

Southern Para Pilots Flying Site Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation

Date : **September 1st, 2012**

Flying Site Name : **Bell Mountain**

GPS Coordinates : **N 34.959613 ; W 83.729382**

Safety Coordinator : **Hynek Cibula**

Site Manager : **Southern Para Pilots**

Access Road :

- No gated access; suitable for vehicle traffic up to approximately 200 yd below launch area. Only extreme off-road vehicles may reach launching pad from that point, otherwise remaining part of access road must be hiked through difficult terrain.
- In case of emergency, no emergency unit vehicle will be able to reach the very top of mountain (launching area) and the victim of accident would have to be transported to nearest accessible point, about 200 yd below launch.

Improvement suggestions:

- some sort of improvements were suggested in past, we need to reassess our options with land owners or land management.

Parking Areas :

- Parking areas for launch and for landing zone (further referred as LZ) are not marked but described under flying sites section of Southern Para Pilots chapter's website.
- Parking area below launching area is very well separated from setup and launching zone; no collision may possibly occur, at any time, in between pilots and parked vehicles or other personal property in parking area.

- Parking area near LZ is being limited or restricted to only one vehicle at any time during flying activities.
- As long as basic rules of flying/landing approach will be maintained, above mentioned vehicle should not be interfering with safety of pilots.

Improvement suggestions:

- both parking areas may be posted or otherwise designated in future, after closer discussion with property owners or managers.

Spectator Area:

- Spectator area at launching pad is not described or otherwise marked.
- Spectators and visitors are usually scattered around launching area or in nearby proximity which is effectively representing a risk of possible collision in between present setting-up or launching pilots and other public.
- Spectators or visitors at LZ, if any, are usually gathered around parking area, not interfering with flying or landing activities thus presenting minimum risk of possible collision. Needles to point out that safety of pilots and spectators or visitors is a matter of wise decisions of both parties.

Improvement suggestions:

- Both spectator areas (launching zone, LZ) may be designated in time of flying activities by yellow tape or portable signs.
- Spectators or visitors may be also verbally informed about possible danger of collision if a safe distance from preparing; launching or landing pilot wouldn't be maintained.
- A permanent warning sign may be posted in both areas after closer discussion with land owners or management.

Launch Area:

- Launch area is reasonably free of any tall obstacles or power lines.
- It is an uneven, gravel covered ground, and about 50ft wide open, not allowing 2 gliders to be set side by side. However a set-up area is located behind launching zone, allowing enough space for more gliders.
- Front of launching pad become about 45° steep, being occasionally covered by large boulders and deep depressions as a sign of water erosion. Those must be avoided and special attention must be paid during light-wind or no-wind take-offs, when some drop in altitude is expected right after leaving flatter ground.
- High rocky terrain, surrounding launching zone, may also represent potential hazard when launching during very windy or gusty days.
- Launching assistant is usually in place to help pilots in condition observation or launching itself.

Improvement suggestions:

- Some sort of steep ground adjustment may be done and will be a matter of club decision during future meetings.

Landing Zone:

- It is a very large, flat and grassy area, surrounded by lake, trees, houses and power lines. LZ itself is free of any obstacles and landing in any direction is suitable, based on needs.
- It is usually equipped with some sort of wind direction indicator; however no permanent windsock was ever erected.
- No ground handling or other activities, apart of landing, are allowed in LZ and it is considered as a very safe place to land on.
- During landing approach in warm days, it is recommended to make an approach over the water surface, to escape possible effects of overheated ground.

Improvement suggestions:

- It is possible to negotiate an option of permanent windsock in LZ area or at least ask a permission to store a portable streamer or windsock in premises of land-owner's house.

FAA Recognition and Communication:

- No interference was ever created or reported, while paragliding in area of Bell Mountain, with any of local airports or other air occupants (no paraglider).
- All tandem operations had been managed in accordance with FAA rules and regulations
- Flying Bell Mountain site doesn't require issuing NOTAM and is very well located inside of uncontrolled airspace.

Improvement suggestions:

- None

Organized Events:

- No organized events, other than casual flying, are on schedule for nearest future; however if planned, it will be done in accordance of USHPA requirements for safety.

Improvement suggestions:

- None

Safety Coordinator:

- Safety coordinator is being permanently looking for possible updates about safety and procedures in compliance with USHPA requirements.

Improvement suggestions:

- None

Information Communication:

- All rules and procedures are known to all, local and visiting pilots, posted and regularly updated on chapter's website.
- No signs were placed in proximity of launching and landing zone.
- No management information is available on site.
- Some sort of emergency plan is available on website, should be reviewed by individuals prior visiting or using specific flying site.

Improvement suggestions;

- Possible sign placement may be negotiated with land owners or management

Tandem Flying:

- Tandem flying is being managed in accordance USHPA-FAA tandem exemption.
- All tandem instructors are current Rogallo members and in possession of up-to-date First Aid and CPR certification.
- All tandem instructors are listed on Southern Para Pilots chapter's website.

Improvement suggestions:

- None

Other Risk Considerations:

- Bell Mountain flying site is a WNW facing site. As such, flying in winds from SW or NNW may create additional risk factor in pilot's safety, due to potential air disturbance in form of rotors from tall trees surrounding usual launching path.
- Bell Mountain flying site has elevated glide ratio
- Bail-out or emergency LZ is out of sight field

Improvement suggestions:

- Safety coordinator recommends keeping Bell Mountain rating in level **P3**.
- P2 pilots allowed to fly only under supervision of P3 or higher rated pilots and visitor
P2 pilots strictly under supervision of a rated paragliding instructor.