

SSA Region 11 Report for March 2018

Overview

Region 11 activity in 2017 continued with some very active soaring sites.

Pacific Soaring Council (PASCO)

In November PASCO held a well-attended Safety Seminar and Awards Banquet. Dan Colton's detailed analysis of his crash in the White Mountains was both chilling and educational. Thank you Dan for doing that. Our guest speakers Jim and Jackie Payne talked about Perlan II's record breaking flight and Argentinean logistics. We also celebrated the **50th** anniversary of the founding of PASCO. From our website: "The original corporation papers stated that the purpose of the corporation is to 'To provide education, communication, and related activities with others who have a common interest in soaring'. Over the past 50 years the members and officers of Pacific Soaring Council, Inc. have endeavored to pursue this mission to support our soaring community. Thank you to all those who have spent many, many hours (days, weeks, years) giving and sharing with others to make our organization a success so we can continue to support soaring with this goal in mind." Check out the details on our web site at <http://www.pacificsoaring.org>.

2017 NEVADA SOARING ASSOCIATION AND AIR SAILING INC.

Bob Spielman reports: 2017 got off to a very rocky start for Nevada Soaring (NSA) and Air Sailing Inc. (ASI). Due to our 200% snow accumulation and spring rain, water washed out ditches and flooded and eroded the airfield so it was unusable. The dry creekbed that ran through the road was full and impassable three times. We could only get in through the back way with water, mud, and bogs to get through using 4WD when we could get in. After it dried up commercial equipment was hired to haul fill and regrade and a new glider tiedown area was built at the same time and then we got rocking.

In April we had our usual membership work day where everyone helped clean up the field and equipment. We couldn't manage without our members to help out. We were on our way to a GOOD soaring season. We had more than our normal days with clouds and hot days and it was great soaring. Many long cross countries were flown and a lot of SSA legs and badges were earned. We ended up the #9 club in the USA out of 168 clubs entered in the Online Contest highlighting what a great soaring area we live in. August came and the members enjoyed their own flying and fun.

Air Sailing has 172 members and Nevada Soaring has 59 which is part of ASI. Each club has it's own Pawnee towplane and NSA has 6 gliders for members of NSA to use, 2 two seaters, an L23

and a 2-32 and a 1-26 1-36, L33 and ASW19. The L23 and ASW19 get the most use. We were short of tow pilots but seem to be improving on that. We are short of CFGs and haven't had much change in the past year. We don't do much training in the summer as we are so busy but we catch up on that in the fall, winter and spring. Some years, like this fall and winter, we fly all year. We have a program with the JROTC from North Valley High School to fly orientation flights and we have soloed 10 of the cadets over the years.

We hosted the annual THERMAL CAMP in June and also the CROSS COUNTRY CAMP with good attendance at both. Then in July we had the SPORTS CLASS CONTEST with 13 entries including 5 USAF Academy gliders flown by 12 cadets. A Duo Discus flown by Brad Jackson and Jim Lee won.

During the later summer and fall we were greatly impacted by fires. Two fires came close to us and firefighters working bulldozers during the night and tankers during the day stopped the fires less than a half mile from our field. We had to cease operations several days.

Our field had one accident in 2017. The pilot was on tow and taking off and got too high and the tow pilot released him and the glider pilot tried to make a 180 turn back and didn't have enough altitude (less than about 100') and landed in the sagebrush. The glider sustained major damage but the pilot wasn't hurt.

Long time pilot and friend Vern Frye, call sign "EAGLE", passed away. Vern was responsible for resurrecting Nevada Soaring when it was defunct and then ran the operation for many, many years.

Northern California Soaring Association (NCSA)

NCSA President **Van Emden Henson** Reports:

Based in Byron, California, about 40 miles east of the San Francisco Bay, the Northern California Soaring Association (NCSA) focuses on primary training and transition to cross country. With a fleet comprising a Belanca Scout tow plane, three Grob 103 two-place gliders, a Grob 102 single-place retractable, and a venerable Schweizer 1-26 (we also have one of the many grounded Blanik L-13s around) we conduct weekend operations in Byron year round. Most of the time conditions are great for instruction but not



so great for soaring, although we do get reliably good soaring conditions to 6000 or 7000 feet in April and May, and through the winter we see occasional wave conditions off nearby Mt. Diablo and the ridges leading to it, sometimes climbing up to the Class A limit. With 81 members, about a third of whom are quite active, we have a rotating schedule of about eight tow pilots and six to eight instructors, and we keep them mighty busy.

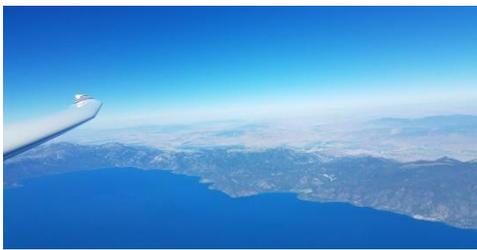
NCSA "rewards" a student's first solo in the traditional fashion.

Summertime, however, is what we live for! Each summer we take most of our aircraft to the Sierra Mountains, stationing them at Truckee, California, or Minden, Nevada, or at Air Sailing, north of Reno, Nevada. Here the summer conditions routinely produce days with great Cu or even cloud streets all the way up to the Class A. Waves are occasional all year round, but mostly in the winter, and often get several wave windows open to 24K or above. These summer locations produce terrific conditions in which even relatively inexperienced pilots can stay aloft four to five hours and cover several hundred kilometers. Most years our members produce a number of Badge flights, and we currently have a number of members with the Gold Badge who are working on their diamond flights. We have around twenty members who own gliders, and most of them also move to the mountains in the summer.



Spectacular views of the Eastern Sierra Scarp while flying in the Bishop Encampment

We usually have several new pilots go to Air Sailing's Thermal Camp, and a year or two later attend the Cross Country Camp, also hosted at Air Sailing by the Nevada Soaring Association. We have several club members who serve as mentors at the camps. Our members also attend the Bishop Encampment, with some of the most spectacular soaring around.



At 17,999 feet over South Lake Tahoe looking north toward Truckee

2017 was a typical year for NCSA, with twelve members logging over 1000 Km of cross-country flights. Four of those logged 6000 km or more, including Buzz Graves, who came in just a shade under 10,000 km, and led by our own soaring legend Ramy Yanetz, who logged a mind-boggling 33,082 km of XC flying last year (for a total of 356 hours in 62 flights, including a longest flight of 1,104 km). Ramy ended up third overall in the United States on OLC. While most of us are astonished by such numbers, it isn't unusual for Ramy, who

calculated recently that he had enough XC miles in his career to get all the way to the moon, and is now trying to get enough to get back home!

The year was not without its lighter moments, such as when Marianne Guerin, in a long XC flight between Mount Lassen and Air Sailing found she was sharing her cockpit with a stowaway mouse.

2017 also had its share of challenges for NCSA, as well. A taxiway collision between our tow plane and a member's glider resulted in the tow plane having an engine rebuild and necessitated considerable repair to the glider. One NCSA member, although flying at the time under the banner of another club, and in one of their gliders, crashed in the White Mountains east of Bishop. The pilot was essentially unscathed beyond a few cuts and bruises; the glider was a total loss. And late in the year our tow plane was grounded to repair disintegrating fabric on the wing and a leak in a fuel tank, causing the club to be down for nearly two months.

NCSA is rededicating itself to continuing to fly at capacity while improving our fleet maintenance and operating in a still-stronger "safety first" culture. We have also seen a crop of fresh, young, energetic

leadership emerge (a description that does NOT apply to this reporter), so the future of the club should be one of continual upgrade and improvement.

Truckee Tahoe Soaring Association (TTSA)

Lots of information from Truckee. **Will Snow** sent the following PowerPoint summary.

● Truckee Tahoe Soaring Association Assets

- Loyal Volunteers, Staff, Pilots and Spouses
- Leased land with the Truckee Tahoe Airport District during the summer
- Lincoln Airport for Fall, Winter and Spring Training
- Two Pawnees Tow Planes
- 2 ea 2-32s for rides/lessons
- 2 ea 2-33s for rides/lessons
- 1-26 on lease for Youth Soaring Support
- Office and Bunkhouse
- Dining Area
- 33 Campsites (more can be added)

● Truckee Operations 2017

- Second year as a Non-Profit
- Opened the last week of May
- Over 1285 Glider Tows and Self Launches
- 88 Pilots signed the SOPs
- 56 Club Private Gliders Tied Down
- 27 Permanent Campsite Users (out of 33)
- Region 11 Contest
- Closed the last day of September

● Gliders were 15% of Total Truckee Flights in 2017

● Youth Soaring

- New Solo student
 - Preston
- Alumni
 - Pablo Saso Perkins graduated to CFIG status
 - Blake Sortor graduated to Commercial Power Pilot status with Surf Air
- TTAD helps with youth soaring costs

● The TTAD Tower and How it Went

- Overall a positive addition for safety

- Pilots contact tower 10 mile away, below 10,000 feet
- Began landing procedure farther then before, higher
- Note: they monitor your transponder position but there is no radar that monitors where you are or those without transponders
- Tower personnel exceptionally cooperative
- Procedure not complicated, just more radio chatter
- Overall safety increased
- Tower back in 2018 as permanent feature of Class D airspace designation

● 2017 Fund Drive Results

- 7,000 in cash donations
- 8,000 in loan forgiveness
- 15,000 in total donations

● Lincoln Airport Operations

- October through May
- 51 Glider Launches in Fall 2017
- TTSA uses one Tow Plane and a 2-33
- Flight training and tows available currently by arrangement
- Exploring if Private Pilots would be interested in bringing gliders to fly during certain conditions
- Richard Pearl - pennyrich99@gmail.com
- Don Brown- don.e.brown@comcast.net

● Outstanding Service Award 2018

Sergio Colacevich is commended for his exceptional dedication and meritorious service in support of the aviation community at Soar Truckee for over 10 years.

● For Fun: Truckee Area Glider Races

- 2 Official races – Grand Prix style.
- The “fun race” in the valley – not this year
- “Impromptu” race, open end finish: yes and it was OK

● The Regionals

- 16 participants, including Air Force with 5 gliders
- Weather poor - flew four days - but pilots were happy
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- Winners:
- 1 - Gary Ittner
- 2 - Luke Ashcraft
- 3 - Jonathan Fitch

● Mentoring Program

- Glider Owner: lead-and-follow with a Guide
- Glider club Member: lead-and-follow, with a Guide
- Two-Seater club Member: flight with a Guide
- Sergio Colacevich and Mike Mayo's Duo Discus
- Purpose: improving cross country proficiency
- Meet Saturday morning, decide activity
- Results: 28 cross country flights, about 15 mentoring

● Looking Ahead to 2018

- Continue Mentoring with Owners and club Members
- Region 11 Contest
- Women Soaring Association
- Physical Improvements
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● Women's Soaring Pilots Association 2018

- National/International event
- When: In July 23 -27, 2018 after the Regionals
- 30 to 40 women, 10+ ships
- Several two-seaters needed to fly the ladies
- You can help
- Contact Marianne Guerin _m.guerin@mindspring.com

● Priorities for 2018 Improvements

- Tow Plane Maintenance and Replacement
- Improvements to Dining Area (Soar Truckee initiative)
- Extend the launch area (Truckee Airport may participate)
- Ramp improvement (Truckee Airport may participate)

Jan Driessen added these comments about Truckee :

We had a good Year at TTSA(Soar Truckee)Good contest and lots of good long flights as far as Mt Shasta North and back. Also Mt Whitney South and back. We did many rides but few students except for our line people who keep me busy. Pablo Saso Perkins one of our line folks got his instructor's rating. We ended up with enough money to start up this coming Memorial Day weekend. Truckee will now become "D" airspace and we will have a full time tower as we did last summer. Fortunately we have a great tower manager Karin Hardiman who comes out and talks shop frequently. I also took her up. Our PR relationship with the Airport Management and the Tower are excellent. We will work very hard to maintain this and have Standard Operating Procedures in place for all glider pilots who fly with us.



Gliders have flown out of Truckee for over fifty years. We are very happy to be able to fly there. Our facilities are great and glider folks are friendly.

Tony Gaechter promotes one of the upcoming Region 11 contests at Truckee:

The Region 11 Combined FAI Contest will be held again for the 7th consecutive year at Truckee Tahoe Soaring Association from July 16 through 21 with practice days July 14 & 15. There are now 19 registered entrants and we plan to accept up to 20. The FAI Class Contest is open to Standard, 15 Meter, 18 Meter, 2-Seater and Open Class gliders and is handicapped like a Sports Class Contest but with permission to carry water ballast.

We have obtained approval from the SSA Rules Committee for a change in the format for this Region 11 contest. This year's contest will be 5 days rather than 6 with a separate 1 day contest, perhaps Tuesday or Wednesday July 17 or 18, during the 5 day Regional Contest. The 1 day contest, to be called the California Grand Prix, would not count in the regional contest scoring and would have its own prizes. The California Grand Prix will feature a prescribed start time where time on course is measured from the time the gate opens until you finish regardless of your actual start time. Handicaps will be applied by adjusting the turnpoint radii for each competitor so that the first glider to finish gets first place, the second glider to finish gets second place, etc. Having this additional 1 day contest still leaves 5 days for the regional contest and should provide additional interest and fun to your week at Truckee. If successful this format may be adopted by the SSA Contest Committee as a full scale contest in this new format.

The Truckee contest offers tasks that promote cross country flying in the Sierra and in the Nevada Desert environments. Tasks are selected to get the best out of the day, with lengths that allow ships with different handicaps and pilots with different skills to complete each task. A few pilots will fly to win, everybody will fly for the joy of it. Truckee is blessed by weather conditions and geography that make soaring sublime. We invite you to take part in this event, promising a celebration of magnificent flights and in addition, the stimulating thrill of a race.

We appreciate early registrations to help us plan staffing, facilities and other activities. The link for online registration is at the bottom of the page at <http://www.ssa.org/Contests?cid=2393>.

Las Vegas Valley Soaring Association (LVVSA)

LVVSA had another average season. No 1000k flights from Jean but one from Tonopah during our annual safari and several gold flights. We were able to carry out both Spring and Fall dry lake auto tow safaris to hone our ground launching and desert camping skills.

We keep our few instructors busy with a full list of students. This was hampered somewhat by our Grob being down for several months but the acquisition of an SGS 2-32 on leaseback had made up some of the dual time.

We lost all of December when our Pawnee went into the shop for a rebuilt engine after 2200 hours and over 12 years. This was a scheduled event and gave us a chance to work on clubhouse and maintenance trailer issues as well as get some club glider annuals out of the way.

Other Locations

The highlight of SoaringNV's year was another very successful Wave Camp where at least one attendee earned a Diamond Altitude. Soaring conditions in Minden are always the greatest.

Soaring from Williams, CA, remained excellent this year.

Avenal soaring also had a good year with active interest from the Cal-Poly San Luis Obispo Akaflieg soaring organization.

We hope to have a great soaring season and an excellent safety record this year in Region 11.

Jay