

Saturday, January 26, 2008
190th Cobra flight, 200th PIC, 4 landings
Rio Grande Valley, Manzano Ridge Run, MidValley

Belen Takeoff: 1:37 pm MidValley Landing: 3:49pm
MidValley Takeoff: 4:17 pm Belen Landing: 4:37pm
Today's Airtime 2.5 GPS odometer 132 miles
Total PIC Time 474.2 Total Logged Time 495.4

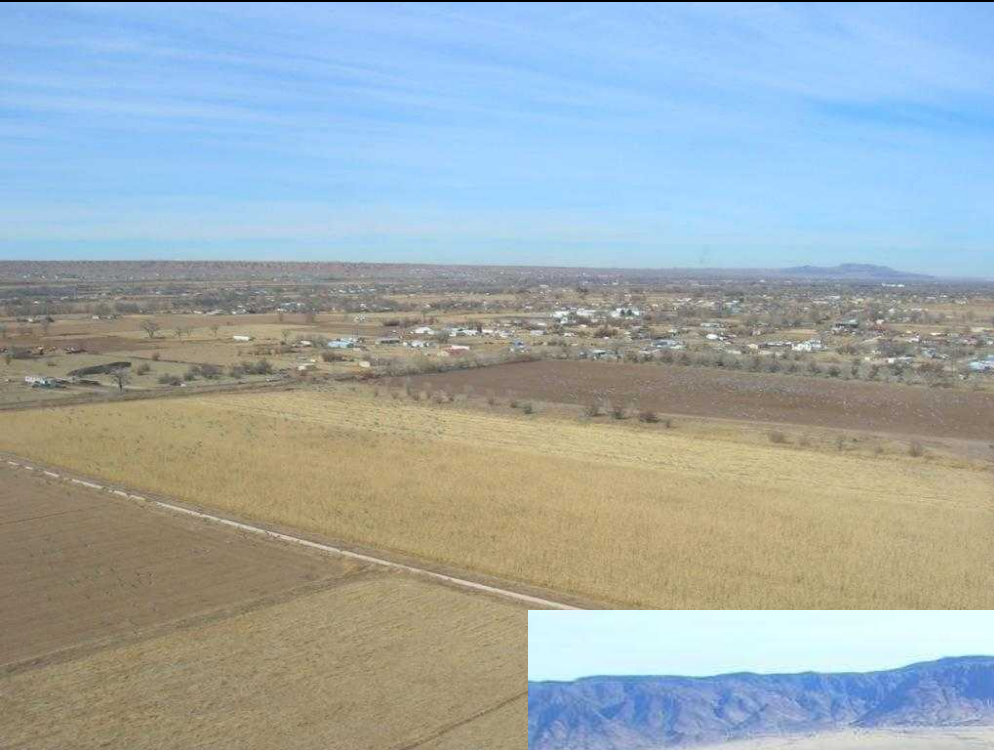
It supposed to be a warm day (45 deg F) with light winds. I called up Rick as I drove down to Belen to see if he was flying today. He said he would meet me at Belen around noon, and we could fly somewhere. I spent the morning installing a drain valve on my oil sump tank. With this valve, oil changes that took an hour and created a huge mess in my hangar are now a simple 10 minute exercise. Rick arrived around noon and hung around while I finished up. I talked him into a winter ridge run of the Manzano Mountains.



We took off and flew over around Belen, NM (above) and headed south along Rio Grande.

Lower left: Rick's trike over the river.





Upper left: We left the river and flew over some large fields. There were birds everywhere. One field must have had tens of thousands.

There were so many I was a little concerned about mid-air with a bird. Check out the birds in the zoomed portion of the photo on the left.



When continued south to US 60, where we turned east towards Abo Gap. I left the old mobile homes and abandoned cars on the north side of the road to fly over the empty grasslands to the south. Ahead of us, the Pino mountains stretched off to the south.





Upper left: The view from Abo Gap looking west towards Ladron Peak on the horizon. The black bump in the middle of the plains is called "Black Butte."

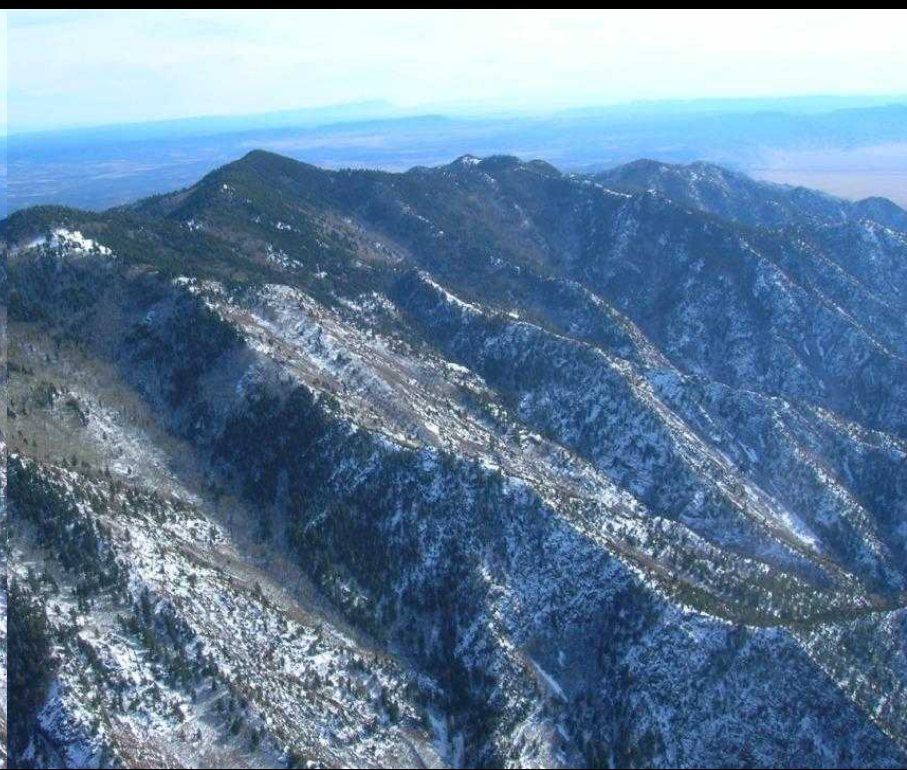
Lower left: Looking north along the slowly ascending ridgeline of the Manzanos.

Lower right: Close up view of a railroad bridge with a train heading west out of Abo Gap.





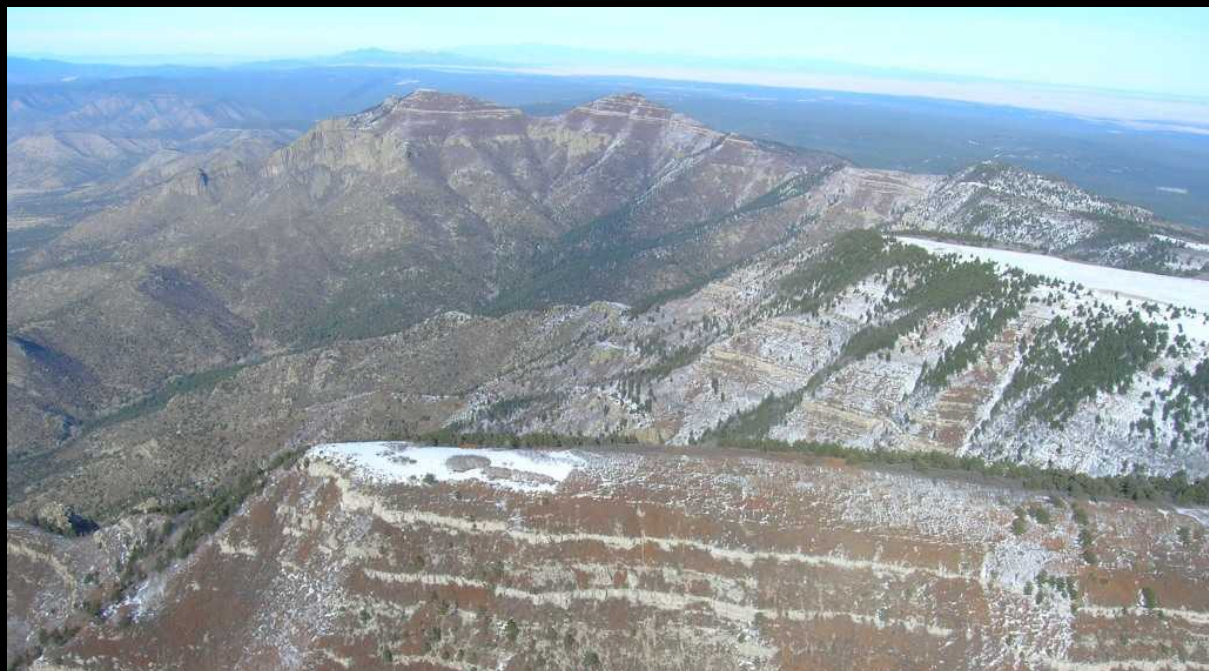
We were planning a trip to Rodeo, NM the next weekend and I wanted test my tolerance of cold temps. Rick's thermometer read 30 deg F. That was cold, but I felt I could take this for an hour or two. On the horizon on the far left are the Sandia Mountains. Everything else in the photo are the Manzanos.

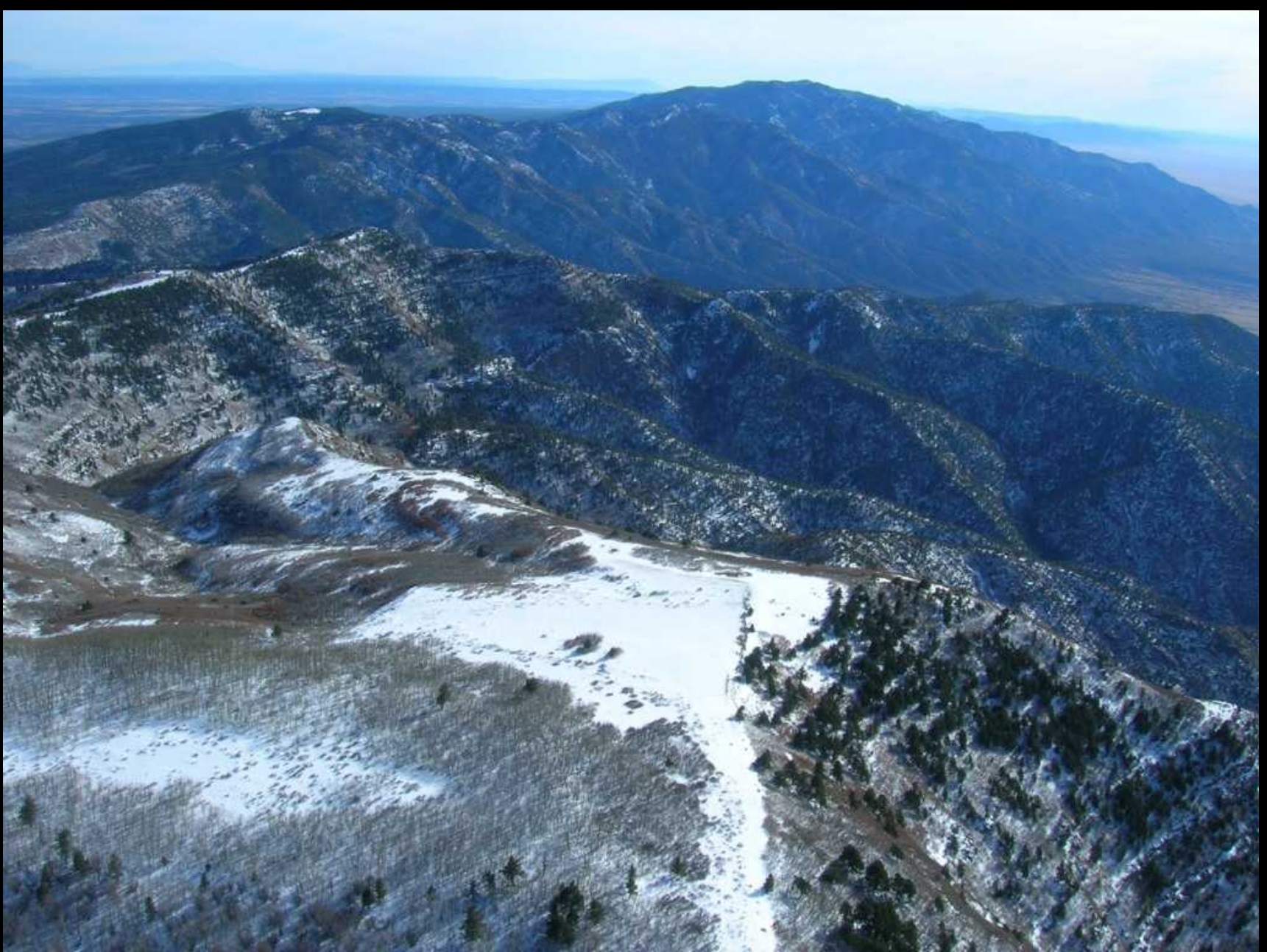


Above: Looking east over the backside towards Estancia.

Lower right: At the northern end of the Manzanos are the twin pyramids of Guadalupe and Mosca Peaks.

I have flown along the Manzano ridgeline many times, but this was the first time I was able to endure the temperatures in winter.





Above: Looking south along the Manzano ridgeline before spiraled down to warmer air over the grasslands at the base of the mountains.



We played around over the foothills, then headed east, landing at Mid-Valley airport. We took a break here, and then split up with Rick heading back to Double Eagle and me making the short hop to Belen.

Upper left: Rick's trike landing at Mid-Valley.

Lower right: Rick's yellow Astra and my white Cobra.



I flew to Belen landed before sunset, while it was still warm. A fun little flight.

