

Looking for Adventure? Zip Over to North Carolina

by Alison Storm

As my husband and I hoisted ourselves in to the back of an open-air 6-wheel drive Swiss Army transport vehicle, I began to question whether this rainy, brisk day was a good one for zip lining. With an Appalachian State college student behind the wheel and another riding shotgun, a group of four other thrill-seekers and I chugged up a steep incline towards the start of the zip line course. Helmets were already snugly buckled to our skulls, and thick ropes with heavy metal clasps were secured around our waists.

Zip lining was something that was always on my bucket list, an activity I wanted to complete at least once in my lifetime, but when I had imagined coasting among treetops it was always a warm sunny day—a romantic scene that looked like it belonged on the ABC reality show *The Bachelorette*. However, instead of sunny, it was stormy. And rather than clear skies they were filled with thick, heavy clouds. As we approached the end of our off-road ride the rain started picking up. We piled out of the vehicle, and trudged up the muddy trail to the first zip line. Among the trees stood a small wooden platform near what looked like a short telephone poll.



“So you can do this even when it’s pouring?” I asked one of the young guides.

“Yeah, it will actually lube up the line and you’ll go faster,” he said with a smile.

I swallowed hard. Faster? Give me a pretty view, a breeze through my hair maybe, but a slippery zip line? That sounded even more dangerous than what I signed up for when I set this adventure up through Scream Time Ziplines. When I agreed to go zip lining and write about it I looked forward to the opportunity to experience something new without having to travel to a foreign country or spend big bucks. That’s what Scream Time Zipline’s owner, Monie McCoury had in mind when he imagined adventure-seekers like me showing up to his North Carolina mountain acreage. “I sat at my desk and looked out at the property and just dreamed of some day seeing a zip line tour operating on the property. I didn’t know just how to do it, but I knew it could be done,” McCoury says on his website.

The company opened for business just outside of the Boone community in January of 2008, often

welcoming hundreds of visitors a day to do an activity that was once only an option for tourists in Maui or Costa Rica. The regular tour consists of six zip lines ranging in length from 450 feet to 800 feet, which is nearly three football fields long. For those looking for an extra thrill, there’s the Super Zip, a cable that’s over a mile long.

I waited patiently and nervously as the rest of my group quietly zipped across the damp valley.

“Is anyone else nervous?” I asked. I took their blank stares as a “no.”

The only noise was the whir of the metal clasp rushing across the cable line and the sound of rain drops pattering against my protective helmet. I watched as the rest of my tour group floated across the valley. Finally it was my turn.

“Are you nervous?” the guide asked with a smile.

“Well, any time I try something new I get a little nervous,” I explained. I didn’t want to sound like a wimp, but I didn’t want to lie either.

He secured my metal clasps onto the cable line and told me to go. I ran off the platform until there was nothing left beneath my feet. Raindrops pelted my face. The scenery zoomed by. I was flying. As I quickly approached the end of the line I trusted that the guide on the other side would slow me down so



I wouldn’t crash into the poll at the end. And he did his job.

Five more times I zigzagged my way across the valley, getting more bold with each trip, leaning back, loosening my death grip on the strap that connected me to the cable line and just enjoying the experience. When it was time for the final run, the Super Zip, my nerves were gone. The guides secured my clasp to the cable line and I was off. Since this line was over a mile long, it’s the fastest, with speeds topping over 50 miles per hour. I zoomed over the top of a house, marveling at the view and enjoying this adventure I’d encountered in the mountains of North Carolina.

Interested in Zip lining?

Take a day trip to experience these zip lining tours:

Scream Time Ziplines:

Boone, North Carolina (828) 898-5404
www.screamtimezipline.com

Hawksnest Zip Line Tour:

Seven Devils, North Carolina (828) 963-6561
www.hawksnest-resort.com

Nantahala Gorge Canopy Tours:

near Bryson City, North Carolina
(877) 398-6222
www.nantahalagorgecanopytours.com

Carolina Adventure World, Inc:

Winnsboro, South Carolina (803) 482-3689
www.cawzipline.com

Wahoo Ziplines:

Sevierville, Tennessee (865) 453-7301
www.wahoozip.com