

## Inner City Soaring

By Myles Tweet

So the past few months I've been thinking, OK, lift can be found almost wherever, but still, there's no good lift nearby, right? PASS members insisted that indeed there are slope soaring opportunities and that we hold contests there---each is within a 2-hour drive of Portland, I kept getting told. All good and well, I thought, but I grew up in SoCal where I could walk to a slope or drive 15-minutes to one---not 2-hours!

With the hand-launch Seeker glider in car at nearly all times lately, I've taken it upon myself to find lift locally, by field or by slope/cliff/rock/tree/building. What my thought would be a disappointing waste of time, searching for lift in the inner city---has proven very valuable and fun in the search itself! Not only have I found that occasionally long flights can be had at local school fields (e.g. Reed College at SE Steele and 32nd), but I've found cliffs, slopes and bowls locally that with the right winds generate booming lift! So who needs to do a 2-hour drive to go soaring.

In fact, in addition to the obvious local spots (Powell Butte and Mount Scott), I've found 2 sites recently in Inner SE and North Portland that can generate the most amazing lift and offer tall grassy fields for safe landings.

Dog-bite park (aka Jessup/Willamette Bowl).

This site works with SW to WNW winds. It's above the East end of Swan Island, just below Willamette Blvd in North Portland. If you took Greeley to Jessup, left to Willamette Blvd, then drive around the huge bowl to the North side and park, you can walk right down a trail to a truly great local place to hand-launch or even a good bungee launch.

The views are great. The landing area is fine (for a while). The lift can be incredible! As mentioned, the place works best with a stable SW to WNW wind, but given the wide bowl area, even when winds come off the top or other directions, hand-launch flights are fun, if short. The BIGGEST downside of this site is the dogs. It seems that 90% or more of the people who use this park (it appears to be land owned by the city) are dog owners. And since this is an open, un-groomed field, nearly ALL of these owners seem to think it's just fine to have their dogs unleashed, and yes, don't even think they need to clean up after them. So this presents a big landing challenge when dogs are around--- to catch your glider before Frisbee-catching FIDO gets a wing.

What makes this site a great place now, and what makes using it for gliders perhaps fleeting, is that a recent fire had scoured the bowl and the lower slope. This of course got rid of bushes, blackberries and other things and allowed lots of great grass to come up this Spring. But along with the grass are new blackberry shoots and other baby bushes/trees. This will make retrieving gliders and landings a bit gnarly---eventually blackberry growth will make it an undesirable spot. But RIGHT NOW this is THE site in town for west winds. It could make a great Fun Fly and even Slope Combat site before next year's blackberry growth sets in.

I had to give this place some kind of name---Dog Bite seems appropriate since that's what your wing will have if you let your glider land when the dogs are around.