

Greater Boston Soaring Club

So, You're Thinking About Soaring

OK. You are enchanted with the thought of soaring like a bird and you're wondering if joining Greater Boston Soaring Club (GBSC) is the thing to do. Hopefully this will answer some of your questions.

But I Don't Know Anything About Flying A Glider

What, you don't know an aileron from a horizontal stabilizer? No problem! GBSC instructors will take you from never having flown before to your first solo, and then on to your private license.

Most new students have a goal of thermalling over Mt. Wachusett. After a while you might want to stretch your wings. We have cross-country mentors that can help you break the apron strings that can tie you to Sterling. Hey, flying out of sight of your home airport without an engine makes everyone nervous (read scared) at first! If you want to continue to upgrade your skills, GBSC instructors can help you achieve your commercial and instructor glider ratings.

Don't want to go cross-country or go to advanced levels? That's great too. The goal is to have fun in soaring, wherever you want to take it.

GBSC has trainers up to cross country gliders so you will have a glider available for whatever skill level you are at.

Encampments

In the spring we have an encampment at Mifflin, PA, where you can experience ridge and cross country soaring. This encampment is for private pilots as we don't have instructors and don't ferry a 2 seater down for it. But as a member feel free to organize the ground tow of a club 2 seater and see about having an instructor available. We love volunteers such as this! (Ridge Soaring, a commercial operation not too far from Mifflin does provide instruction for both students and experienced pilots.)

We have encampments at Franconia airport over Labor Day weekend to give you a taste of ridge soaring, and at Gorham in October for mountain wave soaring. Note that instructors or experienced pilots are generally available so students can participate in the encampments.

Midweek Operations

Good soaring weather during the weekday? GBSC members can organize a weekday operation so you can play hooky from work or school.

So GBSC has everything you need to learn, progress and have fun in your soaring endeavors.

So What's the Downside to Joining?

Well, you will have to pay dues and tow fees for your flights, and you are expected to pay them on a timely basis. (But it is much more enjoyable than paying taxes.) If you are a regular member (not tow pilot or instructor) you will also be assigned field duty (see below)

Club Expectations of Each Member

GBSC is a club, not a commercial operation. It only functions by the volunteer efforts of its members. As a member you will be assigned field duties 2 or 3 times a year. If you are new to the sport, you will be assigned logger duty. Loggers record the glider, glider pilot(s), take-off and landing times, tow-pilot and tow plane which is used for club billing purposes. As your experience

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increases you will be assigned SFO duty, where you work on the glider 'line' making sure the flight operations run smoothly and safely.

Assuming you use one of the club gliders on a regular basis you will also be assigned to one of the gliders, either as a team member or as a ship captain. The glider team is responsible for making sure the glider is inspected (annualled) once a year, help with preventive maintenance and general upkeep of the ship.

Club Expectations of Each New New Member

Do not think you will just show up, hop in a glider and get your flight in.

New members are expected to arrive early (ie 9:30AM latest) to learn how to preflight the gliders, do positive control checks, get the gliders moved down to the staging area. (put that ground handling knowledge to work) and just get an idea of the general startup.

If you are there at the end of the day, you are expected to help the SFO and logger close up shop, stowing the gear, tying down the gliders, putting away the golf carts, etc.

You are also expected to occasionally volunteer as needed, for miscellaneous tasks such as cutting the grass around the tie down area, or more complex tasks such as helping to ferry ships out of Sterling and back again during the Sterling Fair when the operations are transferred to another airport.

At the beginning of the season, gliders needed to be taken out of storage and assembled and at the end of November be taken apart and put back into storage. Club members are expected to help out either just to hold wings during assembly/disassembly to helping to tow them to or from winter storage. Sometime the weather isn't pleasant but the camaraderie of the group always makes the work go easier.

Remember those encampments mentioned above? If you participate you will be expected to help out. It might be as simple as throwing some stuff in your car to take it to the encampment, to helping to ferry gliders (either via by air or trailer) to Franconia or Gorham.

As a club run by volunteers, sometimes things don't run as smooth as you might like. Life happens. There can be a wait for a tow-pilot, a tow-plane, or instructor to get things moving. We don't do reservations, flights are on a first to sign-up first to fly basis. On good days, demand is high and it could be a long wait (a number of hours) before you get in a flight. Even on slow days, something could happen to prevent you from getting into the air. Maybe this is the time to pull out the lawnmower from the main hanger and cut that grass.

There Sure Seems to be a lot to Know

Does it seem overwhelming? It really isn't. Ideally you will help out at most 4-5 days per year. You learn as you go and more often than not you are working with at least one other person to make the work go easier.

In the greater scheme of things, if you want to soar, GBSC can make it happen.

Feel free to check out the following links for more information on the club and how it operates.

GBSC membership manual	http://www.soargbsc.com/man.pdf
Ground handling manual	http://www.soargbsc.com/ground_procedures.pdf
Student page	http://home.comcast.net/~verhulst/GBSC/student/
Club history	http://www.soargbsc.com/history.php

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Still thinking about it?

Pull right in to Sterling Airport to check out the operations! GBSC members are a friendly bunch and would be more than willing to talk to you about the club and show you the gliders.

Contact Information

Mike Biagioni
membership@gbsc.com
508-641-6116