



Favorite Philmont Shakedown

The following pages contain shakedown ideas from other Philmont Advisors who have used these shakedowns successfully in the past. You may see some ideas that overlap, but are provided from the perspective of different advisors, so I've included them all. Please feel free to contact the advisors listed. Each person answered a survey and provided information on their favorite shakedown(s), keeping the following guidelines in mind.

The BAC Philmont Advisor Guide recommends the following, as a *minimum* preparation for Philmont:

- 1) A one-day shakedown, which stresses camp set-up, cooking, cleaning, and leaving camp, along with a moderate hike. This normally occurs in April.
- 2) A two-night weekend shakedown, including a challenging hike (minimum 15 miles), with as many Philmont-type experiences as possible. This normally occurs in mid-May.
- 3) A second two-night weekend shakedown, per above. This normally occurs approx. four weeks prior to your trek.

Name: Mimi Hatch

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Appalachian Trail between Pine Grove Furnace SP and Caledonia SP (PA)

This is [] a one day shakedown; [X] the first weekend shakedown; [] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Appalachian Trail - Pine Grove Furnace SP (Pennsylvania)

Ending Point: Appalachian Trail – Caledonia SP (Pennsylvania)

Note: You must leave one vehicle at Caledonia SP as you pass by on way to Pine Grove Furnace SP. That way, on Sunday morning, drivers can return for vehicles parked at Pine Gross Furnace SP.

Map name/section: I like the Appalachian Trail Guides, which break the hike into mileage-defined "chunks" with detailed trail descriptions, historical info, camping/lodging/parking/fee notes, etc. This hike is in the Pennsylvania volume (#5) of the series, ISBN: 0-917953-76-2.

Map type/availability: The trail guide and maps come together and can be purchased at outdoor outfitters. You can also use Keystone Trail Association Map 13, or Potomac Appalachian Trail Club's Map 2 & 3 (combined), entitled Michaux State Forest, PA.

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. Leaving Caledonia State Park, hiking in a gradual ascent for 3.4 miles, to the Toms Run shelters, where you can camp on Friday night. If they Adirondack shelters are in use, there is plenty of space for tent camping, for practice in setting up a Philmont-style campsite. There is a spring available near the shelters.
2. Saturday morning, leaving shelter, cross Toms Run. Blue-blazed Sunset Rock trail comes in from left. Ascend steep slope of Antmire Hill. After a total of about a mile since starting out, you'll cross Woodrow Rd.
3. Half mile later, at boundary of Tumbling Run Game preserve (private), turn right and parallel Ridge Rd., being careful not to follow Michaux Forest boundary markers, which are also white paint (like the AT). Cross then entrance road to the preserve about 8/10 mile later.
4. At crest of hill, trail turns left, crossing a snowmobile trail, at around 4 miles into day's hike. A mile later, you'll be crossing Arendtsville-Shippenburg Rd. (Possible side hike: Climb the Big Flat Tower)
5. A little over six miles into the day, you'll come to Birch Run shelters, and great water source. Nice spot for lunch.

6. Leaving shelters, you'll soon cross old road bed and pass under power lines. Half mile later you'll cross Michaux Forest's Rocky Knob trail. After another mile, you'll cross Ridge Rd. and descend steeply. About 3/10 mile later you'll cross Milesburn Rd., and have option of taking blue-blazed trail to right to a spring, if needed.
7. Continue hiking along AT. You'll cross intersection of Canada Hollow Rd., Means Hollow Rd., and Ridge Rd. (1/2 mile), then cross Middle Ridge Rd. (another half mile), cross TV cable line (another 1.5 miles), cross power line cut (another 4/10 mile).
8. A little less than a mile after crossing power line cut, you'll read Sandy Sod (junction of Ridge Rd. and Stillhouse Rd.), where AT goes ahead on Ridge Rd. for .1 mile and then turns left into woods and descends into Quarry Gap.
9. 1.3 miles later, AT turns left where stream comes in from right and continues downhill along stream. You will come to Quarry Gap shelters, where you can set up camp and spend the night. If the shelters are in use, take care in setting up your campsite, as the ground is almost completely rock covered and everyone must take care in walking and pitching equipment.
10. In the morning, back on the AT, (AT is gated as you leave, to control vehicle access) taking sharp right after leaving Quarry Gap Rd. AT takes a left fork and descends STEEPLY down Chinquapin Hill, which is rocky. At bottom of hill, you'll see the parking lot in the distance.

Daily Mileage:

Friday: 3.4 miles

Saturday: 13.7 miles

Sunday: 1.0 mile

NOTE: If you need a shorter Friday or Saturday, you can vary this hike by parking at unprotected lots. There are two choices – 2.0 miles out from Pine Grove Furnace, the trail crosses Michaux Road. Limited, unprotected parking; 8.4 miles out, the trail crosses Arendtville-Shippenburg Road, where there is more parking, but still unprotected.

Total elevation change on route: First six miles are continual, but gradual ascent. Over the course of the hike there are several opportunities to practice the caterpillar technique on steep, but fairly short ascents. Overall the elevation change is only about 600-1000' – this is NOT the shakedown to gain experience in elevation change.

Water sources on route:

1. Streams at each shelter site mentioned
2. Other sources as mentioned in description above

Camping restrictions or policies: Notify ranger office of your hike plan at each park.

Permits or fees required: no

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Fast food restaurants close by in "civilization."

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?:

This is my favorite *first* shakedown, because of several reasons. After driving to PA, you hike in the dark on Friday night, along the relative safety of the well-marked, white-blazed AT. Those 3.4 miles seem a lot longer in the dark, and while there is little chance of losing your way, it can be a bit intimidating to those not used to watching for trail blazes (in the dark). This presents a great Philmont lesson: YOU DO NOT WANT TO HIKE IN THE DARK. Secondly, this particular shakedown is about mileage and not extreme elevation change (we practice the elevation change during our next shakedown in Shenandoah National Park). The second day is a L-O-N-G day, although you're easily finished in daylight hours. There is a great mental confidence building in knowing that they hiked almost fourteen miles that day – longer than most any day they'll hike at Philmont. Finally, Sunday is short and sweet – just a painful descent down the steep, rocky Chinquapin Hill. It's a great practice for descending the backside of Mt. Phillips and – you'll know whose boots fit right when they descend those rocky switchbacks!

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Betty Steil

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Pine Grove Furnace SP to Caledonia SP

This is [] a one day shakedown; [x] the first weekend shakedown; [] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Rt. 233, PA

Ending Point: Caledonia State Park, Rt. 30, PA

Map name/section: AT PA Route 94 to US Route 30, PATC Map 2-3

Map type/availability: (Topo map? Where can it be purchased or obtained?) Topo. AT Guide book to PA by PATC gives good directions. Purchased at REI, Hudson Trails, Eastern Mountain Sports.

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. From backpackers' parking in Pine Grove State Park, follow trail markers towards Rt. 233.
2. Watch trail blazes closely as trail turns past other trails and roads to Toms Run Shelter. Camping in this area is more restrictive than in the past as PATC is trying to restore some areas from overuse. However, there is still quite a bit of space around the shelters.
3. Cross Toms Run and ascend Antmire Hill, a rocky climb sometimes wet.
4. Careful to follow AT markings along Tumbling Run Game Preserve here as markers for this private area are also white. We temporarily lost an advisor here because we didn't all stay together.
5. Cross snowmobile trail and then Arendtsville-Shippensburg Rd.
6. Birch Run shelters. These are small, but there are a number of other camping sites across the stream back in the woods.
7. Trail is straight forward to Quarry Gap shelters. If reversing this hike, although these are twin shelters and of fair size, there is not a lot of camping space around them for overflow if sharing.
8. Follow trail past shelter. Trail will turn right and then left onto forest roads but is well marked.
9. Descend steep Chinquapin Hill.
10. Continue ahead carefully watching white blazes through Caledonia State Park and going through parking lots, past restrooms and over creeks.
11. Reach Rt. 30 where AT crosses. You should have your car parked about ½ mile to the east along Rt. 30.

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Friday: 4 to Toms Run Shelter

Saturday: 6 to Birch Run shelter

Sunday: 10 to Rt. 30

Alternative starting at Caledonia:

Friday: 3 to Quarry Gap Shelter

Saturday: 7 to Birch Run shelters

Sunday: 10 to Pine Grove State Park

Difference in elevation between the lowest & highest point on route (for instance, if the lowest point is 800 ft. and the highest point is 2500 ft., the answer is 1700 ft): 1200 ft.

Water sources on route:

1. Spring about 1 ½ miles into hike
2. Spring at Tumbling Run shelters
3. Stream at Birch Run Shelters
4. Spring near Milesburn Cabin
5. Spring near Quarry Gap shelters

Camping restrictions or policies:

Limit size of group on AT to 10

Permits or fees required:

None on AT.

At both Pine Grove State Park and Caledonia, stop at the Park Rangers office and register your car.

This is especially important at Rt. 30. There is a parking lot across from Caledonia along Rt. 30 where you will be asked to leave your car and the State Police can keep an eye on it.

If want to use the pool at Caledonia State Park after the hike, fee. (\$2?)

Nearest junk food location for "après hike":

Danny A's along Rt. 30 east towards Gettysburg for a meal or just coffee

All the fast food places in Gettysburg

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?:

This makes a good first prep hike despite the distance. The trail is pine needle soft in places and heavily shaded so was cool even in the summer. There's plenty of water in springs and streams even in a drought season, so there was no anxiety about that for an early prep hike. There were several climbs that were appropriate for an early shakedown, but nothing that would scare anyone off. In trying to make this a two-nighter, the placement of the shelters didn't stretch a strong crew quite enough on Saturday, but we made up for it by practicing camp skills, baking cookies in a backpacker oven, and enjoying ourselves talking to other hikers. Alternately, you could stay at either Pine Grove Furnace (either at a campsite or at the Ironmasters Mansion Hostel there) or Caledonia State Park and hike 10 miles each day. However, as Marylanders, we do not qualify for the lower group site camping fee that we enjoy in MD and I thought the fees fairly steep.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Tom Beares _____

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Conestoga Trail

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [X] the second weekend shakedown
This is [X] a two day, one night shakedown. You could make this into two nights by staying at the
campground on Friday night and starting at the campground instead of at Lock 12. If you do this, the longest
part of your hike would be on Sunday.

Starting Point: PA 372 at Lock 12 Historic Area (before crossing Norman Wood Bridge)

Ending Point: Marctic Forge (we stop at Pequea Creek Campground which is about 1 mile less)

Map name/section: The Conestoga Trail at Lake Aldred

Map type/availability: (Topo map? Yes, but not the best.

Where can it be purchased or obtained? Call George Aukamp at 717-284-2278 or I can
provide a copy)

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. Start at Lock 12. Take some time to look at the ruins. There is a picnic area, a restroom and a playground.
2. Cross Norman Wood Bridge (about a .75 mile walk) – look to right to see Holtwood Dam Area
3. The trail leaves the road past the bridge – look for the blaze (I think it is on the guardrail)
4. Stop at Face Rock Overlook for good view of Holtwood Dam and power plant. On the opposite shore near the power line towers, you may see Bald Eagles.
5. Pass through Holtwood Recreation Area. This is a good spot for a break. There is a covered pavillion, a restroom and a playground.
6. Continue on to Pinnacle Overlook. This is the highest point along the Susquehanna River and has a spectacular view. This is a great spot for lunch. There are picnic tables, a restroom and a playground. This is also the Kellys Run Area with side trails you could take if ambitious or if you want to make sure you cover 15 miles for the backpacking merit badge. Maps are usually available on site.
7. Continue on to the overnight campsite. There are no facilities here, but you will see some fire rings. Water is available (water is not a problem anywhere along the trail).
8. On the second day, hike to House Rock. This is a great place for a late breakfast or a snack. The view here is also spectacular, and this is a great spot for a Scout's Own service.
9. Continue on to Wind Cave. This is touted as the only tectonic cave on the East Coast. This is a good place for lunch and you will want to spend some time in the cave. It is possible to see some of the cave with just a good flashlight, but serious exploring would require helmets and long pants/shirts. I have an old map I could copy if you are interested.
10. Continue on to Trolley Road. Starting from this point and all the way to the campground, it is flat and follows Pequea Creek.
11. When you arrive at the campground, there are picnic tables, a covered pavillion and a camp store.

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Saturday: About 9 miles

Sunday: About 5 miles

Total elevation change on route: About 500 feet. This may not sound like much, but the trail is extremely rugged. There are numerous ups & downs and many are very steep and rocky

Water sources on route:

1. Water is available at all picnic sites – in season.
2. There is an abundance of streams all along the trail – water must be purified.

Camping restrictions or policies: There is only one overnight spot. You must pack-it-in and pack-it-out.

Permits or fees required: No

Nearest junk food location for “après hike”: Pequea Creek Campground Store.

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?:

This is a great shakedown hike because it will test the hiking abilities of your crew. If they can survive this hike, they can survive any Philmont trek. The trails are very rugged and steep with many rocky sections, and obstacles to overcome such as downed trees and streams.

At Philmont, I am an advocate of packing up and hiking before breakfast in order to get to a scenic spot. This is a good hike for this too. The campsite is nestled down in a valley, but a hike of about 20 – 25 minutes will get you to one of the best views along the trail. Doing this hike helps to introduce that concept right from the start.

I also like this hike because of the points of interest mentioned above and because of the natural beauty of the area. With the rock formations, hemlock forests, streams and waterfalls, there is plenty of good scenery.

This hike works out nice for transportation too. If you contact the campground (717-284-4587) ahead of time, you can arrange to leave your vehicles within sight of the campground office/store. At lock 12, there is plenty of parking. So far, we have experienced no problems with vandalism.

FEET

CONESTOGA TRAIL

13,000

12,000

11,000

10,000

9,000

8,000

7000

6000

5000

4000

3000

2000

1000

LOCK 12

CROSS ROAD
SUBSTN.

ROAD
WATER

KELLYS RUN

KELLYS RUN

HOLLYWOOD O.L.

CROSSING
TUQUAN

SERVICE ROAD
REED RUN CAMP

BRUBAKER RUN
HOUSE ROCK RUN

PEQUEA
ROADS

TRAILER
PARK
COVERED
BRIDGE

MARTIC FORGE

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

MILES

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Wally Feurtado

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Dark Hollow Falls, Shenandoah National Park

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown [X] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Big Meadows Campground, Shenandoah National Park

Ending Point: Big Meadows Campground, Shenandoah National Park

Hike Description:

1. Hike nature trail Dark Hollow Falls Trail.
2. Continue down Dark Hollow Falls past the falls to the jeep trail.
3. Cross over the bridge and hike down the Rose River Falls Loop Trail
4. There are several places to play in the water!!!
5. At the bottom, hike up the Rose River Falls Loop Trail.
6. There are several places to play in the water!!!
7. Cross over Skyline Drive to the Appalachian Trail and hike North to Rock Springs Hut Trail.
8. Continue on the AT North about 100' to an overgrown jeep trail and camp COMPLETELY hidden from the jeep trail and the AT (\$50 fine).
9. After dinner, day hike to the top of Hawksbill Mountain (the lights in the valley are beautiful).
10. Return the same way or hike the AT South to Big Meadows Campground.

Map: Shenandoah National Park - Central Section

Daily mileage (as appropriate):

Saturday - 7 backpacking, 3 day hiking

Sunday - 5 backpacking

Total elevation change on route: - 1,200

Water sources along route:

1. Rose River
2. At the Rock Springs Hut, there is a Spring

Camping restrictions or policies:

1. No camping at the Rock Springs Hut
2. Backpacking Permit is REQUIRED (\$50 fine)
3. Only 10 in crew. Split up crew if more than 10.

Permits & fees required: Regular National Park Fees

Nearest fast food joint:

1. Big Meadows Campground Snack Bar

Why is this your favorite shakedown hike, and what aspect of the hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for a Philmont trek?:

1. In Maryland, there are not real climbs and this provides a Philmont like hike elevation change.
2. This is usually my second shakedown hike and the purpose is to be fun and hone the Philmont in-camp skills. The water makes it really enjoyable.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: John Hutter

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: On the AT – note: we hike this in two days (Sat-Sun)

This is [] a one day shakedown; [X] the first weekend shakedown; [] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: AT in PA at Old Forge Rd (ref map 4 AT , US rt 30 to PA-MD line)

Ending Point: AT in MD at Wolfsville Rd

Map name/section: Map 4 (PA) & maps 5&6 (MD)

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

22. take follow AT south

23. etc. etc.

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Friday:

Saturday: 11 miles

Sunday: 4 miles

Total elevation change on route: 900'

Water sources on route:

3. at shelters and at Wolfsville Rd..

Camping restrictions or policies: camp at shelter areas

Permits or fees required: none

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": none – carry it with you

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?:

Closely simulates hills and hiking conditions. Puts heaviest load on first day.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Richard Schlosser

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Bear's Den to Reservoir Hollow on the Appalachian Trail

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [x] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Bear's Den Hostel, AT in Northern Virginia

Ending Point: Sat Night at Reservoir Hollow, return to Bear's Den Hostel on Sunday

Map name/section: Appalachian Trail, Northern Virginia. Use AT Map #8, Snickers Gap to Chester Gap

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

Day One

Bears Den, 1300 feet

1.7 mi, Spout Run, 750 feet (100 foot saddle on the way)

2.4 mi, Hill, 1300 feet

3.0 mi, Sam Moore Shelter, 900 feet (nice place for a rest especially on a rainy day)

3.4 mi, Tomlin Hill, 1200 feet

3.9 mi, Fent Wiley Hollow, 800 feet

4.6 mi, Buzzard Hill, 1250 feet

5.6 mi, Reservoir Hollow, 1000 feet

Total ascents = 1400 feet

Total Descents = 1700 feet

Reverse the trail the next day to get a total of 11.2 miles and elevation change of 6200 feet

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Friday: None

Saturday: 6 miles

Sunday: 6 miles

Total elevation change on route: 550' - Roller coaster trail with continuously ascending or descending sections. This trail offers several challenging ascents each day.

Water sources on route:

Year round water at Bear's Den at outdoor faucet. Several streams along the trail, but may not be available during dry season. Reservoir Hollow almost always flows year round. Double check with staff at Bear's Den.

Camping restrictions or policies: Must reserve sites at Bear's Den in advance. Bears Den Hostel is near Snickers Gap at Route 7 in Virginia. Parking is available at the lower lot of the Hostel if you let the caretakers know in advance that you are going to leave cars overnight.

Permits or fees required: \$3.00 per tent for primitive site at Bear's Den (does not include hostel privileges)

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Harpers Ferry, WV

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?: Physically challenging, constant elevation changes but short enough hike to allow time for training and reflection. Nice camp at Reservoir Hollow. Must get in early to get a prime spot.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Jack Hitchens

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: AT at Caledonia SP North to Dead Women Hollow Rd.

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [X] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Caledonia SP (parking available in park)

Ending Point: Dead Women Hollow Rd. (easy to find for driver pick-up)

Map name/section: Potomac AT club – Appalachian Trail, PA

Map type/availability: Topo maps available at Adventure Bound, REI. Also, "Exploring the Appalachian Trail Hikes in the Mid-Atlantic States" offers a lot of trivia and history of the areas hiked and trail tips.

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. Caledonia SP to AT, well marked. First night stop at dusk to set-up camp off trail hike @ 2 miles. (We asked permission from Ranger before doing this.) Beautiful scenery; plenty of water; numerous elevation changes.)
2. Lunch at Milesburn Cabin then on to Birch Run Camp - Good place to practice site selection and setup
3. Third day, short hike to Dead Womens Hollow Rd.

Daily Mileage

Friday: 1.5-2 miles

Saturday: 8-9.5 miles

Sunday: 1.5 miles

Total elevation change on route: 900-2000'

Water sources on route:

1. Natural water streams/springs
2. Water at beginning of trail in state park

Camping restrictions or policies: Get permission to camp off-trail if not able to make AT campsites

Permits or fees required: none

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Not far from Gettysburg, PA; plenty of places there.

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?:

We practice cooking and camp setup. It also allowed the scouts to evaluate the gear they were carrying.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Stan Freedman

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Washington Monument State Park to Annapolis Rock and back

This is [] a one day shakedown; [X] the first weekend shakedown; [] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Washington Monument State Park

Ending Point: Washington Monument State Park

Map name/section: Potomac Appalachian Trail Club Maps – Map 5 & 6 (Map 5 has the hike)

Map type/availability: Topo map with trail profile. It can be purchased at any outfitter and many bookstores

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. Hike starts at Washington Monument State Park
2. Follow the AT North for 5 miles to Annapolis Rock (marked with a sign a blue blaze)
3. Return on the AT headed South the next day

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Saturday: 5 Miles

Sunday: 5 Miles

Difference in elevation between the lowest & highest point on route:

- Hike starts at 1500 feet
- Hike ends at about 1560 feet

Water sources on route:

1. Pine Knob Shelter
2. Annapolis Rock

Camping restrictions or policies: None

Permits or fees required: None

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Fast Food along Route 70

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?:

This is a good first weekend overnigher. Although there is little elevation change from end to end it features a steep uphill just after Pine Knob followed by a gradual uphill to Annapolis Rock. The view from Annapolis Rock on one of the best in Maryland and is great place for "Thorns and Roses". The return trip has another steep uphill from the powerlines to the Washington Monument. The crew enjoys going to the top of the Monument before heading home. Annapolis Rock is a good place to camp, with plenty a space for the crew to be by themselves, although once we ran into some young adults with non-Scout beverages. Most of the hike is flat except for the 2 steep parts which make it a good first outing.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Rick Barton

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: AT from Harper's Ferry to Snicker's Gap.

This is [] a one day shakedown; [X] the first weekend shakedown; [] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Harpers Ferry, WVA

Ending Point: Snickers Gap / Bluemont, VA

Map name/section: Appalachian Trail, Map 7, Northern Virginia

Map type/availability: (Topo map? Where can it be purchased or obtained?) Any Outfitter & Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 118 Park St. SE, Vienna, VA 22180

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. Parking on US 340 between the Potomac bridges east and west of Harpers Ferry
2. West along US 340 to the trailhead for Loudon Heights trail
3. South on Loudon Heights to the AT, then south on AT, 11 miles to
4. Overnite at Blackburn Trail Center
5. Second Day; south on AT, 7+ miles to Snickers Gap at VA Rt. 7.

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Friday:

Saturday: 11 miles

Sunday: 7+ miles

Difference in elevation between the lowest & highest point on route (for instance, if the lowest point is 800 ft. and the highest point is 2500 ft., the answer is 1700 ft):

Low Pt. 300 ft.

High Pt. 1700 ft.

Total vertical change; 7400 ft over 18 miles

Water sources on route:

1. Spare on day one, plenty at the Blackburn Center
2. Day 2; springs mid way.

Camping restrictions or policies: Standard AT Restrictions and courtesies

Permits or fees required: public parking areas, commuter lots

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Tons in Harper's Ferry and towards Frederick on US 340 in MD.

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?:

Beautiful walk, particularly in the late spring. Lots of vertical, particularly starting south out of Harper's Ferry (1000 ft in the first 1.2 miles). Day 2 is short, but a roller coaster.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Betty Steil

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Snickers Gap to Keys Gap (Harpers Ferry)

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [x] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Snickers Gap (Rt. 7 VA)

Ending Point: Keys Gap (Rt. 9 VA) or Harpers Ferry, WV

Map name/section: AT in Northern VA Potomac VA to Snickers Gap Map 7

Map type/availability: (Topo map? Where can it be purchased or obtained?) Topo. AT Guide book to MD and Northern VA by PATC gives good directions. Purchased at REI, Hudson Trails, Eastern Mountain Sports.

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. If staying at Bear Den hostel on Friday, it can be reach from a trail from the parking lot or walk down Rt. 7 to the AT. Head south until reach the sign to the hostel. Follow AT north in morning.
2. Cross Rt. 7 watching for AT markings in media strip and up Rt. 679. Watch carefully for trail markers.
3. First several miles ascend and descend. Nice views from Crescent Rock, popular with rock climbers so be careful of their ropes often crossing the trail. Guide books warn of rattlesnakes on rocks in warm weather.
4. Cross boulder field (Devils Racecourse)
5. Couple more miles of roller coaster.
6. Blackburn Center Campground.
7. Buzzard Rocks. Side trail here for view. Easy to miss.
8. David Lesser shelter.
9. Easy trail to Rt. 9 at Keys Gap.
10. From here to Loundon Heights above Harpers Ferry, the trail is easy.
11. Descend Loundon Heights into Harpers Ferry.

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Friday: If want to start Friday night, can stay at Bears Den Hostel ½ mile to the south of Snickers Gap

Saturday: 11 to David Lesser shelter backpacking

Sunday: 3 to Keys Gap; If want to make this more challenging, go on to Harpers Ferry for 9.5

Alternative:

Friday: same as above

Saturday: 7 to Blackburn Center Campground

Sunday: 7 to Keys Gap, or return to Snickers Gap

Difference in elevation between the lowest & highest point on route (for instance, if the lowest point is 800 ft. and the highest point is 2500 ft., the answer is 1700 ft): 700 ft. to Keys Gap; 1200 ft into Harpers Ferry

Water sources on route:

1. Sand Spring 3 miles from Snickers Gap near Devils Racecourse
2. Blackburn Center by side trail (not dependable in winter)
3. Spring David Lesser Shelter (if drought, check ahead)
4. If going on to Harpers Ferry, store near where cross Rt. 9, 3 miles from David Lesser shelter

Camping restrictions or policies:

Limit size of group on AT to 10

Permits or fees required:

None on AT.

Parking is a problem in Harpers Ferry unless recently changed. We have parked at the ATC lot with permission. You can also park overnight at the Harpers Ferry National Park area and take a visitors' bus. \$5.

Good overnight parking at Snickers Gap in a commuter parking lot. Keys Gap parking is limited.

Nearest junk food location for "après hike":

Store near where Rt. 9 crosses AT

Harpers Ferry

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?:

The first half is the northern end of what is referred to as the roller coaster, so that part was challenging, but had some nice views. We enjoyed watching people rock climb on Crescent Rock and listening to a band practice somewhere in the valley below us. We had to work a bit for our water as this was the spring of the drought, so we got accustomed to putting a little effort into filtering and purifying. Lastly, aspects that might never be duplicated but made the hike special: we were fortunate to be sharing the trail with long-distance hikers that welcomed chatting with us. They shared some treasured leftover pizza and steak with the boys, and the next day a "trail angel" had left bottles of 7-up for our whole crew along the trail. Another time we did this hike, it coincided with the meteor shower. This time we share the David Lesser area with about 40 Boy Scouts who woke us up at 4 am to share an amazing light show. You'll probably share this hike with other Scouts.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Richard Ewald

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Old Rag (Shenandoah National Park)

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [X] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: NPS Parking Lot for Old Rag

Ending Point: NPS Parking lot for Old Rag

Map type/availability: EMS or Hudson Trail Outfitters

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

Old Rag Mountain (3291ft) is the most spectacular mountain in the northern Virginia Blue Ridge. Unlike most of the mountains in the Blue Ridge, it stands alone as an outlying mountain rather than as part of a continuous chain. Old Rag is a popular hike in all seasons; on weekends it can be crowded. Old Rag's attractions include a rugged scramble over and through boulders on the Ridge Trail and spectacular views in all direction. This circuit includes two shelters with fireplaces that can be used for cooking. Camping is not permitted above 2500 ft.

Travel Directions:

Take the Capital Beltway(495) to I66 West in Virginia, Take exit for Rt 29/211 South(Gainsville), stay on 211 towards and through Warrenton Virginia. Follow signs for Skyline Drive. You will Pass through Warrenton and will make a right to stay on 211. Stay on 211 until Sperryville. Take US 522 to SR 231, which is 0.8 mi south of Sperryville, VA and 12.7 mil north of Madison, VA. go south 8.3 mi on SR 231, cross Hughes River, and immediately turn right (west) onto SR 602. Stay on left side of Hughes River. route number changes to 601, 707, and then 600. do not cross Hughes River. After 3.5 mi from SR 231, just beyond Nethers, VA, and SNP parking area accommodates 200 cars. Park here and walk 0.8 mi to small parking area at end of SR 600.

(Lat:38.56 Lon:-78.3)

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Saturday: 4

Sunday: 3

Difference in elevation between the lowest & highest point on route (for instance, if the lowest point is 800 ft. and the highest point is 2500 ft., the answer is 1700 ft): 2200

Water sources on route:

1. At the Shelters(check with the ranger for flow rate) recommend purification of the water before drinking.

Camping restrictions or policies:

Can not camp above 2500 ft Elevation

Permits or fees required:

A \$5 fee will be charged for each person over 16. Must fill out a backpacking permit with the ranger before heading out.

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Warrenton Va.

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?: Old Rag Mountain (3291ft) is the most spectacular mountain in the northern Virginia Blue Ridge with all types of terrain. Great elevation gain for a training hike.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Betty Steil

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [x] the second weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Elkwallow Wayside at Mile Post 24 on the Skyline Drive

Ending Point: Elkwallow Wayside at Mile Post 24

Map name/section: Shenandoah National Park – North Section; Trails Illustrated Map 228: Map 9

Map type/availability: (Topo map? Where can it be purchased or obtained?) Topo or description in "Circuit hikes in Shenandoah National Park" by PATC gives good directions

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. From the north side of the Elkwallow Wayside parking lot, find AT south-bound trail.
2. At cement post follow Jermeys Run Trail.
3. At second cement post turn right to Knob Mtn. Cutoff Trail. Cross Jeremy's Run and begin ascent.
4. Pass cement post at junction with Knob Mtn. Trail. Turn left onto Knob Mtn. Trail. Continue steady uphill climb to summit of Knob Mtn. (marked with cement post).
5. Descend through series of switchbacks to Jeremys Run.
6. Cross Jeremys Run looking for yellow blaze and cement marker. At this point could continue straight and finish hike on Neighbor Mtn. Making the mileage a little longer but staying out of the water if it too high.
7. Turn left to another cement post about 45 ft at a fork. Take the left fork up Jeremys Run or right fork up Neighbor Mtn. Jeremys Run trail is marked with blue blazes.
8. After about the 3 time crossing Jeremys Run, there's some backcountry camping spots. Must be out of site of trail. Definitely wildlife here. We saw a bear and had deer in our camp. Zillions of ticks.
9. Continue up Jeremys Run passing another cement post. Will see AT come in from south.
10. Follow AT north bound to starting point at parking lot.

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Saturday: 9 backpacking

Sunday: 5 backpacking

Difference in elevation between the lowest & highest point on route (for instance, if the lowest point is 800 ft. and the highest point is 2500 ft., the answer is 1700 ft): 1600 ft. but total elevation changes 2600 ft

Water sources on route:

1. Jeremy's Run

Camping restrictions or policies:

Backpacking permit is required in Shenandoah National Park

Permits or fees required:

Entrance to Shenandoah National Park (\$10)

Nearest junk food location for "après hike":

Absolute nearest is short-order cooking at Elkwallow Wayside in season. Good.

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?:

Crossing Jeremys Run 14 times, several places relatively deep, required the crew to slow down and help each other. While this section was considerably slower going than blazing along the AT, we had quite a bit of "fun" with the stream. We also got wet, saw a bear, deer, and had altogether more of a wilderness experience than we had had along the AT in southern PA, MD, and northern VA. The area is also loaded with ticks – a negative.



Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Mike Sledzik

email address:

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Washington Monument SP or Gathland SP to Weverton Cliffs

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [x] other weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Gathland St. Park AT Trail or Washington Memorial St. Park

Ending Point: same

Map name/section: AT Sectional Maps, Maps 5 & 6

Map type/availability: (Topo map? Where can it be purchased or obtained?) Topo, local outfitters

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. AT trail to Weverton Cliff overlooking the Potomac

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Gathland SP to Weverton Cliffs = 6 miles one way

WMSP to Weverton Cliffs = 15 miles one way

Garvey Shelter = 2 miles north of Weverton Cliffs

Elevation between the lowest & highest point on route: Rolling terrain between 800 feet and 1700 feet

Water sources on route:

1. WMSP
2. Dahlgren BP Campground
3. Rocky Run Shelter
4. Crampton Gap (Gathland)
5. Garvey Shelter

Camping restrictions or policies: Camping at designated sites only

Permits or fees required: None

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Frederick, MD

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont? This was our last and best shakedown. The guys had their camping and hiking skills down pat and the scenery at the cliffs by the Potomac was very enjoyable.



Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: John Stricker

email address: jfstricker@comcast.net

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: AT south from Bear's Den to Sky Meadows State Park

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [X] other weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Bear's Den at Snicker's Gap

Ending Point: Sky Meadows State Park

Map name/section: AT Trail Map 8

Map type/availability: (Topo map? Where can it be purchased or obtained?) Topo available at REI or library

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

1. Hike AT south out of Bear's Den to Rod Hollow shelter, several nice views along the way.
2. Hike south on AT from Rod Hollow uphill to Sky Meadow St. Park. Not very scenic until you get to the top of the mountain looking down on the park.

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Friday: none

Saturday: 10 miles to Rod Hollow shelter

Sunday: 7 miles to Sky Meadows State Park

Difference in elevation between the lowest & highest point on route (for instance, if the lowest point is 800 ft. and the highest point is 2500 ft., the answer is 1700 ft): A roller coaster varying from 800 ft to 1800 ft, total elevation change greater than 6000 feet.

Water sources on route:

1. Several water sources during first six miles, Rod Hollow Shelter at mile 10, mile 14 after crossing Rt. 50 and then none until you reach the park

Camping restrictions or policies: Must make reservations at Bear's Den (info@bearsdencenter.org)

Permits or fees required: \$5 per Scout per night at Bear's Den

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Frederick, MD

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont? This is probably the most difficult piece of the AT through MD/VA. The elevation changes are many and will add approx. 5 hours to your 2 mph pace on day one. There are four 500' climbs and several lesser ones on day one. Day two includes a three mile hike up to the park with an elevation increase of 900'. This trail will test your crew's physical preparedness. Don't use this hike for an early shakedown.



Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: John Lockwood

email address: jrockwoo@hotmail.com

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Laurel Highland Hiking Trail

This is a one day shakedown; the first weekend shakedown; other weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Laurel Ridge State Park, PA

Ending Point: Ohiopyle, PA

Map name/section: Maps can be downloaded from <http://franusich.com/trails/lhht/>

Map type/availability: Maps can be downloaded from <http://franusich.com/trails/lhht/>

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

The Laurel Highland Hiking Trail runs 70 miles from Ohiopyle to Laurel Ridge State Park in PA. An excellent description can be found at: http://www.kta-hike.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=138&Itemid=65.

One could use this trail for a single day, two day or multi-day shakedown. We did the 19 mile section north of Ohiopyle. Outfitters in Ohiopyle will provide shuttle service for a reasonable fee. We used this and hiked back to our cars, spending one night at a campsite about half way. Campsites can be reserved at the Pa. DNR web site. We camped at Ohiopyle State Park on Friday to get an early start. They have youth group camping areas at a reasonable rate. Reserve early – in the spring, many scout groups come to experience the whitewater rafting.

Any section of the trail is good for group hiking. It is possible to pick several sections of around 10 miles for multi-day hikes. The views are spectacular.

Caution – switchbacks are not the norm on this trail. It frequently runs right up the hill. This is not a hike for beginners – the inclines (up and down) can be strenuous.

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Friday: As much as you can do

Saturday: As much as you can do

Sunday: As much as you can do

Difference in elevation between the lowest & highest point on route (for instance, if the lowest point is 800 ft. and the highest point is 2500 ft., the answer is 1700 ft): ~2400 feet, depends on section hiked – see description.

Water sources on route: See map and trail notes on the website.

1. Frequent stream crossings allow for refill. Camp sites have pumps, but water has iron taste.
2. Camp sites have pumps, but water has iron taste.

Camping restrictions or policies: Must camp in provided sites.

Permits or fees required: Camping requires a reservation fee.

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Ohiopyle, PA or anywhere along I-68

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?

This trail took us away from the crowds on the AT. Our experience has been that many local groups head to the AT in the spring for shakedowns. This one is a bit further to drive, but is worth it for the views and solitude.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Scott Bemis

email address: sbemis1@comcast.net

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Gunpowder State Park, Hereford, MD

This is a one day shakedown; the first weekend shakedown; other weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Trail Head: 1) York Rd & Bunker Hill Rd or 2) York Rd & Gunpowder River

Ending Point: Camp Wood, Gunpowder State Park

Map name/section: Maps available at Monkton NCR Bike Trail station

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

1 in, 1 out. The distance may be varied as desired using different approach/departure trails

Difference in elevation between the lowest & highest point on route: Nominal

Water sources on route:

River (filtering/treating applies)

Spigot at rest station

Camping restrictions or policies:

MD DNR group camp

Permits or fees required: None for one day shakedown if you ask nice.

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Hereford.

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?

It is close, trails in are lightly used, plenty of space to setup / tear down in secluded area.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Scott Bemis email address: sbemis1@comcast.net

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Ashby's Gap Va to Snicker's Gap Va

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [X] other weekend shakedown

Starting Point: Ashby's Gap Va (Rte 50 & Blue Ridge Mtn Rd)

Ending Point: Snicker's Gap (Rte 7 & Blue Ridge Mtn Rd)

Map name/section: AT VA aka 'roller coaster' (Northbound)

Map type/availability: (Topo map? Where can it be purchased or obtained?)

AT section or online

<http://www.cs.utk.edu/~dunigan/at>

http://www.emotivellcdev.com/atc/atc_less_segments/mapimage.html

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

Access AT just north of Rte 50 on Blue Ridge Mtn Rd in VA (south of Harper's Fy)

Overnight at Sam Moore Shelter

End at Rte 7 just west of Blue Ridge Mtn Rd in VA

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Friday: n/a

Saturday: 10.5 mi

Sunday: 3 mi

Water sources on route:

Rod Hollow Shelter (3 mi from start)

Sam Moore Shelter (10.5 mi from start)

Bears Den Hostel (Northern end of hike)

Camping restrictions or policies: Usually no fires

Permits or fees required: n/a

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?

Plenty of elevation change, longish first day.

Favorite Philmont Shakedown

Name: Scott Bemis email address: sbemis1@comcast.net

Favorite Philmont Shakedown: Ensign Cowell to Caledonia State Park, Appalachian Trail

This is [] a one day shakedown; [] the first weekend shakedown; [X] other weekend shakedown
Allows 3 nights out and lots of options for early exit

Starting Point: Ensign Cowell Shelter near Mt Aetna MD

Ending Point: Caledonia St Pk, Rte 30, PA

Map type/availability: (Topo map? Where can it be purchased or obtained?)

AT Section or online

<http://www.cs.utk.edu/~dunigan/at>

http://www.emotivellcdev.com/atc/atc_less_segments/mapimage.html

Hike Description (include trail names, landmarks, points of interest, etc.):

Access AT trail at Ensign Cowell Shelter for Friday night overnight

Hike to Devil's Racecourse shelter

Hike to Caledonia St Park PA

Daily Mileage (as applicable)

Friday: 1 mi

Saturday: 6 mi

Sunday: 13 mi

Monday: 7 mi

Water sources on route:

Spring at Ensign Cowell Shelter

Spring at Devil's Racecourse shelter

Spring at shelter

Fountain at Caledonia State Park

Others as indicated on AT map.

Camping restrictions or policies: subject to AT guidelines

Permits or fees required: n/a

Nearest junk food location for "après hike": Ice cream shop on Rte 30 between Caledonia and Gettysburg, or Gettysburg eateries.

Why is this your favorite Philmont shakedown, and what aspect of this hike is particularly meaningful for preparing for Philmont?

Multiple overnight with long middle day for those taking the longer treks. Not for inexperienced or young crew. Many access points and options for different length days.