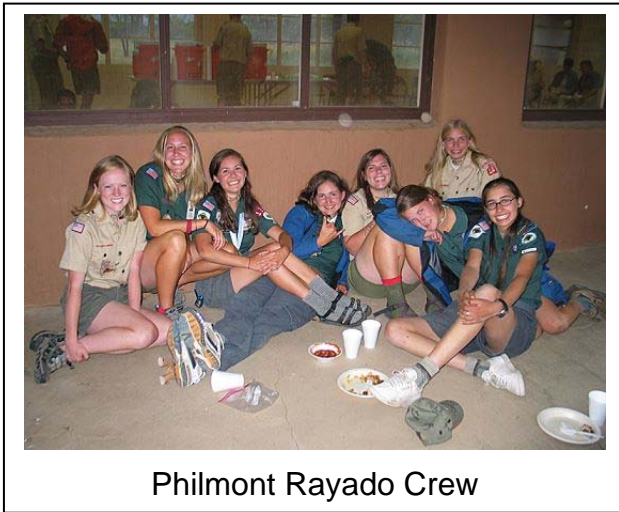


Philmont's Rayado
By
Amy DiFrancesco, 2005-06 National Venturing President

"Philmont is to thee, Scouting paradise. Out in God's country, tonight."

As beautiful as the song is, it cannot describe the breathtaking beauty of this backpacker's paradise. My long-time dream was to complete Philmont's most challenging trek, the 21-day Rayado leadership program. For four years, long before I was eligible to join Venture, I hoped to conquer this challenge. I arrived ready for the adventure to change me. Little did I know how great the change would be! Spending 24 hours a day in the most physically challenging of

conditions, one's inner being cannot be disguised. Participants face exhaustion, frustration, hunger, over 150 miles of hiking carrying 50 pound packs – and they emerge better for the trial.



From the fantastic crew of girls that I did not know, I left with some best friends. While I am unable to disclose the surprise challenges of Rayado, those who participate in the program, will leave Philmont a stronger, more confident and better person.