails)
- Scouting Essentials

- Appropriate **closed-toe Hiking Shoes** with socks; sandals and tennis shoes are not appropriate or allowed
- Poison ivy in the Black Hills is widespread. **Long Pants or gaiters** are strongly encouraged.
- Saturday will be a strenuous hiking day, so everyone is asked to be quiet after **Lights Out** at 10pm on Friday night.
- Unit Leaders are responsible for having their unit Flag by the Ranch House @ MMSR the morning of departure on the buses. Flags will be brought to Mt Rushmore for you. It is your responsibility to bring them back with you from Mt. Rushmore on the buses.

Transportation:

- Units with **Webelos/AOL Scouts** are encouraged to work with a **Scouts BSA Troop** to coordinate co-camping and transportation needs between these two units. **Webelos units** that do not camp with a Scouts BSA Troop or do not camp on their own at MMSR are responsible for their own transportation to the Trailhead and from Mount Rushmore. **This means that** Packs are individually responsible for providing transportation to and from the trailhead on Saturday, unless they are camping at MMSR, where transportation will be available.
- **Cub Scouts** are encouraged to participate in age-appropriate activities at Mount Rushmore on Saturday afternoon. Packs are individually responsible for providing transportation to and from Mt. Rushmore on Saturday.
- Transportation has been arranged for units camping at Medicine Mountain Scout Ranch (MMSR).
- All individual units will be responsible for ensuring their scouts are on time and on the correct bus. Buses will depart Saturday morning from MMSR for each of the trailheads. Buses will again be available at Mount Rushmore, following the ceremony, for travel back to MMSR. Buses will be color-coded based on what trail you are hiking to ensure scouts, scouters, and guests get on the appropriate bus. **Only those paid scouts, scouters, and guests with an approved wristband will be allowed on the buses.**

Registration:

- All units must be registered prior to the event.
- On-site check-in will be held on Friday, September 11 th, from 5 pm - 8 pm at Medicine Mountain Scout Ranch.
- Unit leaders must sign in when they check in with the Camp Master, provide a list of Scouts, Scouters staying overnight and/or hiking the trails. Including Pre-Event Medical Screening Temperature Checks
- Before entering camp, all participants will go through a check-in procedure, review of questions from the Pre-Event Medical Screening, and review of the individual's health form.
- A copy of the Registration Form will be required at the Friday night check-in.
- Proof of payment will be required at the Friday night check-in. Those units/individuals not camping will be required to show proof of payment before starting the trail.
- An Overnight Camping & Unit Hiking Roster will be required at the Friday night check-in.
- Unit Leaders are required to be in possession of a current Annual Health and Medical Record (parts A, B & C) for each person participating/hiking in the Mount Rushmore Pilgrimage. (Reference www.scouting.org "Question. Who needs to complete an Annual Health and Medical Record? Answer- For any and all Scouting activities, all participants must complete Part A and Part B. "All participants" includes parents, guardians, siblings, youth, staff, and unit leaders...

- Registration **DEADLINE is Thursday, September 3, 2026**. To ensure a unit's chances at receiving their preferred trail assignment, register early. Units that register after the deadline will be assigned in accordance with the US Forest Service and National Park Service trail guidelines. The Rushmore District of Sioux Council will notify units of their trail assignments no later than September 6th through your registration contact email.

Registration Fees:

- **Scouts BSA/Venture Crews:** Your registration fees go to pay for the following: US Forest Service user fees and special use permits, Pilgrimage Trail Rocker (America 250 Center Patches are included in all registrations), camping facilities and amenities, awards and insurance, Saturday breakfast, and transportation to and from MMSR.

Price on or before July 31, 2026:

- \$45 per Scout (In-Council or Out-of-Council)
- \$35 per Adult

Price between July 31, 2026, and August 21, 2026:

- \$50 per Scout (In-Council or Out-of-Council)
- \$40 per Adult

Price between August 21, 2026, and September 3, 2026:

- \$55 per Scout (In-Council or Out-of-Council)
- \$45 per Adult

- **Webelos Scouts:** Your registration fees go to pay for the following: US Forest Service user fees and special use permits, Pilgrimage center patch, camping facilities and amenities, awards and insurance, Saturday breakfast, and transportation to and from MMSR.

Price on or before July 31, 2026:

- \$45 per Scout (In-Council or Out-of-Council)
- \$35 per Adult

Price between July 31, 2026, and August 21, 2026:

- \$50 per Scout (In-Council or Out-of-Council)
- \$40 per Adult

Price between August 21, 2026, and September 3, 2026:

- \$55 per Scout (In-Council or Out-of-Council)
- \$45 per Adult

- **Cub Scouts:** Your registration fees go to pay for the following: special use permits and insurance.

Price on or before July 15, 2025:

- \$7 per Scout (In-Council or Out-of-Council)
- \$7 per Adult

Price between July 16th, 2025, and August 15, 2025:

- \$10 per Scout (In-Council or Out-of-Council)
- \$10 per Adult

Price between August 16, 2025, and August 31, 2025:

- \$15 per Scout (In-Council or Out-of-Council)
- \$15 per Adult

Activity Refund Policy:

Food and program supplies are purchased in advance based upon projected youth/adult attendance. Last-minute cancellations create an overstock of supplies and food that often cannot be returned. To ensure all requests receive uniform treatment, the following refund policy has been established:

- **“No Shows” at activities, those sent home because of misbehavior, and Scouts** leaving an activity for non-emergency reasons forfeit all fees, and no refunds will be authorized. This applies to individuals and/or units.
- All cancellations must be in writing and received by the Council office **before an activity’s start date. Please return the request addressed to the Attention of the “Refund Committee”.**
- The unit leader or person in charge of the unit activity must handle all refund requests.
- **No requests for refunds will be honored after the event.**
- Refund **checks will be made out to the “unit” rather than an individual.**

NOTE: Activity personnel cannot authorize refunds. All refunds require the approval of the Refund Committee, which includes the Scout Executive.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR REQUEST TO:

Sioux Council, BSA
Rushmore District
144 North Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

Hiking Trails:

- Pilgrimage will end at one of the Mount Rushmore Memorial parking garages (Hike Masters will go over specifics of their trail at **the Leader’s Cracker Barrel on Friday night.**)
- In order to meet US Forest Service and National Park Service trail guidelines, the number of participants on each trail must be evenly dispersed. **Units will register for trail assignments by their first, second, third, and fourth choice preference.** The Pilgrimage committee will notify units of their trail assignments no later than September 6th. **It is strongly and highly recommended that all units fill out the appropriate award application for the Golden Boot and Silver Sneaker.** The award application can be found under “attachments” on the event registration page.
- Assignment accommodations for individual Scouts with special circumstances (e.g., last trail needed to complete trail segments before 18th birthday) will be considered. **AFTER** an accommodation has been approved, each unit must coordinate participation with the appropriate Hike Master.

WASHINGTON TRAIL: Led by Troop 17

This is a trail of strenuous difficulty. **YELLOW – Moderately Difficult**

JEFFERSON TRAIL: Led by Troop 44

This is a trail of strenuous difficulty. **YELLOW – Moderately Difficult**

ROOSEVELT TRAIL: Led by Troop 131

This is a trail of strenuous difficulty. **ORANGE – Highly Difficult**

LINCOLN TRAIL: Led by Troop 8711

This is a trail of strenuous difficulty. **RED – Extremely Difficult**

BORGLUM TRAIL: Led by Pack 28. This beginner hiking trail will start at the Breezy Point trailhead*. **The expected check-in time is 10:30 am with a start time of 11 am.**

This is a trail of mild difficulty. * Or as designation by the NPS. **GREEN – Mildly Difficult**

CUB SCOUTS: Led by Pack 2. Cub Scouts and parents will gather at the Avenue of Flags at Mount Rushmore at 1:00 pm, with a start time of 1:30 pm. Cub Scouts will hike an easy trail, then participate in a Junior Ranger program. Lions / Tigers / Wolves / Bears **WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED** to hike this trail. Families are encouraged to participate, but this is not an event for young children. Remember, each Pack must provide adequate adult supervision, including 2 deep leadership. **REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR 6 ESSENTIALS.**

**Meet outside of the bathroom at the entrance to Mount Rushmore.
Adventure will start at 1 pm sharp. Please be on time; we will not wait.**

Risk Advisory:

- Since its inception, Pilgrimage has had an excellent health and safety record. We strive to minimize risks to participants by emphasizing proper safety precautions. If you decide to attend Pilgrimage, you should be physically fit, have proper clothing and equipment, be willing to follow instructions, and take responsibility for your own health and safety. Pilgrimage is not “risk free”; therefore, you need to listen to safety instructions carefully, follow directions from the Hike Master and take appropriate steps to safeguard yourself and others.
- Parents, leaders, and participants at the Pilgrimage are advised that this event can involve exposure to an accident, illness, and/or injury associated with high elevation and is a physically demanding high adventure program in a remote mountainous area. Participants may be exposed to occasional severe weather conditions such as lightning, hail, flash floods, or extreme heat or cold. Other potential problems include: injuries from tripping and falling, motor vehicle accidents, worsening of underlying medical conditions such as diabetes or asthma, heart attack, and heat exhaustion. The volunteer medical staff is trained in first aid and CPR to assist in recognizing, reacting, and responding to accidents, injuries, and illnesses. They work with the Hike Master to determine if someone can participate in the hike. Remember, response times can be affected by location, weather, or other emergencies.
- Each unit leader is encouraged to use the **“Philmont Weight Limits for Backpacking and Hiking”** as a guide for determining who should hike the trails. **WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that participants who fall outside these levels be counseled not to attempt the hike. These guidelines are not just for the scout but also for the scouter and approved guests.

PHILMONT WEIGHT LIMITS FOR BACKPACKING AND HIKING:

Each participant in a trek must not exceed the maximum acceptable limit in the weight for height chart shown below. The right-hand column shows the maximum acceptable weight for a person's height in order to participate in a trek. Those who fall within the limits are more likely to have an enjoyable trek and avoid incurring health risks. Philmont recommends that participants carry a pack weighing no more than 25-30% of their bodyweight.

Height	Recommended Weight (pounds)	Maximum Acceptance	Height	Recommended Weight (pounds)	Maximum Acceptance
5'0	97-138	166	5'10	132-188	226
5'1	101-143	172	5'11	136-194	233
5'2	104-148	178	6'0	140-199	239
5'3	107-152	183	6'1	144-205	246
5'4	111-157	189	6'2	148-210	252
5'5	114-162	195	6'3	152-216	260
5'6	118-167	201	6'4	156-222	267
5'7	121-172	207	6'5	160-234	274
5'8	125-178	214	6'6	164-234	281
5'9	129-185	220	6'7 and over	170-240	295

This table is based on the revised Dietary Guidelines for Americans from the USDA and the Department of HHS.

Unit Awards:

- **GOLDEN STAVE AWARD:** Troop/Crew submits camping, program activities, service projects, training records, and council fundraising participation for consideration of being awarded a Golden Stave. Four Golden Staves are presented to the units with the most impressive overall programming for their scouts for the current Scouting year. The four Golden Stave winners will have the option to be a trail lead at next year's event. The four Golden Stave winners are then qualified to win the **Golden Boot**, which is presented to the unit with the most impressive overall programming.

NOTE: Units are no longer required to lead a trail if they are the recipient of a Golden Stave Award. It is strongly and highly recommended that **ALL UNITS** submit applications detailing their activities for the previous Scouting year (September 2025-August 2026).

- **SILVER SNEAKER AWARD:** Pack submits program records for consideration of being awarded the Silver Sneaker. This award is presented to the Cub Scout Pack with the most impressive overall quality program for the current year. The winning Pack will have the option to be the Webelos Trail lead, and the runner-up will have the option to be the Cub Scout Trail lead at next year's event.

NOTE: Packs are no longer required to lead the Webelos Trail if they are the recipient of the Silver Sneaker Award. It is strongly and highly recommended that **ALL Packs** submit applications detailing their activities for the previous Scouting year (September 2025- August 2026).

- **OUT-OF-COUNCIL UNITS:** They are encouraged to participate. They will use the same application for the **GOLDEN STAVE/GOLDEN BOOT AWARD** or the **SILVER SNEAKER AWARD**, but will be judged in a separate competition from the in-council units. The winning unit will have a special designation at **next year's event**.
- **TO QUALIFY - APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE DATE OF Friday, August 28th by 5:00 PM.**

NOTE: Applications may be hand-delivered, emailed (james.miles@scouting.org), or mailed ([144 North St, Rapid City, SD 57701](#)). However, applications received after 5 pm on the deadline date will not be considered; plan accordingly.

Other Important Information:

- Each unit is responsible for ensuring water and uniform requirements are met. As well as being prepared for the ceremony.
- **Water Requirements:** It cannot be stressed enough the importance of sufficient water. **The Hike Master and unit leaders must ensure that all hikers have adequate water, a minimum of 2 liters per Scout (3 liters on Lincoln, Roosevelt & Washington Trails).**
- **Uniform Requirements:** All Scouts and Scouters must wear an appropriate uniform before entering the Mt. Rushmore Amphitheater. Scouts and Scouters should be wearing a full uniform. Be sure that your Scouts look sharp. Only scouting hats will be permitted in the amphitheater, and **ONLY SCOUTS IN FULL UNIFORM - WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PARADE OF FLAGS** (carry the flags during the parade or while on stage). You do not need to (and we do not recommend) that you wear your Class A to hike. However, they must be carried in your pack or brought to the Memorial by a non-hiking unit leader.

NOTE: A full uniform is designated as: Class A uniform shirt, Class A uniform pants, and a Scout belt. (A Scout hat and/or Neckerchief is optional)

- **Mount Rushmore Ceremony:** Units will gather in the designated meeting location. One fully uniformed Scout carrying the unit flag (not a US Flag) will lead the unit in the Parade to the amphitheater. The awards ceremony will begin promptly at 4 pm.
NOTE: If a fully uniformed Scout is not available for a unit, another Scout will be designated to carry the flag on behalf of the unit.
- **Presenting of Awards:** When the winners of the Golden Staves are announced, please send your SPL and one unit leader to the front of the stage to accept the award. When the Golden Boot and Silver Sneaker are presented, the winning Troop and Pack may come up to the stage, but have only the SPL and only 1 Webelos accept the award. The rest of the unit, please stay behind your acceptor on stage.

- **Pilgrimage Campfire:** Saturday night, each unit will be expected to participate by performing a song or a skit.

NOTE: Burn bans may be in effect. If so, no wood or charcoal fire will be allowed.

- **Meals: Troop/Crew units:** are responsible for ensuring adequate food is available for their scouts on Friday evening, Saturday lunch, Saturday supper, and Sunday Morning. Saturday's Breakfast will be provided to ensure a timely departure to the trailheads. Only those scouts, scouters, and guests with an approved wristband will be allowed to participate in breakfast. An optional sack lunch can be purchased for Saturday lunch at the time of registration. The ordered sack lunches can be picked up at breakfast. **Please make sure to note any allergies on your registration!**

Pack units: If you are camping at MMSR your unit will be responsible for ALL food for Friday, Saturday (all meals), and Sunday breakfast. Your unit may purchase the optional sack lunch for Saturday at the time of registration.

Leader Overnight Checklist:

- Practice "Leave No Trace" camping.
- Ensure toilets are left clean.
- Ensure all trash is removed from your site by your unit. Please use the recycling and trash containers provided for you.
- Ensure all personal, patrol and unit equipment and belongings are packed and removed.
- Ensure no live trees are removed or damaged.
- Ensure all tent pegs removed.
- Leave it better than you found it.

Final Suggestions for the Trail:

- Everyone pack a trail lunch and carries sufficient water. For convenience, you can pre-order a sack lunch for Saturday if interested. You will still want to supplement with snacks depending on your caloric intake need.
- Each unit has a trash bag to cleanup at the lunch stop, and for the trail trash.
- Each unit maintains its position in line unless changed by the Hike Master.
- The Hike Master knows the trail and will set the pace - all other units are asked to cooperate.
- Rest stops are suggested every half hour or more often as needed - units may rotate at this time.
- This is not a race, but a controlled hike for enjoyment and fun.
- Units need to bring hand sanitizer to use while on the trail and while in their campsite. Sanitizer stations at camp are for use in those common areas only.

Questions:

Anyone with additional questions should contact the Rushmore District Scout Service Center at 605-342-2824.

Registration can be done at the following website:

[Sioux Council - 2026 Pilgrimage](https://scoutingevent.com/695-Pilgrimage2026)
<https://scoutingevent.com/695-Pilgrimage2026>