

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

310th Cobra flight, 320th PIC, 2 landings

Flight to Mt Taylor to 12,500 ft

My trike is back together. And we finally got a break in the winds on Tuesday morning. I called up Paul and talked him into exercising the new Sport Pilot Max altitude rules that allow flight up to 10000 ft or 2000 AGL, which ever is higher. Our destination will be the summit of 11,701 ft Mt Taylor. 20mph winds are forecast for the afternoon so we are leaving early, shortly after dawn.

On the initial part of the trip, the winds were calm. We followed the Rio Puerco to the Rio San Jose. As we approached the canyon, the winds picked up strongly

Belen Takeoff: 6:38am Belen Landing: 10:00am

Today's Airtime 3.4hrs


Total PIC Time 820.7 Total Logged Time 841.9



and our ground speed dropped to 30 mph, implying +20mph winds. We crept forwards slowly .


Once we squeezed past the canyon, the winds dropped down a little, but they were as forecast, out of the west.





We crossed I-40 and flew along the foothills of Mt Taylor. We wanted to approach the summit from the SE, staying clear of the massive rotor behind mountain.

I saw this interesting graveyard in the middle of the nowhere.



We left I-40 for a while, but the road angled back towards us at this cut in the rock near Laguna Pueblo. The snow capped summit of Mt Taylor can be seen in the background.

It was slow going near Mt Taylor. I could tell the winds were strong by our ground speed of 25 mph. But the air was smooth. The winds were due west so Paul and I climbed high, staying above any upwind terrain.

Paul took the picture on the left of my trike nearing the summit of Mt Taylor. It took 25 minutes cross over the top. Our trikes were hovering over the ground, crabbing sideways over the trees.



Right: Over the top, 12,500 ft.



We turned downwind and watch our groundspeed grow. I pulled in for extra speed and saw my *GPS* reach 99mph for a moment. I angled away from the mountain, wanting to keep clear of the rough air that surely was lurking behind the summit.

Left: The snow capped summit of Mt Taylor. You can see Paul's trike just above Cerro Alensa, the volcanic spike near the center of the picture.



We looked north and saw a dozen or more lakes. That's where we went next, crossing the Mt Taylor Plateau to the NE.

We dropped down low, but the air coming over the edge of the plateau was rough. It was still blowing hard.

Right: Looking back towards Mt Taylor. Paul's trike is visible below the horizon near the center of the picture. Check out all those lakes.





We followed the meadows, each looking like a great place to land someday. When we reached the far NE corner near the Bear's Mouth we turned south for Belen. Eventually we would have to pass directly downwind of the summit, so we angled downwind and away from the mountain.

Right: The Valley of Volcanos.

We dialed in the new Belen AWOS frequency on our radios and picked it up. Good news, the winds were calm on the ground. Up higher where we were it was blowing 20mph, giving us a slight tailwind.

When we descended that last 2000 ft to ground level, it was calm. We both landed and pulled into the hangar.



That was a great fun flight. Here is my GPS track.

