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Traverse City Now Offering Tree-Climbing Tours

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Traverse City is now offering tree climbing tours as a new way to entertain groups that will have people of all ages longing for more childhood-inspired fun. Lead by arborist, Bo Burke, local artists, photographers, bird watchers and thrill-seekers have been able to explore some of the biggest trees in the area.

"Everybody here is involved with outdoor adventures of one kind or another, and we're surrounded by some of the biggest, nicest trees in North America," says Burke. "It's just a natural thing to do."

Burke's process is heavily inspired by rock climbing and adapted for the three-dimensional tree experience. Ropes and harnesses ensure the climber's safety and allows them to go further than they

would if they were on their own. Although Burke's program is just over a year old, he has taught over 200 people how to climb.

"There are degrees of difficulty," he says. "I teach kids as young as seven and seniors as old as 77. It's really up to each climber, and how much they want to challenge themselves. They can go up as high as they want. There's no set goal - it's about getting off the ground and enjoying the world from another perspective."

The Traverse City Tree Tours are open to individuals and groups. Some trees can accommodate 12-15 climbers at a time. Participants will get a lesson in tree biology and proper tree care before starting a three-hour climb.

"We do birthday parties, dinners, sunrises and sunsets, artists, birders, and people who just want to get away by themselves," he says. So far there haven't been any requests for treetop weddings, but he figures it's only a matter of time.

The tree tour costs \$150 per person, group rates are available.

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