

## SOARING THE METHOW 2021

Even though last year was cancelled, in 2019 we had 27 glider pilots with 20 gliders. Everyone discovered possibly the best soaring venue in our state that combines a beautiful region and offers good alternative activities for those who prefer remaining on the ground. Surrounded by beautiful mountains to the north and west ('Northern Alps'), close to the plains to the south and east and the social time enjoyed by all made for a great week. When asked about doing it again, the answers have all been, "yes, yes and yes". So, with the support of the Seattle Glider Council, PSSA and Evergreen Soaring we will plan to do it again with three tow planes (two at Methow, one at Twisp) and good weather... The Second Annual "Soaring in the Methow".

Here are some points to start considering:

1. DATES: Tows at Methow will be available Sunday, June 20 (following Regionals at EPH) through Sunday, June 27. Note: Sunday, 20th, happens to be Father's Day in case that might change your plans. Twisp may start a day sooner. Those coming are encouraged to please arrive Saturday if they can to get set up with the first briefing Sunday morning at 0930 in the same hangar as 2019, east side just north of the fuel pumps, but now owned by Craig Howard. Many thanks to Craig for letting us once again use his hangar for our morning meetings and center of ops. Also just behind Craig's hangar is Randy Wingfield's new hangar that he has offered for additional support if needed. Both Randy and Craig visited our event in 2019 and along with many other local Methow Valley power plane flyers were extremely hospitable which was hugely appreciated.

2. TOW PLANES & TOW PILOTS: In 2019 each club provided one tow plane. Super Cub from PSSA and Pawnee's from SGC and Evergreen. This year instead of three tow planes at Methow there will be two tow planes at Methow (SCG Pawnee + PSSA Super Cub) and the Evergreen Pawnee at Twisp. Also this year at Methow we have a much larger paved tie down area on the west side and both mid-runway perpendicular feeder taxiways to access from each side which should help.

3. GLIDERS: This year will be limited to 16 gliders at Methow (SGC op) that require tows and 8 at Twisp (Evergreen op). Self-launchers are in addition. One limitation is returning to land with only one runway and limited exits off the runway. We will hold out two spots for the two-seaters; one from each club (PW6 & DG-1000) and then one slot for the organizer (me). If you plan to fly only certain days then a week slot may be shared by prior arrangement by two gliders (no overlapping days please). For those who sign up but then cancel, to be fair, we will use an alternate-list for any unused glider reservations - please no "trades" to another glider owner if you cancel and that way we can give first opportunity to the next registered "alternate glider owner". The final roster should be complete by early May.

4. ACCOMODATIONS: The Methow Valley gets booked up very early. I would suggest you book now and cancel if you can't come. Consider VRBO or Air BnB for a house for several pilots or motel rooms either in Twisp or Winthrop, etc. If you are willing to cash in some of your retirement then Sun Mountain Resort is five-star, super nice and as a bonus may see a few gliders overflying the resort during the afternoons. Book early. For RV's there are no hook ups on the field but there is some limited space for dry-camp RV'ing or tents. Caution: evening & night time T-Storms and high summer winds are not uncommon in the Methow Valley.

5. GLIDER TIE-DOWNS: As nice as the Methow is, it is not a totally glider-friendly setting for the unprepared. 2019 worked very well and everyone tied down securely on the sod on the east side. You must secure your gliders & trailers using self-supplied sturdy dirt anchors. For some, the tie down rings on the west side may be available (enough for about ten gliders, priority for the two-seaters).

6. VOLUNTEERING: 2019 worked out really well because everyone pitched in and helped. Please plan to assist with launching, taking a day or morning as ground crew, and then help with moving gliders quickly off the runway after landings, etc. I think we had as much fun helping each other as flying (almost). Some folks really did a lot of the work to keep things organized and safe.

7. **COMPETENCIES:** With several out-landing sites available the Methow is not an inherently unsafe area for good soaring but traps do exist. Making every morning briefing is particularly important for everyone to share knowledge and form an easy & coordinated daily plan. Depending on an individual's currency and proficiency, for intermediate level glider pilots in particular, this can be a reasonable outing and done safely with help and guidance from those more experienced. Staying in sight of the airport works well and it's fairly easy to maintain a downhill return course back if you are careful. The Twisp airport (southeast about 6 miles) and Lost River airstrip (about 20 miles northwest) offer fairly okay bail-outs if needed. Studying the area, being well prepared and getting a good briefing are all important for a safe, comfortable and fun week.

8. **SOCIAL:** For those interested, we will have at least two dinners together. 2019 was a blast and we all came to know each other better. We will likely do at least one dinner-out like before which was in Winthrop. More ideas are welcome??

9. **COSTS:** Each pilot must pay a \$40 fee. The fee for each towed glider is \$80 (glider + one pilot = \$120). Two gliders may share a week without overlapping (\$80 only once is fine) but every pilot needs to pay the \$40. Tow fees will be the standard 2020 Ephrata SGC rates for all tows regardless of tow plane. Self-launching gliders are free, but asking that pilots still sign up and each please pay the \$40 fee. again, \$40 for every pilot and \$80 for each non-powered glider. Additional tow fees will be billed to each glider following the event. Our goal is to break even and in 2019 we came close and made a bit for the Foundation. Our expenses include tow plane ferrying to & from their bases, tow pilot accommodations (3 rooms x 7 nights already reserved at the Sportsman in Twisp), rental of port-a-pottys, etc.

10. **SIGN-UP:** To sign up you must be an SGC member in good standing, willing to volunteer with ground tasks, and pay fees on the SGC web site when sign up opens. I expect this might fill quickly to the max of 16 (not counting self-launchers). Self-launcher pilots (\$40) please sign up so we have a count. You may want to be sure you are already paid-up as a 2021 SGC member now so that doesn't delay your signing up on March 25th.

**\*\*\* SIGN UP WILL START ON THE SGC WEB SITE AT 7pm, THURSDAY, MARCH 25th \*\*\***

**Here are the current sign up rules:**

- 1. Slots are allocated in order of payments made on line - SGC web site. Each glider must be signed up separately - no one person signs up for multiple gliders please. The two place gliders must pay, but slots will be held out for them and released only if they don't plan to come. When we reach 16 non-powered gliders any remaining gliders will go onto an alternate list for additional positions but which still require the above fees to get (in order) on the alternate glider list but fully refunded if slots are full. No limit on number of pilots, just gliders. No limit on number of self-launchers.**
- 2. Full refunds are okay up to June 1st (three weeks prior to the event). If your plans change and you decide not to come please let us know asap so a glider on the alternate list can be scheduled.**
- 3. The 'alternate glider list' will likely stop at 15 on that list which would close the sign ups - if things fill up.**

***Lastly, participants and pilots taking part in this activity accept that flying gliders involves risk and the above entities (Clubs), officers, organizers, volunteers and tow pilots associated with this event shall be indemnified and assume no liability for damages or injuries suffered in connection directly or indirectly with this event.***

If you have any questions or suggestions for a better format, etc. please let me know. This is an "ongoing experiment", all subject to change, with flexibility, good humor and working together to make it a safe, wonderful and unforgettable week doing what we all love.

More details will follow. The above will also be posted on the SGC web site.

Brad Pattison

[bpattisonmd@gmail.com](mailto:bpattisonmd@gmail.com)