

NWBPA News

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Spring Buggy Blitz

by Morrie Williams

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the time that tried men's souls...it was Alvord Dry Lake in late spring.

Any spring in the Northwest can be cool, wet, and chancy. This past spring was cooler and wetter than most, so as we approached the departure date for the trip to Alvord, we were constantly hoping for reassurance from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) experts, the weather maps, and from the local residents of the Fields, OR. area.

Finally, on Monday, May 20th, Mike Eason and I decided that everything looked good and that the supposed "experts" had no clue as to what was really happening in the Alvord Dry Lake area. We continued to check the conditions just in case things changed for the worse which would force us to cancel the trip at the last minute. Pierre and Pat Langlois were our advance team, giving us an "eyewitness" report of the lake's condition from a buggier's perspective on Wednesday (the 22nd). All reports were positive by Thursday afternoon, so we finished packing for the trip.

It was one hell of a long drive! We pulled out from home at 7:00pm Thursday evening, and arrived in Fields at 8:00am on Friday. Speed demon Mike Eason passed us twice along the way. He left our area two hours after us and arrived an hour before we did and had a nap in-between. He and his stepson Ryan checked out the lakebed and then met us for breakfast at 9:00am at the one and only restaurant in town.

On Friday, we had GREAT winds up to 25mph. I got pulled out of the buggy backwards with a Quadtrac 3. Mikey got run over by his own buggy.

Saturday, winds were fairly light and even a 10.8 Peel was too small for most of the day. Mike, Mark Davis,



Mike Eason and stepson Ryan checking out Alvord.
Photo: Seescapes Video Productions - Kelci Williams

and John Matteson went to the eastern side of the lake (about 5 miles away) and found plenty of wind. Sunday, all of us who remained went to the eastern

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NWBPA Officers:

President

Morrie Williams
18030 NE 155th Place
Woodinville, WA 98072
Hm Ph: 206-788-6355
e-mail: morrie@eskimo.com

Vice President

Steve Millsbaugh
7573 Old Redmond Road, #5
Redmond, WA 98052-6826
Hm Ph: 206-885-0203
e-mail: sparks@netcom.com

Secretary/Treasurer

Kelci Williams
18030 NE 155th Place
Woodinville, WA 98072
Hm Ph: 206-788-6355
e-mail: morrie@eskimo.com

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John Matteson launching his kite at Alvord Dry Lake.
Photo: Seescapes Video Productions- Kelci Williams

side of the lake where the winds had been so good the previous day. There were some breezes in the early morning, but the wind never came up to any consistent strength.

After sitting there all day, everyone except the diehards and optimists (Kelci and I, Dave Patterson, and Mikey) left for the day. Even though everything was packed up, we stayed a little longer hoping for wind. About 15 minutes later, the wind started blowing. We didn't go crazy right away figuring that it might just be a sucker wind. Then, after 10 minutes of relatively constant wind, we unpacked and started to buggy.

Kelci flew her Sky Tiger 26, I flew Kelci's 5.2m Peel, Mikey flew his 5.2m Sputnik, and Dave flew a Quadrifoil 4. It wasn't the best wind, but it was much better than we'd had all day. After about an hour of flying on the lake, we decided to take on the pucker bumps. Man we had a great time! I even did the bumps with the Peel. At one point I had a problem keeping track of where the Peel was and, while trying to maneuver around a bush, the Peel hit the ground and I went flying out of the buggy. That was when I decided it was time to switch to the one of my quadline kites.

We played in the bumps until dark and then packed up for the second time that day and headed off the lake.

On Monday, we headed back to that pucker bump spot where we had had so much fun the night before and prayed for a windy day. Alas, it wasn't to be. We waited all day for the wind to start blowing but to no avail. At around 5:00pm, we decided that it was time to head back to camp and get ready for the next day's long drive home.

As we were leaving, we found out that there had been strong winds on the western side of the lakebed all afternoon. Damn! Next time we'll have a roving wind patrol for those days that we are becalmed.

Ocean Shores Kite Challenge

by Steve Millsbaugh

A good sized contingent of NWBPA members showed up for this event in early June. There have been a lot of other buggy events since, so you'll have to excuse me if I get some of the details wrong--it's all so much fun that it's hard to keep it all straight.

Event organizers Eric and Dee Halverson made an effort to include us in the activities at the primary festival site, and conditions were cooperating on Friday. The wind was westerly enough that I got in a couple of nice long runs with the 10m Peel. The fact I was using the 10m tells you something about the wind speed. It was interesting to finally get the feel for using the Peel, and manage to fly it successfully.

On Saturday, the crowds increased, sport kite competitors filled the beach, and north winds called for lots of tacking. By early afternoon the action moved south to the next access road where we would have the room to run. Steve Irby and a couple of others stayed at the festival; Steve had his tandem rig and was doing his usual good job of demonstrating our sport.

I got drafted to run the fighter kite competition (my other kite passion) on Sunday morning. Fighters are generally considered light wind kites, but there was barely enough to keep us going, so I assume I didn't miss much action at the buggy site.

Conditions did improve later in the day, however, so we got in some more action. All in all, I think we would have to give this weekend a "thumb's up." There is a possibility that we may get an approved location in the Ocean Shores area for bugging, and based on my experiences at this festival, I look forward to returning there.



Waiting for the wind at Ocean Shores.
Photo: Seescapes Video Productions - Kelci Williams

Reflections on a Dry Lake

by Mike Eason

About 16 buggiers were at the Alvord Desert (dry lake) over the Memorial Day weekend. I think that some people were scared away by the weather reports. I guess a huge storm hit central Nevada south of us and some rain swept through to the north around Burns. We could see the clouds bank up way to the west, on the other side of the mountains, but it was downright hot on the desert!

On Friday, it was 70+ degrees and slightly cloudy with 8-22 mph winds. We did some fairly long runs across the south and southwest ends of the playa - there was standing water on about 1/4 to 1/3 of the lakebed, mostly hugging the western shoreline.

We set up on the southwest corner again on Saturday, and dealt with light winds (NE) until mid-afternoon, when I took a trip around the southern tip of the standing water (1/2" deep) over to the eastern side. There were 16-22 mph solid winds and a 4X15 mile stretch of dry hardpack! Some of the others followed and we had 3+ hours of good bugging. There were clear skies all day and temperatures in the low 80's. I got very sunburned! But a two hour soak in the hot-springs that evening cured that.

Two or three pilots did their qualifying runs on Saturday for their "Buggy Nekkid" pins, which they can order once they get their evidence to Corey.

Sunday we went to the eastern shore again but found only variable light to medium winds (8m Sputnik and 10m Peels only) until about 4:00pm when Quad 3's, 5m Peels and my 5.2m Sputnik worked great. There's a huge area of pucker bumps over there that we didn't find last November. We bounced and jumped the bumps until dark! I finally got over one that was about 48" high after three or four tries. Kept getting high centered on my butt on the top! Hot and sunny all day.

Monday we went back to the eastern side again, but unbeknownst to us, the wind was blowing from the northwest. After sitting and waiting all day, we found, too late, that the landsailers had had great wind all day on the western side of the lakebed! And we had dealt with sucker winds the whole time! Oh well, we did learn that the wind varies pretty drastically over the whole lake, depending on the direction. It can be dead calm in one location and 20 mph just 5 miles away. The day started out slightly hazy but warmed to 'no shirt sunny' by 2pm. Ryan, my stepson, and I went back out after dinner (7:30pm) to give it a try and measured 22-28

mph winds. We decided that the Quad 30, our smallest kite, was too much so we went to the hot springs until almost 12:30am.

I think I'm going to have to invest in a second buggy for Ryan, he's hooked! I think that he clocked around 35 miles himself. He did 24 mph(?) with the Quad 30 and was doing pretty good with the 5.2m Sputnik later too! I couldn't drag him off the buggy for very long!

Back to the real world on Tuesday. It took about 10 hours to drive home. :-)

Oh well, now its time to get ready for our next desert outing. We already have AKA sanctioning and insurance arranged for Labor Day weekend, August 31st - September 2nd. Make your plans now to join us at Alvord. If you haven't ridden on a dry lakebed you don't know what you're missing!

Back to Alvord

Everyone who went to the Alvord Desert in May, with the NorthWest Buggy Pilots Association had such a good time that we have decided to make a return trip over Labor Day weekend. We did a lot of bugging, jumping over pucker bumps, sitting in the sun due to light winds, screaming across the playa thanks to good winds, mud-bugging, relaxing in the hot springs, and even some "nekkid" bugging.

If you yearn for a wide open space where you can buggy 'til you drop, Alvord is the place - it's about 8 miles wide and 16 miles long! We had some standing water from the spring run-off in May but the hard-packed playa is now completely dry, allowing straight runs for miles without the slightest thought or worry about when to make a turn. I'm looking forward to trying those fifteen foot high mounds that we found at the north end. There are nice ramps on some of them... who knows what's on the other side! Airborn!

Alvord is in southeastern Oregon, near the town of Fields, about 110 miles south of Burns, Oregon. It takes me about 10 hours from Lake Stevens, WA. via the route noted in the newsletter (editor's note: Mike drives like a madman). Pierre says that the route via Bend, Oregon is easier for a large rig, albeit longer. Most of us will be camping or in RV's right on the lake bed. Bring plenty of fresh water. A limited number of

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rooms are available at the Fields Station where there's also a small store, cafe, gas station, and RV park (Phone: 541-495-2275). Their milkshakes are great! To help you find your way onto the lake, we will meet or have signs at Carl Thomas' painted barrel mailbox or near his house.

After reports of the last trip were posted on the internet, so much interest was generated that buggiers from Oregon, California, Nevada, and Canada are already planning on converging at Alvord, with the NWBPA, August 30 - September 2.

If you're really nuts for bugging the deserts, a few of us are planning to meet at the Blackrock Desert on Wednesday, and Adobe Dry Lake on Thursday, before Alvord. Both of these are in northwestern Nevada, not too far from Alvord. For more details, call 206-334-0362 or e-mail:kichiwa@eskimo.com.

Hey, the kids don't need new clothes for school. That fall project can wait. In-laws, out-laws, awh what's the difference? Alvord is calling YOU!

Watashiwa desert tako buggy kichiwa, **Mike Eason**

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Directions to Alvord

Directions from Everett, WA
to Alvord via Fields, OR:
Distance: 624.5 miles (603.6 miles from Seattle)
Beginning at Everett, WA

- Go Southwest on I-5 for 10.6 miles to I-405
- Go South on I-405 for 18.5 miles to I-90
- Go East on I-90 for 99.4 miles to I-82 (East of Ellensburg, WA)
- Go Southeast on I-82 for 137.1 miles to Oregon
- Go Southeast on US 395 for 13.7 miles to I-84 (Hermiston, OR - watch out for cop!)
- Go East on I-84 for 21.1 miles to US 395 (Pendleton, OR)
- Go South on US 395 for 194.4 miles to State Rte 78 (Burns, OR)
- **See Note in next column**
- Go East on State Rte 78 for 1.5 miles to State Rte 205
- Go South on State Rte 205 for 110.2 miles to Fields, OR
- Go North on County Rd for 18 miles to Alvord Desert

Directions from Portland, OR
to Alvord via Fields, OR:
Distance: 429.1 miles
Beginning at Portland, OR

- Go East on I-84 for 3.0 miles to I-205
- Go South on I-205 for 2.1 miles to US 26
- Go Southeast on US 26 for 111.6 miles to US 97 (Madras, OR)
- Go South on US 97 for 41 miles to US 20 (Bend, OR)
- Go East on US 20 for 141.7 miles to State Rte 78 (Burns, OR) ****See Note Below**
- Go East on State Rte 78 for 1.5 miles to State Rte 205
- Go South on State Rte 205 for 110.2 miles to Fields, OR
- Go North on County Rd for 18 miles to Alvord Desert

****Note:** Burns is the last place to get gas before you get to Fields, so it is a good idea to fill up here - especially if you are driving at night. There is a 24 hour gas station just before you reach the Burns city limits. This is also the last area to catch some shut-eye, since there are no road shoulders and few places to pull over once you leave Burns.

Directions from San Francisco, CA
to Alvord via Fields, OR
Distance: 520.5 miles
Beginning at San Francisco, CA

- Go Northeast on I-80 for 203.3 miles to Nevada (Reno, NV)
- Go Northeast on I-80 for 177.4 miles to US 95 (Winnemucca, NV)
- Go North on US 95 for 32.2 miles to State Rte 140
- Go Northwest on State Rte 140 for 68.9 miles to Oregon (Denio, NV)
- Go North on local road for 20.7 miles to Fields, OR
- Go North on County Rd for 18 miles to Alvord Desert

There are three good access points along the western side of the dry lake, all within about a five mile stretch of road centering at the access at the steel-drum mailbox of Carl Thomas. This access is best for RVs and vehicles without high ground clearance. If we are somewhere else we will leave directions at the mailbox or on the playa below Carl's house. Just follow his driveway past the house and straight onto the clay, unless it looks wet. Some of us will be there as early as Friday morning to check things out.

Letter from the President

As I write this column, I'm looking ahead to WSIKF, the trip to Alvord, and to El mirage prior to the AKA Convention in Santa Monica. It seems like just yesterday that I looked out on my buggy covered by snow and wished for the spring to come. Now it feels like the summer is already over and it's almost time to put the buggies away for the winter.

There was a good turnout of NWBPAer's at the Ocean Shores Kite Festival held June 7th to 9th. Once the wind came up it was on-shore so we got in some nice long runs.

Over the Fourth of July weekend, we held the Summer Buggy Blitz at Washaway Beach in Grayland, WA. After bugging our brains out on Saturday, Dave and Carol Lord invited the whole group over to their new home in Westport for a BBQ and potluck. I'd like to give Dave and Carol a special thanks from all of us who attended. The food was great, the hospitality tremendous, and the house beautiful (we're all jealous).

Thanks, Dave and Carol!!!

This year at WSIKF, we will be bugging between

Bolstad and Tenth, in front of the main festival area, on Monday through Wednesday. On Thursday, we are planning a field trip and BBQ at Sunset Beach in Oregon. While we are dining on burgers and dogs, we are going to hold a meeting and attempt to cover the following topics: meeting dates and sites, elections for 1997 (bring your nominations), dues, pins, upcoming events, and anything else that seems pertinent. To stay out of the way of the crowds, on Friday and Saturday we'll be bugging from 10th Street south to Seaview. This should be a great WSIKF!

Over the Labor Day weekend, we're trekking to Alvord Dry Lake again. Several NWBPAer's will be visiting some of the other dry lakes in the Northwest Nevada area before coming to Alvord. If anyone is interested, contact **Mike Eason for information**.

The North American Buggy Championships are being held at El Mirage Desert in California on September 29th and 30th, just prior to the AKA Convention. El Mirage is about two hours east of the L.A. (Santa Monica) area. This is a great place to buggy with lots of varying terrain and winds. If you plan on attending or if you need more information about where to stay, contact Fran Gramkowski at 609-429-6260 or gramfran@aol.com. He would like to get an idea about how many people might be there.

Independence Day Buggy Blast

by Steve Millsbaugh

The NorthWest Buggy Pilots Association hosted a very successful weekend of buggy fun over the Independence Day holiday, July 4-7. These were the same dates as the Westport Festival, and this gave us the opportunity to share this exciting new aspect of kiting with folks who may not have been exposed to it yet. Although we were 7 miles south of the festival site, many spectators seemed to make their way down to Grayland to observe (and sometimes join) the fun.

We had a great turnout, including lots of folks from Oregon and B.C., as well as Washington. Conditions were good much of the time, as both the tide tables and wind gods were reasonably cooperative. We lost the beach in the afternoons, but generally managed to get in enough hours to call the event a success. I didn't keep a count or a roster (I really should take notes if I'm going to write about these things), but the "usual suspects" showed up, along with a bunch of newcomers.

One of the highlights of the event was a barbecue and deck party by our gracious hosts Dave and Carol Lord, justifiably proud of their new home in Westport. Although this was scheduled opposite the Windriders potluck on Saturday evening, Judy and I had no difficulty choosing where to be. We did leave a bit early, to be sure not to miss the pin challenge, but we had a wonderful time sharing buggy tales and video tapes with other NWBPA members. Thanks and congratulations to Dave and Carol, as a good time was had by all.

Another highlight was watching the Northwest's own buggy sailor at work, as Mike Eason made good use of his wetsuit to take his buggy well into the surf time and time again. It's one thing to whip through the edge of the surf and spray a little roostertail, but Mike was a kick to watch as he often found himself floating rather than rolling, and even managed to leave the buggy for some kite propelled bodysurfing. I don't believe it was his original plan, but it sure looked impressive.



NWBPAer's enjoying Wash-away Beach.
Photo: Seescapes Video Productions - Kelci Williams

Mark your calendars for these events:

August 17-25 - Washington State International Kite Festival (WSIKF), Long Beach, WA.

Note: August 22 - Field trip, BBQ, and meeting at Sunset Beach in Oregon.

August 30-September 3 - NWBPA Labor Day Outing, Alvord Dry Lake (near Fields), OR.

September 28-October 1 - North American Buggy Championships, El Mirage Dry Lake (near Adelanto), CA.

For more information about any of these events, contact *Morrie or Kelci Williams* at: 206-788-6355 or morrie@eskimo.com.

THANKS AGAIN!!!

Kurt and Linda Anderson for the impromptu beach bar-b-que you hosted in April.

Mike Eason for leading us on the Memorial Weekend trek to the desert of the northwest - Alvord Dry Lake.

Dave and Carol Lord for putting on a great get-together in your beautiful new home over the July 4th weekend.

Steve Millspaugh and Mike Eason for supplying us with some much needed articles.

More “*Buggy Newz*”

For those newbie buggiers out there who haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting the infamous Corey Jensen or had the pleasure of perusing his publication “*Buggy Newz*”, you're missing out on a great experience. If you want to know what goes on in the rest of the buggy world, contact Corey at Windborne Kites, 408-373-7422, and ask him how you can get on his mailing list. And, if you get a chance, introduce yourself to the Head Buckaroo at the WSIKF

NorthWest Buggy Pilots Association

c/o Morrie and Kelci Williams
18030 N.E. 155th Pl.
Woodinville, WA 98072

Mailing
Address
Goes
Here