

Cascades Conquest

The Cascades Mountains of the Pacific Northwest present a formidable barrier to the flight of aircraft. Even sensible pilots who fly powered airplanes normally wisely choose to remain on the eastside or the westside. To attempt to cross these craggy crests with unpowered aircraft is a display of uncommon courage and little common sense.

The Seattle Glider Council will therefore present, with great regard, the Cascades Conquest award to those pilots, who in a glider, successfully challenge these mighty mountains and have flown across from flatland to flatland.

The following provides guidance as to what it takes to conquer the Cascades.

1. A Cascade crossing is a soaring flight across the Cascades region from the flatland on one side to the flatland on the other side.
2. The Cascades region is defined, for the purpose of this award, as the area between the western and eastern foothills at the 3000' MSL contour line (connecting across valleys) of the Cascade Mountains in Washington State, with the following exceptions to the eastern boundary
 - a. For historical reasons, the eastern boundary follows the Okanogan and Columbia rivers from the Canadian border south to the I90 bridge at Vantage.
 - b. It then swings around the north and west of Yakima, to exclude the Restricted airspace area northeast of Yakima, and then follows the 3000' MSL contour line to the Columbia river.
3. Electronic versions of the Cascades region are available in standard formats suitable for use in various flight computers.
4. Crossing requirement, a pilot must have at least one IGC file fix on the western side of the Cascades region and at least one fix on the eastern side of the Cascades region, in either order.
5. A valid start is any IGC file fix point that is outside the Cascades region and below 4000' MSL.
6. A valid finish is any IGC file fix point outside the Cascades region on the other side from the starting point. There are no height restrictions.
7. Multi-crossing. Turning around after a crossing and flying back to the previous side counts as another crossing.
8. Take-off, Release, or Engine stop points can occur anywhere, however, if they are within the Cascade region, the pilot must first fly outside the region to register a valid starting point before commencing their flight across the Cascades.
9. Landing, or Engine start points, similarly, a pilot having completed a crossing with a valid ending point is free to land at any airport or start their engine anywhere they choose.
10. Subject to review. All Cascade crossing flights should be submitted to the Awards Committee for review of compliance to the formal definitions, as well as ensuring the flight was conducted in accordance with the original spirit of the award.
11. At the discretion of the Awards Committee special consideration may be given for
 - a. Meritorious flights that are not strictly in compliance.
 - b. Crossings made outside of Washington State, in Oregon or British Columbia.
 - c. Flights without a flight recorder that can be independently verified.