

What is a Challenge Course?

A Challenge Course consists of a series of obstacles requiring the social, mental, and physical dexterity of a group, or an individual, to overcome. Challenge Courses are guided by the philosophy of adventure-based experiential education.

Working with the Cispus Challenge Course manager, you will have the opportunity to match your group's goals with the extensive options available. The Cispus Challenge Course is one of the most comprehensive in the United States.

What are some of the benefits?

- Fun
- Trust
- Team building
- Personal growth
- Relationship development
- Conflict resolution
- Increased communication skills
- Enhanced self-esteem and confidence

About the Challenge Course

The Cispus Challenge Course is located in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest between Mt. Rainier, Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Adams. We are fortunate to be able to maintain the Course within the forest, and low elements are nestled individually among salal, Oregon grape and vine maple.

We have over 30 low elements plus an extensive collection of portable elements that we use for our Group Course (Low Course).

Our Course is participant-centered; each day's program is based on the needs of the client. Participants range in age from fifth-grade through adults, and in type from school-related programs, to church programs and at-risk youth programs. We have approximately 5,000 user days a year.

Who facilitates groups on the course?

To meet the demand of groups wanting to use the Challenge Course, Cispus has trained and certified a cadre of volunteer facilitators. In addition, some schools and organizations choose to have Cispus train their staff so they can facilitate their own groups.

About our staff

Jesse Garner, Cispus Challenge Course Manager, has a background in natural resources and wild land recreation. He served as challenge course intern, a leadership intern and a challenge course specialist.

Layla Milholen, Cispus Challenge Course Assistant Manager, has a bachelor of arts from Appalachian State University in Applied Anthropology. She has two years experience working with youth in Western Washington, both with the Cispus AmeriCorps team and as a naturalist at YMCA Camp Seymore. She has served Cispus as a challenge course intern, challenge course specialist and now as assistant manager. She is also a member of the Northwest Challenge Course Network.