

MARIN COUNTY HANG GLIDING ASSOCIATION

Tam Airlines

Summer Edition - July '24



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Editor's Corner:

Did you know you can **SOAR** Tam in the Summer????

Do not believe the FAKE-NEWS media that tells you otherwise! Some would have you believe that summer soaring at Mt. Tam is for losers! MCHGA locals have the TRUTH to disprove these falsehoods - and thanks to advancements in AI/ML (Aerial Intuition & Mindful Learnings) we offer up *boots-on-the-grounds* testimonials from Tam patriots that call it their home.

Read-up from the experts in this issue and learn how to forecast those elusive summer flights. Summer pilots will also be the first to experience a much requested improvement to the paper based check-in process! MCHGA is thrilled to unveil [Digital Sign-ins](#)! We owe a debt of gratitude for the hardwork and commitment of Club Officers - David Beerman & Eric Beckman - for achieving this accomplishment within 6 months of our first club meeting on this topic in January '24.

Another member requested improvement was better access to Site-Intro sponsors. We're adding more communication options for new-pilots seeking intros - a requirement to obtain membership and a sticker. More details in the Club Communications below.

Flying at Mt. Tam just keeps getting better with each passing season! We encourage more feedback from membership to further improve your flying experience and help membership grow.

We urge and encourage any and all feedback to club officers to continue this amazing progress.. or better yet join our bi-monthly meetings and join us in improving the site and flying experience!

There are two meetings a month that alternate between in-person and Zoom. Meeting details included at the bottom of the newsletter.

Fly safe 🦅
Lionel Marks
MCHGA, Editor

Pilots Corner:

YES YOU CAN - Summer Flying: ☀️

Fall/Winter/Spring earn the title for best seasons but summer flying days can still be had! For many of us, flying Tam involves significant commutes, extended time commitments and personal sacrifice. This makes choosing summer days more challenging as many other more reliable options exist nearby at the coast or a little further inland.

But for those fortunate enough to live close by, there are plenty of opportunities to scurry towards launch when conditions permit. Locals understand their site intimately, keenly aware of geographic nuances and optimal conditions.

We offer you three perspectives from local pilots that may tempt you to reconsider summer Tam shenanigans! Best of all, with its gorgeous beaches and sublime natural beauty there's no better place to combine a summer weekend that incorporates flying, friends and family for an epic day of activities for all!

David Beerman - MCHGA President

Summer is possibly the most flyable season at Tam. True, it's not often soarable, but the sled rides can be beautiful. And many times, you can extend your sled ride for 30 minutes or more.

The most important factor to look for in deciding if it's flyable in the summer is a west wind at about 10 mph (okay WSW-WNW at 8-12.) If the wind is S to SW, it tends to bring in the fog.

When it's warm at launch and cool on the beach, it means that the temperature is inverted. An inversion layer will usually set up between 1,000' and 1,500'. When this

happens, there is sometimes lift just below the inversion. Factors that help improve the lift at any time are a low barometric pressure (<30inHg) and stronger winds aloft.

If there's fog along the coast, you can usually see it on the webcams. The PG&E webcam on Bolinas Lagoon usually faces almost due east, looking right at B and C launch. You can also see the end of the Seadrift spit. So this will usually show you any fog in the area.

Fog can be tricky however. It can appear suddenly on our beach, or vanish within minutes. Be careful judging the visibility on days when the fog is moving in and out, because the situation can change quickly and unexpectedly. Do not launch if you feel there's a chance that the fog is coming in.

There is one trick that the fog does consistently enough that I have given it a name. There will be fog all up and down the coast, from Montara to Muir Beach, and from Bolinas to Point Reyes. Yet it will leave an open bubble of clear air over Bolinas Bay. I call this the "Bolinas Bubble," and it when it happens, it seems to be stable enough to allow our sled rides to Stinson Beach.

When there is no fog, this creates another problem. Sunny summer weather is perfect for everyone to come to the beach. Especially on the weekends, the crowds can be intense. Be sure you have a place to land on the beach, before you launch. So, another factor that is helpful is if you have a low tide in the afternoon. This is particularly important during seasons when our beach sand is low.

The last thing that I will say is that Tam doesn't follow any rules. It creates its own weather, so it often fails to conform to wind and weather predictions. If you think you know what to expect from Tam, that's when it's most likely to fool you.

Ian Walton

After a year of flying Tam I am not sure I am better than some of the longtime pilots in predicting it. It's such a G2K place that really it's all about deciding if it is worth the go. In addition to the MCHGA web page resources I use Windy and the reporter stations at Twin Knolls (close to C) and Bolinas fire station. The toughest call is when it is NE, NE and NW. It can be launchable and soarable but it can also be a lee side rotor fest.

B launch kinda makes its own wind but if it is light NW (< 5 and coming down ridge crest) B is launchable. Of course stable vs unstable air changes things, ie unstable air more forgiving of lee conditions. In fact we all know these can be some of the best winter days.

Bolinas fire station can let you know if it might be too windy at the beach. There is also a wundermap station at Stinson.

I am not well calibrated on the high end. That is at what wind at Twin Knolls will it be too windy to fly PG. Twin Knolls seems to measure some winds higher but I am not totally sure about this. Also can be personal preference. I have yet to ridge soar the top and have wondered if there is a

setup where this happens. But could be too windy at the bottom.

A great use of the stations is lapse rate. Seems like if Twin Knolls is >6 degrees cooler than Bolinas it will be soarable. So far this has held 100% of the time, even in the summer/fall.


For fog I use the Alert California Muir Beach and Bolinas cams. If you can see the top you are good. But there can be fog low which you can see from Bolinas cam. Confirmation can come from the surfline Stinson beach cams (free but you have to watch an ad). If it is gray above you cannot see the beach from launch. Surfline cams also handy to confirm tide level, wind caps and crowds.

Anthony Abate

I look at NOAA hourly forecast.
Check that the dewpoint and temperature are far enough apart.
Check the forecast wind strength.
Check <http://fog.today>.
Check Bolinas Fire cam that targets Tam.
Check Windy, real time Wind and Forecast.
Check MesoWest.

The real time wind monitor at the top of Cataract Trail parking is valuable. Anticipate sledders or extended sledders in summer and summer fog. In general, another thing I look at is prevailing winds. If the winds are light enough from a "bad" direction, leese side thermals from a launchable direction is sometimes possible after noon.

Club Communications

Digital Sign-ins are HERE!: 

In response to membership feedback and the digitization of just about everything (except Flying), MCHGA is delighted to announce [Online-signins](#) are now LIVE. Big shout-out goes to those who dedicated many hours of personal sacrifice in pursuit of this effort in coordination with State Park agencies, local authorities and our insurers.

Background: The concept of implementing an electronic sign-in at Mt Tam had faced resistance from previous head rangers, but with the support of Club Secretary - Eric Beckman and a more progressive current head ranger, approval was quickly secured. Changes were made to align the hardcopy sign-in sheets with our virtual system allowing MCHGA to swiftly implement the new electronic sign-in process.

The following members/officers deserve special mention for helping this process along and making this a reality:

David Beerman - Club President
Eric Beckman - Club Secretary
Phil Ray - Club Treasurer
Lionel Marks - Editor
Dan Zaslovski - Member

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Welcome our New Members!: 

Richard Beadle PG
Hans Kloepfer PG
Steve Spacek PG
Zachary Koppe PG
Josh Lepold PG
Jeffery Morgan PG
Avi Iliyaev HG
Soham Mehta HG

Welcome back to Renewing Members!



Ella Gambel	PG
Aaron Levy	PG
Scott Herman	HG

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Site Intro Updates



A new Telegram Group has been established to encourage easier access to approved PG/HG sponsors that are authorized to offer up site-intros for HG/PG and sponsored flights for P3 pilots.

The Telegram Group is invite only and should not be broadcast in other Telegram channels. Instead send the direct link <https://t.me/+LyiB2Z-rT9tiMDRh> to anyone requesting intros in the general channel.

The goal being to offer faster access to pilots seeking a sponsor through modern communication channels. Several pilots have already benefited from its use and we intend to schedule more group intro days on a regular basis - with the explicit goal to expand membership and interest in flying Mt. Tam

Additionally, we are evaluating an "open-enrollment" site-intro days coming this fall to facilitate new membership. MCHGA will be on-hand to answer questions and offer advice on how best to forecast and fly the mountain. Stay tuned for dates/times for this upcoming event!

Safety & Advisories:

Each member receives club rules for flying the site. Copies are available on <http://mchga.org> - Each wing type has separate [rules](#) due to the unique nature of flying Mt Tam for each wing

type and historically based on previous dual club operations of MCHGA/BAPA which are now combined.

In addition to the club rules here are some important reminders of safety hazards and up-to-date advisories:



Summer Crowds - Beach Safety

Warm weekends bring large crowds to Stinson beach. If you plan to fly on weekends pay close attention to the beach prior to Launching. Upon landing, avoid setting up your final into congested areas. This is especially true for HG pilots. It's better to have a longer walk back to the breakdown area than to risk hitting beach goers.

Rating Requirements

A minimum rating of H3 or P3 (intermediate) is required to obtain a sticker to fly the site. All pilots are required to get a site intro before their first flight at Tam from an authorized sponsor listed on the website. Additionally, P3 pilots are required to have an authorized sponsor to observe their first flight prior to receiving an official sticker.

Walla Vista Access

This access is adjacent to private homes; please be mindful of noise levels and unnecessary congregations in this access way.

Club Finances:

To date, we have issued:

88 HG stickers \$25/ea
76 PG stickers \$25/ea
15 of each went to Bi-wing pilots \$40/ea

Total # Paid Stickered Pilots: 149
Total # Pilots (incl Visitors/Novices): 171

Revenue YTD: \$3,975

Insurance: \$4,329

USHPA Subsidy: (\$1,100)

G&A Est: \$1,500

Net Profit(Loss) (\$800) Estimated

Insurance Update:

In the last issue we supplied a chart of Insurance Premiums vs Income vs Sticker Price. Here is a more detailed list of insurance premiums paid to support flying at Mt. Tam. This trend highlights the significant threat insurance costs pose to supporting the clubs finances. Additional membership can help offset these cost increases.

year(s)	premium	subsidy
'01 - '09	\$100.00	
'10 - '15	\$750.00	
'16 - '22	\$1,500.00	
2023	\$3,778.00	\$1,139.00
2024	\$4,329.00	\$1,100.00

Next Meetings:

The club is currently holding two meetings per month: one in person, and one on Zoom. The in-person meetings are held on the *first* Thursday of each month, and the Zoom meetings on the *last* Thursday of each month. If you would like to attend a meeting, either online or in person, please RSVP to info@mchga.org. All are welcomed and encouraged to join, even for non-members.

Next Newsletter

What would you like to see in the next newsletter?

Have a flight story to share?

Topics to be covered?

Feel free to drop us a line at:

editor@mchga.org