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

Many 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 a place where not only Scouts can come and receive leadership training but where our country’s corporate 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 campfires, 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 Scout. “It’s a place you can go back to and get 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.”

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.”

LEARN MORE about the BSA National Foundation at bsafoundation.org.