

Soaring

There's nothing quite like the exhilaration of flying a sailplane into a strong thermal and circling up to the clouds. You have the freedom to soar as the eagles do, your sailplane's long wings silently slicing through the skies. Soaring gives pilots a sense of accomplishment to seemingly defy gravity and stay aloft for hours in a graceful aircraft with no need for an engine.

In Minnesota?

Minnesota is beautiful to see from the air, and it is also a wonderful location for soaring flights. Weather conditions that cause thermals - upward air currents that lift a sailplane - occur often during the season. A typically good flying day will have cumulus cloud bases (marking the the thermals) that average 4,000 to 6,000 feet and higher, which permits soaring flights lasting several hours. There have been flights in Minnesota that achieved over 400 miles and heights of 16,000 feet. Our soaring season extends from early April into November.

How do they do it?

Sailplane pilots start each flight with a short tow behind a power plane like a Super Cub. On a day without thermals, they will then glide gently down from 3,000 feet in about 20 minutes. But soaring pilots can also stay aloft in columns of rising air, fueled by the sun heating the ground. Soaring is, in fact, an indirect way of harnessing solar energy. When pilots choose to land, they control their descent precisely with airbrakes and/or flaps and return to the airport as safely as conventional powered aircraft.

Come Fly with Us

If you are interested in joining MSC, we would like the opportunity to meet you and take you up for a demonstration ride. Stop by any sunny weekend in the early afternoon and we will do our best to get you a ride before the end of the afternoon. The pilot will most likely ask you to share the flight costs.

Minnesota Soaring Club Membership Application

Applications are accepted by the club by:

Steve Metz
1387 Englewood Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-644-5071
smetz@minter.net

Scott Elhardt
15787 Elodie Lane
Minnetonka, MN 55345
952-937-2569
scott@elhardt.us

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

E-mail _____

Membership Category (circle one): Full 2/3 1/3

SSA Number (if applicable) _____

SSA Membership Exp. Date _____

Aviation Experience (ratings, hours, towing, etc.)

Note: All membership applications are reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. You will be notified if there will be a delay in the acceptance of your membership.

Minnesota Soaring Club

Founded in 1959, the Minnesota Soaring Club is a group of about 100 people who have joined together to own and operate soaring equipment, to conduct soaring flights, and to share the unique experiences of soaring. The club is based at Stanton Airfield in Stanton, Minnesota.



Equipment

The club owns three sailplanes and a towplane:

- Schleicher ASK-21 – 2-seater, fiberglass
- SZD-50-3 (Owl) – 2-seater, fiberglass
- SZD-51-1 (Junior) – single-seater, fiberglass
- Super Cub towplane (160 hp)

Benefits and Obligations

The Minnesota Soaring Club is a working and volunteer club: the members serve as ground crew, tow pilots, flight instructors, plus they perform other tasks necessary for the club to conduct flight operations. Members contribute according to their individual abilities and their licensed qualifications. Part of the benefit of belonging to the club is to share the experience of soaring as well as the opportunity to pursue individual goals.

Instructors volunteer their time to student operations on weekend mornings; in turn, the students arrive early to prepare the sailplanes for the day's flights. New members should plan to attend monthly meetings and participate in club activities. All members must attend an annual safety meeting.

Flight Scheduling

In much of Minnesota, the soaring season begins in April and continues until the snow flies in November. Most of the soaring activity occurs on weekends when flights are limited to one hour so that others may fly. Members sometimes fly on weekdays so that they can make longer flights and/or cross country flights. During the soaring season, the club conducts an operation each Saturday and Sunday (weather permitting) including an excellent flight-training program most weekend mornings. There is no charge for the instruction, other than the normal flight charges.

The daily flight schedule is determined by a simple sign-up procedure. As each member arrives at the field he places his/her name on a list. After the conclusion of the scheduled training for the day, regular soaring operations start. At that time, whenever a sailplane is available, the member at the top of the list may elect to fly or to pass and retain the top spot for another sailplane.

Other Events

The club conducts monthly meetings to discuss club business, to entertain, and to educate the membership. Members organize trips with club and private gliders to other airports, such as Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, and more distant locations such as the Wasatch Mountains in Utah. Airport picnics and an annual banquet are also enjoyed by members and guests. Club members also participate in special soaring events such as 1997 15-Meter Nationals, the 2007 Open and 18m Nationals, and the 2007 Region 7 Sports Class Contest, all in nearby Albert Lea, Minnesota.

Membership Categories

Three membership categories are offered. Dues and equity share values are listed below for each category of membership. The annual dues are divided into two equal installments, billed in February and June. MSC is a Charter Club of the Soaring Society of America. MSC dues cover membership in the SSA, and all members receive a monthly copy of SSA's "Soaring" magazine.

Equity Shares

Club members share ownership of the club assets and may vote on club decisions in proportion to their share percentage (Full, 2/3 or 1/3).

Membership Types

Active Member

Full Share: \$2,000

Annual Dues: \$348

Refund: 75% of current full share

Flight Privileges: Full

May sponsor family member

2/3 Share: \$1,333.33

Annual Dues: \$504

Refund: 62.5% of current 2/3 share (after 2 yrs.)

Flight Privileges: Full

1/3 Share: \$666.67

Annual Dues: \$660

Refund: 25% of current 1/3 share (after 3 yrs.)

Flight Privileges: Full

Family Member

Sponsored by Full Share member Spouse and/or children under age 23

Membership Fee: \$100/family member

Annual Dues: \$100/family member

Refund: None

Flight Privileges: Only one member of the family may be on the flight list at a time.

Location

The Minnesota Soaring Club is located 35 miles south of downtown St. Paul at Stanton Airfield in Stanton, MN. Stanton is on Highway 19, midway between Northfield and Cannon Falls. From the Twin Cities, travel south on Highway 52 toward Rochester. At Hampton, follow Highway 56 south to Highway 19. The airport is on Highway 19, immediately west of Highway 56.

Flight Charges

Each flight incurs a tow charge, based on altitude, and a sailplane flight charge, based on the flight duration. A flight record is kept of each day's flights and the treasurer sends out billings every other month.

Tow Charges

\$16 + \$0.45/100 feet of altitude

(2,000 feet = \$25.00, 3,000 feet = \$29.50)

Flight Charges

ASK-21 = \$0.40/minute (\$24/hr.)

SZD-50-3 (Owl) = \$0.40/minute (\$24/hr.)

SZD-51-1 (Junior) = \$0.40/minute (\$24/hr.)

For More Information

For more information about the club or soaring, check out the web sites listed below. The MSC site includes a calendar of upcoming events, recent accomplishments by local soaring pilots, the MSC Handbook (for club procedures and rules), and some fantastic photos of club-owned and privately-owned sailplanes at Stanton.

Equity Refund Policy

Resigning members equity refunds are paid from cash flow. Depending on the time of year, there may be a delay in repayment until funds become available.

MSC Website: <http://www.mnsoaringclub.com>