

GSWCF Challenge Course General Program FAQs

What is a challenge course?

A challenge course is a set of obstacles (called elements) and activities with the purpose of helping participants push the limits of their comfort zone, and learn leadership, teamwork, cooperation, and more.

All challenge courses involve activities (called Ground Games) that serve the same purpose as high and low elements, but do not require their use. Interested volunteers can attend trainings on ground games with GSWCF, but this does not qualify them to facilitate on any of our challenge courses. Contact us about available trainings. In addition to Ground Games, a challenge course can also contain:

Low Elements: Structured activities that are low to the ground, usually no more than 6 feet high, and geared toward team building. Trained facilitators will guide groups through low elements.

High Elements: Challenging activities that are high, above the ground and typically require a harness and belaying system. They are geared toward challenging the individual, rather than the group as a team. Trained facilitators will guide groups through high elements.

What does the challenge course look like?

When most people picture a challenge course, they're actually thinking of a Ropes Course. A ropes course is a type challenge course with interconnected elements that require participants to transition directly from one element to another. We operate challenge courses, not ropes courses. Our challenge course elements are not connected, and participants conquer each element individually. GSWCF has three challenge courses, one each at Camp Dorothy Thomas, Camp Indian Echo, & Camp Wai Lani.

Dorothy Thomas



Indian Echo



Wai Lani



Do my girls need to take on the GSWCF Challenge Courses in a certain order?

The following is the recommended progression for our courses: No but we do recommend girls start with ground & low coursed to work on team building skills prior to doing the more individually challenging courses like to rock wall and climb and zips.

What do we wear/bring?

As always, wear closed-toe shoes with a closed heel or heel strap at any GSCWF camp; however for these programs we suggest athletic shoes you can climb in such as sneakers which totally enclose the foot. Bring a refillable water bottle, bandana, sunscreen, and bug spray. We suggest athletic attire, t-shirts, or comfortable clothes that you can easily move around in. Pants **must** be to the knees (capris length leggings are best) for activities at the course that will require a harness. Improper attire will restrict your ability to participate on the course. If you do not wear clothing deemed appropriate, you will not be allowed to participate entirely. *There are no refunds for those who choose to wear incorrect clothing.*

Do you require a waiver?

All participants must have a signed hard copy of their [waiver](#) in hand when they arrive at the course. This MUST be submitted to the challenge course facilitators, so please make a copy if you are using the waiver for multiple events (knife safety, canoeing, ect). All participants under 18 years of age must have their waivers signed by their legal guardian. Waivers may not be signed on-site unless the participant's legal guardian is present. Waivers will be sent in the confirmation email you receive when you submit your challenge course information form and are also available on our [website](#). If a participant does not have a signed hard copy of their waiver they may not participate, however they may observe. *Refunds are NOT issued for those who arrive without waivers.*

We do not accept digital submissions of the waiver.

Can I stay with my group?

Yes! In fact, we require that you leave at least enough adults to cover your safety ratios for supervision, per [Volunteer Essentials](#). This enables our staff facilitators to be focused on the girls' skill development and teamwork during the challenges and provide you with the best possible program. Additional adults often stay to watch and take photos of the girls as they tackle the course.

Can adults participate?

We are focused on creating programming focused on the growth and development of our girls, so we allow *adults to participate only in encampment program options*. Troops will have the option to partner with other troops in their program interest form to meet group size minimums.

What if a girl does not want to participate in part of the course?

We practice challenge by choice in our programs. While we encourage girls to push the limits of their comfort zones and give them opportunities to take safe risks, we do not force anyone to participate in anything they are not comfortable with. There are no refunds for refusal to participate.

Are there discounts available?

Girls may use any form Council Dough towards the cost of your program reservation. These must be requested through our customer care department with the reservation details included at info@gswcf.org .

Troops reserving 2 or more programs on the same date receive a \$5 discount per girl.

Encampments of *50+ paid participants* will receive a pre-set discount.

Please see the Troop Program and Encampment Program FAQ documents for details on our available discounts.

Are there any weight restrictions?

Due to manufacturing specifications any activity requiring a harness, participants must be able to fit in to the harness correctly, and a **weight limit of 250lbs** (or less) is strictly enforced for all of our courses. This helps ensure the safety of our participants and facilitators. *For those participating at the Dorothy Thomas zip line*, they must weigh at least 60lbs to travel far enough on the zip to clear the pond.

How do I request a reservation?

Steps differ depending on if it is a troop or encampment reservation. Please refer [this FAQ for troop/group](#) reservations.

Encampment requests will be taken at the time that encampment dates are opened. Encampments not selecting challenge course at the time of encampment reservations may not be able to select challenge course options later as the dates may not be able to be staffed.

What am I responsible for?

Prior to your program at the challenge course, you are responsible for sending in your final numbers and final payment 30 days before your event. In addition to this, you are responsible for sending those interested in participating the [liability waiver](#).

You are also responsible for verifying that *all* participants are registered members of Girl Scouts and are the correct grade level for participation.

When is payment due?

A \$100 *non-refundable* deposit is due at the time of reservation. Requests will not be considered complete until the deposit is made. For any groups not paid in full one month (30 days) prior to their reservation, we reserve the right to cancel the reservation. Deposits are due at time of booking. If deposits are not made in the appropriate time, the request will automatically be cancelled. If the Outdoor Program Team cannot staff your request or we cancel on you due to unforeseen circumstances, you will receive your deposit back.

Can I change my group size?

Yes, we will work with you to accommodate additions to your group up to one week prior to your reservation. In the event that you need to lower the number of participants after you have paid for your reservation, our cancellation policy will be enforced (please see our cancellation policy below).

Can I cancel my reservation?

Yes, however all cancellations are subject to our cancellation policy below.

In order to receive a full or partial refund you must email a cancellation notice to

Campreservations@gswcf.org. If your email is sent:

- 60 days or more prior to camp reservation date, you'll receive a full refund, less deposit
- Less than 30 days to camp reservation date you will not receive a refund

A staff member will follow up with all cancellation requests. Cancellation requests include, but are not limited to: lowering the number of participants, total cancellations, or anything that affects the cost of program delivery.

Have more questions? Please contact us at Campreservations@gswcf.org or 813-281-GIRL (4475) or 813-262-1806.