

# Jack Furst

He has never lost sight of Scouting's fun side.

**M**any forces motivate supporters of Scouting, including admiration for the way Scouting teaches leadership and a regard for the values and principles the movement aims to cultivate in young people. For Jack Furst, it's all those and one more: He finds the fun in Scouting.

The fun began for Furst, a member of Scouting's National Executive Board and the BSA's volunteer vice president of the Outdoor Programs group, when he was a Scout in Troop 1 out of Paoli, Pa. There was a two-week camping trip to the Adirondacks and another to Algonquin Provincial Park in Canada. "And a whole lot of whitewater canoeing on the Schuylkill River and other places," Furst recalls. After moving to Texas, Furst served on the waterfront staff teaching the Canoeing merit badge in the mid-1970s at the Circle Ten Council's Camp Constantin. He made the first of many trips to Philmont Scout Ranch at age 15. And, you might not be surprised to learn, he's an Eagle Scout.

After graduating from business school and beginning the process of perfecting his craft as a private investor, Furst reconnected with

Scouting in his late 20s and early 30s. He served as president of the Circle Ten Council in Dallas. By the time he was in his early 40s, he had joined the national board. Did a national board position mean the end of Furst's Scouting fun? Hardly. "I've been the lead volunteer for all of our national outdoor programs since 2007," he says. "I continue to believe the magic of Scouting happens in the great outdoors."

Furst's outdoor adventures in Scouting include many resident summer camps, national jamborees and world jamborees — and more visits to Philmont than he can readily recall. "As an adult, I've done Philmont a ton of times," he says. "I think I've done it 30 times." That includes treks as an adult and staffing Wood Badge training courses.

Not surprisingly, Furst feels a special connection with Scouting's New Mexico high-adventure ranch. "It's just magical," he says. "As much as things change, at Philmont, everything remains the same. It's a great place to get recharged and find perspective."

One of Furst's most significant contributions to Scouting is leading the BSA's initiative to create the Summit Bechtel Reserve.

He sees the West Virginia high-adventure base as a complementary vehicle to Philmont-style Scouting. "Philmont is spectacular. It's Scouting's paradise," he says. "The Summit offers an outdoor adventure adrenaline rush, which happens to be strategically located. About 65 percent of the population of the U.S. is less than 10 hours away."

Furst also sees the Summit Bechtel Reserve as a platform to showcase Scouting's leadership and citizenship development capabilities. "It is a place where not only Scouters can come and receive leadership training but where our country's corporation leaders will want to come as well," he says.

While Furst is part of a team stewarding the BSA's vision for the Summit Bechtel Reserve, he also has indulged his longtime affection for Philmont by supporting a

redesigned youth- and adult-leader training center there. The new facility includes campsites, a commissary and pavilions for training more than 100 future leaders at a time. And it's all beautifully situated on Rayado Ridge. Rayado Ridge Leadership Camp is now a reality, paying tribute to those Scouters who have come before this current generation. Several Wood Badge courses are conducted there annually as well as the National Advanced

Youth Leadership Experience, or NAYLE. "It's a special space at a special place. Everyone leaves Rayado Ridge Leadership Camp and Philmont an ambassador," Furst adds.

When it comes to being an ambassador for Philmont, the more Furst does it, the more he seems to enjoy it. He sees Philmont as an anchor in his busy life as investor, businessperson, family man and Scouter. "It's a place you can go back to and get

Furst's passion for Scouting also led him to give back to Philmont Scout Ranch. Above, he speaks at the dedication of the Rayado Ridge Leadership Camp in 2014.

rested, emotionally and spiritually, not to mention a great physical workout," he says. "At the end of your time there, you've connected with the environment and with the people with whom you shared a very unique journey. The dividends include shared experiences, lifelong friends and perpetual memories."



Furst has left a mark on Scouting at both the national and local levels, including leading the BSA's initiative to establish the Summit Bechtel Reserve. Above, he cuts the ribbon to Jack Furst Drive at the Summit Bechtel Reserve with his father, John Furst, during the 2013 National Scout Jamboree.

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**FOR JACK AND DEBRA FURST**, supporting Scouting is not so much something they do as something they are. It's been like that since the beginning, and not much has changed. "Jack's always been involved in Scouting," Debbie says. "When our son became a Tiger Cub, we joined a pack. I didn't intend to sign on as a leader, but I

ended up the Tiger Cub leader." Debbie served as den leader throughout their son's time in Cub Scouting. After their son grew out of Scouting, the Fursts stayed involved, supporting the movement financially and with their personal time and energy. "We're trying to let people know that we still find the program

relevant and we support it," Debbie says. "A lot of people think Scouting is not relevant today, but we think Scouting is more needed and relevant today than ever."

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