

Pine Mountain to Venator, 7/15/2008

By Brian Webb

Weather

Forecast

15,000ft, good lapse rate, wind from the NW

Actual

15,000ft, blue then high cumulus, 35kmh W/NW

5,000+m, 3-7 ms

Pine Mountain, OR - Free flight, Open distance

Comments

Cross wind launch from the west face at 12:30, no cu but lots of smoke in the air, visibility was acceptable but poor.

Conrad, Matt, Cherie, Chaz, Steve Roti and I all launched. Took a climb to 3000m then moved on down wind along Highway 20. A line of cumulus convergence running NW/SE had formed a little past Brother and I aimed to connect with this.

Conrad landed a little after Brother, Matt and Cherie were one climb behind.

Just before the convergence line took a climb to 3,800m and the day began to show some of its potential.

Wind was from the WNW, around 10knots and giving a ground speed of 30 knots

Upwind of the convergence was very rough, the best part of the line was on the downwind side where the lift was more organized.

Cherie took a better line in the convergence and moved ahead with good height. I had to regroup but eventually topped out at 4,500m under some solid cumulus that has built down wind of the convergence.

Used these cumulus to move quickly east maintaining height between 2000 and 3500m. Ground speed was now moving up to 40knots, climbs were running between 2 and 6 m/s

I deliberately slowed a little before Burnt as the day was moving on and I was intent not to get low prematurely as per the previous flight.

At Burnt moved more Easterly along highway 78 which was aligning better with the wind direction. Took a long slow climb past Burnt then pressed on to the East. The ground began to rise at Crane and change into rolling arid hills. The heat from these hills began to form a band of broad lift which maintained for 20km.

The route I had chosen now showed it's weakness as the road moved around to the north, continuing east was not practical as the land was uninhabited and had no roads as far as the eye could see. Would have been wiser to follow Route 78 which would have allowed more distance along a road.

Landed at 220km, needing to work hard to lose height with 2 hours of useable day still to go. An 8 grape flight and a new Oregon open distance record.

Cherie flew 198km and Matty 130km - a day that turned good despite the smoke

<http://www.paraglidingforum.com/leonardo/flight/112513>

Many thanks to Conrad, Heather and Matty after a long retrieve. Regretfully we ran out of electricity on the way home (stuffed alternator) and had to overnight in Burns.

Lessons

Watch the day carefully for changes and respond accordingly

Preparation, load maps in GPS to aid navigation and route selection whilst flying

Maintain concentration throughout the flight, hydration and food