

Sacramento, 2001-9-1

A fine day at the Sac. After setting up I went and checked conditions again and found a nice smooth 10-15 blowing pretty well straight in, with a touch of cross from the West. Cumies were everywhere. Launched at 10:50. Didn't find very organized thermal activity to begin with. Because the wind was reliable, I decided on a ridge run, so I set off towards the river.

The thermals became better organized and higher as time went on. At first, cloudbase was just above 3k'. Crossings of Klingerstown and Pillow gaps were both uneventful, thanks to finding a nice thermal just before each one. Then right after Pillow gap I hooked a really nice, well organized mellow thermal, and followed it way out into the valley at 300fpm, up to cloudbase at 4200'. I thought about going back to the ridge, but it wasn't an appealing option. I'd have been low by the time I got back, with unknown landing fields out front. Landing fields were plentiful in the valley, and so were cumies.

A quick application of the old rule of thumb "ridge-height times wind-speed" gave me $600' * 16 = 10000'$, or 2 miles downwind to be free of turbulence. I estimated I needed to be a little further away, so drifted downwind, South of Rt. 25. Getting low, I went into search mode and hooked another one back to 4200' at 300fpm. This one took me onto Berry Mountain, the ridge South of Elizabethville, from where I got a good view of the Elizabethville launch and the PG landing circle, not to mention the astoundingly ugly multi-layer quarry.

There was enough lift to stay up indefinitely, but (a) I was tiring physically (b) I was tiring mentally (c) the way ahead was built-up (Millersburg) or tree-infested (South of Berry Mountain), and (d) I desperately needed to pee. Hey, when you gotta go, you gotta go.

With the luxury of plenty of altitude, I cruised around checking out landing options. It's an awkward time of year with so many tall crops growing, but I found a really great field. Short grass, big, uphill (marked by a pond), and into the wind. I couldn't have designed one better (except for the gopher holes). 2:04 in the air, for 17.9 miles.

The farmer walked over to investigate, and was friendly and really helpful, inviting me to drive over his field to retrieve the glider. Surprisingly, he said no-one had ever landed there before. Also surprisingly, he asked very few of the usual wuffo questions.

After running the gauntlet of Labor Day parades, Joan, my lovely wife, arrived for the retrieve. Then beer and food in the very pleasant Wooden Nickel in Millersburg, over which we decided to head home (rather than Hyner). Ah, life is good.