



The State of Idaho has been legendary among pilots interested in back-country flying in wilderness areas in the lower 48. The State maintains a network of some 50 plus airstrips providing access to primitive areas for hiking, fishing, camping & many other outdoor activities.

This year some friends & I decided we wanted to fly that dream. The initial step would be to fly from SGJ across the country to KSUN (Hailey, Idaho) & on into the back-country to the north.

After months of planning, Jim Murray & I watched our departure date pass by as a Low in the gulf was sending ugly, wet weather across our path & all the way up the coast. Before dawn the next day we pulled the plane out & with Chris & Jan giving us a send off with homemade cookies, headed northwest figuring "even Lake City would be a start".

Picking our way through the bands of weather we diverted west, southwest & north as



we saw the "big ones" moving all the way from the Gulf over Tallahassee heading northeast. We cleared just ahead of those at 11500, back on the flight plan & thought we had it made. Looking down over Alabama the clouds were a solid layer below us - time to look for a hole. The first hole went right to the ground but as we descended into it we could see the



clouds going to the ground also! Back up to try again. Another 50 miles or so we found our way under the ceiling to our first (intended) fuel stop - closed on Sunday. More scud-run up the line to fuel & weather brief at Clanton, Al. Back into the air we had clear skies for a few miles & climbed over Tupelo & on to Memphis. Clouds east of the Mississippi had us up to 12000 & on oxygen for the only time on the trip before breaking clear of the weather into clear/haze conditions for the rest of the day.

Another closed FBO & on to Newport, Ak. This was the first of several really good FBOs on the trip. After fuel, lunch & weather brief we climbed over the first mountains of the trip, looking down at the many lakes, rivers & wilderness preserve areas of northern Arkansas & southern Missouri. This is a beautiful region from the air with numerous recreation facilities only a day's flight

away (weather permitting).

We passed over Springfield, Branson & on over Joplin into Kansas in the best weather we had seen in a long time, landing at Chanute, on groomed turf! This was one of those perfect evenings with clear dry air, the sounds of birds in the fields & the manager of another great FBO asking what he could do to be of assistance. When we commented on the ideal weather the response was "yeah, well you picked the only descent day we've had for months."

The following morning we were off the ground by 6:30 and had some of the finest flying conditions anyone could ask for. With a tail wind & clear skies the plane felt as if on rails flying over beautiful farm country, green with the spring rains days before. In just 4 . 5 hours we were in Sterling Co. so impressed with our speed we took time for a late breakfast, phone calls & weather brief only to walk outside a few



minutes

later to see the weather had moved in - the jet stream was down along the Wyoming-Colorado border wreaking havoc with high winds mixed with virga. It looked nasty & we stayed grounded for the rest of the day. With the plane in a hangar, we diverted (by car) over to Cabella's in Nebraska. Passing



through the outer edges of those storms we were glad to be on the ground.

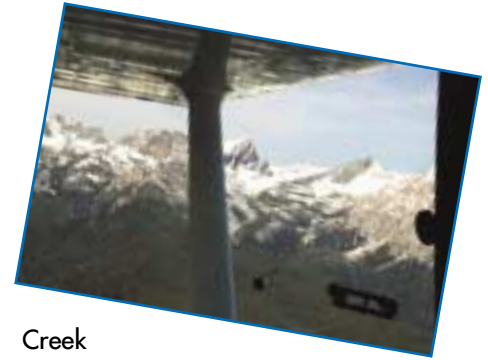
Another early start the following morning gave us a break in the winds across the Great Divide Basin & on to Big Piney at the base of the Salt River Range along the Wyoming-Idaho border. Opportunities for making emergency landings abound in this region but airports are few & far between, requiring more planning & fewer options for fuel than what we're used to back home.

The official weather word in Big Piney was "leave now if you're heading west

or it'll soon be too late." We climbed to over 11000ft before turning toward the peaks & picked our route over Afton to descend north of Pocatello into the Snake River Basin, over the Craters of The Moon & on to Hailey (KSUN).

The winds caught up with us at Hailey. The pattern is run in a wide canyon with the airport in the middle. Side canyons provide gusting crosswinds in the afternoon & after an onerous tail wind it was a good time to quit for lunch.

We flew the final few miles of our journey over Galena Pass into Smiley



Creek in the light evening winds. The mountain canyons rise from 5300ft at Hailey to over 8600ft at the pass with mountains climbing to over 10000ft on one side & 11000ft on the other. We elected to circle in the canyon before heading for the pass & had room to spare at the top. Smiley Creek lies at the south end of the Sawtooth Valley. The strip is 4900ft of beautifully maintained turf at 7100ft with facilities including hot showers & camp sites with lodging & restaurant available nearby. We felt like we were home!

POOR AND RUSHED APPROACHES

Captain Warren E. RauHofer

FAA Order 8400.10 defines a stabilized approach as "maintaining a stable speed, descent rate, vertical flight path, and configuration during the final stages of an approach." Significant speed and configuration changes during a approach can complicate tasks associated with aircraft control and increase the difficulty of evaluating an approach to a landing as it progresses. This situation applies to both IFR and VFR conditions. Stay away from situations that needlessly rush you and get you behind. Remember, YOU are flying the aircraft and NOT approach con-

trol or tower. And last but never least; if you find yourself in a bad or rushed approach and you don't feel warm and fuzzy about it.....TAKE IT AROUND. Fly safe.

Capt. Warren E. RauHofer
Member of the Old Not Bold Pilots
Association





Our meetings are always on the
Second (2nd) Saturday of each month @ 9:00a.m.
 at the SAAPA Clubhouse.
 Join us for our next meeting on July 12, 2003



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