

Overview

Type: northeast facing, eastern mountain site, near Elmira, NY, uniquely located in Elmira Class D airspace

Geography: steep forested ridge overlooking the Chemung River and extending east to west for about 3 miles

History: opened 1976 by FSF, flown continuously

Launch

GPS Coordinates: 42.089599, -76.918885

Elevation: 1650' MSL (750 AGL)

Glide to LZ: 4:1

Minimum Ratings & Skills: H3/P3 (H2/P2 w/ supervision) and FL

Best Wind direction/speed: NNE (015°), 5-12 mph (rotor/sink likely beyond 350°-045° range). Can be safely flown in smooth straight-in (010°-020°) wind to 15 mph, smooth 30° crossed wind to 10 mph.

Description: in wooded park-like setting, the narrow slot launch drops off steeply to become a vertical face manifesting a compression zone out front, particularly in stronger conditions. The site frequently exhibits wonder wind conditions during late afternoon, especially in summer and early fall.

Hazards: launch can be turbulent, especially in crosswinds; strong upward moving air due to the steepness of the ridge is easily underestimated; blown launches and tree landings have resulted; expect general aviation traffic due to ELM airport.

Access: gravel driveway off rural road, passing neighbor's house slow enough to avoid raising dust, across landowner's lawn then via dirt/grass road, 2WD and standard car ground clearance sufficient except when snow covered, but 4WD is preferred by landowner

Parking: clearing in trees behind launch and setup area, space sufficient for six to eight vehicles

Setup: area immediately behind launch, among scattered trees, space sufficient for up to ten gliders

Control: property is privately owned, launch is maintained by FSF, use is regulated by FSF, subject to terms & conditions of landowner agreement; landowner contact required beforehand.

Landing Zone

GPS Coordinates: 42.100683, -76.916996

Description: gently sloping 15-acre hayfield about ½ mile in front of launch and on the leeward side of Harris Hill; bordered by a hedgerow and Route 352 on the north side, trees to the south, and adjacent fields east and west.

Hazards: in the shadow of Harris Hill, LZ is subject to rotor effects, most notably wind of variable speed and switching direction when approaching; in stronger conditions, LZ turbulence prompts pilots with sufficient altitude (above ridge line) to land alternatively at the Harris Hill LZ; sink stronger than one would expect is encountered over shaded and moist areas just downwind of LZ; and unharvested hay is often too high for safely landing, other than a perfect no-stepper.

Access: paved 2-lane public roadway bordering one side of field

Parking: along shoulder of paved roadway next to main field, comfortably accommodating six vehicles on LZ side

Teardown: area along north side of field away from main landing area, adjacent to parking

Control: property is privately owned, LZ is maintained by owner and usually planted in hay, use is regulated by FSF, subject to terms & conditions of landowner agreement

Protocol

Visiting pilots/new members must be accompanied by Board-designated LOCAL members for access, site briefing, and flight activity. Convene in teardown area of LZ next to Route 352, plant a windsock at upwind end of landing field, transfer equipment (carpool as convenient to minimize traffic). In order to fly the privately-owned site, landowner Dave Richards must be contacted beforehand, typically accomplished by a phone call prior to any ETA commitment. If tires spin during wet or muddy conditions, stop vehicle and walk equipment in. Place wind indicators in the slot. Prior to the commencement of any flying, telephone Elmira Tower (607) 739-1971 to activate hang gliding at Indian Cliffs. At the conclusion of the day's flying, telephone Elmira Tower to report the cessation of hang gliding activity.

XC Options

XC potential is acceptable. Landing fields are not as common as elsewhere in the area but XC flights originate here, although not so frequent that defined route options, waypoints or LZs for landing out have been established.

Restrictions

Gliders must remain clear of parts of Elmira Class D airspace not included in Harris Hill Soaring Area, defined as that part Class D airspace south of a line from Wells Lane bridge through fairgrounds racetrack to east edge of control zone and through the intersection of Rt 352 and Winters Rd to west edge of control zone. FAA retains authority over operations. The site is subject to ad hoc closure for hunting from the end of October through the beginning of December.

Contacts

Free Spirit Flight

INDIAN CLIFFS SITE GUIDE

12/15/2021

Safety Director:

Jim Kolymich, 435 Draht Hill Rd, Elmira, NY 14901 (607-732-0034)