



## **Georgia's Best Treetop Adventure! Voted Best weekend getaway in Georgia! By AJC access Atlanta readers! 2010**

### **Story By Amy Bickers**

It's the "Just jump already" feeling. Standing on a platform 60 feet above the ground, my harness hooked to a thin cable strung 1000 feet across a creek, I repeat this new mantra.

My hands sweat inside thick gloves, my knees knock and my heart pounds. This is the first of five towers I'll traverse by zipping along cables high in the treetops. That is, if I can get up the nerve to jump already.



"This first one is the the hardest", says Mike Holder, who owns the Screaming Eagle Zipline Canopy Tour at Historic Banning Mills, an hour from Atlanta. Tours like this, once found mostly in exotic locales such as Costa Rica, are now popping up all over the U.S., and this is one of the country's highest and longest.

Finally, I jump. As I glide off the platform, sailing by the lodge and over the creek, the sensations my body first took for fear become absolute, unadulterated excitement. On the other side, my friend and I jump up and down like we've won the lottery.

Next we test our endurance and balance on a series of 20 wood-and-cable bridges high above the forest floor. The most difficult bridge, created with cable and a series of planks, hangs 300 feet across and 100 feet above the creek. About halfway across, we have a moment of panic. But the only way through the fear is forward.

The grand finale is the Screaming Eagle, the longest zipline on our course. "The Screaming Eagle is like stepping off a 30-story building", Mike says.

He's not lying. The half-mile long zip line sends us flying at nearly 70 mph, 300 feet above Snake Creek. Stepping off one of the world's highest timber towers brings home the lesson of this whole experience: learning to move forward no matter what.

Facing my fear on the zip line tour is one of the best things I've ever done. It isn't just fun.

It's confidence-building. It's the type of experience that makes you tell yourself, "I rock!"

Trust me, if you want a grand adventure, a tale to tell your children, grandchildren, and friends or for yourself in low moments), this is your chance.

So, just jump already!



**What To Expect:** The Full Extreme Adventure Tour (\$149) takes up to five hours and includes a series of nineteen ziplines and 20 bridges of various heights and distances. The Flight Pattern Tour (\$69) and a Flight Pattern Plus Tour (\$99) offer shorter versions of the canopy tour. Each takes two to three hours.

### **Do you have what it takes?**

You must be able to climb stairs to reach the top of the 60-foot and 100-foot towers,

walk on trails with steep inclines, and maintain your balance on cable bridges.

Women must weight between 100 and 250 pounds, and men must weigh between 100 and 285 pounds. All participants should be at least 10 years of age. Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Wear closed-toe shoes and long shorts or pants. There is no refund if you have on sandals or flip-flops and are unable to take the tour. Make sure your camera has a secure strap.

### **Historic Banning Mills**

205 Horseshoe Dam Road, Whitesburg, GA [historicbanningmills.com](http://historicbanningmills.com) or 866-447-8688

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