

Overview

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

Geography: three-mile wooded ridge with a flat Chemung River valley in front of it

History: opened 1974 by FSF, flown continuously; sharing ridge with glider port where sailplanes first flown in US

Launch

GPS Coordinates: 42.112324, -76.915889

Elevation: 1650' MSL (750 AGL)

Glide to LZ: 4:1

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

Best Wind direction/speed: NW (315°), 5-15 mph (rotor/sink likely beyond 290°-330° range). Can be safely flown in smooth straight-in (300°-325°) wind to 15-20 mph with gusts to 25 mph, smooth 30° crossed wind to 10 mph.

Description: well maintained, moderately sloped, fairly open, grassy slot on west side of wooded ridge

Hazards: in a west cross, expect turbulence due to rotor from Steege Hill upwind of launch; in soarable conditions, expect increased ridge traffic from fast-moving sailplanes with whom we share the ELM-designated Soaring Area; expect general aviation traffic due to proximity of Elmira-Coming Regional airport (ELM)

Access: gated dirt and gravel right-of-way off Harris Hill Road, passable by 2WD vehicles with good ground clearance but impassable when snow creates drifts behind crest of ridge line

Parking: the 5-acre field behind launch can accommodate many vehicles

Setup: the 5-acrer field behind launch can accommodate many gliders

Control: excluding the privately owned access path, property is Club owned, launch is maintained by FSF, and use is regulated by FSF; Elmira Tower retains authority over flight operations in its control zone

Landing Zone

GPS Coordinates: 42.117743, -76.923353

Description: at distance ½ mile from launch, primary LZ is flat but narrow rectangular field used as a bailout for sailplanes flying harris Hill and consequently kept in good condition; it is bordered by Rt 352 at its west end, a tree-lined creek at its east end, and flanked by fields of crops on both sides

Hazards: in a west cross, expect turbulence due to rotor from Steege Hill opposite the west end of the LZ; narrowness of field and tall crops may restrict landing direction and favor using a nearby fallow field as an alternate; powerline along Rt 352 west of landing field, teardown and parking areas

Access: 100-yard dirt/gravel path from Rt 352 into sailplane bailout field, suitable for 2WD vehicles

Parking: at the extreme western end of the bailout field, accommodating four to six vehicles

Teardown: upon landing, immediately move glider to area at the extreme western end of the bailout field, next to parking

Control: property is privately owned, LZ is maintained by the county for the benefit of Harris Hill Soaring Society, Club use is regulated by FSF, subject to terms & conditions of landowner agreement

Protocol

Visiting pilots/new members must be accompanied by Board-designated LOCAL member for access, site briefing, and flight activity. Convene in teardown area of LZ off Route 352, plant a windsock at upwind end of landing field, transfer equipment (carpool as convenient to minimize traffic). Lead vehicle opens gate to access right-of-way, positions gate to side. Place wind indicators in the slot. Prior to the commencement of any flying, telephone Elmira Tower (607) 739-1971 to activate hang gliding at Harris Hill. At the conclusion of the day's flying, telephone Elmira Tower to report the cessation of hang gliding activity. Last vehicle retrieved insures access gate is closed and chain-latched.

XC Options

XC potential is very good and the site is productive; pilots leaving Harris Hill downwind must overfly the city of Elmira. Beyond which landing fields are abundant; reaching Chemung, route options are heading south down the Susquehanna River valley or east up the valley toward Binghamton; waypoints or LZs for landing out have not 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. Elmira Tower may restrict flight operations due to unusual airport traffic. Whenever there is any sailplane activity, remain clear of glider port traffic pattern and avoid flying in front of runway ends, maintaining a minimum crossing/overflight altitude of 1000' AGL.

Contacts

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