



Orange County Soaring Association



ZERO SINK

The official newsletter of the Orange County Soaring Association

Third Quarter 2011

President's Message

The Orange County Soaring Association is a non-profit organization established in 1959 to promote and teach soaring and provide soaring activities for association members and their families.

For more information about the club, email the Membership

Chairman:

mem_officer@ocsoaring.org

Club operations are conducted at several Southern California gliderports. For information: <http://www.ocsoaring.org/ClubInfo/locations.htm>.

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Contributions may be edited for content.

Our summer soaring season has finally gotten started! A late spring held us back for a while but reports of "great flying" are filtering in now almost weekly. The training program at Elsinore is showing some excellent results with several of our alumni-student members we transferred to LESC now soloing. Congratulations to you all on a day you will remember for the rest of your lives. Ah...it would be nice for an old guy like me to have such pleasures again!

The flying out at Crystal with the SCSA is also rolling with much activity in the PW5 and G103. We had several successful winch days and now the thermals are popping so low that an aerotow into the nearby hotspot is a reasonable cost vs. setting up the winch. With the help of OCSA's Chris Mannion, SCSA recently hosted their first "Wounded Warrior" program with great success. The OCSA Board voted no special programs for Labor Day, so the ships will stay at Crystal and be available on the usual basis.

Good news unfortunately is balanced with bad news this month as we learned of the fatal crash of "KMA" Jerry Snedden. Jerry had served OCSA in various capacities over the years including holding down the President's job. While it will take a few months for the NTSB's report to come out, it is a no-brainer to say that flying near rock outcroppings is dangerous...leave yourself plenty of extra room, know which way the wind is blowing, and keep your wings banked away from the mountain. We have lost too many in the Sierras!

Finally, the reopening of Hemet-Ryan is getting closer and more real all the time. Our OCSA-Cypress Task Force has been very active in reviewing various documents being passed between the FAA and the County of Riverside. The County has gone through quite an "education" and now seems to realize how soaring fits into the aviation education system. They now appear to be cooperating and may actually become helpful in restarting soaring at HMT for the good of all. This same education "process" echoes in many other governmental rooms: the FAA has been using the HMT case to educate other airport operators on their duties to General Aviation, the EAA/AOPA are waking up to the low costs of soaring to train and retain pilots, and the SSA and the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) have signed an agreement to work together. All of this has been in the works for a while, but it seems to be all coming together at the present time...which should help our "relaunch".

"Three steps forward with an occasional step backwards" is the march of humankind...and soaring may be on the brink of one of those three steps forward in 2012. It's going to be an exciting year for OCSA!

--Larry Tuohino



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Flight Instruction

Please contact the Flight Instructors well in advance by phone or email so they know they are needed on their scheduled days. They are under no obligation to appear at the airport unless notified.

The preliminary instructor schedule is listed in the calendar in each issue of Zero Sink. Always check the OCSA web site for the latest schedule.

Minutes from General and Board meetings can be found on the Members page of the OCSA web site.

Flight Operations

Club operations are conducted with the following aircraft:

Grob 103 N158SS
 Blanik L-13 N25BS
 PW-5 N982PD

Membership Fees

General Membership \$25.00
 Flight Group initiation \$300.00
 Student initiation \$150.00
 Family initiation \$150.00
 Flight Group monthly \$55.00
 Student Flight Group \$25.00
 Family Flight Group \$25.00
 Discount: Pay for 11 months up front, and get 1 month free.

Dues

Monthly dues and any past-due amounts are payable on the first of each month. Send checks to:

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ZERO SINK

Wind Turbines A Threat to General Aviation Airports

At the November 2010 CalPilots Annual Meeting, Mr. Bill Dunn, Vice President of Airports, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) opined that going forward, “wind turbines” would represent one of the most difficult issues that airport advocacy groups would grapple with. Let’s take a minute to explore a development in southern California general aviation that may very well become the “signature” threat to general aviation airports in many parts of the country.



The Tehachapi-Mojave Wind Resource Area, situated next to the city of Mojave and just west of Edwards Air Force Base, is considered one of the premier places in the nation for wind power since it is one of the windiest places in the world. Average wind speeds approach nearly 20 miles per hour. The Department of Energy's Wind Program and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) published a new wind resource map for the state of California (DOE California Wind Map). Areas with annual average wind speeds around 6.5 m/s and turbines greater at 80-m height are generally considered to have suitable wind resource for wind development. The Tehachapi Wind Resource area's average wind speeds are 9.510.0 m/s.

However, construction of large “wind farms” next to general aviation airports as a matter of public policy would have immediate and obvious deleterious effects upon the future use of a given airport. More than ever, the land surrounding America’s general aviation airports is attractive to energy developers. Historically, airport land use commissions are loathe to permit incompatible land uses in areas surrounding general aviation airports when that use involves habitable structures. However the question of whether such uses as solar reflector farms, small “peaker” power plants, or wind turbine farms are incompatible land uses is becoming a matter of great public debate. The development of clean energy in prime wind energy regions such as Tehachapi requires a balancing act between the demand for clean energy and the prevention of hazards to air navigation. New and replacement turbines are nearly 500 feet tall. On the one hand Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger set as a goal the generation of one-third of California’s energy from renewable resources by 2020. On the other hand energy companies stepping up to the plate find themselves hemmed in by competing demands for airspace from the Edwards Air Force Base R-2508 military complex in the Mojave Desert (wind turbines create unusable test airspace due to large radar returns), and the safe operation of public use airports situated in and around the city of Tehachapi (wind turbines create hazards to air navigation for general aviation pilots). Additionally, wind energy is a powerful inducement to growth, creates jobs, and is a significant source of tax revenue for county governments. *(continued on page 4)*

ZERO SINK

Mountain Valley Airport (FAA LID: L94) is a VFR airport used for glider operations and training located in Tehachapi, California. The airport was established for its close proximity to various advantageous lift effects for soaring where the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Tehachapi Mountains and the Mojave Desert meet, and numerous world



record glider flights have originated from Mountain Valley Airport. The Skylark North Glider School performs glider flight training for civilians as well as for the US Air Force Test Pilot School (from Edwards AFB), the National Test Pilot School (from the Mojave Air & Space Port), NASA and others. Due to the ongoing training contract with the US Air Force Test Pilot School, probably most or nearly all NASA Space Shuttle pilots who came from the Air Force have received glider training at Mountain Valley Airport.

In early 2009 the Alta Windpower Development Company proposed the Oak Creek wind energy project, an 800 megawatt, 9,120 acre wind farm in

the hills just east of Mountain Valley Airport. A portion of the project (Sub area 3) was to be located approximately 1.25 miles to the southeast of Mountain Valley Airport, in the vicinity of the left power traffic pattern. However in October 2008 the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a "Notice of Presumed Hazard" to air navigation pursuant to the provisions of 49 USC §44718, citing the excessive height of the proposed wind turbines (430 feet above ground level-AGL), the penetration into 49 CFR Part 77 navigable airspace, and requiring the structures be reduced in size to 236 feet AGL in order to mitigate the substantial adverse effect upon air navigation. While an FAA Notice of Presumed Hazard is a rebuttable presumption at the option of the applicant, on October 22, 2009 Alta Windpower Development Company withdrew from consideration the proposed wind turbines in Sub Area 3, citing the FAA's determination that the proposed wind turbines were a presumptive hazard to air navigation.

Although Alta Windpower's decision to withdraw Sub Area 3 from the Oak Creek project without further debate bade well for Mountain Valley Airport in 2009, a new threat to the airport emerged in 2010. In November 2010, the Kern County Planning Commission prepared a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) upon application of Pannon Design and Development's proposed 40 megawatt wind generation facility called "Clearvista Energy Wind Project." Significantly, the proposed Clearvista project would be situated a mere 6,000 feet from the end of the runways at Mountain Valley Airport. At a distance of one nautical mile from the runway, 13 of the 14 proposed wind turbines encroach into the Part 77 conical surface, a problem cited in the Draft EIR but deferred until such time as the FAA conducts a formal obstruction evaluation. However while the FAA's formal procedures for conducting an obstruction evaluation are designed to fully and fairly vet the issue, there are no guarantees that a finding of "hazard to air navigation" and/or "significant adverse impact" will result even if the structures penetrate the Part 77 conical surface. As of this writing, no application for an FAA obstruction evaluation (FAA Form 7460-1 Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration) has been filed by the project proponent, Pannon Design and Development.

(continued on page 5)



ZERO SINK

No doubt the most audacious potential encroachment to date upon the airspace surrounding the besieged Mountain Valley airport is the recently proposed Pahnamid wind energy project. Alta Windpower, LLC, a New York-based wind energy developer, has recently proposed a 7,106 acre wind energy project on the north-facing mountains of the Tehachapi Valley in Kern County. The project includes the installation of 137 large wind turbines (411-500 feet tall) at elevations up to 7900 feet in the Tehachapi Mountains. The project would generate 411 megawatts from the 137 turbines on the proposed 7,106-acre site. The top of Tehachapi Mountain, a known generator of powerful thermals used as a “launch pad” for flights north into the Sierras, is 7,960 feet. Having met considerable resistance from the airport owners, the general public and the FAA (Part 77) regarding placement of wind turbines downwind of the active runway, Alta’s has apparently shifted its strategy to placing the wind turbine “farm” on the slopes of the mountain immediately adjacent to Mountain Valley airport thereby skirting the Part 77 obstruction limitations. Astonishingly, many of the 500 foot tall wind turbines would be built within 7,000 feet of the runway, on the slopes of Tehachapi Mountain.

A glider and tow-plane combination on takeoff departs Mountain Valley airport with a very shallow climb angle, the system is basically underpowered. Moreover, a modern glider wing is one of the most efficient airfoils ever designed with glide ratios in the range of 50-60:1. Hence a glider returns to Mountain Valley airport with a very shallow descent angle.

These facts, not appreciated by a developer, should make clear that the 500-foot tall wind turbine projects surrounding Mountain Valley airport pose a substantial risk to aeronautical safety. But more importantly, should Clearvista Energy or Pahnamid wind energy projects go forward as planned, they will create a damaging precedent for general aviation airports. It’s tempting to trivialize the wind turbine threat to airports like Mountain Valley because it is “only” a VFR airport serving “only” glider aircraft. But when glider aircraft are threatened, it may well be but the “canary in the coalmine” portending future, more aggressive action by energy investors.

Chris Mannion, California Pilots Association Vice President, Region 5

1. U.S. Department of Energy Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Wind and Water Power Program Wind Powering America: California Wind Map and Resource Potential
 2. Vesta’s V90 3.0 megawatt turbines 495 feet from base to the top of wind turbine blade at the 12 o’clock position.
 3. Anthony York, Los Angeles Times, “Brown may find it’s not easy being green” December 2, 2010. Governor Jerry Brown’s renewable energy goals are even more ambitious.
 4. Leora Broydo Vestel, New York Times “Wind Turbine Projects Run Into Resistance,” August 16, 2010.
- Additional developments from late July:*** The developer withdrew the proposal for the Phanamid wind turbines. Clear Vista received a “Determination of No Hazard” from the FAA conditioned upon a height restriction for the turbines of 200-218 feet. The developer amended its proposal to use a shorter turbine unit, a Vestas V-47 turbine, which meets this height limitation. This turbine model height is 185 feet, combined with a 1 foot concrete foundation, equates a maximum of 186 feet AGL. Because of the lower height due to FAA requirements, the developer now proposes to erect 33 turbines instead of the original 14. However, the FAA ” Determination of No Hazard” was issued to the original 14 turbine locations and does not represent a specific height restriction to all "...usable area" and "Therefore, any additional wind turbines, change in turbine siting coordinates, or change in height of turbines, will void the current Determination and require a separate notification to the FAA".

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Waypoints

- Congratulations to **Kenny Kressin** who soloed Saturday, July 30, 2011 at Lake Elsinore, having just turned 14 years old about 2 weeks previously. He had been studying with Mary Rust for exactly one year. Kenny received the traditional dousing with water after his solo flight.

- **Jacqueline Orr** completed her solo flight at Lake Elsinore in June.

- Congratulations to **Marc and Marie Forsyth** who both achieved their Private Pilot certificates for powered flight.



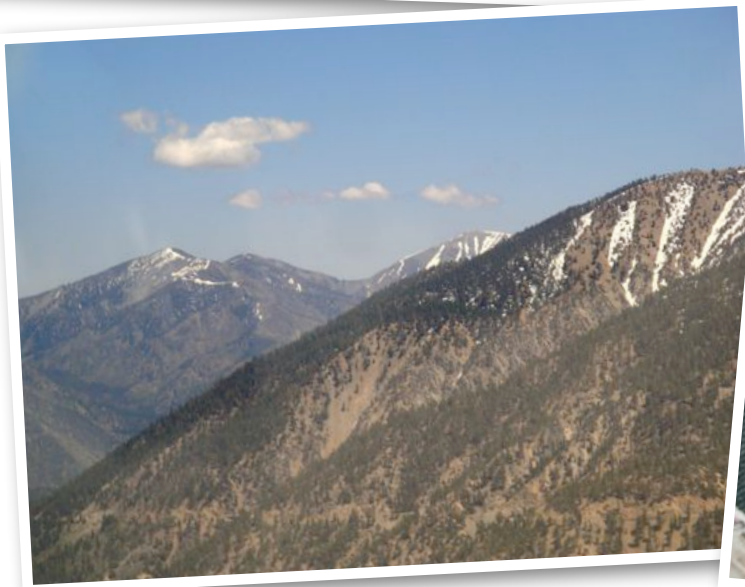
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OCSA Helps with Crystallaire Boy Scouts Day

Instructor Rob Morgan gave seven scouts rides in OCSA's Grob 103 as part of Southern California Soaring Academy's event with the Boy Scouts of America in March. In return, SCSA made a donation of tow fee credit for OCSA pilots. Rob reports: "There was a fairly significant cross wind from the south, which made for some challenging takeoffs and landings. The good side of the cross wind is that it set up conditions for workable wave all day, which I managed to successfully use on all seven flights."



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Hey, check out the view from my window!
Now, don't tell mom I'm playing hooky again today,
I'm chasing clouds: stratus, cirrus, cumulonimbus, the whole lot.
I'm experiencing lift as you've never imagined,
Floating, soaring, racing 10,000 feet off the ground.
Hear the air rushing over the canopy as time stands still?
I'm jotting down the sound of silence with the pens in my pocket shirt, which
are always there, dotting the sky with the diamonds from my badge and the
diamonds from my eyes so you, forever, can watch me shine.
And I'll always be there.
I'm wandering down cloud streets, surfing the invisible mountain wave,
forever floating with the zephyr, at peace with the wind.
Go far, fly high, I say.
You see, I am a building man. I take peoples' dreams and make them a reality.
Take plans and shape the land with my hands; I built the foundation for my
family and watched life spring up around me.
And now I surround you, in the air.
Because your man is home. I've wandered the mountain switchback road to
the other side, sailed through eternity over snow-covered sierras, and found
my copilot who was waiting just on the other side.
I am at peace.

--Megan Snedden

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September

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Board meeting	2	3
4	5 Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10 Dust Devil Dash
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 General mtg
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

October

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6 Board meeting	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15 General mtg
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

ZERO SINK

November

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3 Board meeting	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 General mtg
20	21	22	23	24 Thanksgiving Day	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Board meeting	2	3
4 Holiday party?	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 General mtg
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30	31

In this issue:

- 1 - President's Message
- 3 - Wind Turbines
- 6 - Waypoints
- 7 - Boy Scouts
- 9 - Poem for Jerry
- 10 - Calendar



Orange County Soaring Association



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