

APRIL – FINDING YOUR ADVENTURE

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OWEN: Hey, Scouters! I'm Owen McCulloch. Welcome to April ScoutCast by *Scouting Magazine*. With me, as always, is my podcast partner, Anissa Hicks.

ANISSA: Hey, Owen! Okay, listeners, the topic for this month is Finding Your Adventure! Whether you live in the north, south, east or west part of the grand ol' USA, the BSA has a high adventure base for you!

OWEN: And you're not limited to going to the one near you. Oh, no!. Each provides different adventures so you can pick the one that is right for you.

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OWEN: And here to guide you along Finding Your Adventure is Lonnah Curry. Welcome to ScoutCast, Lonnah. Why don't you tell us a little about yourself?

LONNAH: Hi, Owen, thanks. It's great to be here. So I've worked for the Boy Scouts of America for 20 years and I've recently had the pleasure of visiting all four bases. They each are so unique and fantastic. They offer everything for everybody. And I'm encouraged and excited to talk about 'em.

OWEN: Very cool. So, you mentioned four of them, so what are the National High Adventure Bases?

LONNAH: We have Sea Base in the Florida Keys, we have Philmont Scout Ranch, we have Northern Tier, and we have the Summit Bechtel Reserve. The High Adventure Bases are premier outdoor experience centers of the Boy Scouts of America. They facilitate activities and experiences that allow our youth to learn and grow, develop leadership experiences, challenge themselves; just experience adventures of a lifetime. The large variety of opportunities at each one of our bases is offered in some of the most remote and beautiful camping locations that the BSA has to offer.

ANISSA: I'm excited to learn more, so let's start with the Florida Sea Base. Where is it and what kind of activities does it offer?

LONNAH: So, the Sea Base is literally located in Paradise. It operates in the Bahamas' St. Thomas, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the beautiful Florida Keys. It has many different program activities and opportunities including BSA Family Adventure Camp opportunities.

OWEN: So, Lonnah, I know that when a group gets to a High Adventure Base we call them crews, whether it's a troop or a venturing crew or a Sea Scout ship or even a post. At the High Adventure Bases they call them crews. So, how does a crew need to register and can individuals go?

LONNAH: So, at Sea Base, registrations are made as a unit, or as a crew, as you referenced. The crew sizes range from six to eight individuals and they go up to as many as 20.

ANISSA: When do these adventures occur?

LONNAH: Well, their winter season begins December 26th, (and) spring season runs mid-February through late April, and summer season kicks off with mid-May and ends in late August.

OWEN: So, in addition to all of the cool aquatic stuff that they're doing there, are there opportunities for advancement or awards while they're at Sea Base?

LONNAH: Oh, definitely. Sea Base has 19 different activities and programs going on at their base. They are also the only Scout Center of Excellence for nature and environment location for the World Organization of Scouting Movement here in the United States, so that provides some very unique opportunities to our participants. Each participant has the opportunity to earn this award while they're at Sea Base, in addition to all the kayaking, paddle-boarding, and the wide variety of PADI scuba specialties that's available at the program at Sea Base.

OWEN: That is cool. I had the opportunity to be Director of Program at Sea Base for four years, and just the kind adventures you get there are unlike

anything anywhere else. Oftentimes Sea Base gets categorized as the Club Med of High Adventure Bases, but there's nothing easy about living on a 41-foot boat with eight other people plus a captain for week at a time when your whole world moves side to side. So, there are certainly unique challenges on, in, and under the water at Sea Base. Let's go from the south to the north. We've got a program up at Northern Tier. Can you tell us a little bit about where is it and what kinds of activities do they offer?

LONNAH: Northern Tier is unique in its own right. It has three relocations to choose from. So, in the summer it operates out of Ely, Minnesota, and Ontario, Canada, and Manitoba, Canada. All three locations offer things like Wilderness Canoe Treks for Scouts ages 14 and older. They offer Order of the Arrow High Adventure programs, Forest Corps Environmental Education programs, and a variety of things. During the winter, Northern Tier operates out of the Ely, Minnesota base, and it offers Wilderness Winter Camping. Their program there is called Okpik. And while this program has a wider age range – 11 years old and up – there's different program options and options that are limited by the age of the Scout and the crew that's participating.

ANISSA: Okay. Is this for individuals or does a crew – a girl troop, boy troop – need to register?

LONNAH: Most of the Northern Tier programs are registered by crew, however, they do offer a full run of individual programs in both the summer and the winter, so both options are available. Aside from the environmental education and conservation programs, Scouts can sign up as individuals

for the traditional wilderness canoeing and winter camping programs as well.

OWEN: You mentioned our summer and winter programs and in three different locations. It sounds like canoeing is a big part of it; certainly in the wintertime canoeing can't be what they're doing, so really what are the kinds of different activities that happen at the different times of year?

LONNAH: Their summer programs are open June 5th to August 25th. Winter programs are December 27th through mid-March. The summer programs, like you said, offer the wide variety of water activities: the canoeing, the kayaking, many different program elements in that respect. The wintertime provides its own unique opportunities. You can do dog sledding; you can sleep in an igloo. There's many different winter opportunities that you definitely don't have the opportunity to do just anywhere.

ANISSA: Are there any opportunities for advancement or awards?

LONNAH: Advancement opportunities are not offered through the Northern Tier staff, however, there's plenty of opportunities for the unit to achieve advancements on their own while they're there. It does offer a bunch of specialty awards such as the various mileage awards, 50 miler, 100 miler, water monitoring awards, Duty to God awards, trek awards, and there is also the Zero Hero Award during the winter.

OWEN: *(Laughs)* Bet that gets some seriously cold temperatures up there when the water turns solid - they just keep camping. Okay, listeners. We'll be back after this quick commercial break.

Commercial – Amerigas

OWEN: One of the amazing things about our bases is how different they all are. One of our newest facilities in West Virginia is the Summit.

LONNAH: Sure. The Summit is located in southern West Virginia. It is 15 minutes from the New River Gorge Bridge National Park and the New River Gorge Bridge, which is the largest bridge in the western hemisphere.

ANISSA: Is this for individuals or does a crew need to register?

LONNAH: Summit, very similar to Northern Tier, offers both options. They can go as a crew, but they also have programs for individual Scout experiences.

OWEN: And, Lonnah, what time of year does the Summit operate? When do these adventures occur?

LONNAH: Most of the experiences at the Summit occur during the months of June, July, and August. They do have opportunities for activities year 'round, including a new partnership with the Winterplace ski resort that's going to offer some wintertime opportunities.

ANISSA: And specifically, for advancement or awards, what opportunities does the Summit offer?

LONNAH: The High Adventure experiences are primarily focused on the adventures of the specific activity that the participants have chosen, however, there's requirements that can be completed if the unit comes prepared to complete those while they're there. Participating in one of the High Adventure experiences qualifies the participants also for the Triple Crown or Grand Slam Awards, which they're eligible for by participating at any of the High Adventure Bases.

OWEN: And, Lonnah, finally, Philmont Scout Ranch. I've got a place in my heart for Philmont and, gosh, since 1938 they've served over a million participants on their backcountry trails and it's also home to our National Training Center. What could a typical crew expect in a Philmont trek?

LONNAH: Philmont is located in Cimarron, New Mexico, and it offers treks for both units and individuals. They have Family Adventure Camp opportunities. They have conferences in the training centers. They have multiple options depending on your size of unit, the number of days you want to stay and everyone needs to register ahead of time; crews as well as individuals.

OWEN: Lonnah, you mentioned some of the other bases are operating at different times of year. What time of year does Philmont really operate?

LONNAH: Philmont does offer opportunities pretty much year 'round. Their largest season is definitely in the summertime, but you shouldn't let that limit you on when you go. They do offer things year 'round.

ANISSA: What opportunities for advancement or awards does the Philmont Scout Ranch offer?

LONNAH: Philmont staff themselves don't sign off on any advancements or merit badge requirements, but Scouts can complete requirements during their experiences at Philmont, meeting specific components of a merit badge, depending on which one that they're trying to earn.

OWEN: So you've taken us through some really spectacular opportunities out there and when you think about High Adventure Bases and the kinds of things that they offer what other things do you think should be shared with our listeners?

LONNAH: Come experience adventure. Visit [Scouting.org/outdooradventures](https://www.scouting.org/outdooradventures) and check out everything that all the High Adventure Bases have to offer. You're not gonna want to miss out on the adventures and opportunities that our BSA High Adventure Bases have to offer. And remember, with each base that you go to, that participation at that base checks a box and makes you closer to earning either the Triple Crown or the Grand Slam Awards. So, I want to reiterate and remind everybody, it's not just for individuals and it's not just for Scouting units. We have family adventures that are happening in our High Adventure Bases that offer fantastic family

memories, lifetime opportunities, and real bonding experiences, so I just want to remind everybody of that. And then one last thing is there's a perception out there that the bases are always full. We can always find room for someone else. Never just go on the assumption that we're full. Check with us. Check with the base that you want to go to. There's opportunities for individuals and units and they'll find a place for you to go.

OWEN: Lonnah, you mentioned some of the family programs. I've been lucky in being able to live at a few of the High Adventure Bases and my children have largely been raised at Philmont and at Sea Base and had the opportunity to visit all of them. I've got two of my daughters are working at Philmont this summer, and Maggie has worked at not only Philmont but also at Sea Base and the Summit, so I've gotten the chance firsthand to see the impact that our Scouting programs and our High Adventure Bases can have on families. And I just gotta say I'm so excited for the new family programs that are being offered all the bases so that other families have the same kind of opportunity for their children and for their families to bond over these amazing, amazing facilities. Someone could really choose any of these High Adventure Bases and have an amazing, genuine mountaintop experience in Scouting. Lonnah, we thank you so much for helping us share this with our listeners so they can find their own adventure.

LONNAH: Thank you. Had a fun time being here.

ANISSA: We'll be back with Reminders and Tips after this brief Safety Moment.

(Safety Moment – Code of Conduct)

ANISSA: Speaking of Code of Conduct, April is Youth Protection Month, and the Boy Scouts of America takes that very seriously. Now would be a good time to review all the materials and resources from our Youth Protection website. Just go to [Scouting.org/training/youthprotection](https://www.scouting.org/training/youthprotection). You should also go to my.scouting.org and be sure your youth protection training is up-to-date.

OWEN: By now you should have received the March-April issue of *Scouting* Magazine and read about a troop from Virginia that planned its own unique 100-mile-plus adventure that included hiking, camping, canoeing, biking and touring through Washington, D.C.

ANISSA: Also, in that issue: find out all the ways you can take Scouts fishing. It's a lot easier than you might think.

OWEN: And in the April issue of *Boys' Life*, see how a girls' troop and boys' troop from Campbell, California, learn to navigate the urban wilderness of San Francisco with a scavenger hunt. Well, that does sound pretty cool.

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OWEN: And you can go ahead and read that right now as our April ScoutCast comes to an end. Special thanks to our guest, Lonnah Curry.

ANISSA: And thanks to you for listening. Tune in next month as we get ready for the 2021 National Jamboree. With that, I'm Anissa Hicks.

OWEN: And I'm Owen McCulloch. So, was our discussion useful? Let us know by sending an email to ScoutCast@scouting.org, or tweet @bsaScoutcast. We look forward to hearing from you.

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