

## Guide to flying Panoche (Revised 4/2/2015 by M. Guerin)

### Introduction

Panoche is a grass strip 30 miles south of Hollister in the Diablo Mountain Range. Unlike Hollister, Panoche is protected from the summer sea breeze. Thermal lift here often goes to higher than 10,000 feet. Since Panoche is in the middle of nowhere, if you are taking a Panoche tow it's best to plan on bringing cross-country equipment even if you aren't flying cross-country. Be sure to have a working radio and a cell phone so you can call Hollister for a tow back if needed. Bring plenty of water – it can be hot on the ground. Before you leave Hollister you should check the thermal conditions and the upper air winds.

Lift is the reason we fly to Panoche. Panoche is almost always going up. The valley itself often works well.



### *Sectional of Panoche Area*

### Aerotow to Panoche

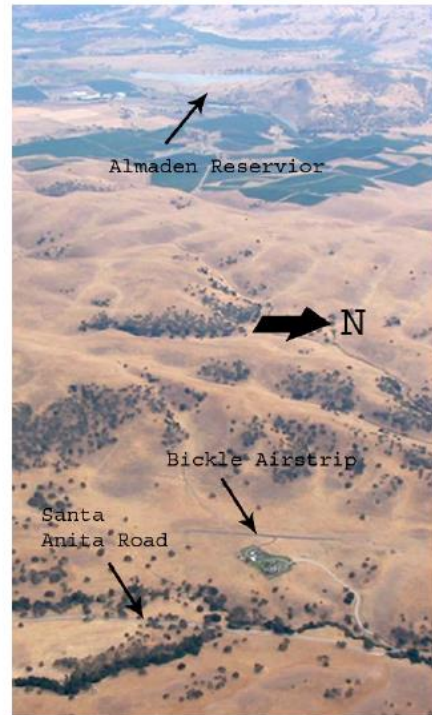
The tow out should keep you in glide of Hollister, so if at any time you need to release, turn around and glide straight back to Hollister. The compass heading from Hollister to Panoche is 110°. Note prominent landmarks as you fly out to identify your position. Abeam Bickle you should be ~ 4500 Feet.

Landmarks on the way to Panoche: Christensen Airport, Bickle Airstrip, Santa Ana Peak, Quien Sabe Valley, Almaden Reservoir

The Aerotow will get you to ~ 6200 ft., generally within glide of the Panoche strip. A common release point is directly abeam of a ranch 18 miles from Hollister and 12 miles from Panoche. You may want to modify the release point to account for strong winds. The ranch is easily spotted - it lies in a wash basin between two sections of the Diablo Range. Dirt roads form a 3-way intersection directly before it.



Release Ranch



Bickle Area

When you release you should have the Panoche Valley in sight and in glide - you are now flying local to Panoche not Hollister. Panoche Airstrip is about 5 miles out in the Panoche Valley. Find Panoche Road as it comes out of the hills on the west and follow it until it meets Little Panoche Road. The two roads form a T intersection and the Airstrip is right on the west side of the T.



*Panoche location*



*Panoche Pattern Entry*

## **Landing at Panoche**

When soaring in the Panoche area use the glider frequency 123.3 for communications. On good soaring days there may be several gliders in the area so be vigilant in reporting your position and



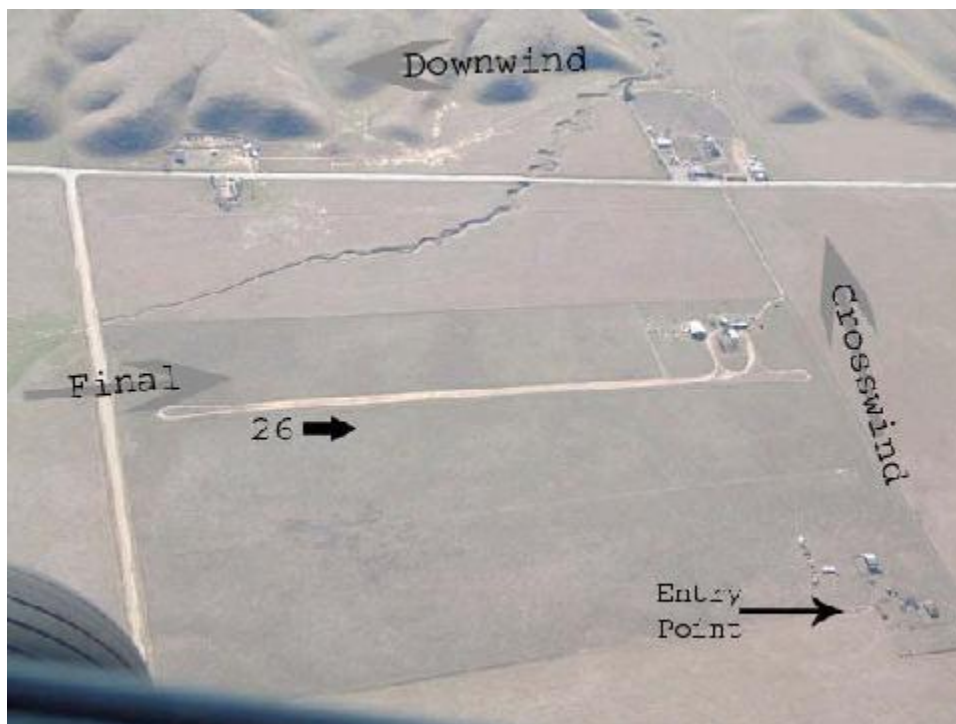
keeping track of others. Keep a sharp eye on the field - the airstrip is small and easy to lose sight of.

There are several things it's good to know about the strip itself, as well as the glider pattern that's been established. The length of the usable dirt strip is about 2000 feet. It runs approximately true east to west, hence we've designated the 'runways' to be 26 and 08 in their respective direction. The strip runs slightly uphill in the 26 direction. The field elevation is 1340 feet. There are windsocks at both ends of the runway.

Towards the end of 26 is a house area containing a hangar, some other buildings, old vehicles and equipment, and several trees. Out in front of that area is a windsock, and two turn-off areas used by towplane and gliders. Defining the end of 26 is a fence and after a few feet more there are telephone wires, which are an obstacle to an approach to 08.

Before you land check the windsocks, which can sometimes be hard to see. Look carefully out in front of the biggest tree, right in the middle of the two pull-off areas. Also check the field for cows and other obstacles. Cell-phones don't work close to the ground, so you may want to call Hollister for a retrieve tow before you get down to Pattern Attitude.

Gliders use a standard traffic pattern. It is much like the crosswind entry pattern for 24 at Hollister. However, do not be limited by the standard pattern: you should take all factors into account and fly the best approach for the given conditions.



*Panoche Pattern*

The left crosswind entry point for 26 is over a barn area to the north of the field. We recommend 2300 MSL for pattern entry. This is about 1000 feet AGL over the 1340 foot field elevation. Use the RUFSTALL checklist and make standard pattern calls. Remember that there may be many other gliders in the area. Identify your Aim Point and Touch Down Point early on. Fly the pattern by angles: 30° to the runway on downwind, 45° angle out on base adjusted for the wind. Shoot for a 1/2 - spoiler approach directly to your Aim Point. Make a low energy touchdown. On the roll out, concentrate on staying on the center of the runway and keeping the wings level.

Once on the ground pull off into the little pull-off area. It tends to be hot on the ground at Panoche so be sure to drink lots of water and stay in the shade whenever possible. Larry's Bar is right across the street where you can get a drink or call for a retrieve.

### **Aerotow from Panoche**

Check with the tow pilot on the ground so you both know and agree to the same set of procedures. Take-offs are typically done down 08 to avoid the power lines and to take advantage of the downhill. The dust is all encompassing on take-off. Be sure to close all vents. You will not be able to see the towplane until you are off the ground. Focus on following the direction of the rope you can see in front of the glider and flying the glider straight ahead. Don't take-off prematurely and don't get high on the towplane - if the glider pulls the tail up he won't be able to get off the ground.

Take note of the indicated altitude on the ground as a reference for Rope Breaks. The towpilot should veer to the right on the way out to set up the glider for a left turn back to the field at 200 feet.

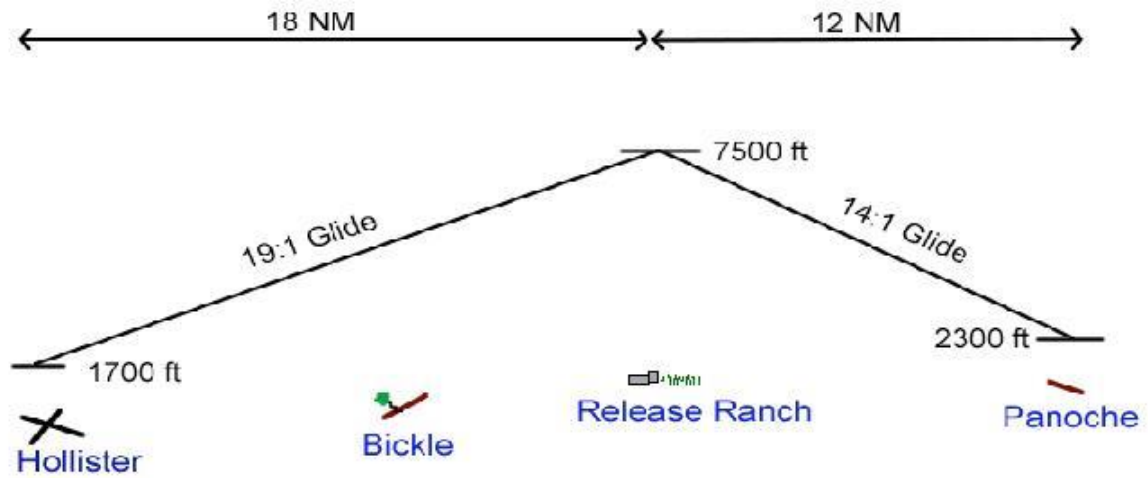
### **Rope Breaks flying off Panoche 08:**

- Field Straight Ahead
- 200 feet make 180 back to 26
- At comfortable altitude fly an abbreviated pattern

Towing back from Panoche to Hollister may use the same release point as the tow down to Panoche. Santa Ana and Almaden Reservoir stand as good landmarks to guide you back to Hollister. Also look for the Quien Sabe Valley and the two mountain ridges on either side. Bikle is 11 miles out of Hollister on the far side of Santa Anita Road. Christensen should come in sight below Santa Ana. Notice the haze in the picture - it will be necessary to guide yourself with the landmarks until you see Hollister.



*Quien Sabe Valley from about 20 miles out of Hollister*



*Possible Glide Distances to Panoche and take-off at Panoche*

(Written by Brett Hinze for the Hollister Gliding Club Photos Courtesy of Russell, Brian, Jeremy— revised and updated 04/02/2015 by M. Guerin)