



The Foundation at Work Preserving Sites: Some Ongoing Success Stories



Eric Smith launches a student pilot from the Miller Canyon southeast launch.

Miller Canyon, Arizona

By Fred Leonard, SAHGA Director at Large, USHPA #14194

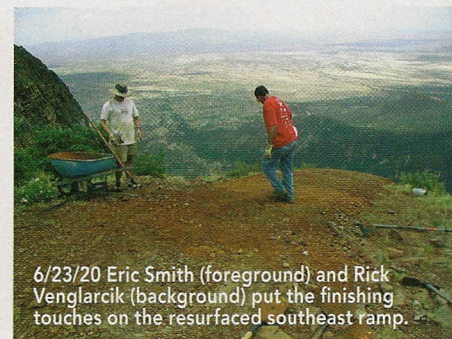
Photos by John Lowery

Miller Canyon is the premier mountain flying site in southern Arizona, with a takeoff at 7600' MSL and a 2900-foot descent to landing. It has been a hang gliding and paragliding site for almost 30 years, and is maintained by the Southern Arizona Hang Glider Association (SAHGA) under a special-use permit with the Forest Service.

SAHGA has traditionally held an annual fly-in at the site, encouraging all USHPA members to attend. However, in 2004 we were informed by the Forest

Service that our road to launch would be closed, and we would have to cancel our upcoming fly-in. A geologist's survey had determined that a portion of the road passed over and along an abandoned mine shaft and could be unstable. After discussions with the Forest Service, we were allowed to continue using the road while we worked on a way to mitigate the hazard, but we were not allowed to hold any further fly-ins or organized events.

Over the following years we worked closely with the Forest Service on a solution to the problem. Approval was slow because of the need for environmental impact studies, and the limited resources we and the Forest Service had available



6/23/20 Eric Smith (foreground) and Rick Venglarcik (background) put the finishing touches on the resurfaced southeast ramp.

to devote to the project. However, we finally received approval to start a road bypass project in March 2007. With the financial support of the Foundation for Free Flight we were able to rent the heavy equipment required to complete this project while still conserving the funds we'd need to pay our site fees and insurance.

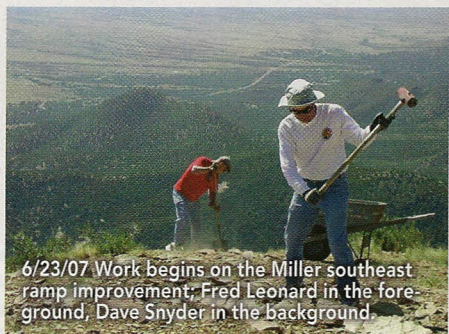
We would like to thank the Foundation for Free Flight for their assistance and support. Because of their assistance and the many volunteer hours by SAHGA members, Miller Canyon has been preserved as a flying site. We hope to resume our annual fly-in in 2008, and we welcome all USHPA members to come fly with us. More information on the site is available at <http://www.sahga.com/>.

Sand Turn, Wyoming

By Adam Graham, USHPA #58980

When a "for sale" sign appeared in the Sand Turn LZ in 2004, pilots who loved flying this site knew they had to take action quickly before their site was lost. Lots of hard work and financial support from the flying community, along with a matching grant from the Foundation, kept the LZ property out of the hands of developers. One of the fundraising tactics was a raffle, with 240 tickets sold for prizes ranging from the grand prize of a hang glider or paraglider through a wide assortment of other quality items from generous manufacturers.

The raffle was held at the Sand Turn fly-in last Labor Day; grand-prize winners were Pete and Stephanie Anderson at Hang Glide Utah, and Neto Serna,



6/23/07 Work begins on the Miller southeast ramp improvement; Fred Leonard in the foreground, Dave Snyder in the background.



3/31/07 Russ Anderson pulls stumps with the backhoe while Jason Otto supervises.



Photo: Adam Graham

Steve Rathbun surveying the Sand Turn LZ

a local Sheridan-area hang glider pilot – both received Wills Wing gliders of their choice.

We are still going strong on the project, just patiently waiting for the wheels of progress to turn in Sheridan. The final plat is with the Sheridan County Planners, and the next planning meeting will be November 7th, at which time I

am hoping the plat will be approved, and we can go into phase 2 of the project, which will be to separate the parcel and place it in permanent trust.

The Sand Turn Trust formation has been more challenging (and expensive) than planned, but we have 501(c)(4) status at least – I am still learning exactly what that means – but the Trust should

function just fine to hold the parcel and hopefully to hold other parcels in the future for folks trying to do the same thing as Lynn and I.

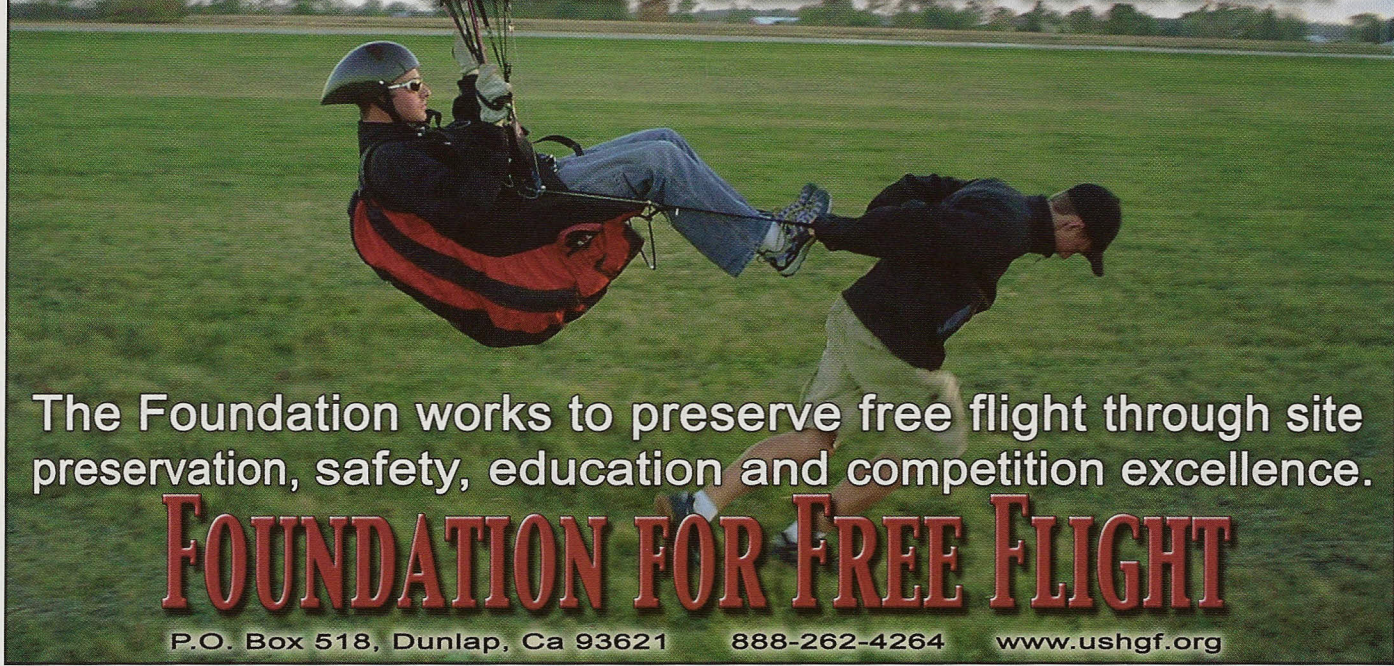
The Local Buzzard Squadron is forming up (the Dayton local chapter), which will ultimately be providing insurance for the site through the USHPA. With all the new development happening around the LZ, we are happier than ever that things have come together to permanently protect this LZ.

We again thank everyone for their support. We hope that by the end of 2007 the piece will be officially separated, the plat finalized, and we will be moving on to writing easements/deed restrictions, and putting other final touches on the project.

Background information on the Sand Turn project, and the Foundation's participation in securing the LZ, are in the February '05 and April '06 issues of this magazine.



**We're pulling for you,
but we can't do it alone.**



The Foundation works to preserve free flight through site preservation, safety, education and competition excellence.

FOUNDATION FOR FREE FLIGHT

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