

Boy Scouts Conquer 90-Mile Hike

Troop 88 spent time hiking in New Mexico.

October 25, 2011



During the recent summer of 2011, boy scouts from Troop 88 in Bridgewater completed a challenging 90-mile backpack hike in New Mexico.

Under the direction of the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, the Troop 88 crew consisted of eight boy scouts [ages 14 to 17] and four adult advisors. The backpack hike, also called a trek, was determined by the scout ranch to be “super strenuous,” involving 82 miles over 12 days.

In total, Troop 88 backpacked 90 miles, including side hikes, with the average backpack weighing between 42 and 55 lbs. Troop members carried their food, water, tents, stoves, fuel and gear, and, like true boy scouts, were always prepared for any situation that may have arisen.

Advisors and some scouts became specially trained in Wilderness First Aid and CPR, in addition to other courses, in order to meet the Philmont requirements for crew safety. A single scout, known as the Crew Chief, led the crew, but all scouts had specific responsibilities or jobs that made the trek a success.

Troop 88’s first day on the trail included backpacking to the world’s only petrified Tyrannosaurus Rex foot print, followed by a hike to ancient Indian writing locations where they learned about the Native Americans’ unique culture during the Wild West days. On the trail, the crew stopped for a chuck wagon dinner and breakfast, giving them a welcome change from their daily freeze-dried meals requiring a tedious cleanup.

At the Continental Tie & Lumber company, the boy scouts conquered the intimidating vertical challenge of spar pole climbing, which consisted of ascending a telephone pole by use of spiked footwear. Troop 88 also had the rare opportunity to shoot black powder rifles that were made famous in the Old West, as well as fire modern shot guns down range at clay pigeons.

Other highlights of the trek included burro racing, rock climbing and rappelling and hiking the famously known Baldy Mountain [12,441 ft] and the Tooth of Time [9003 ft], both heaping masses of rock and earth which put the laws of gravity to the test.

“As we approached the "You Made It!" sign at the end of the trail leading to base camp, we all had a feeling of both accomplishment and regret that our journey had come to end,” said crew reporter Nick Ollo. “We all gathered under the sign like the winners of the Super Bowl and recalled the unforgettable scenery we all just experienced. One cannot leave Philmont without being changed forever for it truly is scouting paradise.”