



ARIZONA'S REMOTE Mogollon Airpark, 100 miles northeast of Phoenix.

Particularly thought-provoking is that Mogollon's runway slopes downhill from the midpoint in both directions. As a result, departing pilots cannot see aircraft at the opposite end of the runway—in fact, they are so thoroughly blocked by the midpoint rise that pilots may not hear each other's radio transmissions. Accordingly I studied and printed the airpark's seven-point "Safety Warning" anti-collision departure procedures list.

Finally, I pre-calculated my course since you can't just dial it in after takeoff. Private airports rarely appear in panel-mounted GPS navigator databases, so getting to Mogollon requires manually entering its coordinates as a user waypoint, or applying old-fashioned pilotage and dead reckoning.

My homework complete, Jean and I launched for a 30-minute flight over the world's largest ponderosa pine forest. I was concerned about air traffic congestion for the seminar at the nontowered airport, but that proved a nonissue. Alone in the pattern, I was still extra careful approaching the runway. Along with wildlife hazards such as deer and elk, airparks can be notorious for vehicular and pedestrian traffic on and near the runway. We crossed midfield over the airport 500 feet above pattern altitude to scout traffic and wind-

AVIATORS' PARADISE NEW AND DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES

Among both the joys and challenges of piloting is that however long we fly, we're continually encountering new and different circumstances. Recently Jean and I attended an FAA Safety Seminar at Mogollon Airpark (AZ82), a private fly-in residential community high on the Mogollon Rim 100 miles northeast of Phoenix.

Although Jean had lately observed that, "we don't do enough together, anymore," I was stunned when she cancelled Saturday-morning tennis to join me for the highly esoteric topic of ADS-B surveillance, traffic, and weather delivery technology. Later it came out that she was "also a little sore from too much tennis."

Our destination likely affected her decision, too. Picture your favorite childhood pine-woods summer camp, set at 6,700 feet elevation for nice, cool summers. Now add a paved runway and homes with attached hangars on spacious wooded lots, and you'll appreciate why we enjoy visiting this aviators' paradise.

Flying into private airports generally requires planning and permission, so you can't wait until departure morning to figure things out. Such airports needn't meet public-use airport standards and rarely appear in official publications such as the

FAA Airport/Facility Directory. Mogollon's website specifies rules and recommends safety procedures. As with many private strips, visiting pilots are required to pre-submit aircraft insurance documentation and a hold-harmless form. The website also designates Runway 21 as the calm-wind runway, specifies right traffic for Runway 3, and prohibits night landings.

PICTURE YOUR FAVORITE CHILDHOOD PINE-WOODS SUMMER CAMP, SET AT 6,700 FEET ELEVATION FOR NICE, COOL SUMMERS.

The high-elevation strip is only 3,436 feet long, shorter than I remembered, and is surrounded by tall pines. That raised density-altitude concerns. Looking more closely, however, I noted that narrow centerline taxiways at each end of the runway effectively add another 2,600 feet for takeoff, well within *Flying Carpet* capabilities.

socks, then skimmed trees and houses to land on Runway 21.

Half a dozen airplanes were already parked on the sunny ramp when we arrived, and another eight or 10 soon followed. The seminar was to be held in a private hangar facing the flight line, and as each arriving airplane was secured, its

pilots joined those already gathered to socialize over day-old doughnuts.

When we sat down for the open-hangar presentation I found myself thinking, *How wonderful to enjoy fresh air and sunshine streaming in*, instead of a stuffy old conference room! But the open door turned out to be a problem. You know you're in trouble when the presenter opens with, "I realize you can't see this slide, but...."

"Uh-oh," whispered Jean. "This is going to be awful." We tried to stick it out, but unable to follow the complex topic without supporting visuals, we eventually snuck out. I expressed concern to the gentleman at the door about firing up the *Flying Carpet* near the open hangar, but he said, "Don't worry. Everyone here likes the sound of airplane engines."

"They'd probably rather hear our engine than this seminar," Jean muttered under her breath as we tiptoed out the door. Now for those takeoff safety procedures I'd recorded. Mogollon features an unusual multifunction radio advisory system. Traffic and position announcements work as usual with a single click of the microphone button. Clicking three times, however, summons the field's automated weather system. Armed with winds and altimeter setting, I taxied to the midfield high point to survey the runway for traffic, run up the engine, and announce our takeoff intentions. Then I taxied promptly to the takeoff end of the runway.

"Watch this, Jean!" I said, clicking the mic four times. Upon hearing the words "pilot transmission test," I transmitted my takeoff call. A few seconds later, we heard our own transmission rebroadcast on the airport advisory frequency for the benefit of any out-of-sight traffic. I've never encountered anything like it before.

"Pretty cool!" exclaimed Jean as we rolled down the runway. I'd planned to apologize for displacing her treasured morning tennis game with the lackluster seminar, but when she squeezed my hand that no longer seemed necessary. ☺

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