

# ~ CIMARRON DAY TRIP #1 ~

## The Philmont Scout Ranch & The Sangre de Cristo Mountains

**Total distance:** 40 miles

**Estimated duration:** ~2 hours, depending on length of stops

From mid-June to the end of August, over 20,000 Boy Scouts from around the world come to the Philmont Scout Ranch to hike her majestic mountains. This 137,493 acre ranch was given by Waite Phillips (of the Phillips 66 family) to the Boy Scouts of America to be used as a high adventure base and working ranch. Your trip begins at the intersection of Highways 64 and State Road 21 at the west end of Cimarron and travels south along the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail fronting the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range. The map provides visual clues to the Waypoints listed below (mileage is approximate). Comments and additions to Historic Markers are given in brackets. Be sure to check out the following 3 historic markers:

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### MARKER ONE:

#### Adjacent to the Visitor Center

**Cimarron** – This village on the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail was settled around 1844. In 1857 it became the home of Lucien B. Maxwell, and headquarters for the famous Maxwell Land Grant of almost 2,000,000 acres. An agency for Utes and Jicarilla Apaches was located here from 1862 to 1876. [Stop at the Old Mill Museum on the Walking Tour of Old Town.]

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*Markers 2 & 3 lie across Hwy 64 from the Visitor Center, in front of the Cimarron Inn, one marker on each side of the Santa Fe Trail Byway Interpretive Center:*

### MARKER TWO:

**Santa Fe Trail**— Opened by William Becknell in 1821, the Santa Fe Trail became the major trade route to Santa Fe from Missouri River towns. The two main branches, the Cimarron Cutoff and the Mountain Branch, joined at Watrous. Travel over the Trail ceased with the coming of the railroad in 1879.

The difficulty of bringing caravans over rocky and mountainous Raton Pass kept most wagon traffic on the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail until the 1840s. Afterwards, the Mountain Branch, which here approaches Raton Pass, became more popular with traders, immigrants, gold-seekers, and government supply trains.

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### MARKER THREE:

**Colfax County War** —For twenty years after the 1869 sale of the Maxwell Land Grant, homesteaders, ranchers, and miners fought the new owners for control of this enormous region. The resulting murders and general breakdown of law and order led to the removal from office, in 1878, of Territorial Governor Samuel B. Axtell. [Lew Wallace, the author of *Ben Hur*, replaced Axtell as governor of the Territory of New Mexico.]

**Black Jack's Hideout**— In Turkey Creek Canyon near here the outlaw gang of Thomas "Black Jack" Ketchum had one of its hideouts. After a train robbery in July 1899, a posse surprised the gang at the hideout. The outlaws scattered after a bloody battle and the Ketchum gang was broken up. [During the shootout, Black Jack's brother Sam was wounded and later captured. He died shortly thereafter in prison from the infected wound.]

**Mileage to Wpt Notes**

- 0 1 Begin the tour by driving south on SR 21 from Hwy 64 at the west end of Cimarron. SR 21 follows along the Santa Fe Trail for the next 13.5 miles. As you leave town and after you pass the sign for the Cemetery, on your right is a historic marker: **Philmont Scout Ranch** – Oklahoma oilman Waite Phillips gave this 137,000 acre property to the Boy Scouts of America in 1938 and 1941. The first National Boy Scout Camp ever established, Philmont now hosts young men from all over the world. Kit Carson, Lucien B. Maxwell, and Dick Wootten were important in the history of the area.
- 4.0 2 After passing open fields with a view of mountains on your right and the high plains on your left, you will begin to see **buildings**. On your left you will pass **Villa Philmonte**, the mansion built by Waite Phillips. *(guided tours—take about 1 hour)*
- 0.5 3 Shortly after passing the Villa, set back from the road is a brown adobe building, the **Philmont Museum and Seton Memorial Library**. There is a parking lot just off the road on your left. You may ask about a Villa tour at the Museum, as well as see an exhibition of museum items or purchase books and jewelry. Inquire at the Museum about the **Philmont Trading Post**, where Boy Scouts stock up on needed (and forgotten) camping supplies before they head off on their hike (typically 50 to 100 miles long). *(takes as long as you wish to spend)*
- 1.0 4 After visiting the Museum, continue south on SR 21. Shortly, you will veer left and climb a small hill where a **pullout offers magnificent views** of the plains, mountains and Philmont headquarters. **The Casa de Gavilan Bed and Breakfast** is a short distance off the road toward the mountains.
- 5.6 5 If you have time, continue south along SR 21 to the former Army Post and **home of Kit Carson at Rayado**, which dates from the 1850s. From mid-June to mid-August the Post is staffed by Philmont Museum personnel and is open to the public as a museum. Be sure not to miss the quaint **Catholic Chapel** and a reconstruction of **Lucien Maxwell’s original house**. *(could spend at least an hour here)*
- 4.6 6 At this point you may either turn around and head back to Cimarron or continue on SR 21 to a small lake (**Miami Lake**). If the lake is placid, look for the reflection of the Tooth of Time Mountain in its waters.
- 5.9 7 Continue on to the “town” of Miami. If the weather is nice, look for the road sign on your left near the center of “town” indicating Salado Creek Road (CR 11). Turn left (north) on this dirt road and drive straight into ranch land.
- 1.5 8 At the first intersection, about 1.5 miles down the road, turn left.
- 0.9 9 After passing two homes on your right, at the first intersection, turn right (north) – look for the Miami Lane (CR 12) road sign on the far corner. Follow this road through a few curves (drive slowly!).
- 7.0 10 The **views from this country lane of ranch land** and the **Sangre de Cristo Mountains** in the near distance are picture-perfect. Take note of the **cholla cacti** in the fields and a **pronghorn antelope or coyote** might also be seen.
- 2.5 11 Continue on until you reach the intersection of SR 58 and turn left.
- 4.9 12 The **tour ends** upon arrival at the intersection of Hwy 64 in Cimarron.

