

# *The Eagle's Nest*



The Official Newsletter of the Sacramento Valley Soaring Society

September 2011

Volume 21, No. 9

## **President's Message**

By Marty Falarski

SVSS'ers

It seems quite amazing that this is the September newsletter already and that we are nearing the end of the 2011 contest year. Don't fret this is not an attempt to look back at 2011 just a simple remark on how quickly the year has passed by.

Bruce Moore was the CD for the August contest and picked an interesting four flights for 45 minutes format for the contest. He had just two main provisions: no flights under 5 minutes and no flights over 15 or you were penalized. I think he mumbled the no flights over 15 minute rule or I was sleeping because I was merely circling high up in a nice thermal when Kipp read my flight time as 14:40. I'm not sure what reminded me that I was going to get penalized if I didn't land quickly but needless to say it was exciting getting the plane down from the thermal and make a landing with 2 seconds to spare. The weather for the contest was perfect with good thermals of to the SE and East all day and a nice breeze out of the north. Hats off to JT for flying a near perfect contest. He missing a perfect score for the day 16 points out of a possible 3100. Scott Meader, Neil Nolte, Steve Henke and Bill Curry had a pretty good contest too.

I've been talking to the county about or lease and they keep saying they'll get it to us as soon as possible. Apparently their legal staff looked at the draft and edited it down a bit but nothing significant. I suspect it will be very similar to what we last say but without the \$100 deposit requirement. The county is also talking to us about a program to help get rid of the ground squirrels. Rich Beardsley went to the meeting and they want to control the population on our field but just not with poison. They seemed Ok with us using pellet guns to help eliminate the squirrels but not firearms. Chris Bajorek has some good ideas for scoring a contest based flying a squirrel shooting. Some safety rules will have to be discussed before we get too far into the hunting mode.

September is the time of year to set the rooster for the club elections and I am hoping that a lot of you want to step up and help the club as an officer. We have been very fortunate to have our current officers working to support the club for the last few years as they each have done an excellent job. Please let me know if you would like to President, one of the VP's, Treasurer, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Safety Officer, Mentor or Yolo County rep for 2012.

Chris Bajorek hosted a swap meet along with Neil Nolte's fun fly. From the sounds of things a lot of stuff got swapped with several pilots taking a trip back down memory lane and buying a replacement for a long lost favorite plane/brick. It was a great idea and I hope Chris does it again next year.

Our September contest is on the 10, the Reno Air Races on the 17-18 and Cal Valley on 24-25. Word on the street is the highly charged Jim Rolle team has a new plane ready for Cal Valley and it is well insulated.

See you at the field,

Mart

## The Eagle's Nest

Published monthly by the Sacramento Valley Soaring Society.

### Purpose

Founded in 1989, SVSS is a social organization whose purpose is to promote the safe and skillful operation of radio controlled model sailplanes. SVSS is an AMA chartered club, number 2752. Membership is open to the general public.

<b>President</b>	Marty Falarski 510-547-5144
<b>Secretary</b>	Mike Myers 916-353-2900
<b>Treasurer</b>	Stan Scharosch 919-987-1173
<b>V.P. Contests</b>	Jim Rolle 707-762-5447
<b>V.P. Field</b>	Rich Beardsley 707-455-8279
<b>V.P. Equipment</b>	Jonathan Heritage 530-756-4931
<b>New Member Mentor</b>	Kipp Geisler 530-693-1771
<b>Instructor</b>	Scott Meader 916-212-4100
<b>Instructor</b>	Bob Huff 916-277-6059
<b>Instructor</b>	Juan Mota 916-541-0024
<b>Web Master / Newsletter Editor</b>	Dudley Dufort 916-207-1266

### Monthly Meetings

SVSS general membership meetings are held at the SVSS field. They follow the nine monthly club contest on alternate months beginning in March. If the club contest is postponed so is the meeting. Our meetings are open to the public and visitors are always welcome and encouraged to attend.

### Contests

Monthly contests are held on the second Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM. Beginners and spectators are always welcome.

### AMA

Membership in the Academy of Model Aeronautics is required prior to flying in any SVSS organized event or using and SVSS equipment.

### Club Rules

1. Have fun
2. See rule #1



## Editor's Corner

By Dudley Dufort

### Best First Plane

Thanks to everyone who took time to express their opinions and recommendations for the "Best First Plane". In the Ready-to-Fly category, the Radian by Parkzone, was, far and away the top pick. For those more inclined to build and fly votes were split between the Gentle Lady and Spirit. For the Best of Show, the choice is the Radian. Although it's an electric, it flies more like a glider. It's simple 2-channel design eliminates a lot of the stress associated with full function planes. With it's durable form construction you're flying in no time and it is very forgiving on those hard landings. An electric motor eliminates launching equipment and buys you more flight time. The Radian is available at R/C Country where it's priced competitively with on-line retailers. Chet & Teri have been very kind and generous to SVSS over the years. R/C Country is a great place to shop. Support you local hobby store and local economy.

### The Fun Fly & Swap Meet

With apologies to Neil Nolte, we ran out of space for the article he submitted on the August 20 Fun Fly & Swap Meet. Look for Neil's report in the October edition of the Eagle's Nest.

### RC Groups Forum

Wikipedia defines forum thusly; "An Internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages." I want to encourage everyone to take RC Groups out for a test drive. It's a modern day, internet version of the "Show-n-Tell" segment of our old SVSS club meetings. New products, how tos, contest announcements, building tips, technology discussions . . . the list goes on and on. SVSS even has its own forum there thanks to Chris Bajorek. Anyone can initiate or participate in discussions there. Check it out. I'd also like to remind everyone that there is a page on our club web site entitled "How SVSS Communicates". There you'll find detailed descriptions of the various methods we employ to communicate with each other.

# September 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Club Contest
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23 Cal Valley XC	24 Cal Valley XC
25 Cal Valley XC	26	27	28	29	30	

## SVSS Key Dates

**9/3 Club Contest**

**9/23 - 9/25**

**XC in Cal Valley**

## Happy Birthdays

Dave London 9/3

Harry Wilson 9/5

Chuck Blackwelder 9/7

Bruce Barnett 9/7

Tom Ball 9/8

Cameron Clarke 9/12

John Gross 9/12

William Walby 9/12

Brian Hackett 9/15

Bill Curry 9/18

Bill Chase 9/23

Jim Rolle 9/26

## From The Shed



Greetings all, Good things have happened since I wrote the report for the news letter Dudley released in August. First, Neil changed all out 8 pneumatic tires with very low cost solid tires he got on sale. That is a big relief to me as changing out squished tubes and ripped up wheels was getting a little old. Thanks Neil for your clever solution and your time and effort to make the change. Secondly, Rich and I found a solution to the electrical problem that has been plaguing one of the sprinkler strips. After concluding that for unknown reasons, there was no power from the proper circuit, we moved the solenoid over to another circuit that was active. Perhaps Dudley is right about the evil ground squirrels. Now we have three strips running at once instead of just two, the previous standard. Fortunately the controller has (just) enough power capacity to manage three strips of 4 sprinklers (but no more!). Many thanks to Rich for his hard work in identifying and implementing the solution.

Jonathan

## SVSS Preliminary Financial Statement

August 31, 2011

<u>Checking Acc.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Debits</u>
	<b>Starting Balance</b>		\$8,038.19
<b>Income:</b>			
	July contest income	\$150.00	
	August contest income	\$130.00	
	<b>Total</b>	\$280.00	
<b>Expenditures:</b>			
	Purchased Long shaft winch motor		\$135.00
	Material for Cart repair		\$74.70
	Porta-Potty Service 8/11 thru 9/07		\$184.97
	<b>Total</b>		\$394.67
	<b>Ending Balance</b>		\$7,923.52
	<b>Increase/decrease in operating funds</b>		(\$114.67)

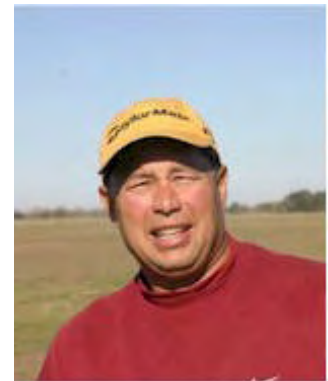


Jack George has several electrics but has always wanted to learn how to thermal. He bought a used Vista and we did manage to get it to thermal. Jack then found a used built up Spirit wing and fitted it to the old Vista. After adding a little nose weight we flew it and Jack got an easy 10 minute flight. Here is Jack and his Vista/Spirit. Although you can't make out his smile, Jack is one happy camper.

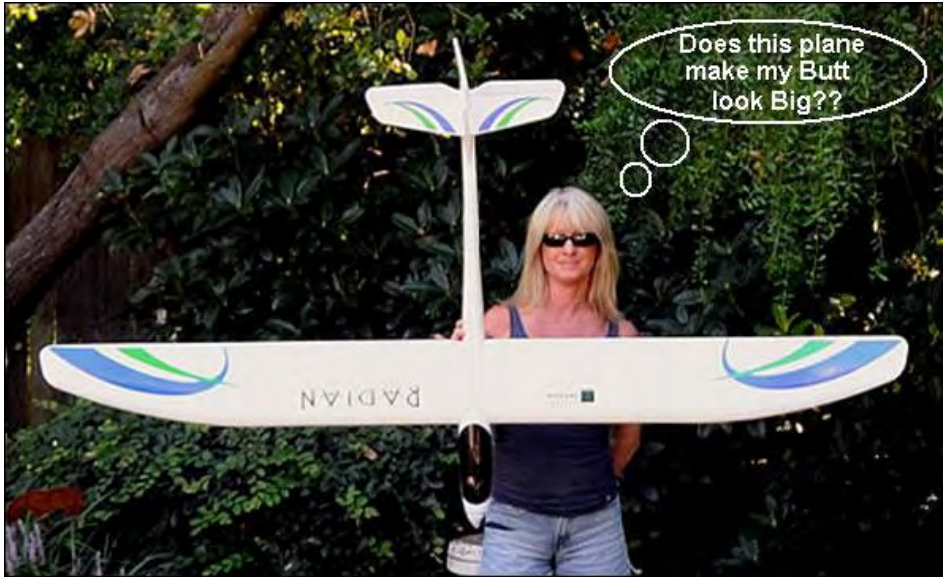
- Juan Mota

### September Contest - Flex 20

Scott Meader will CD the club contest on September 10th. Scott is a wiz at creating challenging and unusual formats. Here's what's cookin' for the 10th. First the easy stuff; The contest task is 40 minutes. There'll be four rounds with a Visalia type landing zone. The landing zones will be set up the day of the contest so only the CD knows what they'll look like. I can tell you this however, 25 points is the maximum landing score per round, so it ain't a landing contest. OK, now the "meat and potatoes" of Scott's all new Flex 20 format. The target flight time range for each round is between 5 and 15 minutes. You get a zero for the round if your flight is less than 4:56 or greater than 15:04. The total time for rounds 1 & 2 will be 20 minutes. The same holds true for rounds 3 & 4; 20 minutes. Every flight must end on a whole minute. Any time (seconds) over or under a whole minute results in a penalty. If you're off time on one round you can't make it up on the next. You'll be penalized for being off the whole minute on both rounds. Hey, it's simple. Just fly four 10-minute rounds. Sound like a hoot, eh?



# Best First Plane



My nomination for the best all round RC trainer is the Parkzone Radian. As an electric powered 2 meter glider it combines the best of both worlds, soaring capability and self launching capability. It is only rudder- elevator (RE) so is simple to control and the electric motor eliminates the need for a high start or suitable slope. An electric motor glider also has the ability to fly for much longer periods between charges compared to a straight electric airplane model. Learning how to soar and thermal are an added bonus.

Kathy, my "significant other" (S.O.) became my XC team driver last year and from time to time expressed some interest in learning to fly. So I put her on my Real Flight simulator and discovered a couple things. First, the glider simulator bored her to tears and second, the Christian Eagle simulator which was the only one exciting enough to hold her interest was pretty much impossible for her to control. Things were not looking too promising at this point. Also, I had previously put together an electric Easyglider a couple years back for my nephew, spent a day assembling and painting it, set up my old JR388 radio and proceeded to give my brother and nephew some lessons. This did not go too well as the radio was far too complicated for an 11 year old kid. My brother has absolutely no technical aptitude and they both rapidly lost interest. While the Easyglider was a decent flier I was not too happy with the power system which at that time was a brushed motor and heavy NiMh battery pack. I didn't have a buddy cord which also was a drawback. The Easyglider also sported ailerons so was not really an ideal first trainer. Back to the Radian. I really didn't want to buy another one of these simple foam gliders for Kathy only to see it gather dust in the closet. Then at this last Montague XC event several of the guys showed up with Parkzone Radians and organized goofball Radian XC contest which amazingly ended with a 22.75 mile flight by team "Flaming Aero". Bruce Moore, Jim Rolle and Marty Falarski currently hold the official world Radian XC record!!! The only rule was it had to be stock out of the box and you could only use a single full charge on the stock battery pack.

For more on that goofy contest refer to; <http://www.rcgroups.com/forums/showthread.php?t=1407789>

I got a close look at the Radian and could see that it was a better potential beginner model than the Easyglider, mostly because of the power system and lack of ailerons. I decided, what the hell, I'll buy one and if Kathy burns out before destroying it I can always join in the fun of the Radian XC Challenge.

I elected to purchase the full ready to fly kit which comes with a transmitter, charger, 1300 mah LiPo battery pack, motor/ESC, etc., completely ready to fly, about \$250 for everything. I thought it would come with one of those cheap transmitters that I've seen kitted with the small helicopters and was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the Spektrum 5 channel TX. It's 2.4 ghz and DSMX capable. My JR9303 doesn't even have DSMX (\$75 upgrade if I ship it back to Horizon). This is not the typical radio/receiver park flyer setup where you have to be careful of flying out of range; I'm pretty sure after flying the Radian that you can safely fly it to the limits of your vision just like the high end stuff we are all so used to using. The Spektrum TX takes four AA cells. The TX also has a trainer switch and I can plug my trainer cord into it and use my 9303 as a buddy box, perfect for training a new pilot. Servos, pushrods and brushless motor are pre-installed. It has a very nice canopy and servo hatch secured with super magnets, this is a better system than the Easyglider used. All I had to do was slide the spar into the wings, snap the wings onto the fuse and slide in the stab (secured with a couple pieces of tape. Assembly was simpler than the Easyglider (which was also quite simple). No glue, everything snaps together, took all of 10 minutes to assemble. One problem I discovered was the lock screw for the elevator pushrod is cheap pot metal and it snapped with very little torque. I replaced that, charged the battery and we headed off to the local park. The first flight required very little trim changes and I was very happy with

the power and climb rate. Right off a serious close call, first flight and I nearly put it into the top of a 70 ft oak tree. I wanted to experience its thermaling ability (which other pilots told me was quite good). A couple Buzzards coasted into view over the soccer field and circled so I joined up with them and shut down the motor. Sure enough, it really can thermal, surprisingly well in fact considering what it looks like up close. That foam wing is pretty rough and the trailing edge must be 1/4" thick. The thermal turned into a real hat-sucker and the Radian was disappearing fast. Getting down without flaps or brakes was going to be a problem. Then I remembered my experiences flying a 2 meter Spirit when I first joined SVSS some 20 years ago. I would often have to spin it down to escape the really strong thermals. So I crammed the stick into the lower right corner and sure enough, the Radian spins just fine and she came down with no problems. After 20 minutes or so the battery died off so I landed. About then I noticed this very impatient woman standing there. Oops... Hadn't realized how much fun this glider would be and used up all the battery on myself. And the charger was back at home. We packed up, headed home and were back at the park in a couple hours with a fresh charge on the battery. This time I would give Kathy the full flight time which ended up involving about 20 or 30 saves from certain destruction (the trainer cord really helps here). I'll confess to having a little fun letting her battle the death spirals all the way down to a few feet off the ground while listening to higher and higher pitched squeals of "YOU TAKE IT!!" and "DO YOU HAVE IT?!?!?!?"

It was a successful first outing and the first thing Kathy does when we got home was to order a couple more battery packs. She also likes it so much she wants to hang it up over the pool table in our game room. At least in her case, the real world experience turned out to be much more enjoyable than the flight simulator experience which was a nice thing to see. For anyone interested in getting a Radian I would only change a couple things. First, order a second battery pack and replace the lock screw on the elevator pushrod with a better one. Also, it's a good idea to paint some dark stripes on the bottom of the wing and stabs, the Radian comes with two small dark blue sticker patches on the wing tips but these are not enough for good visibility at high altitude. It thermals well enough that high altitude situations will happen especially for those of us that may want to attempt the next Radian XC world record flight!!

*Steve Henke*

The Radian gets my vote for best 1st glider. Price 150.00. Where: Hobby Town or RC Country. Needs Rx and battery. One hour or less build time. EZ to fly, needs no special launch equipment. Replacement parts available.

*Scott Meader*

My thoughts...for an RTF, you can't beat the Radian. It's available at R/C Country or direct from Horizon Hobby. For approximately \$249 you can pick up a RTF version complete with 2.4GHz radio. The Radian is easy to fly, thermals well, is very forgiving, as well as very durable (for those inevitable times). Being a 2-channel plane, it's much easier for the newbie, yet still able to "hang in there" with the big boys (within reason of course). Due to it being an electric, new people need not fear launching, or getting too far away. Since you can fly a Radian pretty much anywhere due to the electric motor, the new person can get a lot more stick time IMO, which is very valuable. For a more advanced version, I'd go with the Radian Pro, for all the same reasons, however, with the Pro you have a more advanced plane with flaps/ailerons. Why is an electric sailplane my recommendation for a first plane? I feel that a new person needs to "grow" into a larger, full house, or even RES ship. The competition ships, full-house or RES, can be expensive to learn on. While used ships are available, and SVSS has an abundance of knowledgeable members willing to help the new pilot just getting started, a new pilot will enjoy more successes more quickly with a plane like the Radian, as well as the opportunity to get a LOT more stick time. Regardless of launch method (winch, hi-start, or electric), once in the air, sailplane basics are the same; find rising air, stay away from sinking air, learn how to control your aircraft in all orientations, and of course, land in one piece in order to fly again. These basics are the building blocks of our sport, and the only way to build your skills is to fly, which means launches, lots of launches. More launches = more flights = more experience gained. The Radian, with its electric motor makes the launch task simple. The ability to climb out again when you're just learning thermal skills, as well as the ability to return home, and "go around again" if necessary for the landing provides more learning opportunities for the new pilot in my opinion. Additionally, there is an increased safety factor, for equipment, the pilot, and others in the area. Safety cannot be over-stressed, and having that electric capability, should it be needed, can sometimes help to avert disaster. Now about that launch; a new pilot can also add a tow hook, in order to learn our other launching techniques, without removing the electric power option. A simple, yet effective way to move onward and upward in the learning progression, while still having the ability to self-launch if necessary, or power on to get out of trouble as long as you're off the line that is. In summary, the Radian is a well-designed, well-built, reasonably priced aircraft, in any of its configurations, that is capable of helping a new pilot learn the right combination of basic skills to effectively graduate to more complex, sport or contest oriented airframes if that is their goal. My \$.02 says you can't go wrong with a Radian as your first choice - **Period!**



For an introduction to the fun of RC flight, one of the best planes is the Hobby Zone Champ RTF (Ready to Fly) plane. At a very low cost, \$89, the Champ comes as a complete setup that can get a new flyer up in the air very quickly. The Champ is a small plane, just over a foot in length with a 22" wingspan. The design is based on the Aeronca Champ, a light utility aircraft that first flew in 1944 and was often used as a full sized trainer. The HobbyZone Champ is a very stable plane with a high wing, lightly constructed, but surprisingly strong. The setup includes the plane, transmitter, charger, along with all of the required batteries, and within minutes a new pilot can be experiencing their first flight. The airplane comes fully assembled, no gluing or adjusting necessary, and the plane is ready to fly after a quick battery charge and binding. The battery takes about 15

minutes to charge, which is about the time necessary to read the instructions provided. For power, the Champ uses a small 3.7volt LiPo battery charged using a charger that is powered by 4 AA batteries. The airplane battery has enough power for a six to nine minute flight and has plenty of power for ROG (Rise Off Ground) and to fly steadily in winds up to 3MPH. Flying in winds higher than that can be done, but is not recommended. The Champ is especially great for indoor flying when the weather isn't cooperating. Controls are straight forward, the Champ uses a Spectrum 2.4Ghz 3-channel receiver with throttle, rudder, and elevator. With 2.4Ghz, there are no concerns about sharing frequencies and I have seen as many as a dozen Champs in the air at the same time. The plane can pretty much fly 'hands off' with a small amount of rudder control to keep the plane flying in a circle. Landing is as simple as reducing the throttle and the plane will glide gently to a landing.

*Aric Wilmunder*

Cripes, I hardly remember my name, much less what I flew in 1981. Nah, just kidding. My recommendation for a first plane is a Gentle Lady. You learn to build, you learn to fly two channel, you learn to repair (it'll happen). Once the GL is mastered you can move on to bigger, better, more expensive.

*Jim Thomas*

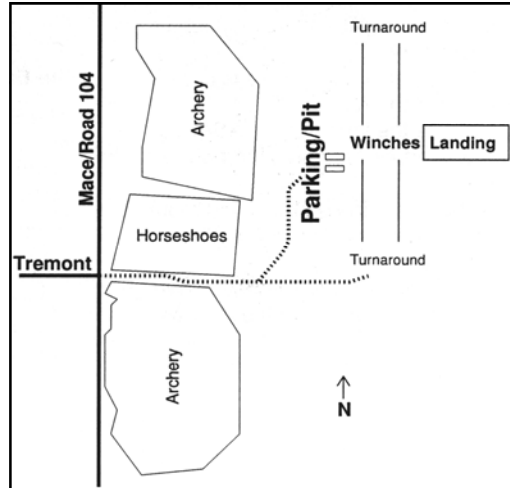
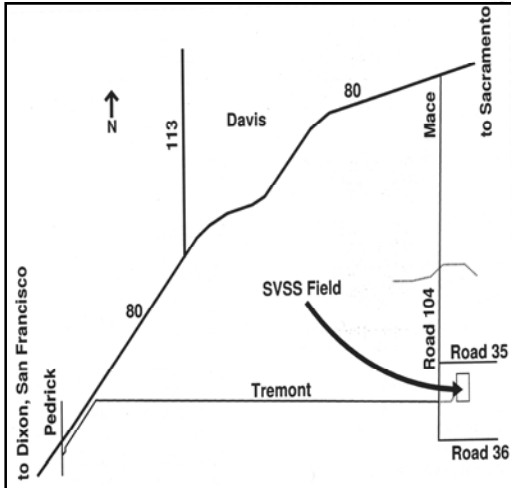
I would recommend an Olympic 650 for a first glider or a Easy Glider for a powered glider. Unfortunately most of the kids today want "Instant Gratification" so I think it best for an ARF rather than any kind of "Build it" type kit. *Peter Sr.*

Radian. Very durable. Easy to fly. Can thermal on first flight. Easy to repair. Only needs simple 3 or 4 Ch radio. Lots of them in the club so lots of help available. Breaks down into 3 easy pieces .No need for launch equipment. Can be thrown and flown by one person.

*Juan*

I have trained a lot of people over the years on both gas powered, electric powered, and pure gliders. From all of that, it is my opinion that nothing beats an electric powered glider (or glider-like plane - see below) as the ultimate first experience aircraft. Unpowered gliders are often frustrating for the trainee as well as the instructor because it is usually only a "couple of mistakes" flight for some time. The student pilot doesn't often get a chance to try and correct a major problem before the instructor says "I'm flying it!". The beauty of a power assist glider is that you just juice it back up to altitude by adding some electrons. My experience with the Multiplex Easy Glider Electrics is that I can climb back to altitude a minimum of 8-10 times which results in flight times of 15-20 minutes on average. That's a lot of training in just one flight as well as the consistency of flight times. But my over all favorite plane to fly with a raw recruit is my old (and I do mean old) Dynafly Butterfly. What a wonderfully stable and big airplane. Once up to altitude I will throttle back to about a quarter to third throttle and it flies just like a big glider in a thermal (and it does thermal nicely unpowered. It flies so slow that the first-time pilot can see the results of their stick inputs, and it is so stable that the saying "let the sticks go back to neutral" allows the plane to fly out of almost any flight attitude. The Butterfly is still available from Tower Hobbies, at least for the present in kit form for \$70 That's my opinion and I sticking to it!

*Ron Kucera*



The SVSS Flying Site is located at Yolo County Grasslands Regional Park, south of Davis, CA.

Lat: 38° 29' 49" N, Long: 121° 41' 28" W

**Directions:** From I-80, take the Mace Blvd. exit. Go south on Mace Blvd. 3.8 miles to the intersection of Tremont Rd. Turn left (east) on the gravel driveway and drive past the horseshoe and archery areas road to the field.

**Shortcut from eastbound I-80:** From I-80 take the Pedrick Road exit. Follow the frontage road eastbound on the south side of I-80 for 0.8 miles. Turn right on Tremont Rd. Follow Tremont for 5.4 miles. Cross Mace Blvd and enter Grasslands Regional Park.

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