

# Photographic Memories

IMAGINE you're standing in the middle of a decked railroad trestle looming hundreds of feet above the forest floor. You know you're secure, and yet the dizzying height sends shivers through your body. A wind picks up and you can see the evergreen canopy sway beneath you. The sky is a cool blue to the east, and to the west thin sheets of cloud are stretched like spun wool. A hawk—the third you've spotted in the past hour—swoops through the gorge. The sun is low in this pre-dusk hour, and you are racing to take in all you can of this rail-trail before the sun sets. You pull out your camera and desperately hope you can do this scene justice.

We understand that feeling! For the past six months at Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), our staff has been canvassing the rail-trails of the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic to capture the spirit of each trail for our new, updated guidebooks, due out this winter. And as the trail adventurers return, brimming with tales of unexpected discoveries and new favorite trails, one exclamation is most common: "Just wait until you see the pictures!"

In this issue of *Rails to Trails* we're showcasing some of the best shots taken by RTC staff for *Rail-Trails: Southeast* and *Rail-Trails: Mid-Atlantic*. We hope some of these great snaps entice you to spend those cool fall days on a rail-trail. And while you're at it, take a few pictures yourself.



JENNIFER KALEBA/RTC

Maryland's 3.2-mile Gold Mine Loop (left) offers a quick, wooded trek within the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park. (Below) Cattle and hikers share the seven-mile Chessie Nature Trail in southwestern Virginia.



BEN CARTER/RTC

FRANZ GIMMLER/RTC



With 14 miles open in densely populated Orlando, Fla., the Cross Seminole Trail (above) will one day form a 23-mile rail-trail network. (Right) Maryland's eastern waterways provide a backdrop for the six-mile Cross Island Trail.



JENNIFER KALEBA/RTC

The Silver Comet (below), Georgia's best-known rail-trail running 52-miles, features the 700-foot long Brushy Mountain Tunnel near Mile 31. (Right) West Virginia's 22-mile West Fork Rail Trail meanders through the mountains, and along the West Fork river, making sweeping 180 degree turns through steep hillsides.



JON LOWENSTEIN/RTC



ELTON CLARK/RTC

The County Line Trail travels four miles in the Monongahela National Forest along the border of Randolph and Pocahontas counties, following the ridgeline of the Little Beech Mountain through a hardwood forest.

JESSICA LEAS/RTC



Do you have a photo of your favorite rail-trail? Want to make recommendations or laud your local pathway for other visitors? Visit [TrailLink.com](http://TrailLink.com) and begin sharing your own trail memories.

Take a tour through North Carolina's gold mining history on the two-mile Gold Hill Rail-Trail, where you can peek into the Assay Office (pictured below) where miners once staked their claim and weighed their gold.



STANLEY LEAS/RTC



JON LOWENSTEIN/RTC

The Washington & Old Dominion Regional Railroad Park runs 45.5 miles from the bustling outskirts of Washington, D.C., to the rural hills and valleys of Northern Virginia farmland.