

Flight Scheduling

In much of Minnesota, the soaring season begins in April and continues until the snow flies in November. Most of the soaring activity occurs on weekends when flights are limited to one hour so that others may fly. Members sometimes fly on weekdays so that they can make longer flights and/or cross-country flights. During the soaring season, the club conducts an operation each Saturday and Sunday (weather permitting) including an excellent flight-training program most weekend mornings. In addition, several weekday training camps are conducted during the soaring season. There is no charge for the instruction, other than the normal flight charges.

The daily flight schedule is determined by a simple signup procedure. As each member arrives at the field he places his/her name on a list. After the conclusion of the scheduled training for the day, regular soaring operations start. At that time, whenever a sailplane is available, the member at the top of the list may elect to fly or to pass and retain the top spot for another sailplane.

Other Events

The club conducts periodic meetings to discuss club business, to entertain, and to educate the membership. Members have organized trips with club and private gliders to other airports, such as Sleepy Eye MN, and to more distant locations such as the Wasatch Mountains in Utah. Airport picnics and an annual banquet are enjoyed by members and guests. Club members also participate in special soaring events such as the Region 7 Soaring Contest in nearby Albert Lea, Minnesota.

In recent years, the club has also hosted a cross-country soaring camp for pilots interested in exploring beyond the bounds of the airport. The cross-country soaring camp is open to pilots of all abilities. The camp is a great opportunity to learn from highly experienced soaring pilots.

Membership Application

Applications are accepted by the club via email. You can either print this brochure, scan it, and send it back by email, or provide the following information directly by email with the subject heading "Prospective Membership" to:

mnsoaringclub@gmail.com

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Cell Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Email _____

SSA Number (if applicable) _____

SSA Membership Exp. Date _____

Aviation Experience, if any (ratings, hours, etc.)

Note: Membership is subject to approval by the MSC Board of Directors.

Useful weblinks:

MSC Website: <https://mnsoaringclub.com>

Stanton Airfield: <https://stantonairfield.com>

Soaring Flight Education Association: www.soaringfea.org

Soaring Society of America: www.ssa.org

History

Founded in 1959, the Minnesota Soaring Club is a group of about 75 people who have joined together to own and operate soaring equipment, to conduct soaring flights, and to share the unique experiences of soaring. The club is based at Stanton Airfield in Stanton, Minnesota.



Equipment

The club owns three sailplanes and a tow plane:

Schleicher ASK-21 2-seat, fiberglass, 34:1 glide ratio

Schleicher ASK-21B 2-seat, fiberglass, 34:1 glide ratio

SZD-51-1 (Junior) single-seat fiberglass, 34:1 glide ratio

Piper PA-25-235 Pawnee tow plane

Location

The Minnesota Soaring Club is located at Stanton Airfield in Stanton, MN. Stanton is on Highway 19, midway between Northfield and Cannon Falls. From the Twin Cities, travel south on Highway 52 toward Rochester. At Hampton, follow Highway 56 south to Highway 19. The airport is on Highway 19, immediately west of Highway 56. Look for the hangars.

Benefits and Obligations

The Minnesota Soaring Club is a working volunteer club: The members serve as ground crew, tow pilots, flight instructors, and perform other tasks necessary for the club to conduct flight operations. Members contribute according to their individual abilities and their licensed qualifications. Part of the benefit of belonging to the club is to share the experience of soaring as well as the opportunity to pursue

individual goals. Instructors volunteer their time to student operations on weekend mornings; in turn, the students arrive early to prepare the sailplanes for the day's flights. New members should plan to attend club meetings and participate in club activities. All members must attend the annual safety meeting in March.

Soaring!

There's nothing quite like the exhilaration of flying a sailplane into a strong thermal and circling up to the clouds. You have the freedom to soar as the eagles do, your sailplane's long wings silently slicing through the skies. Soaring gives pilots a sense of accomplishment to seemingly defy gravity and stay aloft for hours in a graceful aircraft with no need for an engine.

In Minnesota?

Minnesota is beautiful to see from the air, and it is also a wonderful location for soaring flights. Weather conditions that cause thermals - upward air currents that lift a sailplane - occur often during the season. A typically good flying day will have cumulus cloud bases (marking the thermals) that average 4,000 to 6,000 feet and higher, which permit soaring flights lasting several hours. There have been flights in Minnesota longer than 400 miles, and it's not particularly unusual to reach altitudes of 10,000 feet. Our soaring season extends from early April into November, depending on weather conditions.

How do they do it?

Sailplane pilots start each flight with a short tow behind a power plane like our Piper Pawnee. On a day without thermals, they will then glide gently down from 3,000 feet in about 20 minutes. But *soaring* pilots can stay aloft in columns of rising air, fueled by the sun heating the ground. Soaring is, in fact, an indirect way of harnessing solar energy. When pilots choose to

land, they control their descent precisely with airbrakes and/or flaps, and return to the airport as safely as conventional powered aircraft do.

What does it Cost?

2024 Share and Membership Fees

Cost to Join: \$1,500* which includes a \$1,000 membership fee and a \$500 refundable share fee.

Dues: \$750 billed annually in January

* New members pay 50% of the membership fee and the refundable share fee upon approval of their application and before flying. This amount does not include prorated dues for the first year. The second 50% of the membership fee is paid at the one-year anniversary of joining.

Membership Dues

Club dues are billed annually and are due in January of each year. The club is an affiliated Chapter of the Soaring Society of America (SSA). Club dues cover the required membership in the SSA and includes a subscription of the SSA's monthly magazine *Soaring*.

Share Refund Policy

Resigning members' share refunds are paid from cash flow. Depending on the time of year, there may be a delay in repayment until funds becomes available. Resigning members have the opportunity to donate their share refund back to the club. This helps the long-term viability of the club.



Flight Charges

Each flight incurs a tow fee, based on altitude, and club owned planes incur a sailplane rental fee, based on the flight duration.

Tow Fees

\$34 hookup fee + \$1 per 100 feet of altitude
Examples: 2,000 feet = \$54; 3,000 feet = \$64

Sailplane Rental Fees

There is no minimum charge, and flights are billed by the minute. ASK 21 B, \$44/hour; ASK 21, \$41/hour; Junior, \$32/hour.

Flight Instruction

There is no charge for flight instruction, other than tow and sailplane rental fees. Club instructors volunteer their time to instruct club members.

Visit Us!

Would you like to learn more about soaring? Think you might want to join the club? We'd like to meet you at the airfield, where you can talk with club members about soaring, and watch gliders launching and landing. In some cases it may be possible to get a glider ride. Come to Stanton Airfield on a sunny weekend day in the early afternoon. Inquire inside the airport building about how to reach our staging area on the active runway. Once there, introduce yourself to the Field Operations Officer (wearing an orange vest). Club members will enjoy answering your questions and sharing their stories with you!

Questions? Email us at mnssoaringclub@gmail.com.