



FLIGHTLINE

The publication of the Wings of Rogallo
Volume 139, Number 5 May 2021



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In Lieu of Meeting Minutes

Wings of Rogallo General Notes
2021-3-16

- Diablo LZ Reminder: Please note that Arbolado Park is not an “official” LZ and that pilots should land in the official LZ next to it in Lime Ridge, per Robert Moore.
- No meeting occurred due to lack of discussion items.

END

Ben's Vaca Sky-camping







Vaca Sky-camping April 8-11, 2021

I have wanted to try some vol-biv flying since last year and thought leaving from Vaca could be a decent starting point with some options for re-launching and enough wilderness to not be in towns whenever I landed. I had tried a couple times in the past but never got anywhere on the first day and aside from one overnight above Berryessa Dam after bombing at winters this would be my first real try at vol-biv flying.

The goal of the trip was to see how flying went with all the camping gear, try out my setup and see just how hard it would be to actually go somewhere over a few days with the glider. I didn't have any set goal and planned to take it easy while enjoying camping out for a few days.

With a few days of decent flying forecast I decided to leave Vaca on Thursday. The flying wound up being quite a bit better than expected and while it was tough to get away from launch once I was a little north the day started working well with climbs to 6-7k and some nice convergence flying over the Berryessa range. I had a really nice glide with a Bald Eagle drafting off my wing for several minutes. I had thought I would aim for a pond I know about on top of the ridge to the west of the hwy 16 gap since I could get water there but the flying was so good I decided to go a bit further north and check out the ridge at the north end of the Capay valley first. From the air it looked like a nice top landing with some potential for a SE facing launch in the morning. The day was still fully on and I spent a bunch of time

slowing working down 3000ft of altitude and checking out the area. I was mostly looking for any signs of water but couldn't see anything from the air. Since I was trying to practice vol-biv I decided this would be my landing spot even though the day had a lot more km left. I really wanted to top land somewhere good so I could fly easily the next day.

The top landing went well despite pretty bumpy/thermic conditions and I managed to set the glider down on a fire road without getting tangled in the bushes. I packed up and hiked a few hundred yards to where I had seen some green grass from the air and I found a really nice SE facing launch and camped there for the evening.

My camping gear was all old and trusty gear I have used for years so set-up was easy and I cooked some bag food while watching the sunset. I considered hiking down to the river for water in the morning but was able conserve enough to have 1.5 liters left for the next day. I figured I would need to land near water the next day though since I wouldn't have enough to hike much.

Friday morning started early with cycles coming up launch by 10-1030, this spot looks like a really good launch we should use more often since it faces the morning sun and heats up fast. I packed up and launched about 11:30. Being unsure of how far away my landing option was I went west so I could get a visual on a dirt lot I had seen from the air before. This combined with a brake handle wrapped in the lines made me miss my first chance at climbing out and I went for the west side of the creek onto a nice looking East face that I hoped would get wind funneling onto it from the canyon. This worked and after a bit of a fight I climbed out to ~4000ft and started moving North. With no real destination I decided to follow Cache Creek since it looked interesting and would be a fun area to explore if I landed out.

Being not very committed to a big flight and somewhat indecisive I made a bad move early and landed after about an hour and a half of flying along the Cache creek Canyon. I should have been more patient and gotten higher before trying to move North into the lower terrain, later on I saw some small cummie clouds forming overhead as I hiked.

The landing was "interesting" I had two decent options but waited a bit too long to decide and wound up too low to make the further and too high to go into the closer but was committed at the point. After some last minute turns and mushing the glider as hard as I dared I was about to land in a giant briar patch when my wingtip caught a tree and I executed a really slick heli-landing from about 10ft up into a nice soft pile of gravel. Better lucky than good, though I did still have to dig the wing out of the thorn bushes.

I had seen a possible launch on the second ridge to my south on the way in so I decided I would hike south along the river to position myself for the next day. I maybe could have hiked up the closest ridge and managed to fly again that day but wasn't in a hurry and having just got flushed off that ridgeline I wasn't convinced it would work any better the second time.

The next couple hours involved lots of wading across the river and smashing through brush on game trails, but overall not horrible terrain to hike through. I found a nice camp spot on the river and settled in for the evening.

The next morning Anna had decided to come meet me at Buck Island so my plan became hike the ridge, find a launch and try to fly south to Buck Island along the creek. The hike up was on an abandoned fire road and went easy and quicker than expected, by about 11am I was on top of the ridge and had found a big fire cut that looked sorta launchable. I laid out, ran hard, got stuck on a bush and then spent 45 minutes picking the glider out of Manzanita. It seems I tend to underestimate how much I drop down when trying to launch from a flat road over an edge.

By the time the glider was picked out the wind was more cross and I had decided I would try hiking further on the ridge to find a better launch. From the air it had looked good with Live Oaks growing in grassy fields. Sadly, what looked good from the air was a lot of trees that were just too close together to make it possible to launch without risking getting stuck on a tree. The day was also getting strong at this point and I wasn't very keen to fly down into Buck Island during the peak of the day since it's way down in the canyon and I have seen plenty of dust devils there in the past.

From there it was a mostly easy hike along the fire road until I reached the ridge that leads down to buck Island. I found a few possible launches for future use but nothing great, they where all a little sketchy for one reason or another. Anna met me with cold beer and we spent the afternoon swimming and camped for another night before driving home on Sunday.

Things learned:

Launches are really hard to find around here, areas that looks great from far away often don't work if they are Live Oak forest. A lot of places I expected to work actually didn't when I got close. Even really small bushes make launching impossible.

Launching from fire roads is way harder than it looks, I think next time I will bring clippers and a small saw so I can clear a runway if needed.

As expected, water will be the crux of any trip around here. It's heavy and you need lots of it. Going down to the river involves a lot of hiking, but there is very little water up high unless you can find cattle ponds.

The hiking isn't as bad as I expected, I could make pretty good time overland in areas that looked really nasty from the air. There are quite a few game trails to follow and old fire roads.

If the river was higher this would have been a lot harder, I crossed it probably a dozen times on my hike along the canyon.

The launch above Cache Creek/Guinda is really good and we should start using it. It looked like there was a steep trail up from hwy16.

First day flight:

<https://www.xcontest.org/world/en/flights/detail:bwedlock/8.4.2021/20:27>

Second day:

<https://www.xcontest.org/world/en/flights/detail:bwedlock/9.4.2021/18:17>

Inreach points show the hiking:

<https://share.garmin.com/bwedlock>

Bad pictures:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xnxxlwk7ngdb376/AAB9YwvtJD8PmfcXiNHGLepEa?dl=0>

Editorial May 2021

The past month was full of gifts from the ballet dance between the Sun and the Earth to the free-flight pilots in the Bay Area. Many good days met with good pilots to make records and memories. We are lucky to experience it and hard work is a factor leading up to some of the best flights.

WOR administration news nil. Your editor pays attention and asked for news to report. The only thing reported was how good April was.

Weather in April was like one would expect. One drop of rain was spotted by all inhabitants of the Bay area. There is general jubilation that the drop was granted by mother nature. What do you want; Good flying weather and a healthy Spring's worth of rain?

On cultural differences seen in reporting among paraglider and hang glider pilots some discussion was had. Hang glider pilots tend to pass info on personally while paraglider pilots tend to share via uploading tracks religiously. This is the tendencies the discussion highlighted but it is not a prescription. Xcontest.org seems to be the place to log your GPS tracks and it is very easy to do if you run it on your mobile cellular information machine.

April featured some big XC days. Three big Diablo days 4/14 Dan 120km, Evan 191km, 4/18 Victor 118km, Enes 60km, 61km Ben, 133km Josh, 4/26 Machel Diablo 217km, Pamela 80km, Daniela 112km, Anna 121km, Mike 193km, Ben 52km, Victor 212km, Evan 220km; a couple big Mission days, at least one GOOD Tam day 4/26 and a big Ed Levin Day 4/24.

4/23 Spencer earned a Golden Eagle. Five HG pilots flew 90km to Patterson from Diablo on the 18th.

Nearly half a dozen WOR members participated in the sport class Wiltree Park Nationals competition in Florida. Reto made first HG flight from Vacaville. Evan said studying the track logs of previous free-flight pilots provided the invaluable information enabling his 220 km flight from Diablo in April.

The pandemic rages on in parts of the world. The vaccination effort in the Bay Area is performing better than expected and we can expect most people who will get vaccinated to have reached that goal by this month. Will we reach herd immunity or stay just shy of it? The question is meant to raise your heartrate.

May is ready for you. Are you ready for May? The first weekend looks to be gusty around these parts but many just may find a good place to launch and go far and/or just have fun. The drought may continue to beat us senseless but we could see the next drop. Review the tracks and experiment to go farther!

Our environment's dance with the sun is hard to watch when we don't get the rain we wish for but that is easy to forget when reviewing the flight tracks of the free-flight pilots. The dry and unstable air has played the right song for a Waltz, Salsa, Samba, Tango or whatever you and your glider (and perhaps your team) wish to step to. There is no sign that the song will stop in May.

Skydancer

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