

Sunday August 29, 2010
331st Cobra flight, 341st PIC, 3 landings
Bottomless Lakes, Roswell Class D, Rio
Hondo, Carrizozo, Valley of Fire, Grand
Quivera, Transwestern 7, Abo

Lonny's Takeoff: 7:46am Roswell Landing: 8:19am
Roswell Takeoff: 8:58am Carrizozo Landing: 10:50am
Carrizozo Takeoff: 11:28am Belen Landing: 1:11pm
Today's Airtime 4.1hrs
Total PIC Time: 877.3 Total Logged Time: 898.5

Paul, Rick and I were up early so we could get packed for the trip home before breakfast at Lonny's house. We refueled from Lonny's ethanol free gas, and then were on our way home. Mike Marker took these pictures of my (left) and Rick's (right) takeoff from Lonny's Airstrip.



I took one last look at Loony's farm. Rick was unable to join us on our flight to the Bottomless Lakes yesterday, so headed over there for his benefit.



Next stop was the Roswell Airport to get in some Class-D towered airport practice. It is also fun to taxi around all the mothballed jumbo jets stored here.



We went in as a flight of 3 with Rick doing the radio calls. I made the calls on the way out. When I taxied out the runway for departure, I could barely hear the tower on my radio. I requested he give me the light gun for takeoff. A few seconds later I saw steady green light. Cleared for takeoff.

We headed west and crossed a small trickle of a stream coming down from the mountains. The flow of water steadily grew stronger and soon we were in lush Rio Hondo Valley. We followed the valley below the rim of the canyon for an hour and 10 minutes. The air was very smooth, with a slight tailwind all the way to the top.



Near Capitan, NM the canyon branched with the left side heading to Carrizozo and the other side for Ruidoso and Sierra Blanca, visible in the picture on the right. I explore the mountain and the canyon on a future trip.



At the top of the canyon is saw a large geodesic dome, which I circled for a closer look.



We crossed over the top descended to land at Carrizozo Airport, with its newly resurfaced runway.

The airport manager told us the Mike and Jan Marker had landed about an hour earlier. Their RANS S-18 flies faster, and they did not stop at Roswell on the way out.

It was blowing hard, right down the runway at Carrizozo, which meant we would have a cross wind heading north.





We flew along the edge of "Valley of Fires" State park and then settled into a long thermally ride north to Grand Quivera ruins.



I circled Grand Quivera and turned NW towards Transwestern #7, one of a series of abandoned airstrips along a gas pipeline. The first airport, Transwestern #1, is near Kingman Arizona, while last airport in the series, Transwestern #8, is 60 mile east, north of Carrizozo.

The runway was unusable, with large juniper bushes growing on both sides of the runway. But it was interesting to check out on our way home.





We flew up to Abo Gap, south of the Manzano Mountains. The work on the railroad bridges had progressed a lot since I saw them a few months ago when we took the "Train Man" on his tour.



Paul and I landed at Belen while Rick continued on another 45 minutes up to Double Eagle Airport. I spent the next weekend checking my engine. I was greatly relieved when it passed the compression test. I was running right at the max CHT for most of the flight, and there was no damage to the engine. The coolant lines were leaky, so I replaced them. The engine has nearly 700 hours on it now and I was going to replace them anyway. Once I reseal some coolant fittings with high temperature Loctite 648, it should be as good as new.

Here is my GPS tracklog for the final leg of the trip.

