

The Setting, Activities and Service is Ideal for Group Adventures

BUILD MEMORIES TO LAST A LIFETIME

BY MARY BETH SPAULDING

Although my visit to Triple B Ranch in Woodland Park, Colorado is coming to an end, I feel so lucky to have had this assignment. "Assignment" sounds like my visit was a grueling, task-oriented obligation when it has really been a fun-filled, adventurous but relaxing vacation.

In planning my last weekend here I do know that I will be sharpening my archery skills and joining the other guests at a marshmallow roast on the patio. With these two fun things added to the many other things I enjoyed on the Ranch, I will return home with so many memories.

Friday afternoon and into the evening I noticed several cars and vans pull into the Ranch driveway. I saw the Guest Services Manager as I was walking to my cabin and inquired about the influx of people. She informed me that the Hudson family reunion (which had forty family members ranging from ages 2-80 years old) and a local church's couples retreat (ten couples) were spending the weekend at the Ranch.

My first feelings were ones of selfishness. I didn't want crowds of people infringing on the open space and peacefulness on the Ranch that I've felt for the last few days. I also had thoughts of waiting in lines for horseback riding or dinner buffets.

It only took a second to realize my negative feelings and I quickly turned them around. I mean, look at how many new peoples and faces I have a change to meet and possibly get to know!

Where Did Everyone Go?

That evening I was gazing at the beautiful sunset enjoying my barbecued chicken on the patio and daydreaming about my archery practice the next morning. I glanced at the few other diners as I listened to the birds chirping, horses naying and the wind whistle thought the tops of the tall pines. I suddenly realized something—where are the sixty other people who came to the Ranch today?

It turns out that the staff organized privately-catered dinners

in the Conference Room and the Ranch Room for each of the groups. Saturday night the groups will be enjoying their own guided steak dinner rides and then join us on the patio later for the marshmallow roast.

The marshmallow roast was a huge blowout! Every one of the Ranch guests was there!

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We gathered on the patio of the restaurant with the adults sitting around the fire and the kids, who are all friends by now, running in the yard, playing tag and chasing each other.

In between marshmallows, I chatted with many people from the family reunion (five generations were here) and a married couple who were at the Ranch for a retreat. We shared adventure stories about our stay at the Ranch.

Mr. and Mrs. Hudson (second generation) told me that they've been having family reunions every two years now for over the past twenty and this by far was the best ever.

I asked them why they think that is. Mrs. Hudson said, "We wanted something different than the hotels and motels we've stayed at in the past. The kids were bored, and we had to drive everywhere for fun, and there was never an opportunity to do family things together when everybody took off in all directions."

"Triple B Ranch," she continued, "has everything you could possibly imagine right on the Ranch. We are staying for three days sharing activities as a family, never having to get in the car and there are adventures for every age group."

Later in the evening I sat next to a couple from the retreat and inquired about their program and how their group has been spending their time. They were a newly-married couple from Denver who

needed to spend quality time together away from the city and daily distractions. "The ranch has been a haven for us," the wife said, "it has allowed us to soak up the natural beauty around us and relax with one another while sharing our thoughts and feelings. We also have enjoyed the pool and horseback riding together—horseback riding was something we had never done before."

A Variety of Groups

In talking with the owners, Ron and Jackie Bullard, I learned that the Ranch is host to many groups such as Boy Scouts, youth groups, church groups, company meetings, picnics and training sessions, as well as weddings and receptions. The Ranch is such an enriching setting for group events and provides an environment for learning, reflecting, relationship-building, and adventure-seeking.



A Week Full of Diversified Fun

It was very enjoyable being on the Ranch with large groups and other families simultaneously. Depending on my mood, I could join the group activities (like volleyball or horseshoes) or relax with a good book by the pool. My fears of the groups "crowding" me and my activities was truly a misconceived notion.

It was an enjoyable time for all of the guests, groups and individuals alike, because of the Ranch's willingness to fulfill everyone's wants and needs and because of the staff's thorough planning and organization.

It was obvious that the staff's goal was to send everyone home—not just satisfied—but with memories to last a lifetime!