

NEVHGC Winter 2007 Newsletter

President's Welcome

Welcome to our "Winter Edition" of the NEVHGC newsletter. There has been quite a large gap since the last newsletter, and this is a reflection of reduced level of activity by the NEVHGC committee over the late Autumn and Winter months. The majority of the committee are not in Bright right now (there's only Rod Oldfield and myself here all the time at the moment). We have all been quite busy with non-flying related things that have diverted our time away from NEVHGC affairs.

With the small committee that we have this year, this has always been a bit of a danger. I strongly urge you all, come AGM time, to consider what you can contribute to the operation of the club (besides your membership fee). Our club is a not-for-profit organisation which is run by volunteers, and the same people can't be doing the same jobs for ever. The more people we have on the committee, the more we can get done, and also the more people can gain experience when the "old guard" is no longer able to fill these important roles.

In this situation, I really believe that we get the kind of club that we, as a total membership, collectively deserve. There is more to keeping this club running than just paying your subscriptions.

Nevertheless, there has been some activity, as you will see when you read on.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members (Tony Kenney, Barb Scott, Brian Webb, Rod Oldfield, Michele Baptiste) for the efforts that they have put in to date, plus Jo Rainczuk and Viv Williams who, while not actually committee members have done a more than significant amount of legwork to move various projects forward.

Spring is just around the corner, and some flying has already started. Some of us have had the rare treat of being able to ski and fly on the same day.

Memberships are now due, with the option for online or physical subscription. Contact Rod Oldfield (our membership officer) if you require any assistance.

For more information, please feel free to browse our club website www.nevhgc.net

See you up there.

Karl Texler
President

1. Up and Coming Competitions and Events

Our events calendar is certainly starting to fill out.

- Not the Vic Open (02-06/11/07)

Held during the Melbourne Cup long weekend, this has become the traditional opening for the flying season proper. Once again ably run by Sky High Paragliding, it is a great opportunity for pilots to come together and share flying skills, and other experiences, in a fun environment. The NEVHGC AGM will also be held on the Sunday night of this weekend. Registration takes place on the first day. The event will be staged from the Outdoor Inn in Bright.

- Mystic Cup (17-18/11/07, 01-02/12/07, 15-16/12/07, 05-06/01/08, 19-20/01/08, 02-03/02/08, 16-17/02/08, 08/03/08)

This is a popular weekend event for NEVHGC, initiated by Sky High Paragliding. Pilots who wish to advance their cross country and competition skills have a great opportunity to mix it with the local sky gods. Registration and briefing generally take place at the landing paddock at around 10.00am each flying day.

- Bogong Cup (16-23/01/08)

This is the premier hang gliding event for the region. It always attracts pilots from overseas. Once again ably pre-organised by Carol Binder, registration details are available on www.xcflight.com

- Bright 321-2008 (23/02/08 – 01/03/08)

With a \$6,000.00 prize pool for the top three places, and a significant level of international competition anticipated, this event marks the high point for paragliding competitions in Victoria. Carol Binder is the pre-organiser. 140 places are available. Registration is open and details are available on www.bright321.net

2. Mystic Park Lease News

Thanks to the dogged persistence of Jo Rainczuk, we now have signed off on a 5 year lease for the launch and landing areas, with options to renew (in 5 year lots) for another 3 times. What this means is that we effectively have tenure over Mystic Park for 20 years, if we so wish it (and, obviously, we do!).

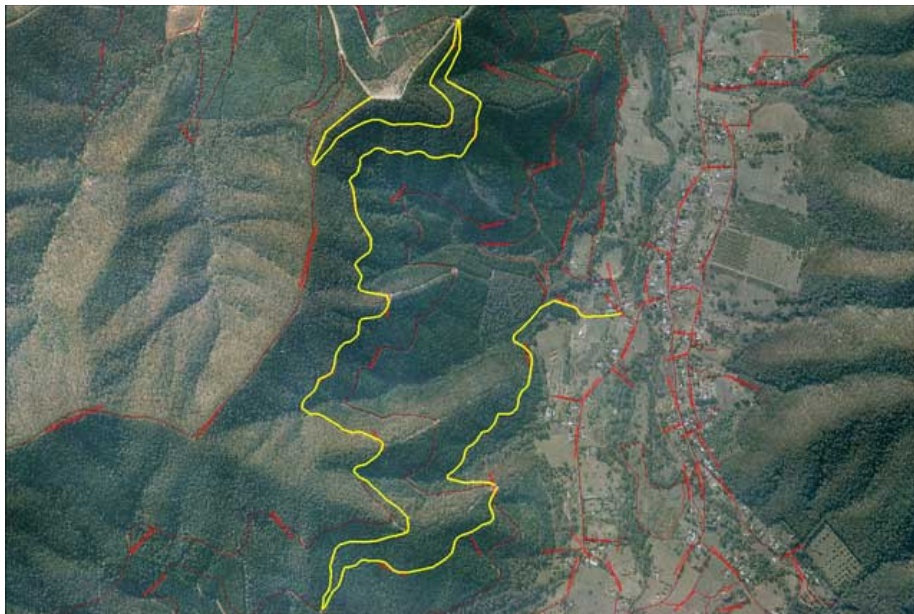
We have negotiated a number of modifications over the old lease. The most important are:

- An acknowledgement that we already own the pine trees below launch and above the two wheel drive track,
- We are able to use Mystic Hill during Fire Ban days (i.e. where the Fire Danger Index is predicted to exceed 44), provided we use the White Star Road for access.

This is a great result for the club. Many thanks (again) to Jo for his efforts, and thanks also to Hancocks for their role in this outcome.

3. Using Mystic Park During Fire Ban Days

During Hancocks imposed Fire Ban Days (when the local Fire Danger Index is predicted to exceed 44), we are to use the access via White Star Road. This starts to climb the hill in Wandiligong, just off Centenary Avenue, and next to the Wandiligong Maze. The club is investigating signpost options for this road. Here's a map of the route (thanks to Craig Collings):



4. Driving Up and Down Mystic Hill

NEVHGC is committed to promoting driving practices on all Mystic Hill access tracks that:

1. Facilitate safe driving conditions for all users,
2. Minimise the wear and tear on the road and hence the operating costs for the site (if you drive slowly, you are helping keep the road packed down, if you drive quickly, you are tearing it up).

NEVHGC considers driving up and down Mystic Hill to be an extension of the flying operations. In exactly the same way as all pilots should take all steps to avoid a collision, when flying, regardless of who has right of way, so should they behave when driving to and from launch.

There have been numerous suggestions that NEVHGC applies sanctions to individuals who repeatedly display dangerous driving habits on the access track. The only sanction that NEVHGC can legally apply is to remove site access privileges to Mystic Hill.

These are now the guidelines for driving the Mystic Park access tracks:

- Drivers should keep their speed below 40 km/h on straight sections and drive the curves at 25 to 30 km/h.
- Vehicles passing each other should slow to 20km/h, and make all efforts to give each other space.
- Vehicles driving the lower part of Mystic Lane Straight (near the houses) should reduce their speed to the point where little or no dust is kicked up.
- In dusty conditions, vehicles should turn on their headlights and should reduce their speed to the point where they can stop within the limit of their visibility.
- When vehicles are passing each other on a narrow road cut into the side of a slope, the vehicle nearest the slope should make room for the vehicle nearest the edge.
- All this notwithstanding, all users should behave towards each other with courtesy and consideration and take all steps to avoid the chances of a collision.
- All commercial operators have the ability (and responsibility) to educate new students who will be driving the road in the future on the best driving practices on Mystic Hill. This can be through discussion as they are driving up the hill and through the example they set.

These guidelines will be used in assessing complaints of inappropriate driving behaviour. If a given individual accumulates three separate complaints (i.e resulting from 3 separate incidents), which are subsequently proven, within a 12 month period, the guilty party shall have their membership (hence their site privileges at Mystic Hill) revoked for one calendar year from the date when the final (third) “guilty” verdict was rendered.

If all members impose these guidelines on themselves, their driving will be acceptable.

5. Flying Sports Tandems at Mystic Park

We have been aware, for some time, of legal issues regarding pilots who take passengers, who are neither HGFA members, nor NEVHGC members, for tandem flights. After much discussion, and following the revision of the liability laws, this position has now become clarified.

Pilots who take passengers for tandems flights are, as “pilot in command”, totally responsible for the safety and welfare of their passengers. If there is an accident or an incident involving the passenger, the pilot is totally liable for any compensation that may be awarded – the club has no liability, vicarious or otherwise. Bottom line, you fly passengers at your own risk.

There is passenger insurance available through HGFA. Please contact HGFA operations, through their website, or via Chris Fogg direct for more enquiries.

Pilots can limit their liability if the passenger is either a member of HGFA or of NEVHGC. HGFA passenger memberships are more meant for commercial tandems, and are charged for. As a free service to NEVHGC members, NEVHGC has created a special membership category for a passenger that limits the passenger's ability to sue their (non-commercial) pilot due to the club constitution. This is implemented via an instruction sheet and a special waiver conferring membership on the passenger. This will be available for download shortly on the club website. A link to the club constitution is also available.

It is highly recommended that pilots who wish to take passengers for tandem flights ensure that these passengers are either members of HGFA, or of NEVHGC. However, it is not compulsory and therefore will not be enforced by the club.

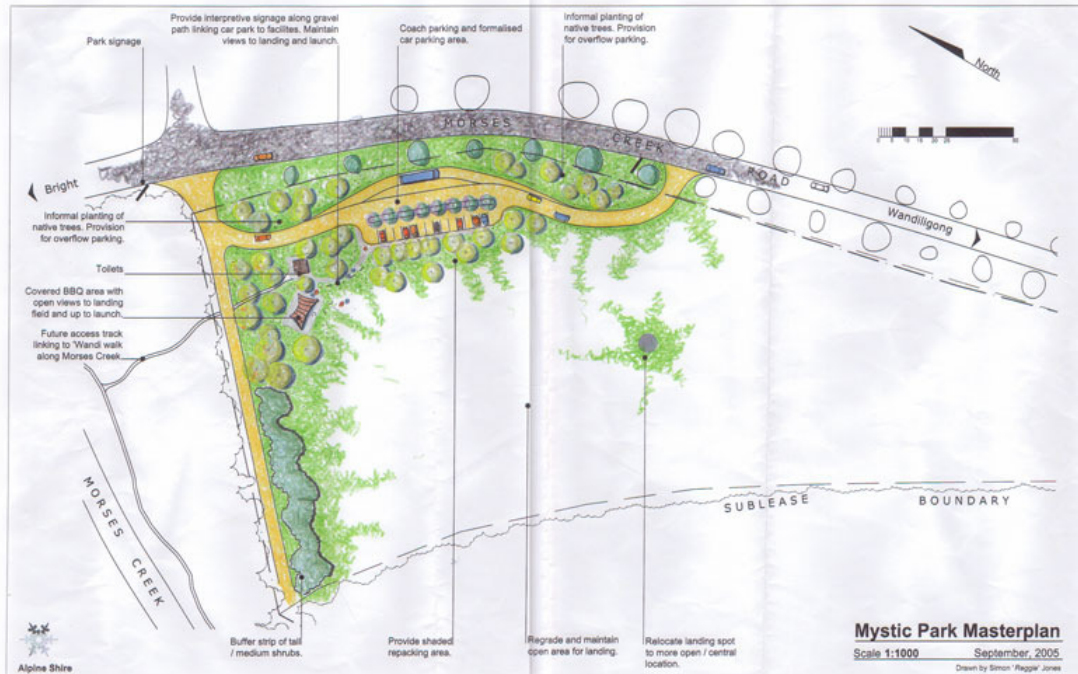
6. Mystic Park Landing Paddock



Primary works have commenced on the Mystic Park Landing Paddock. The area down valley of the old landing spot location has been ripped, graded level and rolled. Topsoil is now being applied in preparation for replanting to catch the spring growth.

The next stage will encompass the construction of the parking area, including grading, shaping and sealing.

Many thanks to Viv Williams for her efforts on this project thus far. Here is a concept drawing of the project.



7. Notice of AGM

Notice is hereby given of the North East Victorian Hang Gliding Club Inc Annual General meeting for 2007.

This meeting is to be held at Outdoor Inn in Bright, Victoria, and is to commence at 7.00 pm on Sunday, 4th of November. The meeting is to follow a set agenda. The agenda presently reads:

1. Open Meeting
2. Note Attendees and Absentees/Apologies
3. Reading and Acceptance of Minutes from Previous AGM
4. Committee Members' Reports (Including Financial Figures)
5. Incoming Correspondence Tabled
6. Election of Returning Officer
7. Vacation of Committee Positions by Existing Committee Members
8. Election of Next Year's Committee:
 - i. Call for Nominations for a Given Committee Position
 - ii. Balloting if more than one Nomination received for a Given Committee Position
9. Action Arising from Incoming Correspondence Previously Tabled
10. General Business
11. Close

NEVHGC members are invited to propose agenda items for discussion. These will be dealt with by the new committee during General Business.