

Flight Park State Recreation Area



Utah State Parks

The Early Years

The history of flight at Point of the Mountain goes back to the early 1920s. Back then, pilots used winches, human tows and Model Ts to launch their sailplanes. In 1928, Frank Kelsey, a local high school student, built his own glider in shop class and tried to fly it at the Point. A few years later, in 1931, Kelsey formed the Salt Lake Glider Club, now known as the Utah Soaring Association. The University of Utah formed its own gliding club in 1929 and its members flew at the Point and other local flying sites.



Class car towing a glider, 1910

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RC Gliding

Recreation RC glider flight began at the Point in the 1970s. The InterMountain Silent Flyers (IMSF) formed the local RC gliding club in 1979. Club members fly frequently at the park and their organization has hosted one of the world's largest RC slope glider events, Soar Utah, for more than 20 years. The event attracts thousands of participants from all 50 states and more than 30 countries.



Hang Gliding & Paragliding

The first hang gliding flight at the Point was undertaken in 1971 by "Cowboy Jack" Romanski. Many other early hang glider pilots came to Point and it is where much of the



pioneering of the sport took place. By 1975, the area was well established among the international hang gliding community as a world-class flying site. Paragliding came to the Point in 1987, brought by Fred Stockwell, who was the second person to introduce paragliding in the U.S. The Utah Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (UHGPAA), formed under a different name in 1974, is a non-profit organization fostering the growth of hang gliding and paragliding in Utah.

An Ideal Place to Fly

Point of the Mountain is part of the Traverse Mountains, which separate the Salt Lake and Utah valleys and is bisected by the Jordan River at the Jordan Narrows. The Point is a spit created by ancient Lake Bonneville.



The unique location and topography of Point of the Mountain create updrafts of wind that come to the Point from across the flat valleys to the north and the south. Winds from the south hit the smooth slopes of the park and rocket upward over the ridge, creating ideal conditions for paragliding and hang gliding.

This is an excellent place for beginners to learn because the scoop-like slope on the lower part of the hill creates lifting winds near the bottom of the hill that are strong enough to produce the experience of flight without pulling novice pilots to heights, speeds and wind patterns beyond their skill level. The consistent wind and predictable weather are of similar benefit to RC glider pilots.

Lake Bonneville

❶ Surface waves from the northwest beat up against the Traverse Mountains, breaking the rock down into sand and gravel.

❷ Below the lake surface, currents carried the sand and gravel and deposited them in the spit at Point of the Mountain.

❸ The deposits grew upward and outward, creating the ridge that juts out into the Jordan Narrows.

North Side

Flight Park
South Side

Traverse
Mountains



Rules & Guidelines

Please observe the following guidelines to ensure everyone's visit is pleasant.

South Side Rules

- Must be current UHGPGA member for legal liability and site preservation reasons.
- Must have a current H-2/P-2 or higher USHGA rating. Students and H-1/P-1s must be with an UHGPGA-approved instructor.
- Helmets must be worn prior to hooking into glider.
- Paragliders must launch and land on the west side of the flight park.
- Paragliders only - Do not land in hang gliding training area at the bottom of the hill.
- Any instructor may limit the number of gliders flying at once.
- Always clear traffic and yell, "launching" before taking off and entering the flight pattern.
- You must fly the pattern at the Flight Park. Often conditions become unsafe due to the volume of traffic in the pattern. If you feel uncomfortable, please land until conditions are more favorable.
- No paramotors in the Flight Park.
- Clear the landing zone once you have landed.
- Freestyle flying (not observing the pattern) is not permitted in crowded conditions and you may lose club membership for violating this rule. Advanced pilots are advised to fly in the "pit" to the far west or far east lower benches, away from the normal flight area.

Rules of the Ridge

- Always clear your turns. See, be seen and avoid.
- Do not pin other pilots against the ridge. Leave enough room to turn out from the ridge.
- In ridge soaring conditions, pass on the right but realize that not everyone will follow this rule.
- Watch other pilots' heads and eyes for clues to their next move.
- First pilot to enter a thermal establishes turning direction. The lower pilot has the right of way.
- In ridge soaring conditions, the faster glider overtaking another glider passes on the inside (ridge side).
- Please stay in a counter-clockwise rotation when ridge soaring. The glider on the right has the right of way. Thermalling should be done outside the ridge soaring pattern.

Be Aware

- Flying conditions in summer can be strong. Thermals occur after 10 a.m.
- Paraglider only - Flying congestion and rapid shifts in weather can happen quickly and change conditions from a P-2 to a P-4.
- Gliders with streamers are student pilots. Do not get too close.
- The irrigation canal to the south of the landing zone is extremely dangerous. Avoid landing near it at all costs.
- There are power lines across the gravel pit and behind the launch.
- Hang gliders launch to your left, radio control planes to your right. Make RC pilots aware that you are flying into their flight paths.
- After landing, move your glider out of the field. Pack it in the parking area.