

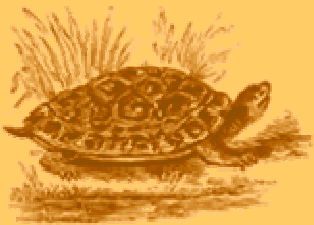
Team Building 101

The *Retreat*

AT BALCONES SPRINGS

EXECUTIVE RETREAT & CONFERENCE CENTER

We fully recognize that taking employees away from work for any length of time can be very costly to a company's productivity. Many companies simply do not have a full day or even a half day to allot for team building. Because of this, we have developed team building activities that are flexible enough to fit different lengths of time while still offering worthwhile experiences.



Sports & Recreation

Please feel free to utilize our sports areas. We offer basketball, baseball, volleyball, softball, soccer, tennis and football. Equipment is available in the "Sports Shed" or at the front desk.

Water Activities

Lake Ted is our private, spring fed lake. If you enjoy swimming, fishing or canoeing, Lake Ted provides a tranquil, secluded area for these activities. Access to Lake Ted is gained either by a path that heads off of the patio around the Big Thicket or by the steps adjacent to the Herb Garden towards the Terrace. We also have a WATER BLOB, ROPE SWINGS, AND WATER SLIDE.

Swimming

Lake Ted is approximately 500 meters in length and 100 meters at it's widest point. Lake Ted is very deep so please remember not to over-exert yourself.

Canoeing

There are so many things you can do in a canoe. Explore Lake Ted, fish, or just relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery. There are three points to launch from: the floating dock just beyond the Terrace, the blob dock just below the Big Thicket, and the canoe cove on the far side of the lake. After you've enjoyed canoeing, please replace the equipment where you found it. Early mornings are a great time for canoeing as wildlife is abundant at this time. Please be careful and remember that you are using Lake Ted at your own risk.

Fishing

Balcones Springs has the best fishing around! Lake Ted is stocked with large mouth bass, white bass, catfish and perch. If Lake Ted is too small for you we have access to Lake Travis just one mile away. Forgot your gear? Don't worry, we can supply you with a pole and ready tackle box.

Frisbee Golf

This is fun, no pressure golf. Play a quick round between meeting or arrange a Frisbee tournament. We provide two disks (a driver and putter), the score card and a 16 hole course map.

Jogging

For those who love to jog, Balcones Springs has miles of scenic jogging trails. Ask the front desk for a map of our trails.

Hiking

Here at Balcones Springs we are blessed with a truly beautiful wilderness property bordering on Lake Travis. This property is perfect for hiking, exploring, and wildlife viewing. We have 4 marked trails and 8 horse trails each with plenty of wildlife to enjoy. Please see the front desk for a map.

Horse Back Riding

We provide trail rides throughout our wilderness property for young and old. This activity requires a staff facilitator and therefore should be pre-arranged through your meeting planner.

Team Building

Canoe Race & Canoe Obstacle Course

Set on Lake Ted, our beautiful spring fed lake. Each canoe can hold up to 3 people; however the teams may consist of many people.

The Canoe Obstacle Course can vary in many ways. It can be set up with team ribbons or balloons that must be collected as part of the obstacle course. The natural setting and its elements are used as the “obstacles”. This may also be used in combination with the canoe race. All participants wear life vests. A fun and challenging way to encourage team work. A facilitator supervises this event.

Scavenger Hunt or Compass Course

The specific set of challenges can be tailored to fit your group’s dynamics and specific projects they might be working on. The combination of fun, recreational activities and ropes course low elements enables your group to play while they learn. This is beneficial for groups that might otherwise spend all of their time in that meeting room without enjoying the beautiful setting and exciting recreation that surrounds them.

The set of instructions that a group or groups receive will lead every group to the same set of activities but in a different order which insures that each group will have a comparable experience. These instructions will lead them to a series of tasks that they must accomplish and clues they must locate. The tasks and clues may include but are not limited to the Spider Web, Mountain Tops, Aggie Trolley, Frisbee Toss, Canoe Races, Climbing Wall and others. In addition, team members are sometimes asked to correctly answer Texas or Company trivia.

The Compass Course is similar to the Scavenger Hunt with the added challenge of reading a degree bearing compass which requires serious attention to detail. Every event is processed by a trained facilitator so that the group is learning while they are doing. At the end of the event, the entire group is brought together for a final debriefing.

Ropes Course Challenge

The ropes challenge consists of initiatives, low elements, and high elements specifically designed to encourage group bonding and team building. These activities require staff facilitation and therefore should be pre-arranged through your event coordinator.

Initiatives

Initiatives are group events, which establish a new way of thinking necessary for an optimum ropes course experience. Initiatives consist of simple games, which will encourage groups to “loosen up” and change their normal approach to problem solving. Games like elbow tag, au-co-so, bop-diddy,-bop, blind polygon and action names are just a few that are fun Team games and great for ice breakers. They are also great warm ups for the low elements.

Low Elements

Low elements present a more intense challenge to groups. These elements are excellent tools for learning group dynamics and for gaining a better understanding of the characteristics and personality traits within a group. They teach groups to plan efficiently and communicate effectively with other members of their team. They also serve as warm ups to the high elements. The following is a sample of our low elements.

Mohawk Traverse

This element teaches participants to plan ahead and work together as a team to attain a common goal. The Mohawk Traverse consists of a series of cables strung between trees approximately one foot off of the ground. The goal is to get from one end of the element to the other without touching the ground. If one member of the team falls, the whole team must start over. This element teaches participants to plan ahead and work together as a team to attain a common goal.

Wild Woozy

This element is an excellent tool for training participants how to communicate, benchmark, and continuously improve their efforts. The Wild Woozy consists of two cables strung from one tree to two separate trees forming a “V”. Groups are broken up into teams of two. It is the goal of each team to get as far out on the wide end of the “V” as possible, using nothing but each other for support. After the first team has completed their turn they may communicate what they have learned to the next group.

Trust Fall

This element builds trust within a group and teaches them to confidently rely on their other team members. The Trust Fall is a low element whereby a team member must place his/her safety in the hands of the other team members. This element consists of a platform attached to a tree about 5 feet off of the ground. One team member climbs to the top of the platform, stands on the edge and falls back into the waiting arms of his/her teammates. This element builds trust within a group and teaches them to confidently rely on their other team members.

TP Shuffle

This element serves as an excellent tool to teach teams how to organize a plan and improve communication skills. The TP Shuffle consists of one horizontal telephone pole supported a few inches off of the ground and braced so that it will not roll. The object of this element is to have the group arrange themselves on the pole without stepping down to the ground. If one member of the team falls, the whole team must start over.

Spider Web

This element teaches teams how to delegate the right task to the right person and how to effectively communicate. The Spider Web is a classic low rope element. Participants attempt to get each individual from one side of the web to the other without using the same hole twice.

Mountain Tops

This element teaches teams the importance of proper planning. Teams must get each team member from one mountain top to the next, without any member falling. Teams are given tools to aid them along the way. One or more members of the team may be blindfolded to add one more variable to consider when plotting their course. This element serves as an excellent tool to teach teams how to plan effectively to accomplish a specific goal, with limited resources.

Bermuda Triangle

The Bermuda Triangle is a very challenging low element whereby groups attempt to walk around the perimeter of the triangle using a rope to balance themselves on top of cables suspended one foot above the ground. It is very difficult to complete the task without “thinking outside the box”.

Nitro Crossing

The Nitro Crossing consists of a rope swing suspended from a height of approximately 15’ to 20’ with a loop at the end of it. The object of this element is for the group to get all of its members across the “deep, dark, man-eating chasm” by way of the rope swing. The nitroglycerin must also be transported across without losing a single drop. If someone touches the forbidden ground, they will either be identified as a casualty, or be required to begin again. If a barrier is knocked off, the whole group must begin again.

High Elements

High elements consist of a series of cables strung from poles 25 to 30 feet above the ground. Balcones Springs’s high elements are designed to teach participants the importance of encouraging and supporting each other in a time of crisis. All high elements require staff facilitation and therefore should be pre-arranged through your event coordinator.

Pamper Pole

Our most popular element, the Pamper Pole is a 30 foot telephone pole on which participants attempt to climb and balance on top of the pole. Once on top, the participant jumps off to catch a trapeze hanging in the air approximately 6 feet away!

Heeby Jeeby

Your task is to climb the pole and walk across the lower cable using the diagonal cables for balance.

High Tension Traverse

Transfer from the Heeby Jeeby or climb the pole and stand on the bottom cable. Your task, using only the suspended rope for balance, is to walk across the cable, touch the opposite pole and return back to the starting point.

Commando Crawl

Your task, if you choose to accept it, is to climb the pole, grab hold of the cable and crawl to the opposite end. This has a high level of difficulty.

Grapevine Traverse

Your task is to stand on the bottom cable and move to the opposite end of the cable using the dangling ropes for balance without using the belay rope for support.

Other Ropes Course Events

The Climbing Tower

A fun climbing experience! With 4 levels of difficulty, this 42 foot high tower provides a fun and challenging experience. After the climb to the top you reel happily down to the ground.

The Zipline (Ted's Dread)

Zip across our 903 foot long cable which spans the width of Lake Ted. The climb up to the platform from which you jump is just half the fun. This exhilarating ride sheds new light on taking your breath away. Gliding across the beautiful lake is view you can get only from Balcones Springs.

The Screamer

A breathtaking 42 foot high swing! Wearing a harness you are hoisted as high as you dare to go. The ride begins as you pull the release to begin your breathtaking swing. You will swing freely until it gradually slows to a stop.