

**Kodiak & Kodiak X**  
**By**  
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After completing the rigorous Rayado trek at Philmont during the summer of 2004, I remained at the Training Center to meet with adult Venturers from around our country. I observed a group of adults wrestling with balloons and firing blow darts. Participants in the Kodiak/Kodiak X program were recognizable around the campus, as they grinned at each other and discussed the lesson and fun of the day. I could not wait to participate in a youth Kodiak.

Venturing has a three step Nature of Leadership Program beginning with the Venture Leadership Skills Course (VLSC). During the VLSC, participants learn important leadership skills and apply them in games and projects. I completed the VLSC during a winter snow shoe, yurt camping trip.

The second step of the Nature of Leadership Program is Kodiak, a six-day leadership course. Originally designed as an outdoor adventure, Kodiak has grown into a program that can be taught anywhere, as long as it is outside, not in a classroom. Pairing the leadership training with an outdoor adventure has distinct advantages, in that participants enjoy the trip while applying leadership skills or commissions. Our Crew's Kodiak was wild. We were out of doors, but camping in the center of our town. Imagine pitching a tent in the middle of Times Square! We completed the Kodiak training in conjunction with volunteering 450+ hours during the largest annual event of our community, Labor Day Wagon Days. Our Kodiak skills were immediately applied as we coordinated the Parade Participant overnight camping facility, handled the Rendezvous registration, hosted VIP seating and conducted the first crowd count for the parade committee. Our Kodiak exercises (games) and projects attracted the attention of visitors and residents alike.

We completed Kodiak X, the final step of the Nature of Leadership Program five weeks after our Kodiak. The exercises (games) of Kodiak X are outstanding! Every participant emerges as more knowledgeable leader. During our Kodiak X, the real challenge was for our advisors to limit the activities to the our participants. Other youth who saw the gathering wandered over, asking to join in the fun.

Kodiak and Kodiak X are winners! As participants, we gained skills, while increasing our camaraderie and having a great time. Our crew members all held leadership positions, as Prez, VP, Sec/Treas of a school, or as officers in BSA, GS & other youth organizations. We were able to increase our performance as leaders as a result of this training. Today, some of our Kodiak/Kodiak X graduates attend Harvard, Yale, Boston College and Manhattanville.

How can you bring Kodiak & Kodiak X to your Council? Training for adult Kodiak/Kodiak X Course Directors will be offered twice this year, at Sea Base during the winter and again at Philmont in July. Youth graduates of the Kodiak X program can assist in teaching a Kodiak.

Kodiak has become a regular part of my summer activities. In 2005, I was youth faculty at both Sea Base and the Philmont, as advisors were trained as Kodiak/Kodiak X Course Directors. During 2006, I served as faculty for a youth Kodiak at beautiful Camp Fife in Washington. Next summer I plan to assist with another Kodiak – location TBA!

Read about Kodiaks in the [News from Crews... and Beyond](#) section of this site. Learn more about Kodiak/Kodiak X training on the national Kodiak site, [www.kodiak-bsa.org](http://www.kodiak-bsa.org).