

Sandia Soaring Association (SSA) La Bajada Site Rules

General description

La Bajada (35.56195, -106.22596) is a ridge soaring and thermal site between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. The site is operated under a US Forest Service (USFS) permit. The site is mostly used for ridge soaring flights with a little bit of thermalling. The winter time features beautiful ridge soaring conditions. The site can be flown in WNW to SW wind above e.g. 8 mph, with the ideal being WSW at 12-15 mph.

As for all New Mexico sites, thermal conditions can get very active during the spring and summer. Pilots flying the site should make sure they understand that aspect of New Mexico weather. Pilots going XC should mind the Santa Fe Municipal Airport (KSAF) class D airspace 3 miles behind the ridge.

La Bajada is a USHPA-insured site.

Access

Take the La Cienega exit 271 on I-25 near Santa Fe. Follow Entrada La Cienega, then Los Pinos, then Paseo Real until 56C. Take 56C which is a USFS dirt road (NF-24). The road is flat but has some rocks and ruts that can be a problem for small cars. Wet conditions should be avoided as they degrade the road and increase the risk of getting stuck. Cars can be parked at the top landing area behind launch. No off-road driving.

Take-off and landing

Hang gliders typically launch from the natural ramp indicated on the map. Paragliders launch on a ledge 30 ft below the main ridge on windy days, or sometimes from the top of the ridge on light days. The ledge can have a slight wind shadow in SSW winds. Top landing is preferred for all wing types. Top landing areas are indicated on the map. Newer pilots can land in the back area to avoid the rotor. Landing near the ridge is possible in moderate conditions, but pay attention to the rotor area behind the ridge (as with any top landing). Paragliders (and skilled hang gliders willing to hike) can land on the "bench" below the launch.

The Cochiti Pueblo land (red line) should be avoided for landings as well as for bottom access as it is considered trespassing. This requirement is part of the permit with the USFS. We ask all pilots to help us keep our permit! However, pilots **SHOULD NOT HESITATE** to land on the Cochiti Pueblo land when their safety is at risk. Landings on pueblo land shall be reported via email to the SSA (sandiasoaring@gmail.com). The SSA will report statistics of outlandings but keep the pilot identities *confidential*.

No sled rides to pueblo land!

Pilot requirements

- Pilots flying La Bajada shall be current USHPA members with a P2/H2 rating.
- Speed wings are allowed.
- Tandems are allowed. Tandems need to comply with USHPA's tandem exemption.
- Instruction is allowed. Instructors need to comply with USHPA rules for instruction at USHPA-insured sites and notify SSA officers of their activities annually.

Site Map

Sandia Soaring Association
La Bajada

