



Photo Provided by Challenge Towers

## *Featured Article* **Utah Olympic Park**

Creating a Benefits Package  
by Lindsay Walton

Attitude is Everything  
by Jen Stanchfield

ACCT Standards Update  
by Scott Andrews

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# Welcome to Parallel Lines™!

We are excited to present our Members with this user-friendly design and format. Our goal is to provide our Members with an easy to read periodical that reflects the more modern world in which we live.

In this edition we are pleased to share with you information regarding the new ACCT Membership Categories and Benefits. This is exciting and important information. Lindsay Walton, Chair of the Membership Committee, explains the development of the new categories and benefits in her article, "Creating a Benefits Package."

We encourage you to share Parallel Lines with your colleagues in your community. Remember you can view the publication on our website at [www.acctinfo.org](http://www.acctinfo.org). As always if you have a program, member or topic that should be included, let us know! We can be reached at [membership@acctinfo.org](mailto:membership@acctinfo.org).

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**THE NEXT ISSUE OF PARALLEL LINES WILL BE JANUARY 2013.  
ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 1, 2012.**

# October

22  
Fall Edition of Parallel Lines released

29  
Workshop Proposal acceptance and/or declines will be sent via email to prospective presenters.

ACCT Clipboard – October 2012

# November

15  
Election Day

6-7  
ACCT Board of Directors Meeting  
Location: Texas

21  
Early Bird registration ends. All registrations sent by mail must be postmarked by November 21st to be considered for the Early-Bird Discount.

22  
Thanksgiving

26  
ACCT Clipboard – November 2012

# December

25  
Merry Christmas

31  
New Year's Eve  
ACCT Clipboard – December 2012

## About ACCT

The Association for Challenge Course Technology, (ACCT) is a recognized standards developer by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and was responsible for the development of the first Challenge Course Technology standards originally published in 1994. These internationally recognized standards are currently being maintained by ACCT through our accredited ANSI public comment process.

ACCT has served as the leading trade association for the Challenge Course industry, (including Aerial/Adventure Parks, Zip Lines, Canopy Tours, Team Challenge Courses, and Climbing Structures) worldwide since its inception. Currently ACCT has 39 accredited Professional Vendor Members (PVM's) and over 2600 Individual and Organizational members globally.

### What is a Challenge Course?

Challenge Courses are organized environments relying on structures that are composed of, but not limited to, poles, buildings, trees, ropes, beams and cables. They may incorporate, but are not limited to, specialized technology and components such as fall arrest systems, trolleys, pulleys, harnesses and ropes. Operation often includes, but is not limited to, staff managed and participant-directed activity by groups and/or individuals navigating challenges where the perception of risk is an essential component to the overall experience. They are managed by qualified professionals functioning under standards including those developed by the Association for Challenge Course Technology.

Examples of Challenge Course Technology include Aerial/Adventure Parks, Zip Lines, Canopy Tours, Team Challenge Courses and Climbing Structures.

## ACCT Staff Move Upward



Ms. Kim Catchings was hired as ACCT's Administrative Assistant in May of 2011. She jumped in with both feet and proved herself to be a valuable asset to ACCT. Not only has she provided outstanding support to the Executive Director, but she took on additional tasks when ACCT was without a Membership Manager for several months. She has assisted with the annual conference, PVM Symposiums and many other tasks that were not part of her original job description. In July 2012, Kim was promoted to the new ACCT Business Manager. In her new position she will take on more responsibilities geared towards budget management, which includes but is not limited to, keeping committees and team members informed of their budgets vs. actuals. Please join us in congratulating Kim Catchings – ACCT's Business Manager!

Mr. Bill Weaver has been the ACCT Professional Services Manager for more than 3 years. His dedication and hard work has helped to develop the PVM process and accreditation into what it is today. With the large amount of growth we have experienced in our industry, Bill's role has increased. In July 2012, Bill was promoted to Director of Operations. A well-deserved promotion! The Director of Operations position will include managing our Government Relations department. Please join us in congratulating Bill Weaver (Also Known As - ACCT's 2012 Critical Link Award Winner!!!).



## Check out the Zip Line Listserve [www.ziplinelistserve.com](http://www.ziplinelistserve.com)

With the exponential growth of zip lines and canopy tours it is important to stay ahead of the upcoming issues connected with state laws and regulations, with the hope that ACCT standards will be adopted throughout as they have in certain states in the US and abroad. The input from our members and affected parties is making the standards process more open and inclusive of the different systems that are out there.

If you haven't had the opportunity to jump on to the new "zip line" listserve, which is up and running for all our members and general public, then take a few minutes and check it out. The idea of this listserve is to open communication, issues and questions from all users in our more specific Canopy/ Zip line tour industry. We hope you make good use of this resource and we are excited to see everyone's input and feedback.



## 2013 Board Election Procedures

by Charlie Williams  
Board Vice Chair

This year there are three open board seats for election. Two of those seats are elected by the Professional Vendor Member community, and one seat is elected by Associate and Institutional members.

According to the current Association for Challenge Course Technology bylaws, any member of the association may nominate an individual, with that person's permission, to serve on the Board of Directors, and any member may place his/her own name in nomination for a seat on the Board of Directors.

### **Associate and Institutional Nominations:**

A candidate must be an Associate or Institutional member of ACCT and may not work for a Professional Vendor Member. Candidates in this part of the election may not run for a seat elected by PVMs in the same election. Anyone wishing to run for this Board seat must send in a nomination form to James Borishade by Friday, December 7, 2012. The nomination form must be submitted electronically to [james@acctinfo.org](mailto:james@acctinfo.org) and must include the following.

**Nomination forms** can be found in the "News" section of your membership portal. To log on visit [www.acctinfo.org](http://www.acctinfo.org).

### **Voting for a Board Member Elected by the Associate and Institutional Members**

Voting for this particular position will only be conducted online (similar to absentee or early voting) prior to the conference. A member may cast one vote using this method. Online voting will be available from December 17, 2012 through January 17, 2013. Associate and Institutional Member voting will be completed electronically ONLY. There will NOT be a ballot election at the Annual General meeting. Information about voting will be emailed to all ACCT members in good standing.

### **Professional Vendor Member (PVM) Nominations:**

Candidates wishing to run for this position must fill out a nomination form, which includes a nomination statement (maximum of 400 words) which must be submitted electronically to Charlie Williams, ACCT Board Vice Chair by December 21, 2012. Candidates do not have to be affiliated with a PVM company but will be elected by PVMs.

In accordance with the current ACCT bylaws, write-in nominations or candidates for positions voted on by PVMs shall be submitted to the Vice Chair no later than forty-eight (48) hours before the scheduled election to be held at 3:00pm on Thursday, February 7, 2013.

Last minute ballots will not be accepted. Elections will be held in person using a paper ballot during the Annual General Meeting on February 7, 2013 (prior to Opening Ceremonies for the 2013 Conference). Election results will be announced at the conference. For any additional information about submitting a nomination for an open seat on the ACCT Board of Directors, please contact Charlie Williams, ACCT Board Vice-Chair at [wngspdadv@aol.com](mailto:wngspdadv@aol.com).

**Nomination forms** can be found in the "News" section of your membership portal. To log on visit [www.acctinfo.org](http://www.acctinfo.org).





## Creating a Benefits Package

by Lindsay Walton  
Chair, Membership Committee

Members of ACCT can look forward to the launch of the new membership categories and benefits with great excitement. The categories and benefits are presented in this edition of Parallel Lines and are scheduled to be released in January 2013.

But how was the package created? The Membership Committee was created in 2009 and tasked with gathering information about the needs of our members in order to explore how ACCT could better serve you as an individual and the broader challenge course industry. In 2010 members received an invitation to participate in a survey and provided a great response with in-depth feedback, insight, and requests for services that helped to shape the structure of the new membership categories and their associated benefits. Smaller task forces were then assembled to review the individual categories to help fine-tune the overall package, and the final product was reviewed by the ACCT Board of Directors and approved for launch!

As with any transition this significant, there will be some hiccups and speed bumps along the way, however this package was created relying on the information and feedback provided by ACCT members, and it will be with the continued constructive feedback from members that

the new categories and benefits will take root and create a solid foundation for our next stage of growth as an organization and an industry.

Knowing how to best serve ACCT members will always be an ongoing learning process as the world changes over the years and our industry changes with it. Future surveys will be conducted in an ongoing effort to make sure ACCT benefits are relevant and useful to you as an individual and to your business. Your continued feedback will always be welcome and thoughtfully considered.

Good things are happening at ACCT and you have been an active part of making that happen. Thank you! To learn more please read the complete descriptions provided in this newsletter and join us at the ACCT conference at Red Rock in Nevada. We will look forward to seeing you there!

## Current List of 2013 ACCT Conference Sponsors

### ACCT Diamond Conference Sponsors



### ACCT Platinum Conference Sponsors

RopesParkEquipment.com



### ACCT Gold Conference Sponsors



## New Membership Categories and Benefits in 2013!

ACCT has restructured its membership categories to better serve the challenge course industry. Beginning in January of this coming year members will be assisted in transitioning to the new categories, which offer more benefits at the same pricing and are better suited to meet your needs.

**Individual Member** benefits are tailored to meet the needs of the ropes course professional who would like to be connected to the broader industry community with access to professional development opportunities. Student/Senior pricing is available to encourage up and coming professionals to engage in the industry and to encourage our experienced members to stay connected.

**Organizational Member** benefits are tailored to meet the needs of corporate entities that are looking to grow their clientele and make the general public more aware of the services or products they have to offer. Non-profit pricing is available to support charitable initiatives.

**Accredited Professional Vendor Member** benefits are designed to meet the needs of companies who have undergone a rigorous application process to be recognized by ACCT as a qualified builder, inspector, and/or trainer.

**Business Partner Member** benefits are for companies who wish to advertise a product or service to the members of ACCT through our new online Members Discount Directory, giving them exposure to a large community who may wish to make use of what they have to offer, and getting savings for our members.

Enclosed in this edition of Parallel Lines are complete descriptions of the membership categories and associated benefits. Please read them carefully to determine which category is the best fit for you. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact the ACCT office at [membership@acctinfo.org](mailto:membership@acctinfo.org) for assistance during the transition, and make sure you come to the 2013 conference at Red Rock where the Membership Committee will give a full presentation regarding how the new packages were developed, what additional benefits are underway, and to address any questions.

If in reading the benefit descriptions or during the transition you have further insight or feedback please contact ACCT at [membership@acctinfo.org](mailto:membership@acctinfo.org) and share your thoughts! Working together we can all look forward to great things in the future of ACCT!

*Continued on page 6*



# Welcome to the Association for Challenge Course Technology

(version 1.0, submitted  
June 2012)

|  | Student/<br>Senior<br>Member  | Individual<br>Member   | Organizational<br>Member  | Accredited<br>Professional<br>Vendor Member  | Business Partner<br>Member  |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
|  | Any individual participating in full-time studies at a recognized educational institution. Proof of student status required. Senior status applies to individuals who are 60+ years old. Membership benefits apply to one person. Membership is registered under the individual's name. ACCT will communicate directly with the individual. | Any individual interested in being plugged in to the ACCT community and gaining access to the professional challenge course industry and its resources. Membership benefits apply to one person. Membership is registered under the individual's name. ACCT will communicate directly with the individual. | Any company interested in being plugged in to the ACCT community and gaining access to the professional challenge course industry and its resources. Membership benefits apply to the organization and <u>all its employees</u> . Membership is registered under the organization's name. Organization will identify one person as their contact for ACCT to send login and other information to. ACCT will communicate directly with the designated contact. | Companies who have successfully completed an ACCT application for Professional Vendor Member status. Membership benefits apply to the company and <u>all its employees</u> . Membership is registered under the company's name. Company will identify one person as their contact for ACCT to send login and other information to. ACCT will communicate directly with the designated contact. | Companies who desire to network with ACCT members for the purpose of marketing products to the challenge course industry. Membership is registered under the company's name. Company will identify one person as their contact for ACCT to send login and other information to. ACCT will communicate directly with the designated contact. |
| Membership Fee   | \$65 USD  | \$85 USD   | \$275 USD (\$200 USD non-profit)  | \$1,800 USD  | \$1,500 USD   |
| Membership Renewal Service   |   |  |   |  |   |
| Automatic renewal service  | yes   | yes  | yes   | yes  | yes   |
| ACCT Resources   |   |  |   |  |   |
| Receive "Parallel Lines" ACCT's on-line e-newsletter (you may request a printed copy delivered by mail). | yes   | yes  | yes - delivered to designated contact   | yes - delivered to designated contact  | yes - delivered to designated contact   |
| Receive printed ACCT Standards FREE  | 1 copy  | 1 copy   | 4 copies  | 4 copies   | no  |
| Purchase additional copies of ACCT Standards at a discounted rate  | no  | no   | yes   | yes  | yes(for resale)   |
| Have access to support if you are experiencing a challenge course related problem or concern.            | yes   | yes  | yes   | yes  | yes   |

| Accreditation and Certification  |     |     |     |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Peer reviewed to determine compliance with ACCT Standards. Successful completion results in distinguishment as an Accredited Professional Vendor Member. | no  | no  | no  | yes | no  |
| Ability to provide new construction of challenge courses and elements as a peer-review, accredited Professional Vendor Member.                           | no  | no  | no  | yes | no  |
| Ability to provide challenge course inspections as a peer-review, accredited Professional Vendor Member.   | no  | no  | no  | yes | no  |
| Ability to provide certification to ropes course professionals which is recognized and approved by the Association for Challenge Course Technology.      | no  | no  | no  | yes | no  |
| Networking & Professional Development  |     |     |     |     |     |
| Discounted participant fee for annual conference   | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Discounted participant fee for symposiums.   | no  | no  | yes | yes | no  |
| Ability to post resume online for hiring organizations to review   | yes | yes | no  | no  | no  |
| Access to employment opportunities through ACCT Job Board  | yes | yes | yes | yes | no  |
| Ability to post challenge course industry employment opportunities on the ACCT Job Board   | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Access to resumes that have been submitted by challenge course professionals to the ACCT Job Board   | no  | no  | yes | yes | yes |



|   |     |     |                        |   |     |
|---|-----|-----|------------------------|---|-----|
| Discounted online professional development workshops (Coming Soon!)   | yes | yes | yes                    | yes   | no  |
| <b>Online Resources</b>   |     |     |                        |   |     |
| Access to discounts and promotional deals from ACCT members and outside Business Partner Members through our online Members Discount Directory. | yes | yes | yes                    | yes   | no  |
| Information regarding completed lawsuits and government updates   | yes | yes | yes                    | yes   | no  |
| Equipment recall notifications emailed to you   | yes | yes | yes                    | yes   | yes |
| Current research and results  | yes | yes | yes                    | yes   | no  |
| Grant and scholarship information   | yes | yes | yes                    | yes   | no  |
| <b>Marketing Opportunities</b>  |     |     |                        |   |     |
| Option to appear in ACCT's online Member Directory so that the general public can find you.   | no  | no  | yes                    | yes   | no  |
| Ability to use ACCT Member Logo in your printed and online advertising to identify your affiliation with ACCT.                                  | no  | no  | yes - ACCT Member Logo | yes - ACCT Accredited Professional Vendor Member Logo | no  |
|   |     |     |                        |   |     |
| Discounted fee for vendor exhibits during the annual conference   | no  | no  | yes                    | yes   | yes |
| Ability to post discounts and promotional deals for ACCT members through the online Members Discount Directory.                                 | no  | no  | yes                    | yes   | yes |

|   |    |    |     |     |     |
|---|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Highlighted profile in Members Discount Directory to attract additional attention                       | no | no | no  | yes | no  |
| Free advertisement each year in one edition of the ACCT publication Parallel Lines (value of \$500)     | no | no | no  | yes | no  |
| Web link exchange program that improves Google search results for your business                         | no | no | yes | yes | yes |
| Ability to post training opportunities on the ACCT Calendar of Events found on ACCT's website home page | no | no | no  | yes | no  |
| <b>Insurance</b>  |    |    |     |     |     |
| Access to group insurance options (United States only at this time)                                     | no | no | yes | yes | no  |



# When Quality Matters

Choose an ACCT Professional Vendor Member (PVM)  
Design | Performance | Inspections





## From the Ground Up

by Michelle Hepler  
ACCT Board Chair

As I sit at my desk taking a breath from summer and prepare myself for the busy fall season back out on the challenge course, I can't help but think about the great work being done by this association. While we have more work to do, I'm confident that laying a firm foundation and constantly fine-tuning our foundation is the appropriate strategy moving forward.

In the recent months as Chair, I have been fortunate enough to work with your dedicated Board of Directors, staff and committee members to continue with the job of laying this critical foundation.

Why lay foundation? This association has been around for years and has a solid approach and strategy. However, this industry is constantly changing, evolving, and growing. With that growth and evolution, comes the need for more ground work.

Some of the major projects that have come to fruition over the last months include; record attendance at our last conference, revamped organizational structure and staffing, newly adopted 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, newly adopted Membership Levels structure, four (4) newly formed committees, a new Board Emeritus Policy, and approved Inspector Certification and Examination Committee.

ACCT Conference attendance was at its highest in Boston in 2012 with more than 960 attendees. Providing a space and opportunity for networking, learning and relationship building for the people in our industry is critical. The ACCT Conference is one of our greatest opportunities to share our association with others.

The ACCT organizational structure has evolved to an Executive Director, a Membership Manager, a Business Manager, and a Director of Operations to handle the workload and operations that go on behind the scenes of this association. These folks put countless hours, amazing energy, and dedication into everything they do for us. To have the proper structure for our growth is critical.

*"The 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, recently approved will be the guide and pathway for our work over the next 2 years."*

The 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, recently approved will be the guide and pathway for our work over the next two years. Fortunately, there was a great plan already in place to help guide us moving forward. Taking core strategies from that plan and applying them to include new and broadened approaches for today's industry was top priority.

The Membership Committee worked for over a year and a half to develop a new membership structure to include a number of new levels. The Board approved the newly adopted membership structure and we will begin the implementation phase in 2013. We hope the new membership structure will provide the benefits needed and are the most appropriate to more people, more organizations, and more companies.

Four new committees have been formed and have begun working on tasks. They are...

1. Finance Committee
2. International Relations Committee
3. Employee Workplace Safety Standards Committee
4. Inspector Certification and Examination Committee

These committees have been formed to address the increasing needs in various areas of our Association, as we grow and our industry's needs increase.

*continued on pg. 16*



**Featured Program**

# Utah Olympic Park - Nordic Skills Zone and Trackside Adventure Course and Drop Tower

by Trudy Robbins

ACCT Membership Manager

As the new ACCT Membership Manager I had the privilege of attending the 2012 PVM Summer Symposium, held in Park City, Utah, August 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>. It is an absolutely beautiful area and the home of the 2002 Winter Olympics. On the morning of August 1<sup>st</sup> there was a pre-Symposium event put on by symposium sponsor, Aerial Adventure Techs, that several PVMs and a couple of staff members attended. The purpose of the event was to provide a first-hand look at the new Saferoller and Powerfan. And guess where the event was held? The Utah Olympic Park!



This is indeed a unique place. The goal for Olympic Park was to create an active and unique recreational experience accessible to the whole family. This has been accomplished through a unique blend

of adventure zones, each developed to accommodate a targeted demographic.

At the conclusion of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, the Utah Olympic Foundation was formed and charged with managing and maintaining the unique Olympic legacy. The Olympic Foundation's core mission includes: maintaining, operating, and enhancing the Olympic legacy facilities; engaging and involving more people in winter sport; inspire, educate and entertain through unique activities; and improve the quality of youth sport and physical activity in Utah.

Towards that end, the Olympic Park serves its mission by providing a training ground for winter sport athletes and engaging the general public through a range of sport programs. Visitors have many options. They can experience guided tours of the Olympic facility, take a ride on the Comet Bobsled, and gain one-on-one instruction in freestyle ski jumping. Or they can ride big zip lines along the path of the Nordic ski jumps, and seek challenge and build skills in the newly installed Nordic Skills Zone and Trackside Adventure Course and Drop Tower built by ACCT PVM, Challenge Towers.

When complete, the Olympic Park's newest aerial attractions will include a non-belayed adventure playground (under construction), a timber framed youth oriented Nordic Skills Course (mostly complete), a 65ft. drop tower (open), and a two level adventure course (open).

Both the Nordic Skills Course and Trackside Adventure Course utilize the Saferoller Continuous Belay system that mitigates the objective risks inherent in belay transfers and allows for integrated zip lines. A 20 meter Powerfan provides a unique experience for visitors via the Drop Tower. A +/- 500ft. zip line is the only access into the Drop Tower, and the Powerfan provides a simulated free fall experience that puts a smile on the face of everyone brave enough to jump.

*continued on page 20*



# What Is This Thing We Do?

by Kathy Haras

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If you have been in the adventure field for a while, you've probably noticed a change in your recent conversations. Once it was rare for grade six students to have worn a climbing harness prior to coming to an outdoor education centre, now at least half the group have had this experience. At one point my grandmother could not describe my job to her friends, now they ask me whether I know the zip line advertising this week's lottery jackpot. In a few short years, adventure has gone from being extreme to being mainstream.

As part of this evolution of adventure, the number and types of facilities have greatly expanded. Unfortunately, this growth in the adventure industry itself has not led to a similar flourishing of terms describing what we do. This lack of clear and consistent terminology makes it difficult to engage in meaningful discussions at industry conferences, leads government inspectors to impose ill-suited regulations, and confuses members of the public. The article that follows is my respectful submission for a solution.

I have deliberately chosen "Aerial Adventure Environments" as the umbrella term to describe climbing facilities built from rope, steel cable, wood, and other specialized hardware that are suspended from trees, utility poles, and other structures. These purpose-built venues present intriguing climbing and traversing activities that enable people to challenge themselves. Each word in the term is important.

*Aerial* refers to the fact that participants are located off the ground. It may be as little as 12 inches in a low ropes course activity or more than 100 feet on a canopy tour. In order to mitigate against the consequences of a fall, individuals make use of specialized

equipment, apply special skills, or exercise specific techniques.

*Adventure* is what distinguishes these experiences from amusement rides. An adventure is a purposeful and challenging endeavour that requires participants to demonstrate physical effort or skill to achieve a successful outcome. An adventure is neither virtual nor a fluke – your active participation determines the end result.

Finally, I selected the term *Environment* because it encompasses both the **structure** and its **mode of delivery**. As you will read in the subsequent terms,



aerial adventure facilities may look similar but differ significantly in terms of their purpose and their approach to participation, supervision, instruction, and programming.

I avoided the use of the word "course" since it is used in "ropes course" and "challenge course" and good definitions avoid using synonymous terms. While "course" has a long history in describing these things that we do, I also think that it is actually unhelpful when describing

what we do to those outside our field of expertise. Three of the more common (and pertinent to this discussion) definitions of "course" include: a path of travel; a unit of instruction; and a terrain designed for competition. Although it is possible to stretch the definition to consider a canopy tour as a type of "course" which is travelled, instructed, or contested, doing so seems unnecessarily arcane – especially when you consider some of the other aerial adventure environments that fall into this category. I am proposing a fresh start.

I believe that there are six main Aerial Adventure Environments. These environments share considerable similarities as a result of having grown out of rock climbing and mountaineering. They use much of the same equipment and many of the techniques from those recreational activities. The subtle differences among them, however, may be the key to unlocking clear communication both inside the industry and beyond.

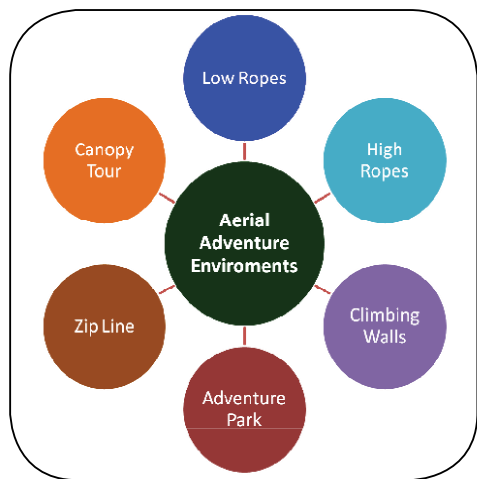
An Aerial Adventure Environment was recognised with its own circle and term when I believed it had a distinct structure or mode of delivery. While operating system (the underlying integrated approach of equipment, facilities, people, and procedures that together form a functioning whole) was important, a different operating system was, on its own, insufficient to gain a circle. Thus, a single element like the Multivine may be found on a low ropes course, a high ropes course, and in an adventure park but will require different instructor capabilities to deliver the experience to participants.

The radial shape facilitates the understanding which is the umbrella term and which are the distinct

concepts. The shape allows for the easy addition of new Aerial Adventure Environments and easy connections to kindred groups. For example, climbing walls connect to the umbrella group mountaineering which includes activities such as glacier travel, ice climbing, aid climbing, sport climbing, trad climbing, and more.

The colours in the diagram also convey meaning. Blue-coloured environments describe structured experiences that are deliberately designed and facilitated to achieve a group's specific outcome. These environments provide organized and established groups with customized programs and are typically associated with schools, summer camps, treatment sites, and conference centres.

The warm-coloured environments



describe experiences that are available to individual members of the general public – so long as you are able to pay the admission fee, you do not need to be a member of a particular group to participate. These environments provide essentially self-directed experiences with a mass appeal that simultaneously encompasses a wide range of ages and abilities and are typically associated with tourist resorts, parks and conservation areas, ski hills, and other commercial endeavours.

**Low Ropes Courses**

In some ways these unharnessed

activities are at the foundation of adventure programming. With roots from herbertisme and military obstacle courses, the goal is for individuals or groups to complete physical challenges located near ground level. Unlike an obstacle course, the tasks (called elements) are not intended to be completed in any particular order and any competition is against yourself rather than others. Protection against a fall is provided by spotting – a technique that is taught to and carried out by group members.

Depending on your perspective, low ropes may be an umbrella term on its own. There is certainly enough variation amongst the activities to support this argument. Low ropes course programs may include permanent structures or portable equipment. They may even include low prop or no prop activities such as ice breakers, cooperative games, or trust exercises. Some elements like the Spider's Web and Initiative Wall are intentionally designed to be group problem solving tasks – there is no success without teamwork and planning. Other elements like the Tension Traverse and the previously mentioned Multivine are

individual undertakings that require spotters for safety but not task execution. Regardless of whether the infrastructure is extensive or minimal, participants stay near the ground and are never suspended in a harness.

Once upon a time, low ropes courses were constructed using ropes – for handlines, footlines, and more. These days, the use of galvanised aircraft cable is more common and leads some participants to ask after a day of low ropes course programming “When are we getting to the ropes?”

**High Ropes Courses**

Traditionally, a high ropes course program was preceded by a sequence of low ropes and other team building activities. Originally developed as a tool for personal and team development, in many ways high ropes course programs

are simply low ropes moved another 30 feet into the air. This significant change in height requires the use of a belay – the term used by climbers and mountaineers to describe a rope system that manages the risk of a fall. Should the climber slip off an element, the belay system ultimately prevents the climber from hitting the ground.

There are three main belay systems in use on high ropes courses: top rope belay, team belay, and lanyard based. Designers of Aerial Adventure Environments make deliberate decisions about these operating systems which must then be reflected in installation, equipment selection, and instructor training. Regardless of the choice of operating system, high ropes are a facilitated and group based adventure experience.

In a top rope belay the belay rope runs from the climber, through a top anchor (which may be fixed or traversing), and back into a belay device managed by a belayer on the ground. The belayer may be a group member who has received instruction and is under appropriate supervision or a trained program facilitator.

In a team belay one or more belay ropes run from the climber, through a series of anchor points (either fixed or traversing), and into the hands of multiple belayers on the ground. The anchor points provide enough friction that a separate belay device is unnecessary. These team belay systems were designed to increase group involvement and reduce the amount of time in takes to teach group members to belay. The three most common team belay systems include: Traversing Double N, M-Style, and Vertical N.

In a lanyard based system the climber uses the two lanyards to connect to appropriate anchorage on the high ropes course. In most cases the climber's lanyards are connected directly to the overhead belay cable and there is no cable pulley required

-- the climber's actions enable them to traverse the span.

### Climbing Walls

Climbing walls were the first commercial aerial adventure environment.

As early as the 1950s European climbers were constructing walls with artificial climbing holds on which to practice and by 1970s climbers could pay to play. Bouldering is the climbing wall Equivalent of a low ropes course – safety is provided by spotting (and possibly mats). As with high ropes, there are multiple belay options: top rope belay (described previously), lead climbing (where the rope runs between the climber to the belayer and the climber clips the rope through intermediate anchor points as he or she ascends), and autobelays (a mechanical device that automatically takes in rope and manages the climber's descent, thus replacing a human belayer). Because of the similarity in top rope belay systems, climbing walls are often incorporated into high ropes course programs.

### Adventure Park

First popularised in Europe, Adventure Parks enable members of the public to participate in a self-directed aerial adventure. While the structure itself may resemble a high ropes course, one need not be a member of a group to participate and there are no overt planned outcomes. Adventure

Parks typically employ a lanyard-based fall protection system although occasionally autobelays are used.

Since their goal is to provide a recreational experience to large numbers of people looking for a part-day experience, some parks now operate using lanyard systems designed to make it impossible for patrons to inadvertently disconnect themselves.

### Zip Line

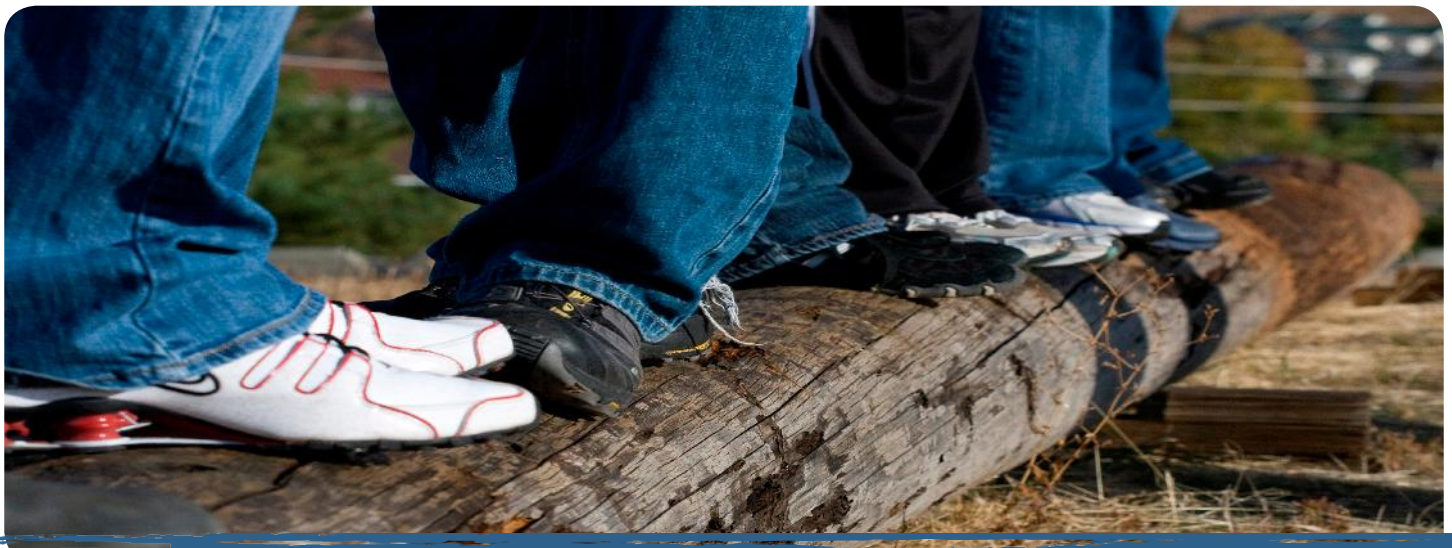
A zip line appeals to anyone who has ever wanted to fly across the earth, high over obstacles. A pulley riding on an inclined cable means that once a person steps off the platform, gravity takes over and transports him or her to the end. Zip lines can be distinguished not only by their height, length, and speed but more importantly by the technique they use to stop the rider: gravity brake, bungee brake, brake block, hand braking, instructor braking, hydraulics, and magnetic devices are all possibilities. A zip line may be used to dismount from a high ropes course or adventure park facility, or may be a stand alone structure either on its own or in proximity to another aerial adventure environment. Zip lines may also be arranged in a series so that riders can progress from zip line to zip line without returning to the ground (i.e. a zip line tour).

### Canopy Tour

As their name implies, canopy tours often take participants into the forest canopy, whether in the rainforest or more temperate locations. A canopy tour differs from a zip line tour mainly in the variety of elements that are included. As part of the experience, canopy tours often include bridges (level or inclined) that individuals need to cross, rappels (aka abseils) that enable individuals to go down, climbs that allow individuals to go up to a higher platform, and zip lines that combine traversing with loss in elevation.

### Conclusion

My hope in offering this taxonomy of aerial adventure environments is to promote clear, concise, and coherent communication both within the adventure industry and with those outside this field. In the interest of time and space, I have not attempted to classify all of the subsets of team belay systems in use nor provide a primer on all existing zip line braking systems. These topics merit articles of their own. I do believe that by highlighting these small yet significant differences (low and high ropes courses are not operated as open to the public facilities; canopy tours may include zip lines but zip lines need not pass through a canopy), it will be easier for all of us to understand what we are talking about when we are describing the things we do.



## From the Ground Up

*continued from pg. 11*

As the depth of knowledge and resources increase and broaden in our Association, it is imperative to hold on to pieces of historical perspective, support and guidance. The newly adopted Board Emeritus Policy will help this board and future boards tap into the experience and richness that comes from years of leadership within our Association.

The Inspector Certification and Examination program is a newly adopted concept that will provide an education track at the annual conference for individuals to develop skills and knowledge regarding the inspection of challenge courses, zip line tours, and adventure parks. There will also be an examination available where ACCT will verify the knowledge of individual inspectors at different levels. This system will provide further clarity regarding the qualifications of individual inspectors benefitting the end users in our industry.

In addition, the Board of Directors continues to work with Association volunteers and staff to oversee daily operations. We continue to take pride in our work, but know that without your support, feedback, and commitment, our foundation will fall short. Continue to read the "ACCT Clipboard", "Parallel Lines" and watch for announcements as the details of these accomplishments begin to roll out and get implemented. If you have questions, comments or suggestions, please contact me, or one of your elected representatives.

Michelle Hepler  
ACCT Board Chair



## ACCT Standards Update

by Scott Andrews  
Chair, Operations and Certifications Committee

I recently sent the text of the ACCT Standards, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition to the Association office. It has gone through legal review and technical editing and I am pleased to announce that on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the new **ACCT Standards, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition was approved by the ACCT Board of Directors.**

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the committee members who volunteer on the Operations and Certifications Committee and have dedicated countless hours to this project. They are a remarkable group! To each of you a deep and heartfelt thank you from me, the board and the members of our Association.

Thank you for the countless readings of the old standards, proposed standards and the new standards. Thank you for meetings before and after conferences and for time presenting at conferences. Thank you for weekly conference calls. Thank you for time away from your families for face to face meetings. Thank you for strong opinions and beliefs and the grace and strength to hear other strong opinions. Thank you for hours of tedious work and attention to detail. Thank you for remembering the industries roots and looking forward to the new and exciting ways programs operate.

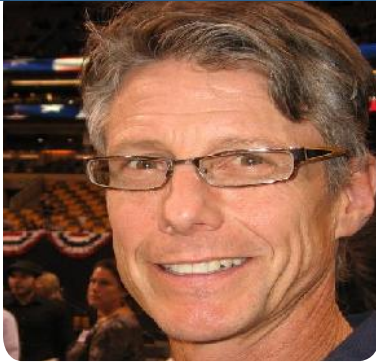


Thank you to Jim Wall for nearly 10 years on the committee. Jim I wish you well in your new efforts. Thank you to Andrew Hubert for returning to the committee three years ago and giving us a needed Canadian perspective.

So when you see John Winter, Christine Baker, Jim Wall, Andrew Hubert, Dylan Burt and the countless number of people who played a role in developing the operations, training and certification sections of the new standards - please thank them. They have worked very hard on your behalf.

**Current ACCT Members can expect to receive a complimentary, downloadable copy of the ACCT Standards, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition by October 31, 2012.**





## Design, Performance and Inspection Standards Update

by Rich Klajnscek

Chair, Design, Performance and Inspection Committee

I bring good news to you, standards aficionados. As Scott mentioned in his article, committee work on the 8<sup>th</sup> edition standard is complete and on October 10, 2012 the ACCT Standards, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition were approved by the Board of Directors! **Current ACCT Members can expect to receive a complimentary, downloadable copy of the ACCT Standards, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition by October 31, 2012.**

The document we've been working on for the past five years has changed as much as the name of our committee. It's been a long road to get to where we are now. Not since the second edition in the mid 1990's has so much changed in our "installation" standard. The most obvious change is the name of the document and committee. We feel that the new name more accurately represents what we're thinking, discussing and writing. Installation is the act of assembling an element or course. Although we have written about installation issues in previous editions, we don't much any more. Our efforts are focused on what happens before (design) and after (inspection) installation. Instead of being prescriptive about specific materials and techniques, as in years past, we're increasingly focused on general principles of minimum acceptable strengths and performance of the products we provide over their useful lifespan. In the document itself, the biggest change is that we have combined the inspection standards with the main design standard. We now address each topic, in its entirety, in one dose rather than two. We hope you think this is as big of an improvement as we do.

We've also greatly expanded and improved the Definitions section, as we realize that definitions are the foundation of the standard. Read the definitions carefully and understand them when you are interpreting the standard – they are VERY important.

While the 8<sup>th</sup> edition might first appear less user-friendly than previous editions, please understand that this evolution is the result of us becoming part of the greater standards writing community. The audience for the ACCT standards has evolved. Rather than being a manual for challenge course installers, as was the first edition, it is now also addressed to governments, regulatory bodies, engineers and many other users.

Please join me in welcoming two new members to the committee, both named Dave (I guess they were trying to

make it easier for the rest of the committee to remember their names). Dave Humphys, of Challenges Unlimited in Ontario, Canada, has been with us since the spring and Dave Horan, of Adventure Construction and Consulting in Connecticut, is our newest Dave, having just attended his first meeting. Both bring solid technical knowledge and ability in different areas of the field. We are excited about having them on board!



The 8<sup>th</sup> edition is also the eighth edition of which I have been involved. Developing new standards has become part of my identity over the past two decades – something I never thought would happen in a million years. I also never imagined that this industry would become my career! It has been an honor to work on each of these editions. I'm proud of what we've accomplished with our standards over the past twenty years. ("We" means a long line of people who have participated in standards development through the years.)

One of the repeated rewards is seeing a new edition coming together and knowing that it is better than the previous edition. One of the frustrations is submitting another edition knowing that it's only a work in progress and never really finished. Needless to say, we already have a significant to-do list for the 9<sup>th</sup> edition (which will hopefully carry the ANSI label).

In the meantime, enjoy the 8<sup>th</sup> edition. Once you've had a chance to digest it, please do not hesitate to contact any of the committee members with your questions. We will be presenting workshops on the 8<sup>th</sup> edition at the ACCT conference in February – see you there!

Rich Klajnscek, Chair

*On behalf of the rest of the committee: Brian Lisson, Tom Zartman, Dave Horan, Dave Humphys, Jack Moeding and our CZLT members: Victor Gallo, Robbie Oates and John Walker.*

Change impacts us all. Technology is influencing the way we live and communicate. Conversation has taken a back seat to instant messaging.

Our programs, services and products bring balance to our hurried, hi-tech world and connect **people** to people. From simple trust-building games to physically demanding challenge courses, our goal is to use **adventure education** as a tool to help develop good judgment, confidence, self-esteem, critical-thinking, problem-solving and communication skills. We open the door to what's possible and help participants develop new attitudes. New ways of thinking. **Success.**





## Workers Compensation Basics

by Robert Monaghan

Workers Compensation is a system by which no-fault statutory benefits prescribed in state law are provided by an employer to an employee (or the employee's family) due to a job-related injury (including death) resulting from an accident or occupational disease. Most employers meet their obligations through purchasing workers compensation insurance from a private insurer or the state. There are four states that are considered monopolistic, meaning employers are required to purchase workers compensation through a state fund or pool. These states are North Dakota, Ohio, Washington and Wyoming.

All 50 states and the District of Columbia now have workers compensation laws, and each law has the same basic objective of providing no-fault benefits to workers injured on the job. Unfortunately no two states workers compensation laws are the same.

Workers compensation insurance is compulsory in 48 states; Texas and New Jersey are considered elective states. In an elective state the employer can elect to legally opt out of the workers compensation system. However if an employer elects to do so, an injured worker can bring a negligence claim against his employer. If an employer opts out the system they lose the use of the three most common defenses (contributory negligence, negligence of a fellow employee and assumption of risk).

The workers compensation law of each state describes what constitutes an employee employer relationship. Often state laws require an employer to cover the injuries of an uninsured contractor employee. In states where those claims are permissible the workers compensation carriers have exposure to claims, and are allowed to collect a premium for the risk. Taxation laws do not determine who is an employee and who is not, it's the workers compensation law in the employer's state or the state in which the injury occurred.

Workers Compensation premiums are based on several factors, but primarily by the governing classification code. There are hundreds of classifications of employees each with a different rate.

The rate is expressed as per one hundred dollars of annual payroll. The rules, rates and regulations are determined either by the state's law or by the National Council of Compensation Insurance (NCCI).



When purchasing workers compensation an employer will forecast their annual payroll by classification of employee. The premium is then calculated and it is an estimated premium for the year. Larger employers will become subject to Experience Rating rules. For those employers the state or NCCI will track the payrolls, classifications and claims of an employer to determine an Experience Modifier. That factor will be applied to your premium.

Employers start with a 1.00 Experience Modifier. Depending on the employers claims experience this can be a debit or credit. At the expiration of your annual workers compensation policy the insurance provider is required to perform an audit of payroll for

the period in which the coverage was in force. The auditor will review the employer's business operations, classifications of employees, their respective payroll, subcontractors, independent contractors, etc. An audit produces either an additional or return premium to the employer. The majority of the audits are correct. However there are times when an audit is incorrect. In those cases the employer has a short window to dispute the audit. Disputes should be in writing and should include exactly what the employer is disputing. Some of the disputes typically involve uninsured contractors, owners/officers payroll and the classification of employees. The ultimate authority on the classification of workers is either NCCI or your state, depending on your state law. When an employer and their insurance provider cannot agree on the classification of employees, there is a process whereby NCCI or the state will provide an inspection to determine the classification. If you are an owner of a business, some states allow you to exclude yourself. If you include yourself, often there is a minimum payroll the carrier will use to determine the premium. Executive officer payroll often has a cap as well.

Workers Compensation Law on a national level is a complex subject and this piece was written to give some basic knowledge to build on. It can get complicated quickly when an employer has operations out of state or hires employees from out of state. An excellent source for additional information on workers compensation can be found at [www.ncci.com](http://www.ncci.com).



## Legal Corner

by Reb Gregg

### Protecting Your Program

In the last issue of Parallel Lines I discussed the first prong of an effective risk management plan: protecting your client. I identified the prominent sources of claims relating to your duty of care owed to a client.

I described that duty of care as one of protecting the client from unreasonable risks of harm. I used the anagram DEEP GRASS – as in the “weeds” in which we all sometimes find ourselves.

Here, I discuss the second prong: protecting your program. I will identify those areas of management and operations which prepare you for the inevitable bad event, and claims produced by it. Note the anagram: CLIPS - getting yourself out of the deep grass, or weeds.

First, protect yourself with good contracts. These include contracts with persons who serve you (employees and independent contractors, and other vendors) and persons you serve (direct participants in your programs and organizations – schools, companies – who bring those persons to you ). Important among these contracts are agreements of insurance, and agreements of release and indemnity, allocating responsibilities, risks and legal liability.

Next, be aware of, and have a good lawyer who understands, the laws and regulations which govern your operation – local, state and federal.

Incorporate (or choose some other form of business which protects your personal assets).

Use professionals wisely – insurance, legal, engineering and perhaps medical. Use only reputable builders, trainers and inspectors of your facility. ACCT Professional Vendor Members (PVMs) should be a reliable source of such expertise. Understand industry standards, and prevailing practices. If you vary from such standards and prevailing practices, have a very good reason for doing so. (And if you are writing standards, provide some flexibility where you can do so reasonably.)

So there you have it – the problem areas (the weeds) and some suggestions of how to prepare your program to meet those problems which arise (cutting through those weeds). Addressing these two prongs of a risk management strategy will assist you in creating and maintaining a quality program: one which does what it says it will do, and which takes reasonable care of its clients.

Reb Gregg  
rgregg@gregglaw.net

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## Utah Olympic Park - Nordic Skills Zone and Trackside Adventure Course and Drop Tower

*continued from page 12*

The adventurous group of PVMs and ACCT staff had the opportunity to be participants on the Trackside Adventure Course and Drop Tower. The timber framed course was beautiful to look at and challenging to do. The two level course had different levels of challenge, with the upper one being the most challenging. Mind you, while we were there, the bobsled is taking runs on the track that wraps around the adventure course. Zipping onto the Drop Tower was just a warm up for the adrenaline. Stepping off the Drop Tower was scary, exciting, breathtaking, and FUN!!!!

We all appreciated the opportunity to visit this beautiful, historical park while checking out and playing on a top-notch adventure course with other ACCT members.

The Utah Olympic Park Nordic Skills Zone and Trackside Adventure Course and Drop Tower were built by ACCT PVM, Challenge Towers. Challenge Towers has been an ACCT member for 18 years. For more information regarding the program please contact Andrew Miller at [andrew@challengetowers.com](mailto:andrew@challengetowers.com) or 828-265-0602.

*Cover photo is the Nordic Zone & Trackside Adventure Course at the Olympic Park.*



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## Can You Spot Elvis?

by Cynthia Paris  
Chair, Conference Committee

Walk through the Exhibit Hall during our annual conference at Red Rock Resort in Nevada, February 7-12, 2013 and maybe you will catch a glimpse of Cee Lo Green or Lady Gaga. We are a super-powered group so maybe even Superman or the Green Lantern will show up!

Keep your eyes (and ears) open for Elvis, superheroes, characters and other celebrities in the Exhibit Hall on Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. Awards will be given for Best Costume for both Exhibitors and Attendees – so start planning your 'look' and join the fun!

The conference committee has taken your suggestions and feedback and we are planning some new 'looks' for this year's event. You can register online now -much easier than trying to use the paper form. Go to the ACCT website at [www.acctinfo.org](http://www.acctinfo.org) and look for the conference link.

We are excited to be at the Red Rock Resort & Spa in Las Vegas – a truly amazing resort complex close to the Red Rock canyons. Check the ACCT and the resort websites for activities such as hiking, biking and horseback riding. This is a great place to spend an extra day before or after the conference. We will post more links as we get closer to the event. If you want to see the famous Las Vegas strip & its many themed hotels- it's only a short drive from our host hotel. The hotel even offers a free shuttle (with limited space) to the strip and to and from the airport – saving you the cost of a taxi or bus if you plan well.

The conference is a great way to meet others and share best practices. We have added networking opportunities during lunch and breakfast each day of the conference. While you could have a sandwich in your room, consider instead, the value of gathering and sharing with industry

professionals during a meal. If you are looking for a job or are hiring you may find what you need here.

Friday and Saturday will again have our 9 workshop time slots, with more than 10 sessions to choose from each time slot. These are available on a walk-in basis, no pre-registration needed. Though they may still fill up quickly, we have moved some of the most popular topics to bigger rooms. You have nearly 100 workshops to choose from, all included in your registration fee!

If you want to get a more from your time, consider attending a pre- or post-conference workshop. We have sessions for many different areas in our industry, including : zip line, adventure and canopy tour operations, building, social media, discussion techniques, games, safety equipment and an OPEN SPACE session for facilitators, course and camp operators, and personnel. See the ACCT website and registration brochure for more details. We are celebrating the Association for Challenge Course Technology's 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday this year. We will have cake and other birthday treats throughout the event. If you have any photos of the association as a youngster please send us a copy to be included in our slideshow.

Have you "Liked" us yet on Facebook? We will be posting photos, video clips and other fun things via Facebook.... so visit us now ! Do you have any suggestions or creative ideas to add to this year's event? Send me an email at [cparisconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:cparisconsulting@gmail.com) . I look forward to meeting you at the Red Rock!

**The 23rd Annual ACCT Conference Registration Brochure is now available online!**

[www.acctinfo.org](http://www.acctinfo.org)



# ACCT Organizational Priorities

by James Borishade  
Executive Director

The organizational planning process that ACCT undertakes annually serves to focus our efforts for the coming year. Traditionally, this process has entailed the collection of feedback from across the network in order to settle on an org project list that balances the goals and priorities of the varied committees, staff and Board of Directors.

Org planning for FY13 is unique to any prior year's process in that it appears as though we are unified in our belief that we must move forward projects that support our strategic plan and core strategies. This underlying objective has provided focus to this year's process that is both essential and exciting, requiring that we select a distinct set of organizational projects that will support our work towards our strategic plan.

I am continually receiving feedback across the network that we are trying to do too many different things at one time – managing too many different projects. There is a concern, which I share, that too many projects overstretch our resources, making it difficult for us to achieve real progress on any of our objectives. I have seen greater success and greater pride when we have been able to maximize our effectiveness by prioritizing our work. Going forward, I am encouraging us to use this as our guiding principle.

To maximize our efforts in FY13, your ACCT staff believes it is imperative that we focus on the following goals:

1. Build a strong operational **infrastructure**
2. Maintain a **membership** and **governance structure** that is congruent with ACCT being the leading challenge course, aerial adventure course and canopy/zip line tour trade association
3. Establish **sustained income** efforts to help us accomplish our strategic plan and increase our endowment fund
4. Create and implement a comprehensive **advocacy** strategy
5. Increase our impact as the **leading international trade association** for challenge courses, zip lines, canopy tours and aerial adventure courses

## FY13 Org Project List

It is through the lens of these goals and our strategic plan, and through your feedback, that we have identified our FY13 organizational project list. We are excited to announce that this list of organizational projects is more streamlined than that of any past year. We are confident that our investment of time and resources into the following 10 projects will guide us as we work towards accomplishing the goals on our strategic plan.

| Project                      | Owner           | Core Objective(s)   |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Standards                    | SWC             | - Publish the ACCT Standards, 8th Edition<br>- Complete the 9th edition draft for public comment  |
| Organizational Structure     | ED              | - Develop a cost effective org structure that helps us accomplish our goals   |
| Brand/Technology Enhancement | BM              | - Website upgrade to enhance overall user experience  |
| Legislation                  | ED<br>DO<br>GRC | - Develop and determine the most effective way to maintain an up-to-date list of states, provinces or countries that regulate this industry |
| Advocacy                     | GRC             | - Create a comprehensive advocacy strategy that includes goals and outcomes   |

| Project                 | Owner        | Core Objective(s)   |
|-------------------------|--------------|---|
| Inspector Certification | ED<br>ICC    | - Pilot new Inspector Certification Program<br>- Integrate Inspector Certification into the Annual Conference |
| Program Accreditation   | MM           | - Pilot Accreditation program for facilities with commercial zip lines and/or aerial adventure courses        |
| Membership Program      | MM           | - Launch new membership benefits package<br>- Launch new membership benefits                                  |
| Expert Reviewer Pilot   | DO           | - Pilot Expert Reviewer Program as part of PVM Accreditation  |
| Research Projects       | BM<br>RES. C | - Gather Industry Data  |

**Projects Not on FY13 List**

I do want to provide some rationale for why some projects are not included on the organizational project list for FY13. Undoubtedly, some of you may be concerned not to see certain projects on the list. It is not easy to say no to projects that seem to hold potential, but we must focus our efforts in order to maximize our effectiveness. It is important to remember that some of these projects may receive greater focus in future years.

We will examine our philosophy around standards development after the publication of the ACCT Standards 8th Edition and the completion of our BSR-9 form to ANSI. The outcome of our ANSI process should largely determine the future scope of other standards we might consider developing for the industry. During FY13, the standards development process will continue to focus on the publication of our 8th Edition and the submission of our draft 9th Edition for public comment.

Though no longer an organizational project, Standards Harmonization has been a major focus of organizational effort and resources for quite some time. Harmonization is an important part of our core and does not need to be singled out as a project.

ACCT Annual Conference has been an intricate part of our financial strategy since our inception and has given us the

ability to complete other projects. Enhancement to our conference happens each year and is considered business as usual.

While Practitioner Certification is not on the FY13 project list, the Operations and Certifications Committee will be exploring areas related to the topic of Practitioner Certification and a new Practitioner Certification project may be initiated in the future as a next step to this committee's work.

The ACCT Board of Directors recently voted to create an Employee Work Place Safety Standards Committee. While the work of this committee is indeed an organizational priority, the ACCT Standards 8th Edition and the 9th Edition draft standard for our ANSI process are our top standards writing priorities. To avoid being stretched too thin, the staff needs to stay laser focused on those two standards for FY13. In addition, we want to ensure the EWPSS Committee has time to have an open standards writing process. In the interim the EWPSS Committee will be preparing their scope and sequence; an outline; and working to ensure harmonization.

In regard to Additional Income Streams, we believe this is rolled into other projects. For example, program accreditation and inspector certifications are both a part of creating additional income streams.

*continued on page 29*

**Getting Your Copy of ACCT Standards, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (A Must Read)**

The ACCT Standards, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition is ready for publication. To ensure you receive your complimentary copy of the new ACCT Standards, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition you MUST be current in your membership dues. If you have questions regarding your membership status please contact Trudy Robbins, Membership Manager, at membership@acctinfo.org or 1-800-991-0286 ext. 914.





## ACCT Certified Inspector Program

by Keith Jacobs and Don Stock  
ICE Committee Chair & Vice Chair

Originally founded by vendors, ACCT members are now predominantly Challenge Course & Zip Line/Canopy Tour managers, facilitators, owners and operators. ACCT has been setting challenge course standards since 1993, and is now accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as a standards developer.

Based on extensive discussions with representatives from all segments of business and industry, ACCT has identified the following potential benefits of inspector certification.

- Fewer accidents, injuries, and fatalities
- Reduced risk of loss
- Assurance of inspector abilities
- Improved safety records and focus on risk management
- Enhanced public image of challenge course industry
- Meet the growing demands of states and providence for inspector certification

Industry subject matter experts have reviewed the speed of change within the industry and have researched other comparable certification and licensing systems before determining that this goal could be achieved by ACCT.

The ACCT Board of Directors, acting on this need, created a committee to focus on this task. The Inspector Certification Exam Committee (ICE) has been charged with the development of the committee structure, exam, and appropriate system to implement. They will be responsible for grading the exam and developing a list of sources and/or study guides for those looking to obtain an ACCT Certified Inspector Card.

The first step in the development of an objective test to measure what is required for challenge course technology inspections is to look at the relevant industry standards. The second step is to analyze the job requirements of an inspector and the duties being prescribed by current state and provincial law.

A survey of inspection providers was conducted to validate the need for certification of inspectors.

The ACCT Board of Directors will guide the ICE committee in establishing and maintaining the key elements of the program. These include: identifying essential skills, standardizing test conditions, developing the scoring process, establishing reliability among tests and creating flexible application and scheduling procedures.

A prep course for the ACCT Inspector Certification Exam will be offered on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013, prior to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference. The ACCT Inspector Certification Exam will be offered on Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at the conclusion of the conference.

For More Information on Inspector Certification visit [www.acctcertifications.com](http://www.acctcertifications.com).

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## Choosing a Challenge Course Vendor

by Bill Weaver  
ACCT Director of Operations

Back in 2003, an ACCT flyer was written and distributed titled "Choosing a Challenge Course Vendor". The introduction to the flyer began, "If you are planning to build a new Challenge Course, or if you have one and are in need of services like an inspection, maintenance, expansion or training, your choice of a professional vendor will be a very important one, both for now and in the future. Choosing a vendor who can provide a complete range of services and one with a good reputation is key, as is educating yourself to become an informed consumer." These words of advice are just as relevant nine years later. Based on the nature and volume of calls received at the ACCT offices, I believe the information from that article should be shared today.

I will begin by tweaking the title, "Consider the Benefits of Choosing an ACCT Professional Vendor Member (PVM) when selecting a Challenge Course or Canopy / Zip Line Vendor." Many of the calls I receive from practitioners and end users are from disgruntled clients who are not satisfied with the services they received from their vendor and/or feel misled by their vendor regarding their credentials. The vast majority of those callers unfortunately selected a non-PVM or were under the impression (through conversations and marketing materials provided by the vendor) that their vendor is indeed an ACCT PVM. All are disappointed when I have to tell them that the vendor they chose is not a PVM of ACCT and there is very little my

office can do help them resolve their conflict.

The purpose of this article is to help end users become informed consumers. Below is a sample list of questions you should consider asking **any** prospective vendor:

Is the vendor insured for general liability and for completed operations or product liability? Are **all** employees and agents covered by workers compensation insurance, and are all vehicles adequately covered? You could also have the vendor request that a copy of the policy and/or a certificate of insurance be forwarded to you directly from the carrier. Does the vendor have at least 2 years of full time experience in providing the services you need? What is the vendor's involvement level with relevant professional organizations (e.g. ACCT, AEE, ASTM, etc.)? Be aware, vendors who are Associate or Institutional level members of ACCT **are not accredited**. How many courses have they built comparable to the size project you are proposing and where? How much experience does the individual installer, inspector or trainer have who will work on your project? Request a list of references for similar projects. Visit courses the vendor has built. Does the vendor offer more than course installation? How about a periodic inspection program; maintenance and repair services; course expansion services; course supplies and equipment? Does the vendor adhere to ACCT Standards? If so,

what documentation can they provide to substantiate their claim? **All ACCT PVMs** have successfully completed a rigorous accreditation process which includes a site visit. They provide annual reports to the association to verify their compliance to ACCT Standards and they receive a review site visit every three years. **All active PVMs** receive an annual certificate confirming they are an accredited member in good standing and each PVM will be happy to provide you with a copy.

Another thing to consider is can the vendor ensure that the course will meet or exceed any other applicable standards, such as camp accreditation standards, state regulations, etc.? Will the vendor help you to establish internal policies and procedures for course management? Does the course come with a warranty? Does the vendor adhere to ACCT Standards regarding Training & Certification? Does the content of the training match these standards? What is the curriculum used in the trainings and what assessments are used at the end of the training? Does the vendor provide practitioner certification that is accredited? Who is the accrediting body? Be aware, there are many certification programs available which claim their services "meet or exceed" the ACCT Standards. A fair follow-up question would be, "says who"? ACCT accredits PVMs EXCLUSIVELY for certification accreditation.

*continued on page 28*

### Have you logged on to the new ACCT Membership Portal?

ACCT upgraded the backdoor of our website in early October. This upgrade will provide more access and user-friendly services for our members. Go to <http://m360.acctinfo.org/frontend/portal/Main.aspx>. Your new login information was emailed to you approximately two weeks ago. If you have questions or need assistance please contact Trudy Robbins, Membership Manager, at [membership@acctinfo.org](mailto:membership@acctinfo.org) or 1-800-991-0286 ext. 914.

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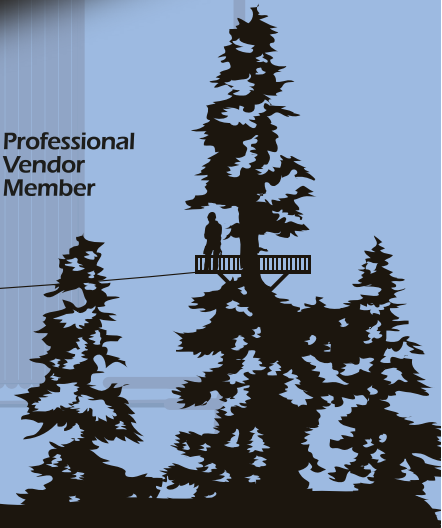
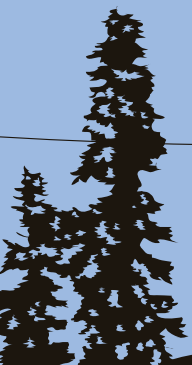
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## Facilitators Toolbox: Attitude is Everything

by Jen Stanchfield



Group participants truly respond—even subconsciously—to a facilitator's attitudes, demeanor, and expectations. We often communicate more than we realize with our body language and tone. A positive attitude is contagious.

If you really believe in the methods and activities you are using with a group, they will most likely buy in and respond to your enthusiasm. Conversely, if you aren't comfortable with the material you are presenting, participants can sense that as well. People respond to your attitudes toward them. I believe if we expect the best of participants, they will usually perform their best.

Remember to acknowledge and believe in the abilities of the learners in your group. We all work with difficult groups and group situations at times. Be aware of how you respond to the challenging behaviors that arise. If you are starting to feel there is "no hope for that kid" or a participant is "pushing your buttons," then it might be time for some self-reflection. Take a step back and reflect on the positive aspects and achievements that have occurred; recognize the small steps and successes of the individuals and the group. It could be that it is time to get some support and new perspectives from a colleague, or if possible find a co-facilitator or co-teacher for the group.

During a recent conversation with a group of teachers about the challenges of working with middle school students, I said, "When I work with that 7<sup>th</sup> grade group, I keep thinking of the comedy film "What about Bob?" (1991). In this movie the main character (played by Bill Murray) is guided by his psychiatrist (Richard Dreyfus) to repeat the mantra 'baby steps' as he

gets over his phobias. I try to recognize each 'baby step' the group members are taking. If I didn't, I could become very discouraged." One of the teachers responded, "Yes, we have to remind ourselves that we are looking for 'oak kind of growth' rather than expecting 'mushroom kind of growth.'" I have observed that facilitators who regularly work with challenging populations are skilled at acknowledging and celebrating the small successes and adept at noticing the small, positive steps forward a group is making.

All of us have times when we question our effectiveness. Group facilitation is not easy. It takes a great deal of energy and commitment, as well as a willingness to take on challenging interpersonal situations. Facilitators who continue to enjoy their work remain hopeful, keep their perspective of the big picture, and recognize that growth and change arise from conflict and struggle. Consistently practicing patience, empathy, and the power of positive thinking reaps great rewards.

"The last human freedom is to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances." - Viktor Frankl

Reference: Tips & Tools: The Art of Experiential Group Facilitation by Jennifer Stanchfield. 2007. Wood 'N Barnes Publishing Bethany, Oklahoma.

## Choosing a Challenge Course Vendor

*continued from page 26*

Is the vendor financially stable? Is a formal contract executed for all services? What are the terms for deposits and payments?

Why choose a PVM? **You have an advocate.** Rarely, but occasionally, I receive a call from an end user who expresses a concern or has a question about a PVM.

As Director of Operations of ACCT, my primary role is to manage ACCT's PVM accreditation program. I know and speak with each and everyone of our PVM company owners on a first name basis. I am always available to receive your

call and be your advocate in addressing any concerns you might have regarding one of ACCT's Accredited Professional Vendor Members.

For assistance or more information contact:  
Bill Weaver, Director of Operations  
800-991-0286 extension 913  
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## ACCT Organizational Priorities

*continued from page 24*

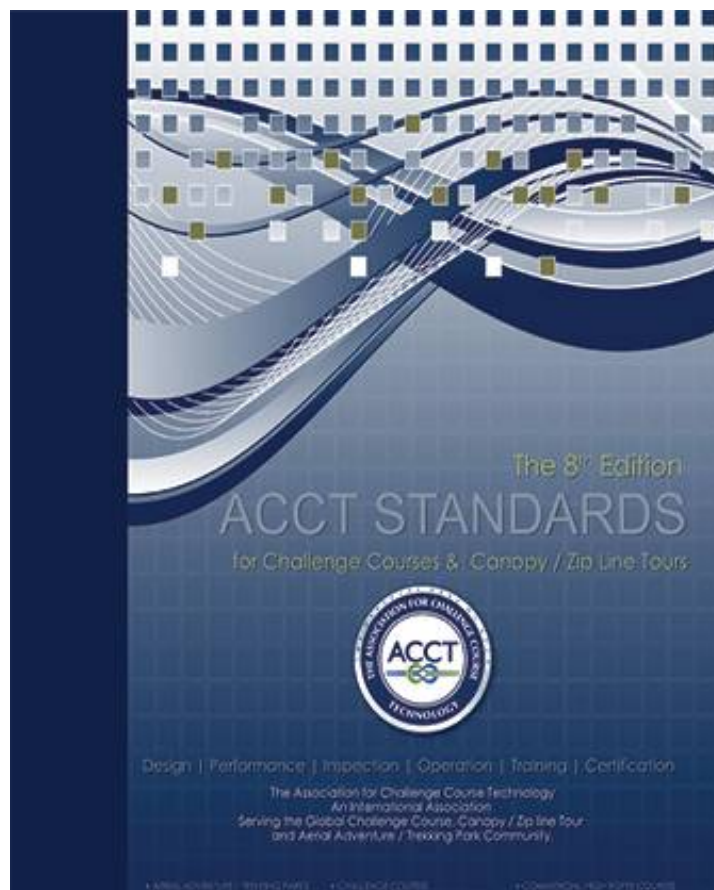
In FY13 we will divest in the following projects to ensure that we can stay laser focused on completing the goals within our strategic plan:

- Social Media Integration
- Revising ACCT Accreditation Manual
- Creating Additional Position Statements
- Membership Drive
- Challenge Course University

### **Effect of the Strategic Plan**

As acknowledged above, the creation of a new strategic plan has informed our work and has helped us maintain our focus. These choices will regularly be evaluated and if there is a need to reallocate the resources committed to any of these projects – or other initiatives – in order to prioritize others, we are open to doing so. Naturally, when envisioning how we will reach our organizational goals, there is a long list of areas where we will need to focus and exciting things we may want to explore. The projects that we focus on during FY13 are simply the first steps of many to be taken in beginning to work toward the completion of the full strategic plan. We hope that you share our excitement in taking these first, focused steps and realizing the full potential of our efforts.

James Borishade  
james@acctinfo.org



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Founded in 1993, The Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) is the world's leading and largest American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Accredited Standards Developer focused specifically and solely on the challenge course industry. It is the mission of the organization to establish and promote the standard of care that defines professional practice and effective challenge course programs.

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