

COME VISIT COWLEY

Canada's largest soaring event occurs every year at the Cowley airstrip campground, 15 kilometres north of the village of Cowley (on Highway 3 east of the Crowsnest Pass). The Cowley Summer Camp, with family camping, sightseeing, a swimming hole and campfires, has pilots coming from all over western Canada and the USA. The camp takes place the week preceding the first Monday in August. Glider flights are available to the public.

Major attractions close by are:

- Waterton National Park
- Head-Smashed-in Buffalo Jump and



Where can I find out more?

For other information on the sport,
write to: Alberta Soaring Council
Box 13
Black Diamond, Alberta T0L 0H0

phone: (403) 813-6658
e-mail: asc@stade.ca
web: www.soaring.ab.ca

Soaring clubs in Alberta

Central Alberta Soaring Club

Red Deer, (403) 346-0543

Cu Nim Gliding Club

Calgary, (403) 938-2796

Edmonton Soaring Club

(780) 363-3860

Grande Prairie Soaring Society

(780) 354-8769



Is soaring for me?

Challenge is the key word – to fly well, to use the capabilities of your craft to its utmost, to make the most of the weather conditions of the day. It's always changing, and it's never boring. Your only limits are your own skill, desire, and initiative. If you're intrigued by the concept of motorless flight, interested in the weather, or just friendly people of all ages, fresh air and open spaces, and you want to feel at home in the sky, then we know that you will find the sport of soaring both challenging and exhilarating for years to come.

SOARING

— in Alberta



Soaring in Alberta is Generously Supported by



Cu Nim Gliding Club

Site 11 Box 17 RR1

Okotoks Alberta T1S 1A1

(403) 938-2796 - Hangar and Club House

(403) 200-2470 - Intro Flights

What is soaring?

Soaring is the most perfect expression of man's dream to fly... The morning has dawned bright and clear, and by 10 o'clock there are puffy white cumulus clouds popping everywhere. You strap into your elegant glider and check the controls and instruments. All OK, you give a thumbs up to your wing runner, who hooks the towrope to the towplane, and then signals "all out". It begins rolling and pulling you up into the air, and a few minutes later you're at 2000 feet – time to release from your friendly towplane. Now it's just you, your sailplane, and the sky. Soon, a surge tells you that you're gliding through a "thermal", so

you start circling and begin spiraling upwards at 600 feet a minute. While riding this rising column of warm air from a plowed field to cloudbase, a red tail hawk joins you! You are soaring, thanks to the solar heating of the ground. There is a remarkable amount of energy freely available in the atmosphere to the discerning pilot. So, now where? A trip over the prairies on a 300 kilometre cross-country task? Perhaps, on another day, you will climb to 25,000 feet in a "mountain lee wave" produced by the strong winds blowing across the Rockies – the view below and the clouds are extraordinary!

What does it take to learn?

Gliding clubs offer day membership with introductory flights to let you experience the joys of soaring for yourself. Try one, and if you find it to be the most fun you've ever had, join a convenient club. Contact them directly (see back page) to learn where they fly, their equipment, fees, etc. It's a safe sport; you only need to be 14 years of age to become a student, and 15 to solo – and we've had people solo on their 60th birthday, too. A fully qualified and experienced group of instructors will teach you everything you need to know, even if you have never been in the air before. Ground schools are run by clubs or held through community college evening courses.

An average new student takes 40 to 50 flights of dual instruction to develop the experience and judgement to fly solo. If you are a power pilot, you can transition in 10–15 flights. Weekend flying starts in the spring and usually goes through to early November, depending on the weather. Once you have soloed, it's a little more flight time before writing the Transport Canada examination for the glider pilot licence. Many persons are able to solo during their first season (and flying skills will progress more quickly if you do not have long

breaks between lessons). Now you can progress to higher performance sailplanes, acquiring the additional skills that will enable you to earn various soaring badges that are recognized internationally, fly on cross-country tasks with friends, enter competitions, or anything else that you wish to learn ...

Soaring is a team sport from the ground up, relying on shared volunteer work to operate the club; so when they are not flying, even new members immediately learn to help with the launching, assist with aircraft maintenance, and so on.

How high can I go? How far?

Alberta is known across Canada for its fine conditions for cross-country soaring, and many national records have been set in the province. The Canadian altitude record of 34,400 feet is held by a Calgary pilot, set in 1981 over the mountains just northeast of the Crowsnest Pass. Flights of over 500 kilometres are often completed by experienced pilots. The Canadian record for a triangular course is 804 kilometres flown from Black Diamond in 1982. The Canadian distance record of 1093 kilometres is held by two Edmonton pilots who flew

from their club at Chipman to Winnipeg's gliding club in 1984. Although record breaking flights aren't to be had by everyone of course, the simple pleasure of a couple of hours of local soaring up near the clouds is ample reward for a week on the job – and there are trophies and other awards for less daunting (but equally well regarded) levels of achievement for all skill levels!

What will it cost?

Soaring is the most enjoyable and affordable way to fly regularly, costing significantly less than power flight training, while being a lot more fun. The new student will fly fifty or so flights during the year to solo. Costs include club membership, use of club equipment (instruction is free), and membership in the Alberta Soaring Council and the

Soaring Association of Canada with "free flight", its quarterly magazine. Total annual cost varies from club to club – check with the one nearest you – it's cheaper than you think.

Do I have to buy a sailplane?

Private ownership is not necessary because clubs own a fleet of modern gliders for shared use. However, once you have your licence and some cross-country experience, you may consider owning your own so that you can fly anytime and as long as you like.

Gliders (complete with trailer and instruments) can be bought for the price of a new car, with similar cost/quality considerations – and the cost is commonly shared by two or three pilots in partnership.

