

The author flies a Dream-Flight Libelle Discus-Launch Glider at Lake Erie during the North Coast Glider Games, held each year in May, in Perry Park OH. This glider excels in light lift.



# Dream trip: Fly 10 Slope Soaring sites in the East

by Dave Garwood

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**H**ere is an itinerary for a two-week trip to fly at 10 Slope Soaring sites between the Atlantic Ocean and the geographic center of the contiguous US. I have flown at nine of them, and I'd love to go to any of them again. Let's start at the ocean.

## White Crest Beach, Wellfleet, Massachusetts

It's located on the ocean side of Cape Cod, with east winds between 5 and 40 mph that produce dream Slope Soaring conditions. You might have to yield to hang gliders. It features a paved road, parking at the top, and plenty of places to eat seafood.

## Deer Island, Boston, Massachusetts

Located in Boston Harbor and flyable in north and southwest wind, Deer Island is a delightful location that presents modest hills with views of Boston and Winthrop. Once an island but now a peninsula, you can drive there, but go early in the day because the parking lot is small.

The author is pictured on a walking trail on Deer Island in Boston Harbor, with a Magnum Models Duster. This One Design racer is another highly versatile traveling Slope sailplane.



The author flies his Dave's Aircraft Works Schweizer 1-26 at White Crest Beach in Cape Cod overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The 1-26 has been a "must-have" traveling sailplane for 20 years.

## Mount Greylock, North Adams, Massachusetts

With a southeast wind, the view doesn't get much better than this. Lift is basically unlimited at the top of Massachusetts' highest peak when the wind direction is right. Mount Greylock has a state park with a paved road to the top and a restaurant that is open seasonally. Take a side trip and hike on the Appalachian Trail.

## Petersburg Pass, Petersburg, New York

Located within spitting distance of the Massachusetts and New York border on Route 2, the northwest-facing bowl, at 1,000 feet above the valley floor, generates epic lift. Bring long-wing sailplanes for visibility because this site encourages flying high and far out.

## Sterling Bluffs, Lake Ontario, Sterling, New York

Pilots like flying with water out in front of them because smooth, undisturbed air blows up the slope. This site has a huge grassy landing area and is suitable for maiden flights of new sailplanes. A northwest wind at 10 to 30 mph works great here. There is a park at the end of McIntyre Road. Walk approximately a quarter mile to get to the bluffs.



**Perry Park, Lake Erie, Perry, Ohio**

This park offers Great Lakes lakefront flying. It is a fine flying site with a large mowed grass landing area. Fly there in northwest winds of 5 to 25 mph. This is a favorite flying site during the North Coast Glider Games, held in early May.

**Indiana Dunes, Lake Michigan, Chesterton, Indiana**

More Great Lakes flying? Yes! Fly near Lake Michigan at a big dune, located near the Chicago area. Park close and walk up a trail to fly on the north side of the dune.

**Brookville Lake Dam, Brookville, Indiana**

Known for four- and eight-hour League of Silent Flight (LSF) flight times, this site is a pleasant and accessible inland hill that faces a prevailing south wind, with grass out

front. Fly anything from Weasels to 3-meter glass slippers here.

**Coronado Heights, Lindsborg, Kansas**

Legend has it that Francisco Vázquez de Coronado reached this far north on his search for the seven cities of gold. It is an interesting promontory over the Kansas prairie.

On my visit there, the wind was 37 mph gusting to 45 mph, and landing areas were small and gnarly, so I did not launch on that day. It's not far from Interstate 80, and flyable in three wind directions. I'll return.

**Lucas Park, Wilson Lake, Lucas, Kansas**

This cool flying site has convinced at least three Slope fliers from other states to move to Lucas. It features grassy slopes, great views, drive-to-the-top access, and prevailing wind. Plan to

Blast from the past: Dave Sanders, from Capistrano Beach CA, made a Slope Soaring trip to the east in 1997. He is flying a Torque and Recoil Club Foamer at Mt. Greylock. Dave owns Dave's Aircraft Works.

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Sterling Bluffs, on the shores of Lake Ontario, serves as a training hill because pilots can recover sailplanes from the hill face. The author is holding an LEG Kawasaki Ki-61. There's a huge grassy landing zone.

arrive in late May and join in the fun and excitement of the Midwest Slope Challenge.

At Lucas Park you're 70 miles from Lebanon, Kansas, the geographic center of the US. Additional sites close to this Massachusetts-to-Kansas itinerary are Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan.

One of my Slope-flying friends counted 40 flyable launch points at Shenandoah National Park along the 103-mile Skyline Drive. Landings are tough, so bring bounceable EPP sailplanes. I've flown there five times, and try to go each year.

At Sleeping Bear Dunes you can obtain a free pass to fly gliders at four sites in three wind directions over Lake Michigan. It is the site of many LSF eight-hour flights. I have not been to this one yet, but I sure want to try it before too long.

A foam Combat match takes place during the 2011 Midwest Slope Challenge. Pilots knock each other's bounceable foam sailplanes out of the air, then pick them up and launch them again.

In these days of uncertainty and impending regulations regarding multirotors, it's wise to check with park operators for current information regarding permission to fly.

*(Editor's note: Make sure to check with proper authorities to ensure you have permission to fly within parks or other public areas.)* 

SOURCES:

Ten Best Slope Soaring Sites  
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[www.silentflight.org](http://www.silentflight.org)

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