



Getting  
and Keeping

# *FLYING SITES*



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THE ACADEMY OF MODEL AERONAUTICS  
5161 E. MEMORIAL DR. MUNCIE IN 47302

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*Getting and Keeping Flying Sites*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, is published by the Academy of Model Aeronautics, Programs Department, 5161 E. Memorial, Muncie, IN 47302  
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# Forward

AMA 1936-2011  
75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

This is the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of *Getting and Keeping Flying Sites*, which has been revised by Tony Stillman, Flying Site Assistance Coordinator.

The previous editions served many clubs well and were a valuable addition to the list of tools that AMA chartered clubs could use to work out flying site matters. This new edition reflects recent developments with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other government agencies.

In this book, you will find advice on how to deal with noise and vandalism problems. You will also find ideas on how to search for a site with minimum effort.

The wisdom of the earlier books has not changed. All of the facts that guided clubs in those editions have been retained because most of the basics do not change.

Getting a flying site remains a matter of local people locating a suitable piece of ground and then making the correct approach to the owners/administrators. This approach must dignify the sport; legitimize the need; and show how model aviation is a constructive, educational, and excellent recreational activity that is governed by a safety code and federal regulations. The size of your national organization (AMA), the number of chartered clubs, and the wide support from industrial and educational institutions add up to an excellent story to support your requests for flying privileges.

Read the book. Identify the sections that apply to your particular situation, and then make your proposal. It is being done with success every week of the year.

With much appreciation to all of those who contributed ideas and information to previous editions, and with even more thanks to those who helped make this edition a reality, we are pleased to present the new *Getting and Keeping Flying Sites*.

Joyce Hager, Executive Director  
Tony Stillman, Flying Site Assistance Coordinator

# AMA Can Help

As you begin your quest for a new flying site, keep in mind the many resources that the Academy of Model Aeronautics has to offer you. Over the past 75 years, the AMA has learned a great deal about modeling and the facilities that are required to enjoy our sport/hobby.

What is AMA insurance and what does it cover? Should you incorporate? We can help you find answers to these questions and many more about AMA insurance and how it protects not only the member, but the site owner as well. We can also assist you with many of your legal questions. While there is no attorney on-site at AMA HQ, we have outside general council who has worked with us for over 20 years and has previously fielded many questions you may encounter. We also have many documents that will provide answers to many questions and situations. Give us a chance to help you. That is why we are here! Feel free to contact us at 1-800 I FLY-AMA. You will find friendly people who are happy to provide the answers you need to complete your plan for your new flying site or maintain and protect the one you have.

## **Section I**

# **How to Get a Flying Site**

If your club has a satisfactory flying field, turn immediately to Section II, “Keeping What You Have.” There you will find an outline showing how to lose a flying site and suggestions for holding an existing site. As you move through Section II, be grateful that you’re not in the same boat with fliers who have no place to fly. This section is for them, and also for those who have a field and are looking for another. Regardless, be sure to read this section so that you are prepared for future possibilities.

# Chapter 1

## Deciding the Basics

You need a place to fly your aircraft, but you don't have a field. It is a tough job to keep interest up without a flying site where models can be put into the air, can be ideas exchanged and friendships can be formed.

Maybe you're in a group that has only five members (the minimum specified by AMA for a chartered club), or maybe you are in a very active group with over a hundred members. Whatever your situation, look at your needs before you look for a site. Free Flight (FF), Control Line (CL) or Radio Control (RC), indoor or park flyers. Whichever segment of model aviation is your choice, you can separate your requirements into two categories—*wants and needs*. There's an important difference!

**You can find suggested field layouts in Section III of this book.**

**Wants** are the ultimate facilities that your club can afford to administer and maintain. It might be five CL circles (all paved), a treeless FF area, or multidirectional paved runways for RC—with several picnic tables, electrical power, running water, and restrooms.

**Needs** are the minimum with which you can fly safely, such as a dirt circle for CL or a grass RC strip, space for a pit area, and room for a folding chair or a blanket.

### **How Much Area?**

Needs can be satisfied by the fundamental items—accessibility and adequate space. Adequate space may not be available, but just enough space for a flying field is way ahead of not quite enough, a category into which an awful lot of potential sites fall. You must remember in all instances that your flying site neighbors own not only their property, but also the airspace above it. You may not overfly their land or enter upon it to retrieve downed aircraft without specific permission. If you do, you are trespassing and subject to legal penalties. You should also keep in mind that a good relationship with the site neighbors is worth its weight in gold when it comes to keeping the field in use. One complaint to local authorities can be enough to get your flying privileges revoked. The three most important things to remember at all times are: *be courteous, be safe, and be quiet*.

Although you are the best judge of your group's needs, some basic facts about the various space requirements are in order:

**Accessibility**—Good access roads to any flying site are essential. The greatest field in the world is useless if you can't get to it conveniently by car. Your group would need to consider improving an access road, let alone building one. Any contractor can tell you that the cost per mile for road building is astronomically high. *So*, accessibility by existing roads is a must in site selection.

**Basic CL Facilities**--Because the model follows a circular flight path around the pilot, the requirement is for an open area (paved or grassy), approximately 160 feet in diameter. Since only one model is generally flown at one time. In addition to the circles, a safe pit area is needed where line pull checks, assembly, repairs, and refueling can be done. Car parking should be provided at a safe distance from flight circles. Also, be sure that spectators are in an area that is safe and not likely to be infringed upon by any flier who wanders from the circle center.

A minimum square of 120 yards per side (14,400 square yards) could contain four circles 160 feet in diameter (80 radiuses) comfortably. This allows about 25 feet between circles. One or more circles 50 to 100 feet in diameter could be included for smaller models if space permits.

**Basic FF Facilities**—The only basic facility requirement for FF aircraft is a sufficient, unobstructed area with terrain smooth enough to be accessible on foot for retrieval. A 120-acre field without trees, boulders, fences, or steep ravines is adequate for many duration models. Half a mile square (160 acres) is better, and one mile square (645 acres) is better yet. Paved launching and service or pit areas are considered desirable by some, but they are not necessary. The retrieval area is most important, so good chasing terrain is essential.

**Basic RC Facilities**—(see AMA membership manual.) The basic requirements are: a properly oriented (with respect to prevailing wind) takeoff and landing strip of sufficient size to accommodate the largest models; a pit area to service the models, possibly with

interconnecting taxiways to the main strip; a centralized control zone for the pilots to stand; plus an unobstructed flight pattern area—especially with respect to the landing strip approaches. If RC aerobatic (Pattern models) are to be flown, the flight area should be a minimum of 1,000 feet by 4,000 feet, oriented so that the longest dimension parallels and is centered on the landing strip. The high speeds of Pattern aircraft can easily carry them to a distance of 1,500 feet from the runway center as they make their turns.

Safety for the pit, spectator and parking areas is of prime concern. It must be a field rule that no flying takes place over any of these areas. AMA files clearly show that the majority of claims for auto damage by model aircraft are due to parking areas being too close to the flying areas. A minimum of 300 feet should be established between the landing strip and the car park. As the use of 2.4 Ghz radios becomes more prevalent, frequency issues are waning. However, no uncontrolled radio transmissions on the same frequencies used by models can be tolerated within an area of at least 3 miles radius from the control zone. Do not plan another RC site within this distance from another radio-controlled activity. This recommendation is based on the findings of the AMA Frequency committee. Interference from uncontrolled radio sources can cause an “under control” model to become an uncontrolled, dangerous object. With the growth of RC boating and RC cars, it is even more important that you survey the area to determine what interference, if any, might exist—(see AMA Membership Manual).

Although there is less possibility of interference between model airplane fliers and surface vehicle (boats, cars) enthusiasts, now that separate channels are designated, it is still a good procedure to become aware of all radio-controlled activities in your area. All problems should be reported to your District Frequency Coordinator whose name appears each month in *Model Aviation* (District report page).

Orientation of an RC site is very important from the standpoint of prevailing wind and sun angles at different times of the year (for preferred down sun/upwind flight paths). Upwind takeoff is essential, of course, and the sun can cause real problems if it's in your eyes much of the time you are flying. Loss of control takes very few seconds if you are blinded by the sun and lose vision from the glare.

**Indoor RC Facilities** Many different venues are valuable indoor sites for RC. From school gyms and auditoriums to Reserve and National Guard Armories, an open area with a high ceiling will satisfy the requirement. Warehouses and entry foyers to businesses make great indoor sites as well. Keep an eye open for the right size building and when you find one that looks good on the outside, call or go to the facility and introduce yourself. Take a gentle, light weight, easy-flying airplane to help you get your foot literally in the door.

I have had success with two churches that had open areas they used for various activities, but they made good airports for our little electrics. In three instances, I found someone affiliated with the facility that had an interest in modeling as well. Two of those three folks mysteriously found themselves as

presidents of the Indoor club and that made the inroads smoother and straighter. A tremendously talented and polite youngster...the younger the better... demonstrates the value of the sport as a means to develop and educate the youth and in most instances gets parents and grandparents from the facility interested in getting their youngsters involved as well.

We charge a nightly fee of \$3/person for flying and a flier either pays for the flying up front or makes a donation to the church or the team/coach at the end of the year.

## **Chapter 2**

### **How to Find a Flying Site**

If you don't have a flying site, the first thing you should do is select a Flying Site Committee with an aggressive Chairman. However, that should not relieve the rest of the club from the search.

Poll your members by every possible means—through the newsletter, by phone, at meetings—to find out if anyone has any knowledge of a suitable piece of land, and who owns it. Perhaps one of your members already owns some ground that could be developed into a flying field. Leave no stone unturned. See if any member has spotted a potential site in your area. Use every means and all available resources in your quest.

Approach the problem from all possible angles—even if you seem to be having



success in one particular area. An awful lot can happen between locating a potential site and being able to fly there. So, keep as many irons in the fire as you possibly can. You just might develop two sites, and it is always good to have alternate fields.

An aggressive flying site chairman should keep the members informed so that they are aware of progress or lack of it. Nothing will weaken a club as much as the lack of a flying field. With any luck at all, you should be able to turn up some open space—even if you have no idea who owns it. Don't overlook cultivated land, since the farmer may be interested in your club's needs or may be a tenant on the property. The owner might be persuaded to have a tenant leave a portion of the land fallow so it can be used for flying. With low-profile, surrounding crops such as beans or potatoes, a small flying site may be possible if access roads are available and convenient. Sod farms near metropolitan areas are a very good bet and may be rented economically since the "crop" is harvested infrequently.

You might be able to rent a 400-foot square from the sod-farm operator by paying for the value of the sod on that portion of the land (letting him or her take off all of the sod surrounding that area). You might find with powered models that you will be asked to use ground protection, as fuel can kill the grass.

### **The Initial Search**

Many of the clubs that we hear from have a similar question on their minds when they call in. That question is: "How can we locate a possible flying

site without having to go all over the country, or hiring a light-plane to do an aerial survey ourselves?" Now that is not to say that they are not willing to rent a plane or burn up a lot of gas in a car to do some legwork, but like good modelers everywhere, they are looking to save time and trouble.

There are several types of paper maps, but now we have, through the magic of the internet, free instant access to virtual technology programs such as GoogleEarth where you can quickly and methodically look at large areas of land within communities and surrounding areas. Within just a few short hours you can locate a few potential sites within your search area. Next is a listing of tools through which you can identify land use and owners of potential sites. These are federal, state, and local products that can assist you.

**U.S. Geological Survey Maps:** With headquarters in Washington DC, but with outlets all over the country (try your local map store), they produce outstanding maps of small, very accurate scale. The usual scale is 1 inch=2000 feet, which makes it very good for an initial land search. These maps show topography, major tree stands, power lines, water courses, and urban development. You might find that in some areas the maps are as much as 20 years old, but normally for heavily populated areas they are up to date. It will not cost you an arm and a leg for these either. Believe me, they are well worth it. They are easy to read. You can identify areas that would be good for sailplane Slope Soaring; floodplain areas that could be used for FF or RC flying and most obvious, of course, urban areas.

**Regional Plan Commission:** Most metropolitan areas have some form of regional planning commission or a council of government's agency. As an example, the entire State of Wisconsin has such an agency, which means that every area of the state is covered. Aerial photographs are made and are transformed into aerial maps that are used by the commissions to record changes made since the last aerial survey. You may find some areas subject to annual flight surveys so that a constant record is available for planning purposes. Most areas, however, are surveyed about every five years with the results being made into maps of approximately 1 inch=400 feet for the urban areas and 1 inch=8000 feet for the rural sections. You can get a print showing about 4 to 8 square miles for a small fee. In order to find out which agency serves the areas you want to look at, contact:

National Association of Regional Councils  
1700 K Street, NW  
Washington DC 20006

**County Plat Books:** You can obtain these handy 8-1/2 x 11 inch books from your county office, usually from the County Agricultural Agent. They are also available from map stores, so you do have more than one source. Cost is from \$7 to \$10 each, but they are worth it. Details shown include the owner of the land, the acreage, and an outline of the shape of a piece of property. One good reason for shopping for one at the county courthouse is that the agriculture agent is frequently an excellent source of additional data that could be useful to you, such as, flooding areas, soils, good

areas to look at, and how to plant grass that will survive. That person may also give you some zoning information because that is his or her business too.

**Zoning Maps:** It is now a fact of life that almost all areas of the USA are "zoned," meaning that local or county ordinances have been passed regulating the use of that land. Model airplane flying tends to be overlooked in the zoning language, leaving it in a gray area. When pressed for a decision, most local building inspectors will choose between classifying it as recreation versus airport—airports are not widely permitted in local zoning. If they are permitted, usually it requires special action such as conditional use or special exception. It is, however, recommended that any club buying land try hard to get its property zoned as a model airport. This will give the group a stronger leg on which to stand should its activities be questioned at a later date.

To summarize, there is a lot that can be done without even leaving your flying site committee table if you do some groundwork ahead of time. Get whatever documentation you think you will need for a good meeting, and then spend some time in committee, analyzing the lay of the land. It might save you a lot of time and gasoline, both of which are expensive.

*Remember, it can be done and you can do it.*

## **Locate the Owner**

If a club member owns the prospective site, you know where to begin. The same is true if a member knows a landowner personally. If you locate open land without knowing who its owner is, someone in the area will very likely tell you all you need to know to locate that person. In rural areas, where frequently everybody knows everybody else, they may tell you more than you need to know. Be polite and do more listening than talking. Remember that if you gain use of the land these people will be your neighbors, and it pays to have them sympathetic to your goals and needs. Good neighbors who respect you and your sport won't be asking for injunctions against your activities and signing petitions to have you evicted later. Consequently, you should approach these potential neighbors politely and somewhat discreetly. Their only experience with aeromodelers may have been with wild kids who ran noisy machines at odd and inconvenient hours, or raced through a farmer's crops, indiscriminately destroying his or her livelihood.

County land records will reveal the owners of a given tract of land, but sometimes that can be a cumbersome or time-consuming way to get information. However, you will have to use that approach if a tour of the neighborhood, with discreet inquiries of the residents, does not uncover the information you require.

## **If the Land Is Government Owned**

Don't overlook land that may be under the control of a government agency, whether it be county, state, or federal.

(More on federal land programs can be found in Chapter 13.) From the local point of view, you should check out the school boards and recreation commissions.

Frequently, these bodies have control of parcels of land that may have been set aside for future use. It is usually best to make first contact with full-time employees in these cases, because elected boards come and go. The elected boards have to be courted because you will need their support to get final approvals, but your preliminary work should be done with the permanent members and staff. Some school authorities are faced with declining enrollments in this era, and if they have land that was earmarked for new construction, they may be happy to find a use for it or earn some rentals from it. Sometimes school and park developments are placed side by side, so it is possible that land may be transferred from one authority to another. Develop a contact in both administrations so that you can phone periodically in the effort to develop a flying site. Remember that public money for improvements comes slowly because of government appropriation cycles, so quite some time may elapse between appropriations and the beginning of work. Consider the possibility of handling the clearing and development as a club project if you have the money.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Selling the Idea**

If you have identified a piece of land, this is the time to make a thorough check with all of your members to see if anyone personally acquainted with the

landowner. If you have a member who knows the owner, then you are in a good position to proceed. This one point may well be the most important in your search for a field.

If the land is controlled by one person, your approach can be tailored to suit. However, if the land is controlled by an organization, you will have to find out who the key people are and how to set up your approach to them. Industry-owned land is a good bet, but, again, you will have to find out who the influential people are. Working with one person is pretty straightforward. Working with a committee will be more time-consuming and complicated, and your problem will be multiplied. Remember the old saying about the camel being a horse that was designed by a committee.

Your whole approach must be planned in advance. You should probably select a team of two people who are skilled in either sales or public relations, because they may have a very big task to accomplish. Your future as a flying club may depend on their efforts. It is essential to put yourself in the landowner's shoes with as much understanding as possible. How would you feel if someone came to you and asked for the use of *your* land for an activity with which you were totally unfamiliar? You can readily see how this gets magnified when you have to deal with an elected committee where every member could have 20 questions about the matter. On a committee, seldom can one member grant you permission to use the land, but quite often one member's opinion or vote can deny you the use of the property—and will in some instances. This is especially true when dealing with public bodies and public

land. It is in your interest to find out who on the committee has the most influence and work on him or her behind the scenes to get that person on your side. The key person can sometimes sway the group to a favorable decision.

### **Salesmanship**

Consult with the AMA Flying Site Assistance Coordinator for a review of your approach and a custom package of applicable printed materials for your use. Be prepared to approach each owner carefully, establish rapport, and, above all, put yourself in his or her shoes. This is where salesmanship comes in. It has been said that salesmanship is the art of letting the other person have your way. Any professional salesman knows this because it is the way he or she makes his or her living. If you have such a club member, he should at least be a member of your site committee, and perhaps be one of the people to approach the landowner. He or she will know how to look for a "friend" on the board or how to find an "angel" to assist in gaining access to the land you have selected. He'll also realize that, although you might not dress up in a tuxedo for the interview, neither do you go in dirty, glue stained dungarees.

Whoever approaches the owner has to get across an image of mature, responsible, dedicated, feet-on-the-ground people, who are sincerely and properly involved in a family-oriented sport that is not only wholesome, but also a great influence on young people. The first interview can also be the last interview if you don't handle it well. Have your documentation well prepared and use it judiciously. Sell yourself and your club.

### **Sell the Sport**

It is important for you to help the landowner believe that the sport of aeromodeling is as normal as golf or tennis. It takes less space than golf, and it can cost a lot less than fishing, so it doesn't have to be a rich person's sport. Compare the cost of an RC model with the cost of a 10-speed bike. Compare the cost of a FF airplane with fishing outfit. Compare the cost of a Control Line model with a tennis racket. And what about the cost of outfitting a Little League Baseball team, or even one football player? Aeromodeling compares very favorably with those sports, especially if safety and educational values are weighed. Incidentally, if your club bylaws do not emphasize your safety orientation, and if you don't have a pilot training program, this may be a good time to get something identified. Don't try to fake your position in your presentation, because the audience will probably see through it.

Use the tools that AMA has available for you. These include many pieces of documentation. Videos from AMA can also be used to spread the knowledge of the sport. Remember to stress youth involvement and recreation for older people who enjoy miniature aircraft. Also, don't be afraid to drop some names such as Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon, who began his career as an aeromodeler. If your club conducts fundraisers for community functions, be sure that it is highlighted in your presentation. Education outreach to schools, Scouts and 4-H are key items that may tip the scales in your favor.

Take a good-looking model on your first visit so that the landowner can

appreciate the quality and skill that goes into building a good airplane. Offer to put on a flying display by your most competent members—making sure it is well rehearsed and that effective mufflers are used.

### **Show That Your Group Is Responsible**

The community receives many benefits from allowing land to be used for such worthy purposes as family togetherness, healthy competition and the promotion of a viable and respectable hobby/sport. Emphasize your club's purpose. A copy of your concise and stringent field rules stressing safety, mufflers, and field cleanliness will surely help your case.

AMA liability protection for the landowners will aid your efforts immeasurably. Explain that they will be covered by \$2.5 million of primary liability protection by naming them as "additional insured." Show your club charter, liability protection and the owner's certificate of coverage that they will receive.

The important point to remember is that the property owner is not primarily concerned about whether you and your club are protected; he or she wants to be sure that he or she is protected. So the fact that that person can be protected through your club coverage is the point to stress. Again, it is a matter of looking at the problem through his or her eyes.

Your presentation could be a simple scrapbook of photographs stressing family participation in aeromodeling and an explanation of what your club is all about. It could be a printed and bound portfolio detailing the benefits offered

by aeromodeling, including letters by community leaders and astronauts expounding the virtues of the sport (AMA can supply these). Whatever you offer in support of your cause should be sincere in every respect.

If you're dealing with elected officials, it is important to discreetly mention the number of registered voters in your club, and the number of friends and supporters they represent. A large percentage of members of any given clubs are senior citizens. These are active voters. Most clubs have youth programs which should be mentioned as well. Most clubs are charity-oriented and host annual events to raise funds for, Toys For Tots, Jerry's Kids, etc., as well as special projects for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and the Salvation Army. Many hundreds and thousands of dollars have been raised by AMA for charities. The AMA has awarded thousands of dollars to high school students who have excelled in math and science studies through our AMA scholarship programs.

Technically, public officials are working for you and you can point out that you are merely asking for your fair share of the tax dollars that go into recreation budgets, such as for golfers. It helps to stress the adult makeup of the club, while not losing sight of the fact that model aviation is for all ages and thus justifies community support. If disabled or minority groups are represented in your club, mention that also. One argument often raised against aeromodeling activities is the amount of land to be used by a limited number of people. It's important not to argue, of course, but it should be pointed out that enormous quantities of land are used for golf courses. Golfers tie up more land

for fewer people than do model fliers. Furthermore, golf is almost exclusively an adult activity, it's expensive, and has little youth orientation—not the case in aeromodeling. Man-use days are an important statistic that you should calculate and include in your proposal. Another point to keep in mind is that many cities have programs for senior citizens that you have in your club.

Be sure to mention the magnitude of aeromodeling, with more than one million modelers nationwide. Emphasize international activities such as world records and championships, which bring respect and glory to the US, with the base being the local flying clubs all across the country.

Success will follow if you believe in what you are doing and in what you are selling, and enthusiastically convey that belief to the landowner.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Financing the Idea**

There are some clubs with sufficient resources to finance many projects directly from their treasuries. Most, however, are faced with a problem when it comes to raising the money necessary for a flying site. The direct solution is to assess the members or to increase dues to cover new expenses. Although this has been widely done and is perhaps the simplest way of raising funds, it is not always without drawbacks. In fact, it could be unsatisfactory for many members and cause a loss of membership for the club. With inflation being what it is, many fliers may feel that they cannot afford added assessments.

This means that it is required to go outside the membership and raise the money from other sources—here is where imagination and initiative comes to the fore—and produce substantial sums for the treasury. Most importantly, those who participate in fund-raising projects gain a generous helping of satisfaction from working on them. In any case, the financial arrangement will have to be tailored to a particular club's situation by assessment, if practical, or through a fund-raising drive if necessary.

One good money raiser is a first-class RC or CL demonstration team which can earn donations for a performance at appropriate public gatherings. (Note: AMA Safety Code requirements must be observed for AMA insurance to apply.) Club CL flying demonstrations are great promotions for shopping centers, and the management is usually willing to donate a sum to the club treasury for the show. (Pull tests should be made on all models before each flight to ensure safety.) Many clubs earn money by putting on a model display at local shopping malls. The activity can be used to attract shoppers and at the same time arouse local interest in model aviation. New members of all ages can be acquired in this manner. Mall management might pay for this type of display in hard cash. There are now several show teams in operation all around the country. (Write to AMA for the show team guide.) Some very fine demonstrations have been put on with compensation being provided for the fliers and, in many cases, club treasuries being enriched. This approach allows pilots to demonstrate their skills, while at the same time earning funds for future club needs.

A raffle can also be a very successful fund-raiser. Model merchandise can be raffled off regularly at club meetings, but the results will be limited in dollars collected. A better way is to go “public” with your raffle—select a good prize (like a TV or other acceptable item)—get your members in high gear and sell tickets throughout the community. Perhaps a nice “model” prize can be awarded to the member who sells the most tickets. Be sure to check with local authorities to determine the legal situation in your area. Some communities have made raffles illegal, but others look the other way when a good cause is involved.

Look around at some of the fund-raising efforts undertaken by other civic groups, and use a little imagination to come up with the best means to raise money for your field project. Quite a few clubs sponsor a regional auction, inviting area clubs to participate by bringing surplus models and supplies and charging a fee for selling or a percentage of the sale price. Internal club auctions have also been successfully held with 10% of the selling prices going to the club treasury.

A club in west Texas raised funds for a runway improvement by selling \$100 bonds to members. The members who put up bond money were given free dues until their bonds were paid back by the club. Enough money was raised that renovations were completed, and when extra money was available each month, a bond was paid off. Members wanted to keep their bond as long as possible, so a lottery was set up where all bond-holder names were put in a hat. When money was available, the name was drawn and the member had to take the money and relinquish the bond.

Another club asked members to pay dues two years in advance if they had the ability to do so. That provided some instant cash but left renewal time a little short for the next two years. But they got their project funded and survived.

You may find other ways of accumulating the revenue that you need for the new field and have lots of fun doing it.

## Chapter 5

### The Contract

When the idea of a flying site has been successfully sold and finances are taken care of, a contract is in order. If your group has a lawyer among its members, he or she can be a big help; otherwise, try to find a legal “friend of the club” who can help with the paperwork. Your responsibilities as well as those of the landowner should be spelled out with the specific limits of responsibility included.

Some government agencies will require that the field be controlled by one club but that no restrictions may be placed on who may fly there. In other cases, they may permit only AMA licensed (thus liability protected) fliers—many field arrangements are set up this way. If they require the field to be open to all—even to fliers who may not be club members or even AMA members—your group may still be given responsibility for control of the field. This is usually the case if the government agency has its own liability protections and doesn’t need yours.

This would not jeopardize your chartered club’s liability protection. The danger is from the non-AMA member who might have a flying accident. Should his or her activities result in

person or property damage, the club is protected from a lawsuit, but the nonmember is on his or her own. The problem with this arrangement is that even AMA members may be unprotected if the non-AMA member should injure them and not have sufficient liability protection to compensate; a lawsuit would probably be the only recourse in this case.

This is not the best arrangement and should be avoided if possible, by pointing out to the property owner the inequity of allowing non-liability-protected fliers on the field. But it may also be the only way to get a field, so it may have to do. If so, the important thing is for everyone to understand the liability situation.

No contract can be “typical,” but sample contracts for both use of and the purchase of flying sites are included here as a guide. Some of the legalities which may be required in your agreement with the landowner are listed, although the services of an attorney are highly recommended to cover all contingencies.

In some cases, the agreement must be drawn up by the landowner’s attorney—possibly at your expense. This is proper, but your lawyer should review and discuss it with you before you sign. He or she may suggest changes for your benefit which may then be included by the landowner’s attorney. Take your time and go to the trouble to be sure all is well for both parties before finalizing. You don’t want to invest time and money in a flying site which you may lose with little or no notice; nor does a landowner want to lose a possible profitable sale or other use of his or her



property. Compromise is the key to a satisfactory agreement.

The sample contracts which follow are based on actual documents used for an agreement among the Sky Lancers of Washington (SLOW), and the District of Columbia Radio Control Club (DC/RC), and Montgomery County, Maryland for the use of county property as a CL and RC model port. Also included is a purchase agreement used by the Seattle

S.R.A.C. for property bought for a flying site. The contracts have been reviewed by attorneys and may be used as samples in preparing similar agreements for your club.

### **AT AGREEMENT OF SUPERVISION OF MODEL AIRCRAFT FLYING COUNTY RECREATION AREA**

**THIS AGREEMENT**, entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, by and between the DC Radio Control Club, Incorporated (hereinafter referred to as "DC/RC"), a non-profit corporation, the Sky Lancers of Washington (hereinafter referred to as "SLOW"), and \_\_\_\_\_ County, and the \_\_\_\_\_ County Department of Recreation (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "COUNTY").

#### **WITNESSETH:**

**WHEREAS**, the COUNTY recognizes that many of its residents are model airplane enthusiasts, and that the making and flying of model aircraft is recognized as a healthy and constructive activity; and

**WHEREAS**, there is at this time no area in \_\_\_\_\_ county which has been specifically designated as a center for the flying of Radio-Controlled and Line-Controlled model aircraft; and

**WHEREAS**, it has been determined that a portion of COUNTY property known as the \_\_\_\_\_ Tract, now used as a Land Fill, will be set aside for the operation of this public recreational activity, and that the name of this area will be the \_\_\_\_\_ County Model Airport, supervised by the COUNTY through its Department of Recreation; and

**WHEREAS**, the COUNTY desires supervisory assistance from qualified and experienced sources; and

**WHEREAS**, DC/RC and SLOW are experienced and qualified model aircraft flying organizations which desire to assist the COUNTY in this endeavor; and

**WHEREAS**, the COUNTY recognizes a need to protect the safety and welfare of county residents using the Model Airport and provide them with sound supervision and adequate insurance coverage for this activity and further recognizes the need to establish a Board of governors to administer the

\_\_\_\_\_ County Model Airport; and

**WHEREAS**, it has been determined that the Model Airport shall be governed and administered cooperatively by the Board of Governors which, during the term of this

Agreement, shall be made up of rep representatives appointed from the \_\_\_\_\_ County Department of Recreation, DC/RC and SLOW; and **WHEREAS**, the Board of Governors shall consist of five (5) representatives, two (2) each designated from DC/RC and SLOW, as well as one (1) representative designated by the \_\_\_\_\_ County Department of Recreation, with the Recreation Department representatives serving as chairman of the Board; and **WHEREAS**, the Board of Governors shall decide all matters affecting the administration of the Model Airport, such as recommendations concerning its maintenance, the safety of its participants, and recommendations concerning its future development by majority vote at meetings called by the chair man, with tie votes being decided by vote of the chairman. **NOW, THEREFORE**, for and in consideration of the respective covenants and agreements to be kept and performed by the parties hereto, DC/RC, SOW and the COUNTY do mutually agree as follows:

## **ARTICLE I SCOPE OF SERVICES**

A. The COUNTY agrees to assign DC/RC and SLOW the areas designated as the “Radio Control Flight” and “Control Line Flight” sections of the \_\_\_\_\_ Recreation Area for use by members of DC/RC, SLOW and County residents to fly model aircraft.

B. DC/RC shall administer the “Radio Control Flight” area, shall provide on-site supervision \_\_\_\_\_ during the times which their aircraft are flying and as assigned by the Board of Governors, and shall post the area accordingly with rules and regulations pertaining to the use of Radio-Controlled model aircraft.

C. SLOW shall administer the “Control Line Flight” area, shall provide on-site supervision during the times which their aircraft are flying and as assigned by the Board of governors, and shall post the area accordingly with rules and regulations pertaining to U-Controlled model aircraft.

D. At the times that these areas are in use and being supervised by DC/RC and SLOW, county residents shall be permitted to use either of the flying areas, but must be current members of the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) and shall abide by all rules and regulations posted and administered by DC/RC and/or SLOW shall have the authority, within their respective areas, to request that violators of such rules and regulations remove themselves from the premises. At all other times, any use of these flying areas shall be at the user’s own risk and in accordance with any posted times and rules and regulation.

**ARTICLE II  
COMPENSATION**

In consideration of the supervisory services to be provided by DC/RC and SLOW hereunder, the COUNTY or DC/RC and SLOW under the provisions of Article VI of the Agreement. Flying is permitted seven (7) days a week at the flying areas, but only from sunrise to sunset each day.

**ARTICLE III  
COUNTY SAVED HARMLESS;  
INSURANCE**

A. DC/RC and SLOW agree to assume all risks of loss, injury, or damage of any kind or nature to any person or property including, but not limited to, any building or other structure, or the contents of any such building or structure, or to any goods, chattels, or any other property that may be in or upon the areas or premises to be used by DC/RC and SLOW, whether belonging to the COUNTY or others, which results from the flying of their model aircraft in their respective areas and under their supervision during the term of this Agreement and the times during which these areas are in use by DC/RC and SLOW. DC/RC and SLOW shall take proper care, safety, and health precautions to protect the COUNTY, the public, and the property of others.

B. DC/RC and SLOW agree to carry, during the term of this Agreement, appropriate personal and property damage insurance, covering their respective clubs and members, for the protection of the COUNTY, in the amounts of at least \$100,000/\$300,000 death or personal injury and \$50,000 prop 12 ACADEMY OF MODEL

AERONAUTICS property damage. Such insurance shall be evidenced by the filing of an AMA chartered club additional insured certificate by DC/RC and SLOW with COUNTY.

**ARTICLE IV  
LICENSES AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES OF DC/RC  
AND SLOW**

A. DC/RC and SLOW shall be solely responsible for obtaining any necessary licenses and for complying with any applicable Federal, State and municipal laws, codes and regulations in connection with their use of the assigned flying areas.

B. DC/RC and SLOW agree to maintain their respective landing areas in a clean and undamaged state and shall have the right to make minor repairs (such as repairing depressions which result from settling) to those areas should the COUNTY be unable to correct these conditions in a reasonable period of time after written notice. The general maintenance of grounds such as the mowing of grass or the collection of trash and/or debris, shall be provided by the COUNTY. DC/RC and SLOW shall have the option to mow the grass within their respective landing areas as they deem necessary. Other changes or alterations to the assigned areas shall be permitted only with the express written consent of the COUNTY.

**ARTICLE V  
TERMINATION FOR  
CONVENIENCE**

This Agreement may be rescinded by DC/RC and SLOW or the COUNTY for

convenience by giving to the other notice in writing. The COUNTY reserves the right and discretion at all times to cancel and terminate this Agreement. Termination hereunder shall be effected by delivery to the other party of a written Notice of Termination thirty (30) days in advance of said termination, or not less than twenty-four (24) hours in advance of said termination if emergency public use of the assigned flying areas is required.

### **ARTICLE VI ASSIGNMENT**

Neither this Agreement nor any interest therein, nor shall any claim there under, be assigned or transferred by DC/RC or SLOW, except as expressly authorized in writing by the COUNTY.

### **ARTICLE VII NON-DISCRIMINATION**

DC/RC and SLOW herby certify that they do not and will not practice any unlawful discrimination against any person or group on the basis of race, color, sex, religious creed, ancestry, or national origin.

### **ARTICLE VIII INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS**

DC/RC AND SLOW shall perform this Agreement as independent contractors and shall not be considered agents of the COUNTY, nor shall any of the employees, agents, officers, members, or other personnel of DC/RC and SLOW shall be considered sub-agents of the COUNTY.

### **ARTICLE IX ENTIRE AGREEMENT**

This Agreement contains all of the agreements and conditions made between the parties and may not be modified orally or in any other manner other than by written agreement signed by all the parties or their respective successors in interest.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the COUNTY, DC/RC and SLOW have executed this agreement on the date first above written. Attest: (Signature of club officers and county administrative officer).

### **PURCHASE AGREEMENT**

The following agreement is condensed from that used by Seattle's S.R.A.C. to purchase their flying site.

**THIS AGREEMENT**, made this 15th day of September, 1967 is on the following terms and conditions:

1. The parties hereto have purchased on real estate contract, in common, the following described real property situated in Snohomish County, State of Washington, described as:

**(Legal description of property followed.)**

2. This contract of purchase has been taken in the name of Joe Dokes, whose wife, Joan Dokes, one of the parties to this instrument, who agrees to hold the property in trust for the use and benefit of the parties to this instrument as their interest may appear, and further agrees that all dealings and transaction with the property shall be done only with approval of the majority of the parties to

the agreement. The trustee will also act as the manager of the business, collecting contributions from the parties and disbursing the same to pay the installments of the contract, taxes and other expenses. In the event of the death or incapacity of the trustee, Hiram Haysi, whose wife is Harriet Haysi, shall be the managing party. However, notwithstanding the foregoing, at any time a majority of the members to this agreement, may, at an election duly held, with notice to all parties, elect a new trustee, and/or a new alternate trustee, with said trustee to have the powers and duties herein granted, except as may be altered or amended by the majority of the members at the time of election of said new trustee.

3. Subject property is being purchased under real estate contract for the sum of \$22,500 payable 14 ACADEMY OF MODEL AERONAUTICS as follows: \$3,375 down and the balance at the rate of \$200 or more monthly including interest at 6-1/2 percent annum.

4. Each of the parties to this instrument has paid his committed share of all purchase installment payments, taxes, assessments and other costs or expenses against the property or expense of its management, improvement or sale.

5. Each of the parties to this instrument may agree upon the sale or use of the property whole or in part, and shall agree upon whether the proceeds there from shall be applied to reduce the principal balance on the remaining property or shall be distributed to the parties thereto. All costs, expenses, profits and losses shall be divided by each of the parties' committed share of this instrument.

6. Decisions and all matters pertaining to the management, improvement or disposal of the real property or any other decisions relating to the affairs of the parties under this agreement shall be determined by a majority vote of the parties to this instrument, each member having one full vote, irrespective of the number of shares held by said member. Furthermore, it is expressly understood that for the purpose of determining membership under this agreement that each husband and wife shall be considered as one member, and shall be entitled to one vote. Any improvement must have the majority approval of all parties.

7. If any party to this instrument desires to withdraw, sell or provide a substitute member in his place, he shall so indicate to the remaining members to this agreement by mailing to all of said members, by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, a notice of his intention to sell, and any remaining member, or all of the remaining members, or any combination thereof may, with ninety (90) days of the notice of intention to sell, elect to purchase the selling member's interest by agreeing to reimburse the selling member of any and all of his out-of-pocket expense, payable at the rate of fifteen percent (15%) or more of said expense as a down payment, with the balance payable under the terms of a negotiable promissory note requiring payment of 12% of the remaining balance due or more, per annum, with interest at the rate of 6% per annum. However, upon the sale of the property for which this agreement is made, the selling party shall be paid in full the remaining balance due under the terms of said promissory note. In addition, it shall be clearly understood

that if the entire remaining membership desires to purchase said selling member's interest, the entire membership shall have first preference, and if the entire membership does not wish to purchase said selling member's interest, then all parties shall have the right to purchase so much of said interest as their proportionate membership bears to those electing to so purchase. In the event that none of the remaining members desire to purchase the interest of the member desiring to sell his interest, said selling member shall have the right to sell, transfer, with draw or provide a substitute member in his place in any manner which he sees fit; provided, however, that any person acquiring said member's interest shall be subject to and bound by all of the terms of this Agreement.

8. No party to this instrument shall sell, transfer, assign, pledge or encumber his interest in the subject property without the written consent of the majority of the parties hereto.

9. Each party agrees that he will make his monthly payment contribution for the contract, taxes, assessments or other costs and expenses required to keep the contract in good standing and the property free and clear, and shall make his contribution for the payment on the contract thirty (30) days in advance of the due date of the real estate contract installment, and shall make payment for taxes, assessments and other expenses upon notice from the trustee or manager.

10. If any party fails to make the payments or contributions required under this contract by the due date, such contribution may be made by one or more other parties to this instrument. It

is understood, however, that the failure of any party to make his monthly contribution is a serious threat to the investment of the other parties and results in a damage to the other parties that is incapable of precise measurements. By way of liquidated damages the sum of 50% for each item of contribution to cover the inconvenience, time and trouble of the party or parties making the contribution. If any party is in default for making payments or contributions for a period in excess of ninety (90) days, the trustee or manager on authorization of a majority of the remaining members shall be forfeited and unless the defaults are cured within the said ten-day period, the defaulting party shall forfeit all rights, title and interest in and to the said property or any proceeds there from, or any further rights under this instrument; provided however, that said default may be waived by a majority of the parties hereto for good reason shown.

11. The trustee or manager agrees to keep all funds of this venture in a separate account. The trustee or manager shall provide the members with a statement of accounts on or before the 30th day of July, 1968, and every three months thereafter until this venture is terminated.

12. The provisions of this agreement and this venture are limited to the property described in paragraph 1 hereof. This venture may be dissolved upon majority vote of the parties and the property liquidated.

13. The parties hereto agree that they hold the property as tenants in common and not as partners.

14. In the event of the election of the members to this agreement to sell the real property, more particularly described in paragraph 1, it is expressly understood that the trustee shall close said sale at the office of Pioneer National Title Co., Everett, Washington, unless otherwise expressly agreed by the majority vote of the members of this agreement.

15. In the event of the death of any party to this instrument, said party and estate shall cease to have any rights, title or interest in and to the real property or the venture except the right to receive liquidation of the value of such deceased party's interest, by one of the following methods:

a. The personal representative of the deceased shall have the option within thirty (30) days of the death of the deceased to retain the deceased's share in the venture, provided that the personal representative pays any then delinquent contributions for which the deceased would have been liable were he living, and further agrees to be subject to the forfeiture provisions of this agreement, and further agrees to pay any due taxes that would cause said property to be lien in any manner.

b. The remaining parties by a majority vote thereof may agree to the sale and liquidation of the venture, and if such sale or liquidation is accomplished

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Making the Idea Work**

Once you have the field and some money to get started, where do you go from there? Look back over your list of needs. For CL you'll need circles; for

within six months of the date of death, the sole right of the estate of the deceased party shall be to receive were he living; provided, however, that if the venture results in a loss, the deceased party's estate shall be liable to the other parties for the proportionate share of such loss which the deceased party would have owed were he living.

c. If the remaining parties determine that it is not advantageous to liquidate the property, the remaining parties shall have the option within ninety (90) days of the death of such deceased party of paying to the estate of the deceased party the total amount of the deceased party's contribution to the venture, plus interest thereon from the date of contribution at the rate of six and one half percent (6-1/2%) per annum, and upon such payment the estate of the deceased or other parties claiming under the deceased shall have no further claim of any profits or obligation for any losses of the venture.

16. This Agreement may be altered, amended, revoked, rescinded or in any way changed by a vote of a majority of the parties to the same.

This Agreement is signed by all shareholders and notarized by a local magistrate.

circles; RC, one or more runways; and a launch area and access to the upwind side of the field for FF so that activity can shift with the wind. Asphalt or reinforced concrete paving would be ideal, although turf offers fine flying if properly maintained. So decide what you

need, and then carefully plan where to put it.

If a plan (or “plat”) of the facility is not available from the county land records, make a scale drawing of the field itself. Indicate trees and other obstructions, then cut CL circles, RC runways and appropriate FF takeoff and retrieval areas out of a separate piece of paper at the same scale as your drawing. These can be arranged and rearranged on the drawing for optimum use of the existing site. Consider minimum facilities now with additional improvements to be added later. Remember the four Ps: Prior Planning Prevents Predicaments! It’s easier to make changes now than after the bulldozing begins.

CL circles can be arranged like furniture in a room for maximum benefit from available space. RC requires more consideration of such things as prevailing wind and the direction and angle of the sun at different times of the year. FF requires determination of the prevailing wind for downwind retrieval areas.

Your local weather bureau, national weather station (if there’s one at an airport nearby), and state or local government agencies should be able to offer prevailing wind statistics, which may vary depending upon the time of year. Surveys made for other purposes, such as for the location of garbage dumps (sanitary landfills, if you like), can offer sound information to help make decisions regarding the orientation of runways and the like.

FF models launch into the wind, but must have clear retrieval space downwind. RC airplanes take off into

the wind, and most casual flying is upwind of the strip, but it is essential that “downsun” flying space be considered. It’s impossible to control an aircraft you can’t see, so flying with the sun to your back is most important. This downsun area can be figured out, but it varies with seasons. Consider prevailing winds and sun angles in both winter, when the sun is closer to the horizon, and summer, when it is much higher. In Washington, D.C. for example, the sun rises 30 degrees north of east in June, setting 30 degrees north of west. In the winter it rises and sets about 30 degrees south of east and west respectively. At noontime it is 75 degrees above the horizon in summer and 45 degrees in winter. Consequently, you should plan runway locations so that they will offer satisfactory flying most or all of the year rather than only at the season you first lay out the field.

After the flight areas of your field are decided, plan on pit areas, parking, comfort stations, and the like. You might consider a play area well away from traffic, airplanes, and autos—where small children can enjoy themselves at play while your group is flying. It will keep them safely out of pit and flying area, which will be a help to all. A shaded picnic area near the playground would be a nice feature.

Development of your flying field may be inexpensive or unbelievably expensive, considering the amount of modifications required. Bulldozing is expensive, as is fill dirt, which spreads to practically nothing in a matter of minutes. Topsoil and gravel or crushed stone vary in price depending on the availability in your part of the country. On the other hand, if you’re lucky enough to have someone in



your club who is in the construction business, he or she may be able to help cut down these costs considerably.

If a turf flying area must be developed, soil must be rich or built up with organic material and fertilizer. But remember, grass seed doesn't produce good turf for three years or more. Consider a tough grass such as K-31 if you must seed, but be sure to prepare the soil properly and plan to wait a couple of years before hard usage. You can land and take off by the following season, but heavy foot and vehicle traffic will destroy all your work until turf is well established. Your local horticultural agent will be a big help if you follow his or her advice.

Asphalt and concrete costs seem to be rising almost daily, so enough money to pave your flying site today won't be enough tomorrow, and by next week your paving nest egg may not even be enough to get the trucks out to the field. Unfortunately, paving must be about as thick for a model as for automobiles in areas where the earth freezes in winter. Concrete, for example, must be 4 inches thick and reinforced with steel mesh, or it will crack as the earth freezes and thaws—even with no heavy traffic on it.

A Kansas club has suggested that its highway department use the club field for black-top "test strips," which are used to study the effects of weather on different asphalt compositions. The strips serve the club as runways.

Another potential savings in paving could be with your local premix concrete company, although it requires work, coordination and luck. Premix concrete trucks rarely carry exactly the right amount of concrete for each job, and

they dump the excess at an acceptable and convenient place before returning to the plant. If you have your runway properly prepared with forms and steel mesh reinforcing in place, you might persuade the local premix concrete management to have drivers dump their excess at the site. Floats and brooms for smoothing must be on the site at all times, and the drivers must have the time and inclination to "float" the wet mix, or it will be a mess at best. But it might be worth the trouble in savings if you work out such an arrangement.

City and county officials may be hesitant to pave model flying areas because of demands from (other) pressure groups to "do" for them. Offer to pay a token portion of the development job 25¢ a square yard or so from the club treasury. (A San Angelo club got by with 10¢.) This token payment keeps the local government "clean" so as not to furnish without cost anything to one particular segment of the users of a public facility.

Two other ideas are available for runway surfacing consideration. A method that has been used very successfully for parking lots and secondary roads is known as "soil-cement" or "in place" paving. It is performed by the use of a machine similar to a large roto-tiller preparing the soil to a fine pulverized state; cement and moisture are spread to a predetermined ratio based on soil quality, and then the ingredients are thoroughly blended by the roto-tiller. After that step all that remains is to have the "in place" mixture properly compacted by a heavy roller. Surfaces like this have been in existence for years and are very simple to look after.

Another alternative is the tennis court-type surface, also prepared with a rototiller machine, but a type of all-weather clay is introduced to the broken-up soil. Compaction is required after blending and then rolling is the final stage for a smooth finish. Talk to your local tennis court installation experts to see what they recommend.

Of course, your geographic circumstances will have a bearing on what you use and how you construct runways, but a conversation with a competent local contractor or highway department can help point you in the right direction.

Along with development of the field, you should formulate fair, stringent rules for its use. Some suggestions:

- (1) Club members only.
- (2) Guests must be accompanied by club members and possessing current valid AMA memberships.
- (3) No flying over pits, spectator or parking areas at any time for any reason (minimum 100 feet away).
- (4) New or experimental aircraft flight-tested by experienced club members only
- (5) Full-scale aircraft always granted right-of-way above club field.
- (6) Aircraft and control systems will be checked for safety before flying.
- (7) No deliberately careless flying tolerated.
- (8) Repeated violations of the above will result in the loss of the individual's right to use the flying site.

## Chapter 7

### How High is Up?

Answering objections is one of the major jobs in development of a flying site.

At the Sepulveda Basin in Southern California, a new flying site began with the initial agreement and cooperation of local authorities. Later the trouble started. Opposition came from one man who made all manner of complaints about the approved site. The site, which was approved by both the modelers and the city, was supposedly too close to streets being paved. When it was pointed out that the closest point to any road was at least 1,200 feet, the opposition said that wasn't far enough; told they were off base, they found another avenue of attack. Since the proposed site was 800 feet off the extended centerline of the Van Nuys Airport runway, the opposition enlisted the help of the chief of the Van Nuys Airport control tower, to who wrote a letter the Department of Recreation and Parks protesting the new flying site—a letter that had sufficient strength to block further action on the approved site. About this time the reins of the Los Angeles Model Hobby Association were turned over to Bob Bleadon, a new president, who called on local club members for some flight research which could prove the new field safe as originally planned.

Early one winter morning, Bob Smith took his RC Pattern model up and flew it over the approved site. Bob Bleadon was in a Cessna 172, flying formation on the model to get an idea of the maximum altitude at which one might be able to control an RC model from the ground, and to ascertain how high the typical model flies when doing ordinary aerobatics.

It was determined that Bob Smith could only fly in a controlled environment to an altitude of about 1,200 or 1,300 feet, when visual reference would be lost and thus control of the aircraft. It was further determined that the top of a loop was usually between 200 and 300 feet above ground level.

Because of the layout of the approved field and an RC models proven ceiling, no problem was expected concerning full-scale aircraft traffic from Van Nuys Airport. Armed with this knowledge, Bob Bleadon went to see the Van Nuys tower chief's supervisor. When the facts were presented, both the supervisor and FAA backed the modelers, and the approved field was on the books again. It all seemed like smooth sailing, but the fliers didn't count on the tenacity of the opposition that next tried to squelch the new field through local politicians.

Bob Bleadon called on another Valley Flyer expert and these two met with a local councilman's aide, although nothing was accomplished. The aide had read that the flier was known as a "suicide" pilot for his low flying in an international meet in England the year before, so he was not considered by the aide as an expert on safety. Also, since Bob Bleadon had spent a minimum amount of time at the basin flying models due to other commitments, the aide considered him too removed from model aviation to much of an expert.

Bleadon then suggested that the aide attend a meeting of the Valley Flyers, and sit on a panel to field questions from the modelers themselves. The invitation was accepted and the panel discussion was arranged.

The councilman's aide had no idea what he was up against when he agreed to face the Valley Flyers. After two years of on again, off again agony, the members who attended that meeting were ready to drive the final nail into the coffin of the opposition. After the meeting was over, the aide had seen exactly how the Valley Flyers felt. By a unanimous vote, the modelers had backed the city plan and had rejected the opposition plan point for point. After the "wake," the only problem left was a farmer who leased part of the basin for crops.

The city department that was supposed to cancel the farmer's lease did not. When the time came to start flying site construction, the farmer produced his lease agreement and it turned out that he could legally plant his crops for another year.

Enter Loretta Hall, who succeeded Bob Bleadon as president of the Los Angeles Model Hobby Association. In two days she raised \$2,500 from the hobbyists to give to the city, which gave the money to the farmer for *not* planting crops on the proposed site. Paying the farmer was the final major obstacle before construction was to begin. From here on the Flyers' luck began to change for the better.

They got excellent cooperation from the city engineers, who approved the plans drawn by Chuck Smith and Bob Bleadon. The new site, in the shape of an "X," is an enormous 80 x 600 feet with a paved pit area and taxi strips 250 feet from the runway. There is also a paved parking lot, and a 60 x 90 foot pad for helicopter and pylon takeoff area—almost too good to believe. Not only is a

superb RC site available to the local fliers, but there is also a complete CL complex and FF center. The only restriction is that model rockets are limited to an altitude of 200 feet. Close to \$4,100 was spent on the basin complex which is officially known as the Apollo II Aero Modeling Center, home of the Valley Flyers. In the future, the modelers plan for new grass around the flying site, restroom facilities, and fences. The group has not let up on its PR and even made a five-minute movie to include in a proposal to the city for needed improvements.

None of these successes would have gotten off of the ground without knowing (or finding out) just “how high is up” and answering objections as they arose—clearly, cleverly, scientifically, and politely.

## Chapter 8

### What Others Have Done

Here’s a look at some successful efforts by various groups throughout the country. The examples cover a variety of different flying sites. The common thread that ties them together is the preparation and determination of the people involved in working with either private property owners or public property administrators. Some of the successes took more than three years to accomplish. If the road ahead of you appears to be long, do not quit. Hang in there. Use the tools you have at your command. Remember too that a smile and a cheerful, cooperative attitude need to be an integral part of your approach. **Denver:** Still going strong at Chatfield State Park are the Jefco Aeromod’lers of Jefferson County, Colorado. This group

appointed a spokesman to approach the park superintendent. The Jefco Aeromod’lers were looking for a long term home. At that time a federal government program made funds available for park and other improvements, provided that matching private funds were donated for a common purpose.

Jefco had about \$8,000 in its treasury and was happy to turn it all over to the State of Colorado. The State then applied for matching funds and got a federal grant. So with \$16,000 (more or less) they got the project off the ground. A lot of consultation and design planning began. State officials had apprehensions about devoting a big segment of the property to this special purpose, but since Chatfield is a multipurpose park, they convinced themselves that it was a logical step.

As of this writing the field consists of two paved runways, a large open-sided shelter, running water, a fenced parking area, a play area for children, toilet facilities, and an access road that is hard-surfaced. Almost all of these things were furnished by the club and installed by club members. With proceeds earned at several fund raising activities including an annual auction, Jefco Aeromod’lers donated \$38,000 to the State for the resurfacing of the runway and taxi strips, and for other improvements at Chatfield. The club has also installed a sound meter in a position at the exit from the pit area. Housing is encroaching on the south boundary of the park, so monitoring aircraft noise makes good sense. Standards have been set and aircraft that exceed them may not be flown. The club wants to remain a good neighbor.

This unusual contribution of time, money and labor has since been recognized by the State of Colorado with a “partnership award” to the club from the director of state parks.

A key factor in the excellent relationship existing in this “partnership” is the liaison between the club and the park management. One person from the club is, and has been, the only person who deals with the park superintendent. This person is appointed by the club, he or she speaks for the club, and he or she is trusted by the park management. This method works for Jefco and the model airport at Chatfield State Park will be there for future aeromodelers to enjoy, thanks to all of the work done by present and former club members.

**Columbia, Tennessee:** The Columbia RC Flying Modelers club opened its new field, which has a 500-foot paved runway, five taxi strips, paved pit area, large covered shelter, restroom, running water, screened bleachers for spectators, lots of parking, and an excellent access road.

*How did they manage all this?*

It started with Emery Cole, a longtime service employee with Monsanto Chemical. Monsanto had a landfill area that was almost completely filled and ready to close. Consisting of 37 acres ringed by trees and bordered by a wildlife area, Cole thought it had great potential for a model airpark. He approached the management of the company and his plan was thoughtfully received. Soon an agreement was reached for the club to use the area. Under Tennessee law all landfills have to be landscaped and restored to a

natural condition. Monsanto authorized the contractor to do much more than just restore the property. Fill materials were brought in. Drainage of the entire property was carefully engineered. All areas were seeded to provide ground cover and prevent erosion. State approval was given to all of the work upon completion.

In the meantime, additional local support for the model airport project was solicited by many club members. Contributions of bleachers, sunscreens, steel columns and beams, roofing, curbs and paving, plus many other useful materials were donated to the project. The list of local businesses that helped create the airpark is a long one. At the grand opening, each of the businesses was honored with a beautiful plaque in recognition of its contribution.

The overall result is a *model*, model airport that will serve the citizens of Columbia for an unlimited future. With the excellence of the facility and huge parking capability, the Emery Cole Field could easily host a regional contest.

**Idaho:** The Farragut Flyers club is made up of AMA members who live in both Idaho and Washington states. Several years ago club officers approached the park manager in Farragut State Park, near Coeur D’Alene, to see if an area of the park could be made available for radio-controlled model flying. During WW II, certain parts of this property had been used for naval training, hence the name Farragut. The club adopted the name once it got permission to level an area and start flying.

In the tradition of all good clubs, members pitched in and soon had more than just a level runaway. Grass seed

was spread, fertilizer was added, rolling followed, and soon a green grass runway started to appear. Fencing was installed to keep spectators back from the flying area. Pit areas were marked out and field rules and frequency regulations were posted on the large club-built notice board. The park management assisted by developing a large parking area so that members and visitors alike could leave their vehicles in a safe place that was removed from the flying.

Because this park is used by many vacationers for camping because of the superb natural beauty of the area, the presence of the model airpark soon became a magnet for visitors from all across the US. With good flying discipline and adherence to the AMA Safety Code, the club was given permission to host team selection meets and contests. The publicity that resulted from these activities brought more visitors and helped the park to be known far and wide.

The Farragut Flyers felt that its members' volunteer efforts entitled them to enter the "Take Pride In America" contest. This annual event, sponsored by the Department of the Interior, and open to all individuals and groups that have beautified a part of the country, is strongly supported by The White House. With detailed documentation and photographs, the Farragut Flyers won a statewide award, which recognized its public spirited efforts, and then went on to win a national award that was presented in Washington DC.

This just goes to show you how much a dedicated group can achieve if it pulls together and tries hard.

**New York:** A landmark agreement, made between the RC Association of Greater New York (RCAGNY) and the U.S. Department of the Interior (National Park Service), permits RC flying at Brooklyn's Floyd Bennett Field and at Staten Island's Great 22 Kills Park in New York City. These flying sites—a part of the U.S. Gateway Park Program—were the first such facilities released by the federal government for model aviation use and opened the door for more federal flying sites throughout the country.

Looking back some years allows one to the history of metropolitan New York fliers to the present facilities.

For many years, model airplane pilots in New York City were hard-pressed for a place to fly their planes, especially since they lost of large site now occupied by a stadium (on the former New York World's Fair parking lot). As a result of efforts by the Association of Model Airplane Clubs of Greater New York, new sites were part of an overall project that provided CL flying fields in each of the five boroughs of the city.

The regional association was founded when Flushing Model Airplane Society called together as many model clubs as possible to form an alliance of New York-area model airplane clubs. Representatives from 14 groups attended this first meeting. The main purpose in forming the association was to gather the majority of fliers in New York City into one large organization, to make a show of strength to obtain adequate, permanent model airplane flying sites, and to promote model aviation wherever and whenever possible. Until this time, many attempts by individual clubs to

obtain flying sites from the City of New York had ended in failure.

Contact was first made with the City Park Department through the president of the Borough of Queens. It was through the office that the new association was able to present its problems, together with suggested solutions, to the authorities. There was much correspondence between the association and the New York City park commissioner. At this time, association officers were asked to identify locations in each borough that they considered desirable for model airplane flying. Shortly after this meeting, the association not only provided a list of locations, but also included plans for what was considered to be the typical CL model flying field. Representatives of the association met with Park Department officials to discuss the planning and development of final plans for the construction of the fields.

Subsequently, the association was pleased to learn that funds necessary for the construction of the proposed fields had been allocated in the following year's New York City Park Department budget. Construction was to start in the summer or the fall, but due to delays and difficulties in getting the money released, bids and contracts for construction were not awarded until late in the next year.

Phase 1 of the project included CL flying sites at Marine Park, Brooklyn, and Pelham Bay in the Bronx. Work on Phase 2, for CL sites at Forest Park in Queens and Inwood Hill Park in Manhattan continued, as did the task of procurement of CL sites for Staten

Island, plus a large site in the Flushing Meadows park development.

Outside the city, flying circles were included in the "east end" town of Islip, New York. The director of recreation said that eight to 10 months of diligent work was required to acquire four flying circles at the north end of this recreation site. The total project cost nearly \$1 million. The association worked closely with local groups (Bay Shore, Deer Park) and the New York City recreation department.

More recent developments have included the opening of portions of Gateway Federal Park for aeromodeling activities. This agreement between New York City modelers and the US government was brought about through efforts of the (RCAGNY), AMA district vice president John Byrne, Dick Brooks and Bill Boss. The RCAGNY consists of eight clubs (more than 1,200 fliers) that are constantly working for procurement of new flying sites in the New York City area.

The Pennsylvania Avenue RC Society was forbidden to fly at Floyd Bennett Field when the U.S. Department of the Interior took over the property from the U.S. Coast Guard for the Gateway Project. The Association got involved and within six months had permission to resume use of the flying site. Meanwhile, negotiations had been underway for sometime for use of the Miller Field in the Great Kills portion of Gateway Federal Park on behalf of the Richmond Model Flying Club on Staten Island. An agreement was reached that permitted aeromodeling use of Great Kills Federal Recreation area on Staten Island, as well as Floyd Bennett Park.

As with any project of this size, there were problems to be ironed out. Coordination was necessary between Gateway (U.S. Department of the Interior) and the on-site Coast Guard Air Rescue Station (U.S. Treasury Department), the New York City Police Department Helicopter Squadron, driver training areas, and a wildlife preserve (since Gateway embraces every facet of recreation in addition to the governmental facilities).

In Model Airplane News magazine, the editor quoted the RCAGNY president, Dick Brooks, as saying "It would be a gross overstatement to say that everything worked out fine and dandy from the start. It took a year-and-a-half of hard work, with many disappointments, before we could say that our association was running in high gear."

A joint meeting that included AMA's executive director, the Coast Guard commander in charge of the helicopter rescue facility, and local aeromodeling representatives, helped to prevent problems. (The Coast Guard commander later served as a scale judge at a Rockefeller Center Model Show). As a follow-up to the overall effort, the RCAGNY showed willing to give as well as get. It held several Delta Dart programs for underprivileged children as part of its community-oriented efforts. Public Relations planning was aggressive, and still greater TV network coverage was obtained for other, larger events.

Gateway flying sites are open to any US citizen who demonstrates flying

proficiency and proper qualifications (see I.D. cards below).

**GATEWAY NATIONAL PARK  
MODEL FLYING FIELDS  
ENTRANCE PASS**  
**Floyd Bennett Field - Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Great Kills Park - Staten Island,**  
NAME \_\_\_\_\_

AMA NO. \_\_\_\_\_ FCC NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**This card is non-transferable and must be on your person while flying. It must be presented upon demand of Gateway, PARCS or GNY personnel.**

**PILOT STATUS RATING CARD**  
**The R/C model pilot whose name appears on the front of this card may not fly without an instructor unless he is listed as a qualified pilot on the form below. To be valid, the form must be dated and signed by a PARCS or RMFC instructor.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**PILOT'S TEST TAKEN (Date)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Instructor's Signature**

**North Carolina:** Doug Holland, then an AMA associate vice president, tells the story of the Raleigh Durham R/C Club which learned that it was going to lose its field. They immediately started to look for a new one. Their search consisted of the usual methods: driving throughout the country, checking on farmland that might prove useful; flying over the county hoping to find more land to inspect from the ground; and telling everyone they saw about their needs. They put on a static display in a shopping mall, including a large poster



advertising the fact that they needed a flying site. None of the efforts produced results.

At one club meeting, a retired farmer stood up and suggested that they advertise in a local newspaper under "Land for Rent," where farmers advertise for land they want to rent for crops. This had been tried once, but with effect little result. But the club was told that late winter/early spring was the best time of year, so an ad was placed. It ran Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. On Saturday afternoon, the phone started to ring. The results were astonishing. It was estimated that more than 75 calls were received.

As soon as club members told callers they wanted a place to fly model airplanes, most were not interested. However, some said that if the price was right they would consider it. The group was able to quote a price that would not destroy the club's budget, and landowners seemed to be interested. About 5% of the calls from the ad resulted in properties that were possible flying sites but did not work out for one reason or another. They eventually located a farmer who was interested in a lease with reasonable terms and options for renewal. He was interested in airplanes too, having had people fly them from his property in the past. The club wound up paying less than \$100 per acre (of actual ground area) per year and now has a flying site, plus airspace over a great deal of rent-free acreage.

In the area, Holland concluded, they could forget about flying close to towns. They found it difficult to locate land within 20 miles of a town or city. However, some members said that they

would not mind driving 50 miles for a decent field. An "ad" under "Land for Rent" may be the answer to your prayers too.

**Pennsylvania:** A contribution to model aviation history was made in a relatively remote section of Washington County, close to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1970, a new 4,000-acre state park was opened for public use. Of particular interest to modelers was the 200x350-foot asphalt takeoff and landing site for model aircraft. Added conveniences included taxiways, ready areas, a mounted spectator area, large parking lot, and 24 Academy of Model Aeronautics restrooms. Best of all, the park was placed under the control and guidance of the Greater Pittsburgh ARCS. Here's how it all came about.

Working with youths in the Pittsburgh area, the ARCS attracted the attention of James F. Hillman, a strip miner and philanthropist, who is interested in youth activities. Mr. Hillman gave the ARCS facilities to establish a model airport and through the years contributed greatly to aeromodeling activities in the area.

Mr. Hillman believed that in strip mining a portion of the profits should be returned to the land, restoring it to its original condition for future generations. Therefore he began a program of putting strip mines his company had worked back into their original condition through filling and replanting vegetation. For this effort, James F. Hillman was given the Outstanding Citizen of Pennsylvania Award.

About this time, he donated 4,000 acres of reclaimed, former strip mine land to the state for use as a public park. In the

meantime, the ARCS was caught up in an expansion of highways and housing developments that were threatening to crowd it out of its long-established flying site. The club decided to ask for space on the newly donated land, and with Mr. Hillman's blessing it arranged a meeting with the state director of the Department of Forests and Waters. Other state representatives also attended, including K.L. Irvis, a state legislator, member of the ARCS, and later speaker of the house in state legislature. His political know-how and assistance were of considerable benefit to the ARCS' goals at the new state park.

The meeting was held at the club's original flying site so that the needs of area fliers could be demonstrated. State engineers were favorably impressed by demonstration flights, and also with the thoroughness of thinking and planning done by the ARCS members. They readily agreed that the club activities should be an important part of the new state park. The fact that the ARCS had controlled its old flying site without problems for many years also impressed the engineers.

Another important factor affecting this favorable decision was the far-thinking approach of the Pennsylvania Park Planners. Unknown to the ARCS, they had decided that the public was ready for "noise" parks-places where people could use relatively loud modern machines without the dire consequences from those who preferred peace and quiet. The ARCS showed the way, mostly through strict organization and control of the field it had maintained since 1946. This is one of the main reasons why the club has control of its area of the state park. There had been minor problems

with dune buggy drivers who roared through the park at will until confronted by ARCS members with blood in their eyes. What more could any parks department ask?

Another important factor in determining control of James F. Hillman Model Airpark was that the AMA stood solidly behind the ARCS as a sanctioning body, not only for chartering but through liability protection as well. Not many other organizations would be able to approach a state government and make the same conditions available, especially at no cost to the state. The ARCS flying site demonstrates what can be accomplished by one hardworking club that has a friend in the legislature and presents an image of aeromodeling that benefits us all.

**Casper, Wyoming:** This city was fortunate enough to have a city manager and a visionary council. Through the efforts of the city manager and the council, the citizens of Casper were persuaded to pass a referendum some years ago for a 1¢ sales tax. This fund was to be used for capital construction projects for the benefit of the citizens. The list of capital expenditures has grown through the years but contains numerous parks, a new city hall, a new justice hall, major street and utility construction, and new fire stations.

Later, this tax system was adopted by many city governments throughout Wyoming and in many cases has provided funding for financing major improvements that would not have been managed in any other way. Casper purchased land for the North Platte Park several years ago. A model airport facility was not included in the master

plan. However, when the local AMA club members realized what the possibilities were, they quickly went to work. One problem they had to overcome was the “toys” image. Through demonstrations, mall shows, and other public awareness programs, the club built a mature, responsible, adult image and proved to other citizens how sophisticated the model aircraft of today really are.

It was decided to prepare a detailed model airpark proposal. This proposal contained a short history of the sport and references to safety, healthful recreation, education, pilot training, the size of the national organization, and the sport. The national and international aspects of the sport were identified. The membership policy of AMA and the club was being stressed as a sport for all people regardless, of age or background.

To indicate to the City that a model airpark can be a tourist attraction, a listing of actual and proposed contests was included. No admission charges were scheduled, but the business community benefits from an influx of out-of-town visitors. It was pointed out that resulting sales taxes would help to reimburse the city.

The club proposal included a detailed plan showing locations of parking areas, landscaping, picnic and spectator areas, runway locations and sizes, and more. A well-prepared drawing is better than a thousand words. The report, although heavy in detail, was kept as short as feasible, bearing in mind that the city staff was normally well occupied with many other matters. Preliminary meetings with city staff also helped

smooth the way and allow the presentation to be prepared to suit them.

The most interesting aspect of the proposal, from the city viewpoint, was the wealth of work that the club offered to perform. Most groups go to their local administration and demand services. In this case, the Casper club went prepared to give. Members had already lined up contractors and supply houses to provide wood, brick, gravel, concrete, old drilling rig cables for boundary markers, and old telephone posts for fences. Work parties from the club outnumbered city employees 10 to one most of the time. All companies that provided materials received a thank-you letter delivered in person by a representative from the club.

Club contributions to the project were estimated at about \$156,000, while the city contribution, bearing in mind the value of the land, and was estimated at over \$1 million. If you ever visit Casper, stop in at North Platte Park and enjoy one of the best model airparks in the nation.

### **Buy Your Own**

Some clubs have been able to purchase land for a flying site. This is possible outside of the larger metropolitan areas of the country, where land is less expensive. If you live in such an area, this may be a viable alternative for your club. Many clubs have a program where a portion of the membership fee goes directly into a site fund, which is set aside for such a goal. Other clubs charge a basic membership fee and an additional flying fee for use of the existing field, which goes into the site fund. However you decide to handle it, it is an idea that works.

Since financing from a bare start can be a problem, some responsible members of your group may form a syndicate for the actual purchase of the property with a lease-back or share-selling arrangement with the club. These details should be worked out and agreed upon by all, before action is taken on such a program. It has worked in some areas and could be right for you. Some clubs have expressed the thought that when you rent all you have at year, end is a handful of receipts; whereas when you buy property, at the very least you have a club asset that appreciates in value. Purchase of land can be handled by down payment and mortgage; with the prime consideration being how much your club can afford to pay on a monthly basis. This approach requires a stable membership that will understand the requirements of the financial commitment and be prepared to live with it. If a friendly benefactor or group can handle the mortgage, then perhaps you can realize a lower monthly payment over a longer period of time. Of course, your overall cost will be higher before termination of the loan, but if it equals your rental costs on a monthly outlay, then you have gained and not lost.

Approach land purchase cautiously because many zoning and land use questions must be considered before you commit yourselves. One group bought a piece of property and paved a runway before it discovered that its RC activities were prohibited in that area. A lot of time, trouble, and money was spent for nothing. Know exactly where you stand with local authorities, and neighbors change, so even if you own land now, you may have to restrict or give up flying there at a later date should complaints arise. Which gives rise to the

question—How permanent is permanent?

### **Considerations for the Local Model Club in Purchasing Flying Site Property**

A common problem of many local AMA clubs is the determination of whether to purchase land for a permanent flying site. There are many important considerations, which should be discussed among the leaders of a club prior to making a final decision. As set forth in the following, consultation with a local real estate attorney is essential in determining what is right for your club.

#### **I. Evaluating the Club Structure**

Initially, the club should look at its structure. If it is not already incorporated in the state in which it is located, it should take all necessary steps to incorporate as a non-profit. This step offers several advantages, including limiting liability of the individuals in the organization and allowing the club to avoid the heavy taxation burden that besets for-profit corporations.

When a local club incorporates, its Articles of Incorporation and Code of Regulations (or Bylaws, depending on the locality) should reflect those of the national organization: AMA. By doing this, the club demonstrates a commonality of purpose. The Articles of Incorporation should include a “purpose clause,” which includes a specific description of the organization similar to this:

“To promote and encourage interest in model aeronautics, model airplanes and their operation and ownership for the benefit of the members of the corporation. To purchase, lease or

otherwise acquire, and hold, own, use, and operate real and personal property including model aeronautic equipment, storage areas, and such other equipment and appurtenances thereto and services therefore as may be incidental to the use and operation thereof, and such other or personal property or other facilities as may be required for the use of its members.”

In addition, the Code of Regulations should include a section which providing that if the club dissolves for any reason, all assets of said club are automatically transferred to the national organization.

The non-profit corporation should be aware that certain obligations must be fulfilled in order to retain its non-profit status. Each year the organization is required to file an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990 “Information Return,” which updates the progress of the corporation. In addition, the organization must comply with any state-law requirements.

The corporation must continue to refrain from any activity that could result in the inurement of a benefit to a member. For example, the clubs should refrain from purchasing real estate for a flying site from a member. Such a transaction would cause the IRS to closely analyze the sale to determine if, in fact, a member inured a benefit. Once the club is incorporated, the organizations can then consider the prospect of purchasing real estate for its own flying site. Some clubs have asked whether it is best to set up a separate corporation for the sole purpose of purchasing the property and leasing it back to the club. Generally, since the club has been incorporated as a non-profit organization, there is no

reason to go through the expense of setting up another corporation.

The advantage of setting up an additional corporation for the purchase and rental of the property is that such a structure adds another layer of liability protection for the club. However, the formation of another corporation also signals additional corporate formalities that must be maintained and subjects the corporation to taxation. If these formalities are not adhered to, the creditors of the separate corporation could “pierce the corporate veil” and proceed against the organization itself.

## **II. Purchasing the Property**

Once the club has incorporated and decided to definitely purchase real property, the first step is to choose an appropriate piece of land for a flying site. At this stage that the club should retain the services of a qualified local real estate attorney who is knowledgeable in the area zoning laws and familiar with other laws that might affect real estate.

The attorney can review the property to ensure good title for the club. In addition, the attorney can review the property with regard to restrictions in use, zoning ordinances, easements, and other matters that could limit the club’s use of the property. By employing a real estate attorney who is familiar with the surrounding region, the club will benefit not only from the individual’s legal expertise, but also from, his or her experience with the nuances of a particular locale.

## **III. Finances**

Another aspect of a real estate purchase by a club is financing. It is usually

necessary for the club to borrow money from a local lending institution. If desired, it is appropriate at this time to consult with your district vice president for assistance in the possibility of acquiring a loan through the AMA. If so, the club will most likely be required to present some type of financial statement to the proposed lender. Usually a financial statement similar in format to AMA's would be sufficient.

Although being a non-profit corporation does exempt the organization from many taxes imposed on for-profit corporations, the non-profit corporation is still liable for real estate taxes levied by the local government. An estimation of this payment may be made by the real estate attorney when he or she is investigating the property.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

As set forth in the preceding, there are many considerations to be given when a club seeks to purchase real estate to have its own flying site. Certainly the advise of local counsel well versed in real estate is necessary to gain further insight. However, by addressing these concerns at the beginning of the transaction, the club will be able to enjoy its flying site without having to be concerned with aggravating legal problems later.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Vandalism—How to Cope With It**

An AMA club in New Jersey was experiencing problems with vandalism at its flying site. The Academy was contacted regarding some legal advice in the matter. The subject was discussed

with the law firm in Washington DC that AMA retains for certain business matters. Several points were formulated from the review of this case. The request itself was beyond the scope under which the AMA's attorney normally provides services. But since state laws were involved, the issues required local legal counsel that was familiar with these matters, preferably when originally leasing a site. However, this exercise did produce some general observations, which are being offered for information only and should not constitute a legal position. Therefore, these comments are presented with a note of caution—that local counsel should be consulted before undertaking any of the possible means of protecting flying site property; these are discussed below:

Before undertaking any alteration of leased land, one should review the terms of the lease to determine whether or not the desired alteration is permissible. One should also determine whether or not the lease terms make the lessee liable for the cost of restoring the land to its original condition at the end of the lease period or for the value of irreparable damage. Upon termination of a lease of land, any fixtures attached to the land would normally become the property of the lessor and their worth lost to the lessee.

Assuming that the desired alteration is permissible under the lease, one must consider the effectiveness of possible alterations in accomplishing the desired purpose and the legal liability to which the lessee may be exposed by making each possible alteration. If a lessee were suffering vandalism by means of trespassers driving four-wheel-drive vehicles across the carefully prepared

surface of the land, then several possible alterations may be considered.

One possible means of discouraging the vandals would be placing of horizontal telephone poles on the ground, held in place by lengths of pipe drilled through the poles and into holes in the ground that are filled with concrete. Such poles, if of big enough diameter, should discourage a four-wheel-drive vehicle operator from trying to cross them. Assuming that the grass is kept trimmed around them, the poles should be obvious to visitors, so they will not trip over them. However, children may find the poles attractive to play on, and the lessee could be held liable for injuries suffered by children invited onto the premises by the lessee. Children may find such curved surfaces amusing to try to stand on, and an unsuccessful attempt to stand on a pole may result in injury for which the lessee could be found liable.

Another possible means of discouraging the vandals would be to dig a ditch around the area to be protected. If the ditch is not wide and deep enough, the vandals may merely take it as a new challenge and attain higher speeds on the field than before to assure a successful crossing. If, however, the ditch is deep and wide enough to be effective, it will present a risk to the lessee's invitees to whom it lessee owes a duty of care to prevent injury.

The precise nature of this duty varies with the facts of a particular situation and the law of the particular jurisdiction. Too, a ditch, if big enough to be effective, requires that a safe means be provided to allow wanted visitors to cross. The bridge would have to be

secured in some fashion; and securing the bridge may prove difficult or uneconomical. A third alternative would be to place "tank traps," which are concrete pyramids large enough to block a four-wheel drive vehicle, around the area to be protected.

These tank traps could be placed on the surface close enough together to block vehicles, but not walking people, and could readily be recovered by crane and truck and possibly resold if the lease terminates. By placing the traps on the surface, rather than digging into the ground, the land would not be permanently altered. Because they are not permanently affixed to the land, the lessee would be permitted to remove them at expiration of the lease and not lose their value.

Such pyramids can be made smooth enough and steep enough to discourage children from attempting to climb or sit them and seem less likely to expose the lessee to liability for injury.

Effective tank traps can also be made by assembling steel girders in the shape of a child's six-pointed jack. However, because such an item may attract a child to attempt to climb on it with resulting injury, we cannot recommend its use. Not only could such an item result in injury to an invited child, but it could also be placed with swimming pools and railroad equipment in the category of "attractive nuisances." One who maintains an attractive nuisance on his or her land is liable for injury, not only to an invitee, but also to a trespasser, particularly a child who comes upon the land to play with the item and is consequently injured. Such a case can be especially embarrassing to a lessee

whose status in the community depends heavily on the goodwill of parents and children. The possibility of creating an attractive nuisance should be discussed with local counsel before undertaking any project such counsel can review area statutes and case law and render an opinion.

If there is a structure on the premises with either interior or exterior electric lighting, we suggest that a time clock be installed to change the lighting in a random manner, to give the impression that the property is frequently attended and may be attended at the time vandals are preparing to trespass. We cannot stress strongly enough the role that local police can have in effectively protecting property and the position that an organization, such as a model aviation club, should be in to promote effective policing.

A club suffering repeated vandalism might consider sponsoring a field day event, charging admission, selling refreshments, and donating the proceeds either to the police benevolent fund or to a police-sponsored charity, such as a boy's or girl's club. Club members can actively participate in police-sponsored events, making themselves known as club members. Local counsel can advise on the opportunities available and the proprieties to be observed. Then, with sufficient goodwill built up, the club should be able to get more adequate police protection for its property.

## **Chapter 10**

### **Federal Programs**

Elsewhere in this book you will find stories of clubs that are flying on federal

property. In some cases, site improvements were actually done with federal funds. Now how does this come about? Perhaps some of the following information can be of interest to you.

**Department of the Interior:** This Department has, as part of its duties, a Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan that is administered by the National Park Service. In the review draft of the Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan (1978) there were specific references to Model Aviation (Chapter 6, page 13) and Club Activities (Chapter 6, page 30). From these you can understand that club activities (of all interests) and model aviation are not foreign to the thinking of the Department. However, there are stipulations concerning the overall policies and how grants and land use are administered.

The National Recreation Areas under the Department comprise almost 3.6 million acres of land of all types. In addition, grants are available to states, and through them the money can be made available to other levels of government. In order to qualify for funds, the state must have a statewide recreation plan and be prepared to provide 50% matching funds. Your first step is to find out if your state has such a plan and what it provides for in recreational interests. Present federal policy calls for apportionment of funds by population on a project-by-project basis, with active projects receiving preference. One example, described elsewhere in this book, is the Gateway National Recreation Area (N.R.A.), which is being used by two flying clubs. This has given much needed space for pilots in a heavily populated section of the country.



**Surplus Federal Property Program:**

Another federal possibility, also administered by the Department of the Interior, is the Surplus Property Program. Any local government body is eligible to participate—towns, cities, counties, and states. Notices of the availability of surplus federal property are always sent to local bodies to give them an option to participate in the program if they have the need. Once again, a statewide outdoor recreation plan is a requirement. To determine if your state has any surplus federal land available, you should contact the regional office. These are listed at the end of this chapter.

Since the inception of this program, over 900 properties have been turned over to park use, comprising more than 93,000 acres; a nice addition to the nation's recreation facilities.

**Corps of Engineers:** As you can see from other examples in this book, clubs are using lands (mostly flood control or water storage areas) that are under the control of the Corps. The Corps of Engineers does have an official recreation program, details of which can be obtained from its nearest office. It also publishes brochures on "Lakeside Recreation" that can be obtained by mail. These give full regional details of all the tracts of land and water it administers. A recent change of policy by the Corps states that its land will be used for water-oriented recreation *only*, so you may have to get some seaplanes built or tie in your plans for a site with some RC boaters. Get your foot in the door and then expand the interest group. At any event the opportunities are there, and, you can find out what possibilities exist in your area by contacting the

Corps District office in your nearest major city (usually listed in the White Pages under Army, Department of the Corps of Engineers).

Once again, we advise you that working with government departments requires patience, tact, good documentation and more patience. However, if the best sites for model flying in your area are under the control of a federal agency, make your initial contacts, prepare your presentation and get on with it. You might wind up with a first-class flying field and an expanding club.

**Field Offices of the National Park Service**

1. North Atlantic Regional Office  
National Park Service  
15 State Street  
Boston, MA 02109  
(ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ)
2. Mid-Atlantic Regional Office  
National Park Service  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, PA 10106  
(PA, MD, WV, DE, VA)
3. National Capital Region  
National Park Service  
1100 Ohio Drive S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20242  
(D.C. & certain field areas of VA, MD, and WV)
4. Southeast Regional Office  
National Park Service  
75 Spring Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, PR, VI)
5. Midwest Regional Office  
National Park Service

1709 Jackson Street  
Omaha, NE 68102

Seattle, WA 98101  
(ID, OR, WA)

6. Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
National Park Service  
655 Parfet Avenue  
Denver, CO 80225  
(MT, ND, SD, WY, UT, CO)

10. Alaska Regional Office  
National Park Service  
540 West 5th Avenue (Room 202)  
Anchorage, AK 99501

7. Southwest Regional Office  
National Park Service  
Old Santa Fe Trail  
Post Office Box 728  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)

### **Environment Protection Agency**

The EPA has partnered with the AMA to help identify possible flying sites for model clubs. The EPA doesn't own these sites but has had to step in and clean up sites that have environmental issues. Once sites have been treated they are well suited for our use. Past Flying Site Assistance Coordinator Joe Beshar helped to establish this partnership with the EPA. Following is a copy of the document, as well, as the information to help you determine what sites are available in your area. Numerous clubs have benefited as a result of the cooperative effort between the EPA and AMA. Many new sites are now being enjoyed by AMA members.

8. Western Regional Office  
National Park Service  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
Post Office Box 36063  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(AZ, CA, HI, NV)

9. Pacific Northwest Regional Office  
National Park Service  
4th & Pike Building (Room 931)  
1424 4th Avenue

## **How to Explore EPA Superfund Sites as Possible Model Aircraft Flying Fields**

An extensive search of government agencies for assistance in obtaining model airplane flying sites led the AMA to the EPA.

There, Melissa Friedland, National EPA Program Coordinator for Superfund Development, supported by Michael B. Cook, Director for Superficial Remediation Technology Innovation, recognized the great win-win opportunity that could result from the reuse of EPA Superfund sites as model aircraft flying fields.

Through their efforts in Washington DC, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on February 10, 2005. The MOU creates an alliance between the EPA and AMA. This will link communities with Superfund sites to the expertise of the AMA in evaluating these tracts of land for potential reuse as flying fields.



February 10, 2005  
Michael B. Cook, Director, greets Joe Beshar, AMA Flying Site Assistance Coordinator



View of the Washington conference meeting. (L to R): Michael B. Cook, Joe Beshar, Bruce Giumara (AMA volunteer flying site assistant), Melissa Friedland and Dr. Elizabeth Southerland, Director of EPA Assessment Division



Director Michael B. Cook signs the Memorandum of Understanding between the AMA and EPA. The document was then co-signed by Joe Beshar.

Memorandum of Understanding:



ACADEMY OF MODEL AERONAUTICS  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH  
EPA AND SUPERFUND COMMUNITIES

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to set forth certain understandings between the Academy of Model Aeronautics (“Academy”), an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and the Environmental Protection Agency, (“EPA”), an agency of the United States government.

The Academy’s mission is to make aeromodeling the foremost sport/hobby in the world through promotion, development, education about, and general advancement of modeling activities. The Academy’s priorities include:

- Representing more than 170,000 members nationwide from every walk of life, economic background, and age group. The Academy is open to anyone interested in building and flying model airplanes;
- Chartering more than 2,500 model airplane clubs across the country. The Academy offers its chartered clubs official contest sanction, insurance, and assistance in getting and keeping flying sites;
- Organizing the annual National Aeromodeling Championships in Muncie, Indiana, the world's largest model airplane competition;
- Sanctioning more than 3,000 model airplane competitions nationwide each year, and certifying official model flying records on a national and international level; and
- Providing liaison between local chartered clubs and the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Communications Commission, and other government agencies, in addition to local governments, zoning boards, and parks departments.

The MOU between the Academy and EPA is an alliance which links Superfund communities interested in hosting aeromodeling activities on their Superfund sites with the expertise and resources of the Academy. The Superfund sites should be open environments that have very few obstacles for model aircraft and are normally surrounded by an uninhabited buffer zone (e.g., closed or capped landfills). The Academy will offer no-cost services to participating Superfund communities, in order to examine and facilitate the integration of Superfund sites with aeromodeling activities. Those services are as follows:

- Mowing and maintaining the landscape surfaces on the portions of Superfund sites that the Academy is utilizing; and
- Maintaining fences located on the portions of Superfund sites that the Academy is utilizing.

EPA agrees to provide the Academy with appropriate publicly available information about the Superfund cleanup process and the Superfund Redevelopment Initiative that the Academy may use to facilitate interaction with communities at identified sites, and will consider aeromodeling activities as a possible suitable future use at appropriate points in the remedy selection process.

EPA will provide publicly available information to the Academy about Superfund sites that have physical characteristics identified by the Academy as suitable for aeromodeling and will provide appropriate contact information for EPA, State, and local representatives for the sites.

It is understood and agreed by the Academy that neither EPA nor any of the respective communities have any obligation to host aeromodeling activities and/or utilize the Academy services cited above. It is also understood and agreed by the Academy that any other sport or recreational entity may offer similar types of programs to EPA and/or the Superfund communities.

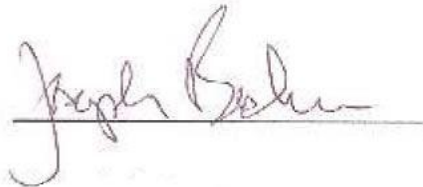
### **Limitations**

All commitments made by EPA in this MOU are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and each agency's budget priorities. Nothing in this MOU, in and of itself, obligates EPA to expend appropriations or to enter into any contract, assistance agreement, interagency agreement, or incur other financial obligations. The Academy agrees not to submit a claim for compensation for services to EPA or any Federal agency for activities it undertakes in connection with this MOU.

Any endeavor involving reimbursement or contribution of funds between the parties to this MOU will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures, and will be subject to separate subsidiary agreements that will be effected in writing by representatives of both parties.

EPA may not endorse the purchase or sale of products and services provided by the Academy or any private organizations that become partners in this effort. The Academy may make factual statements regarding its cooperation with EPA in this effort but these statements must not imply that EPA endorses any fund-raising activities by the Academy.

This MOU does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity against the Academy or EPA, their officers or employees, or any other person. This MOU does not direct or apply to any person outside the Academy and EPA.



Joseph Beshar  
Flying Sites Coordinator  
Academy of Model Aeronautics



Michael B. Cook, Director  
Office of Superfund Remediation &  
Technology Innovation  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

To view the MOU document in pdf format, go to the EPA web site:  
<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/programs/recycle/pdfs/modelair.pdf>  
You will need Adobe Acrobat reader to view this file.

## **How To Locate A Superfund Site in Your Area**

1. Visit the EPA Web site [www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/index.htm).  
In the left side bar:
  - A. Click: "Locate NPL Sites"
  - B. Click: "Construction Completions at National Priorities List (NPL) Sites by State"
  - C. Click: Your state
2. Choose a site of interest. Write down its CERCLIS ID number. Visit and inspect the site to be sure it is suitable for a flying field.
3. If you want to pursue the superfund site as a possible flying field, email Tony Stillman at [fsac@modelaircraft.org](mailto:fsac@modelaircraft.org) or 800-435-9262. Include the following information:
  - A. The site ID number from the EPA Web site.
  - B. The superfund site's state and city location.
  - C. Your club name and contact person's name, phone number and address.
4. We will follow up with the EPA for possible acceptance.

# Chapter 11

## Summation

You have seen from actual examples that clubs have benefited from joining into regional associations—AMA chapters—made up of all clubs in an area. This enables each group to exert a stronger voice with landowners and/or public officials than any single club possibly could. RC groups should contact local CL clubs and FF clubs at the beginning for help with flying site projects, and FF or CL clubs should benefit from inclusion of all categories of models in the flying site acquisition program. A regional association of clubs eliminates divided opinions on local modeling needs that would inevitably result from several different clubs seeking flying sites on their own. Numerous individual plans would necessarily overlap and appear to involve conflicts of interest between several groups. By unifying their efforts, an effective, mutually agreeable, simple plan can be presented to authorities. Any differences between individual clubs could be ironed out before presenting to site owners. Unity also adds the strength of numbers plus sharing a single (even if complex) plan for development. Small clubs may fare as well or better than large clubs in the search for flying sites. The Orbiting Eagles of Omaha gained access to school grounds for CL flying by the concerted efforts of a very few of its 20-odd members, although the club is growing rapidly. The Lake Charles, Louisiana, members of a relatively small club gained access to a county-sponsored facility that was large enough to stage a national contest; indeed, the Lake Charles LARKS hosted the Nats in 1974 and again in 1975 and 1978.

Each successful model-port effort involved politics and numbers of model fliers (multiplied by each family's membership). In each case, one or more thoroughly knowledgeable club member represented the organized modelers with public officials and followed through persistently to the successful conclusion of the model-port efforts.

In most successful cases, club members knew (or got to know) someone of influence who acted as a friend for the group, and they used an effective presentation to convince local officials that the needs of the sport of aeromodeling were viable and should be met.

### **Safety**

The aspect of safety, in all forms of consumer products, was indirectly covered by the March 1979 report from the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Its Age Adjusted Frequency Severity Index ranked Product Group 181 (Science Kits, Models, Molding Sets and Fuel Powered Toys) as number 172 on the listing. Compare this with the top ten: Bicycles; Stairs, Football, Baseball, Playground, Equipment; Non Glass tables; Beds; Chairs and Sofas, Gasoline, and Power Mowers (in that order). Quarter Scale modelers, please note where gasoline ranks (9th) and exercise great care.

The point here is that when discussing safety with public officials, you are quite correct to indicate that there are many accepted forms of recreation and sport that have a substantially higher incidence of injury than model aviation.

## **Nationwide Hobby/Sport**

In all cases, a presentation to administrators should emphasize the national organization, AMA, the Safety Code, FCC, and FAA regulation, and what the group's affiliation with the AMA means to the property owner. AMA's \$2.5 million liability protection, with the landowner covered as additional insured, shows that aeromodeling is responsible, beneficial, and truly national in scope (international too). It should be pointed out that the sport builds character and is enjoyed by young and old alike. Flying demonstrations for public officials and using properly silenced engines—even in areas where mufflers may not generally be required—seem to be universally helpful in the education of both politicians and landowners.

Without doubt, the most successful efforts were greatly aided by an effective public relations program. This helps let the public know what you are doing. Whether it is inviting the press, radio or TV to a fun-fly or contest, a Delta Dart program in your city schools, or waging a full-blown campaign for the honorable sport of aero modeling, PR has a definite and necessary place in your field acquisition program. Good PR will, also, surely help you keep the field you've got.

**Magazines**—The following magazines are the major ones in the US devoted to building and flying model aircraft. They are sold by most hobby shops, many newsstands, and are available by subscription.

*Flying Models Magazine*  
P.O. Box 700  
Newton, New Jersey 07860

*Model Airplane News*  
251 Danbury Rd.  
Wilton, CT 06897

*Model Aviation Magazine*  
Academy of Model Aeronautics  
5161 E. Memorial Dr.  
Muncie, IN 47302

*Park Pilot Magazine*  
Academy of Model Aeronautics  
5161 E Memorial Dr.  
Muncie, IN 47302

*S & E Modeler*  
P.O. BOX 4250  
West Richland, WA 99353-4004

*Fly RC*  
650 Danbury Road  
Ridgefield, CT 06877

*RC Sport Flyer*  
P.O. Box 4250  
West Richland, WA 99353

*RC Heli Magazine*  
13401 Yorba Avenue  
Chino, CA 91710

### **ELECTRONIC MEDIA/WEBSITES:**

The following Web sites have online magazines.

R/C Report  
[www.rcreport.net](http://www.rcreport.net)

Sport Aviator  
[www.masportaviator.com](http://www.masportaviator.com)



Rotary Modelers  
[www.rotary.com](http://www.rotary.com)

RC Universe  
[www.rcuniverse.com](http://www.rcuniverse.com)

Rc Groups  
[www.rcgroups.com](http://www.rcgroups.com)

## **Section II**

### **Keeping What You Have**

# CHAPTER 1

## How to Lose a Flying Site

If you're a member of one of those clubs that has the following kind of flying site problems, take heed. Perhaps your problem field has too many modelers, enjoying themselves too much, flying anytime they like, and not cooperating with each other and the club for the mutual pleasure and benefit of all. Take heart! You can lose that field and many more equally agreeable flying sites by the simple application of just a few basic principles of field-losing. You can even do it in a manner that will allow you to blame your club and its officers along with AMA Headquarters for your loss.

It's simple to eliminate a fine flying site from your list of club assets. You can do it almost without thinking. Actually, it's easier to lose a field if you don't think. Some suggestions on losing a flying site are provided in the following 11 "Commandments."

1. Don't make any ground and flight rules for the use of your club field. Since modelers are intelligent and unselfish or self-serving, field rules are superfluous.
2. If you do have rules governing the conduct of field activities, don't enforce them. Take for granted that all club members can read and will surely adhere diligently to the posted edicts without reminders.
3. Should your group decide to appoint field marshals, managers, or safety officials to enforce the rules, volunteer to assist but never call another member down for improper flying, for parking too close to the flightline, or for littering. Some hard feelings and resentments

might result. It's also helpful if field marshals and safety officials are absent most of the time flying is taking place.

4. Don't concern yourselves about noise. Be complacent because mufflers aren't that effective anyhow, and there probably aren't enough homes around the field to worry about. Try to arrange for some early-morning test flights—especially on Sunday—and break in engines (unmuffled) after dusk when you can't fly anyhow.
5. Treat any noise complaints belligerently. Let it be known that it's your field and you can darn well do anything you like on, over, or around it.
6. Forget about staying away from neighboring homes and fly your model without regard to direction of property lines.
7. Ignore your landowner. Since he or she said you could use the property, don't offer him or her, his or her favorite charity, a portion of the proceeds from your club contest or raffle, and don't invite him or her and his and her family to the club banquet or barbecue. Nor should he or she or his or her children be offered flight instructions using your aircraft. Since Christmas is a family time, enjoy your family but don't give your landowner's child a simple kit or a small ready-to-fly model. And, should the landowner's or a local recreation commissioner's youngster show up at your RC field with a hand-launched glider or simple rubber model, treat him like an outsider who hasn't the money or maturity to fly like you do. Don't offer a helping hand—maybe he or she will go away and never come back.
8. Don't worry about flying demonstrations for the local charities or young hospital patients—your fun and contests come first. Even though demonstrations create better

understanding between the “uneducated” non modeling public and your club, don’t waste time on such efforts. Similarly, don’t bother with a miniature aircraft show, because that’s simply a PR gimmick to give the public a good image of your favorite sport, and who needs it? The same is true of good photographs and text about your aeromodeling activities released to the local newspaper—too much trouble. PR is not the responsibility of a local model club, right? Let AMA Headquarters worry about the PR, even though there’s no way people in Washington can tell your local newspaper, TV, and other media in your town as well as you can what a fine community-oriented group you are and what activities your club is involved in.

9. If one of your models flies into a neighbor’s property, dash right after it. Don’t knock at the home, explain what happened, and ask permission. Plunge right onto their property and don’t worry about mashing down farm crops and the like. They probably won’t be able to identify you and, besides, it’s not really trespassing if you’re going onto their property after your property, is it?

10. Don’t have a junior training program for newcomers to the sport. You came up the hard way and there’s no need to pass along any of your knowledge and experience. Let newcomers shift for themselves until they know the ropes. Collect their dues for club membership but let them learn by their own mistakes, even if they crash their airplanes on neighboring property. Maybe they’ll drop out of the club.

11. If members start dropping out, don’t take it upon yourself to plan special events and programs in order to stimulate interest. Somebody else will probably come to the rescue. If no one

does, the membership may just taper off to nothing and have no need for your flying site. Apply the preceding suggestions with any diligence whatsoever, and you’ll surely find yourself without a flying site. When you lose your field, complain that all others involved let you down.

## Chapter 2

### The Golden Rules

The preceding chapter presented tongue-in-cheek with the 11 suggestions for losing a field. But there’s a simpler approach to keeping flying sites: treat others as you would want to be treated. Empathy means putting yourself in the other person’s place, so empathy is the key to maintaining a good relationship with your flying site owner(s) and neighboring property owner(s). Put yourself in another’s shoes. Think of how you would like a group using your property (or the property next door) to treat you.

Actually you keep a flying site in the same way you keep a friend. The land, its owner, and your neighbors are your friends and should be treated as such. One should never abuse the privilege of friendship but should always strive to maintain good personal and public relations with a friend. In short, treat a friend like a friend!

But don’t carry the friendship idea so far that you hurt the club. Since your club is a group rather than an individual, field rules must be enforced by field managers, marshals or safety officers (and every club member) with concern for keeping the field and not for avoiding the possibility of hurting a flier’s feelings. The most important thing

is keeping the flying site. The group is more important than any individual, and principles should always come before personalities. So don't let a friend get away with abusing club rules—he or she is not really a friend in such a situation.

Good rules, strictly enforced, plus common courtesy directed toward the landowner, go a long way toward ensuring a long and happy relationship. Following are some Golden Rules edited from many AMA chartered clubs throughout the country that may be adapted to fit your group's needs.

### **Suggested Flying Field Regulations**

1. Park only in designated areas.
2. Spectators are not permitted in pits or on the flying field, for their own safety.
3. Small children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.
4. The AMA Safety Code must be adhered to in all instances.
5. All flyers must be current AMA members and club members.
6. No transmitter may be operated for any reason without a proper frequency control device attached; return promptly to control station after use.
7. If others are waiting, use of a given frequency for testing and/or flying is limited to a maximum of 12 minutes.
8. Effective silencers are required for engines exceeding .10 cu. in. displacement.
9. Visiting fliers (AMA members only, for assurance of liability protection) must be accompanied by a club member and comply with all flying field regulations. The club member is responsible for the actions of his guest.
10. No engine may be run for any purpose prior to 10 a.m. weekdays and Saturdays; 1 p.m. Sundays; and never after dusk on any day.

11. Each flier is responsible for any damage he or she causes.

12. No flying over neighboring property or retrieval of downed aircraft from neighboring property without the owner's permission.

13. Beginners are the responsibility of the designated instructor/pilot until competence has been demonstrated.

14. No maneuvers (except takeoff and landing) will be performed at an altitude of less than 100 feet over the landing and takeoff areas of the field.

15. Absolutely no flying is permitted over the spectator or parking areas.

16. Airplanes, transmitters, and other equipment must be kept in a neat and orderly fashion on the flightline. If areas are designated for specific frequencies, model and gear must be kept in the area assigned to the proper frequency(s).

17. All trash must be placed in appropriate receptacles with policing of the field. Trash control is the responsibility of each member.

18. Instructions from the field manager for direction of traffic, takeoff and landing, and other special safety precautions required for conditions at the particular field will be adhered to by all flyers. Check with the field manager upon arrival at the field to determine special rules of the day.

19. Any violation of these field rules will be grounds for immediate temporary suspension of flying privileges by the field manager. Penalties will be determined by club officers.

## **Duties and Responsibilities of Field Managers, Marshalls, or Safety Officers**

### **From Club Charter kit**

#### **Section 4. Safety Coordinator**

To promote increased safety awareness on the part of all members, improve the public perception of modeling as a safe and desirable sport, and provide a means by which important safety information can be shared between clubs, AMA chartered clubs are required to establish the position of safety coordinator. This person will act as a communications liaison between the club and AMA Headquarters to ensure timely distribution of safety related material.

*The club safety coordinator must have Email access.*

#### *Recommended Duties:*

- 1) Provide a communications link between AMA and clubs in matters related to safety.
- 2) Act as a safety advisor and resource manager for the club and its members.
- 3) Assist AMA in the establishment of a national safety program to reduce accidents/incidents.
- 4) Develop, promote, and encourage a climate of safety awareness within AMA clubs.

*Safety Coordinator activities may include the following:*

- Inspect operational areas for proper signage and safety equipment as applicable.
- Conduct safety awareness training and related programs during club meetings.
- Conduct, at least annually, a safety audit of club facilities, equipment, and grounds to ensure everything is in good working order and safe for

normal use by members and the public.

- Act as a liaison with the local EMS/Fire Department.
- Establish a club emergency action plan to handle serious accidents/incidents.
- Immediately report to AMA Headquarters any incidents at the club field. During normal business hours, call (800) I-FLY-AMA. To report serious injuries and/or major property damage after hours call (765) 749-9210 or (765) 212-0793.
- Coordinate appropriate first aid training for members using qualified instructors.
- Develop an appropriate communications plan to assist club officers and members.
- Review emergency procedures (fire and rescue) with club members on an annual basis.

*Note: This list is provided to illustrate the range of activities a Safety Coordinator could engage in. Authority to enforce the AMA Safety Code or any additional club safety rules should be contained in the club bylaws in accordance with your individual situation.*

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

The proper enforcement of good rules will go a long way toward helping keep a flying site, but there are other considerations in your relationship with the landowners and with the neighboring property owners.

If you are using public property, such as schoolyards, consider sponsoring a contest with entry fees and proceeds from the concession stand to put on a picnic for the teachers, at which your

group could put on a flying demonstration. Or offer your landowner the proceeds from a raffle or other fundraising project as a token of your appreciation. Invite your landowner and neighbors to the annual club banquet or barbecue and remember them and their families at holidays. Imagine how pleased they would be to have their wives receive a Valentine or a birthday card from the club.

Some of these suggestions and other kindnesses you may think up yourselves may sound like bribery—not so. It’s no more than the common courtesies you would pay a friend. And what better friend does your club have than the owner and neighbor of your flying site?

## Chapter 3

### Lessons From London

The Society of Model Aeronautical Engineers in England met complaints regarding a flying site with a public inquiry from which several lessons were learned. The following is edited from an article in *Radio Control Models & Electronics* magazine with guidelines from S.M.A.E. for dealing with authority.

#### **Lesson 1 Prevention is Better Than Cure**

The very fact that a public inquiry occurs proves that someone has complained about model flying. It may be that the complaint is not justified, but it can be very difficult to prove that. It is far better not to have complaints in the first place. So, if you fly power-driven models in typical urban/suburban areas, do not fly at unreasonable times and do not fly in an unreasonable manner. What

is unreasonable? Well, clearly a lot depends on the specific site, but ask yourself in the following; Do I fly (a) every summer evening? (b) for long hours on both Saturday and Sunday? (c) over houses? (d) over roads? (e) over organized games?

If you answered “yes” to any of these, then you need to take a sharp look at the specific circumstances. You have a potential problem whether you know it or not.

#### **LESSON 2 It Pays to Pool Resources**

If you fly on public grounds, particularly with power-driven models, you cannot consider yourself an individual free agent. Your activities must be coordinated with other familiar fliers and other users and local inhabitants. You may always fly sensibly and at what you think is a sensible time, but you cannot guarantee what the other flier is doing, or when he or she is doing it, or what understanding a group may have with the local residents. Mr. Average Public lumps all model fliers together as “them.” So you have a responsibility to coordinate your activities with other flyers. The simplest way is to contact the local clubs and ask what their rules are for the site. If several clubs use the site, then they must try to establish rules together. If you are a “loner,” then please, seriously think about joining a club. We know they are not all good clubs and that some have number limits, but please try. If you are in a club, you cannot help but hear useful ideas about the site, which will help you preserve it for all of us.

Although working with other clubs may bring on groans, a public inquiry in England proved beyond any doubt that even large clubs would have been torn to shreds despite their strong cases, had not the British equivalent of AMA, stepped in. The range of subjects thrown at the witnesses could not be coped with except by people with long experience and with many different branches of aeromodeling. Perhaps, however, the following extract from the 200 page transcript of the Bromley cross examinations will really drive the point home.

Questions from the opposition barrister: “It is a pity that a body like you, which clearly tries to take a responsible attitude, should have so few members isn’t it?”

Answer from the witness: “Yes, a great pity.”

It is particularly frustrating to have that dismal fact thrown at you by the opposition when you have been sitting in the inquiry for five days solid, fighting S.M.A.E. members and nonmembers alike.

### **Lesson 3 Don’t Go It Alone and Don’t “Dabble”**

Negotiations with local authorities are rather like walking a tightrope. It’s not too difficult if you have the expertise and experience, but it is very easy to fall off if you are new to the game. (Worse still, you can slip with your legs on either side of the wire—Nasty!)

From long experience, the most critical steps in local authority negotiations are

the initial and early contacts, particularly those in writing. The whole nature of the outcome can easily be determined by your first letter, however innocuous it may appear to you. It is also most certain that an approach by an RC flier (or CL or FF) will cause severe problems for those with other interests, purely because local authorities are busy people who do not normally know the differences between models and wish to deal with them in one lump. As an example: S.M.A.E. has seen cases where gliders have been affected when there was only a noise problem! All because of inexpert dealings by the local modelers in the early stages. It is not the good intentions that are lacking. It is solely the inexperience and the narrow viewpoint. Pool your resources with other clubs, use the talent of experienced leaders, and consult an attorney if necessary.

“Don’t dabble” means that if you lack the ability or circumstances to allow you to stay with it for several years, then keep out. The Bromley case took more than six years from first murmurings to public inquiry. The local S.M.A.E representative fortunately handled the whole saga continuously over that period.

### **Lesson 4**

#### **A Crash is an Accident**

A great deal of play was made by the two (yes, two!) opposition barristers in the Bromley case about “accidents and crashers” involving model aircraft. It was made abundantly clear that whenever a model meets the ground in anything other than a perfect landing, Mr. Average Public regards this event as a “crash” and probably also an



“accident.” So every such occurrence he or she sees builds up his or her emotive mental picture of the safety factors involved. The facts of the situation (i.e., the extremely low accident rate) then becomes almost pointless, because he does not wish to be confused by them. His mind is made up. A slow process of education and image-building seems indicated.

## **Lesson 5**

### **The World is Watching You**

One of the most significant items coming from the Bromley inquiry was the fact that incidents and happenings in Place X are used to justify (or argue against) the situation at Place Y. Thus happenings in Manchester and North London were brought up against the S.M.A.E.’s case for the Bromley Borough, which is in South London. Fortunately, the S.M.A.E. was armed with even more examples from other places which supported the case for model flying. But the lesson is clearly there. Your activities can affect all of us.

From this article you can see that the flying site problems we have in the U.S. are not unique. It is also obvious that in Britain, as well as in the U.S., pooling resources with other local clubs—along with a strong national association—can help immensely in getting and keeping flying sites.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Nightmare of Noise**

You hear it everywhere today. Quiet rumblings have grown to outraged cries. Whispers have become shouts. Soft

appeals are now powerful demands against noise.

Almost everyone has become conscious of noise pollution. National, regional and local environmental protection agencies have been empowered to study and act on the increasing ecological destruction caused by noise. From construction noise to all sorts of motor vehicles, the public overwhelmingly supports noise abatement. You can bet that also includes model aircraft.

That our noise hasn’t been “noticed” nationally is more luck than planned on our part. Those who live near flying sites know we’re there and you can bet our noise has been “noticed” on the local level.

Although many of us may thoroughly enjoy the throaty blast of a jet speed model or the roar of a pylon job, I wonder how we’d feel if we lived next door to a model airfield. The golfer or amateur radio operator or tennis player is entitled to the pursuit of his or her hobby without outside interference, and so are we. We should all be able to “do our thing.” But when our “thing” interferes with their “thing,” we shouldn’t be surprised when steps are taken to cut our “thing” off!

Protesters against our activities will use any means to shut down an offending flying site. In Detroit a careless visiting modeler’s late-evening engine runs and early-Sunday-morning test flights, resulted in an almost totally unsatisfactory compromise between an RC club and its field’s neighboring landowners in order to salvage the investment of a club-owned flying site. The following account of what happened

in Detroit, Michigan is edited from an article in *Radio Control Modeler* and a subsequent letter by Dr. Dave Schwartz.

It was a beautiful August day. The temperature was 85 degrees, the wind 8 mph, the sky clear and blue; a perfect day for flying. Only we weren't flying—we were sitting in a crowded courtroom. Our field was closed, a court order nailed to the gate. We weren't flying today, and we hadn't flown in some time. Our field was reverting to nature, the tall weeds crowding out our carefully planted grass. How did we get here? It's a familiar enough story. But we learned some things along the way that might help other clubs. Maybe they can be spared the trauma that we're going through.

We hadn't paid much attention to a couple of noise complaints since we had purchased and developed our own permanent flying site. We already had a muffler rule. We just didn't worry about it. Then we got a call from the local town clerk. The noise complaints were coming in thick and fast, and we'd better watch our step. We had a club meeting, discussed it and voluntarily restricted our flying time from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and told that to the town clerk. All seemed to be okay for awhile.

Now we were settled, and it was time for a contest. We wanted to have a big one to celebrate our new field. It was a two-day affair, and contestants came from far and wide. They stayed overnight in campers, right on the field. On Saturday night, at 9:30 p.m., one of the visitors took a last flight. Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m., one of our neighbors came racing up in her car, still wearing only her nightgown. She was mad! She swore

she'd have us crazy \*&%8 idiots off that land if it was the last thing she ever did!

Two days later, there was a court order closing our field. It was closed completely, and would stay closed until our court hearing. So there we were in court.

Their side talked first. The complainant has a petition of 47 signatures, stating, among other things, that we flew drone-type airplanes; we made awful noise; crashing airplanes were a danger to small children; crops were trampled and destroyed while looking for crashed airplanes; the crashing fuel-laden airplanes posed a fire hazard; we caused accidents on the highway; and in general, were undesirable people. Their lawyer was really dramatic. He had the wing of a crashed airplane and he waved it around that courtroom like it was a flag. He even banged it on the table a few times to show how hard it was and how much it could hurt if it struck someone. Neighbors testified they could hear our airplanes a mile away. A farmer told how an airplane crashed right in front of him while he was plowing. Witnesses told of small children chasing downed airplanes, trampling crops and flower beds.

We were frantic. We called everyone we could think of for help. We called all the model magazines, The Hobby Industry Association, AMA officers, also Jeremiah Courtney, AMA's legal counsel at that time. Everyone was sympathetic but offered little help since the superficial reasons (trespassing) for trying to shut us down were quite different from the real reason—noise. A

charge they may not have been able to make stick by itself.

So we put up our own defense, with our own attorney. But what did we have to defend ourselves with? We pointed out that we were all family men, responsible types, and that no alcoholic beverages were allowed on our field. We explained that the club had donated time and money to charitable causes. We offered to pay for any and all damage to crops. We further explained that we were fully insured, part of a national organization and that our transmitters were licensed by the FCC. We emphasized the fact that we were on our own land. But, we were forced to admit, under oath, that we did fly over neighbors' property, and that our models had crashed on neighbors' property, and that we did, indeed, make noise. We explained that we had demonstrated our airplanes-and their noise-before we bought the land, and at that time the town and the neighbors had approved of our use of the field.

The judge's verdict came in. We "sort-of," "kind-of," "maybe" had a victory. The judge said that we had not actually caused any injury to people, and we could pay for any property damage we caused. Noise, during reasonable hours, on our own land, was permissible, but we could not trespass on our neighbors' property. We could not walk on their land to retrieve downed airplanes. Should our aircraft stray over the property line, we would be shut down again. The neighbors were given the authority to monitor our activity and report back to the judge.

A very small victory indeed. Two full days were spent in court, two days lost from work, nearly \$1,000 was spent on

legal fees, all to end up with a very severe restriction on our flying. And it's not over. The complainant has a right to appeal the judge's ruling and demand a full trial at any time. How would we fare before a jury of local townspeople? Not well, I suspect.

So what have we learned and what advice can we give to other clubs? To begin with, our worst enemies is noise. If our engines were truly quiet, we never would have had a problem. All the other charges against us were just padding. The main objection to our presence was the noise we made. Yes, we use mufflers, but you can still hear a big .60 a mile away. Now, all of a sudden after the lawsuit, we're willing to put up with the power loss that a really quiet muffler could cause.

After noise, modelers are their own worst enemy. There are always a few who spoil it for the rest. If we had not flown at all hours, had not trampled crops, and generally had been good neighbors, there might never have been a lawsuit. But that's past.

Let's go on to something more specific. Several people, including attorneys, suggested that we should never have asked the township's permission before buying the field, that by so doing we were admitting that they had the power to regulate us. In fact, the letter of permission was all that saved us in court. Without it, we would have had no defense at all.

We've learned that owning your own flying site is not sufficient in itself. You must own, or at least have right of passage, for all the land your airplane flies over. Our field contains 18 acres

measuring approximately 1,200 feet long x 600 feet wide. A fast airplane covers 1,200 feet awfully fast, and it is very difficult to stay within our borders. Beginning pilots have missed the entire field on landing. Legally speaking, you are trespassing if you fly in your neighbor's airspace, and a judge must side with that person in court. Such negotiation would have been a lot easier if we had not made enemies in the first place. We've learned that we were too cheap when we tried to buy our field. Our original assessment was \$50 per member with 60 members, to give us a \$3,000 down payment. Our payments on the land are \$25 per person per year. With more money, we could have obtained a much larger piece of land. More importantly, if we had started saving money long before we lost our earlier (free) field, we would have had the money to buy a really big piece of property. To any club that may someday want its own field, we suggest that you start assessing your members now, and in a few years you'll have a substantial down payment. If you want a field of your own, you'll have to pay the price.

AMA was unable to help with the trespass charges. The lawyer who helped us buy the land is not a modeler, and it never occurred to him that we might stray beyond our property. Advance knowledge about laws of trespass and airspace rights would have saved us a lot of grief and would have strongly influenced our behavior and our choice of fields.

After the legal hassle was completed and the dust cleared, we agreed to the judge's ruling and neither we nor the plaintiff will appeal to a higher court. The terms of agreement are that we can

continue to fly, only between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m., May through September; and 10:00 a.m. to one-half hour before sunset the rest of the year. Most importantly, we cannot overfly the neighbors' properties. The neighbor on one side of us refused to give us his air rights and would not sign any form of lease to that effect. He did finally agree that he would not stand on the fence to hang us if we crossed over by a foot, but he reserved the right to ground us if we began flying too close to his house or otherwise abused his goodwill.

A second neighbor did give us permission to overfly his field as long as we made good on any crop damage. Fortunately, this most friendly neighbor lies in the direction of our landing approach. Our flight pattern is now 600 feet wide and a mile long.

At the stage of progress when the foregoing was written, it looked hopeful that the club's flying site problem had been resolved in a workable, although not completely satisfactory, manner. But the optimism was not to last.

Unfortunately, adjacent property owners began sitting right on the property line, logging and reporting (illegal) overflights to the court. Modelers were threatened with guns by neighboring landowners, and a downed aircraft could not be retrieved from adjacent property.

As a result of the untenable situation with neighbors bordering the flying site, the club finally closed the field and put the property on the market.

It shouldn't have happened, but it did. Not only should cautious discretion be exercised by others in their flying

activities, but they should also try to maintain the best possible (public) relations with landowners and families near flying sites. This is especially vital in cases where flying over neighboring property is involved; otherwise, the severity (and acceptability by the courts) of nuisance complaints will be stronger and more difficult to overcome. Nuisance laws are real and, as shown in the Detroit club case, may invoke harsh trespass sanctions as a direct result of nuisance complaints.

What happened in Detroit doesn't have to happen anywhere again. What we all need to realize is that noise is our worst enemy. And even if distraught neighbors can't convict us on noise alone, they will use every means available to shut our flying sites down if we bother them. That's the nightmare of noise.

Dr. Leslie Griffin, as quoted in *R/C Modeler*, believes that noise, like the alleged trespassing offenses of modelers, is simply an excuse to outlaw models. People understand other sources of noise such as lawnmowers and motorcycles, but they have never seen a model fly or a miniature engine run. Models are different. Since our equipment is different, outsiders fear the strange-

sounding models. For this reason our aircraft are often considered a nuisance, and our neighbors believe we should be made to fly somewhere else. Noise is actually an excuse for banishing strange and unfamiliar activities from the neighborhood.

If we could do away with that strange noise, Griffin believes we could eliminate most of the opposition to our flying sites. We should try for quieter operation by using a proper silencer on every engine and overpower our models somewhat, to permit quieter flying at 1/2 or 3/4 throttle. That kind of thinking may take awhile to digest, but it does offer food for thought as to how a serious problem can be lived with—if the situation calls for quieter flying or none at all.

(Noise, neighboring property overflight, and related legal problems are discussed by AMA's legal counsel, Jermiah Courtney, in "Memorandum of Law on Modeler Noise Complaints" with his additional memorandum "Supplemental Opinion on Flying Space Legal Problems," sent to all new clubs and available to other members by writing AMA Headquarters.)

## Section III

### Recommended RC Flying Site Specifications

#### A. Introduction:

The AMA has determined that most modelers and model clubs are careful in their selection of flying sites, site layout, and operational practices.

The suggested specifications detailed have been developed to promote improved field management and provide added margins of safety for the ever-increasing numbers of fliers and spectators. Most clubs should be able, with reasonable effort, to comply with this suggested layout for general field arrangement and conditions for sport flying.

The suggested specifications are not mandatory requirements, and compliance with these suggestions does not, in the following guarantee that no accident will occur. The AMA recommends that individual clubs design their flying sites based not only on geographic area available, but also on sound sensitivity, obstructions, proximity of neighbors, etc., while incorporating the recommendations presented here. The types of aircraft the site is anticipated to accommodate, such as Giant Scale or small electrics, may effect an increase or decrease of the overfly area. (See FIGURE 2.) When designing or redesigning any flying site, the AMA should be contacted with any questions, comments, or concerns regarding specifications, layout, and safety.

The official AMA Safety Code remains the governing factor. All members and clubs should conduct their field operations in accordance with the Code.

#### Taxi Area:

No landings or takeoffs from this area.

Provides additional open space between pilots and aircraft during the time when most out-of-control accidents happen. Allows taxi room in front of other pilots with less chance of other frequencies interfering with taxiing aircraft.

Barrier: Designed to stop taxiing models from veering into pilots' and/or spectators' positions. (Includes plastic or chain link fencing, hay bales, shrubbery, etc.)

#### Pilot Line:

Set back from runway edge to keep pilots away from aircraft.

#### B. Personnel Side of Flight Area:

Locations Distance Factor (measured perpendicular from edge at runway safety line)

Runway edge is the basic	Safety line or 0
Pilot line a minimum of	25 feet from safety line
Pit line a minimum of	45 feet from safety line
Spectator line a minimum of	65 feet from safety line
Parking lot a minimum of	80 feet from safety line

Safety Zone: An additional 250-foot safety zone, added to the OVERFLY AREA, is desirable if any major roads, buildings, or outdoor personnel activities are in the general area or if high-speed or high-performance aircraft are flown.

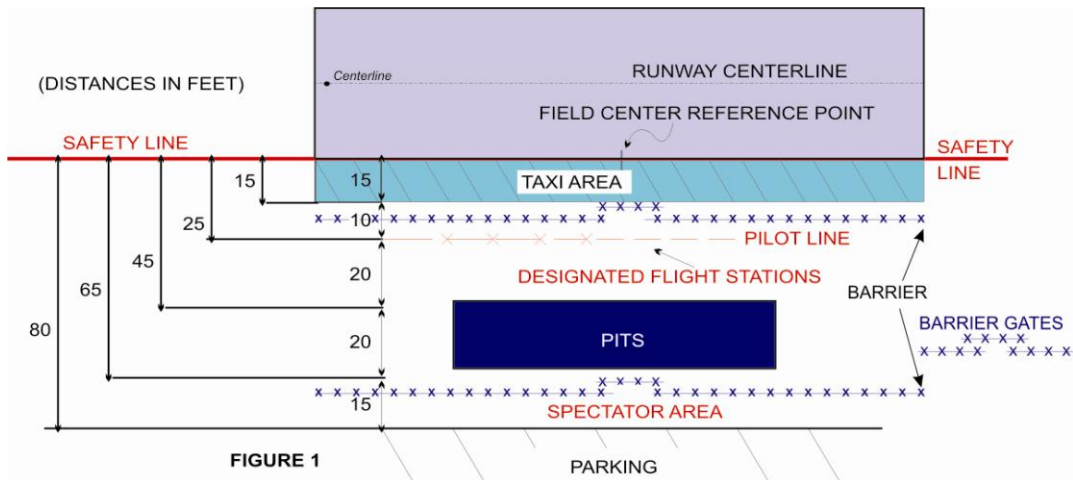


FIGURE 1

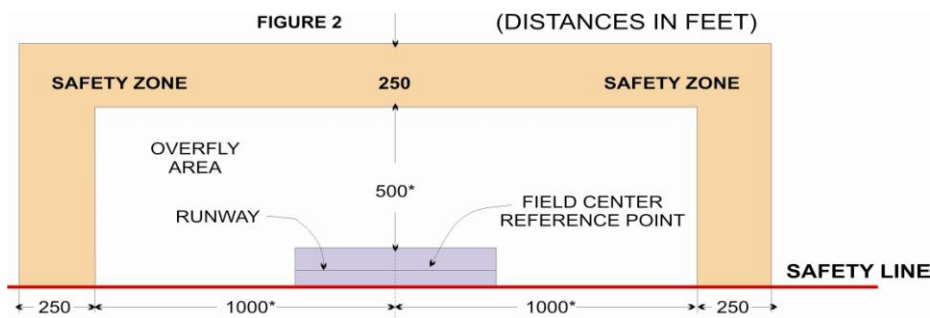


FIGURE 2

### C. Flight Sector:

(Covering an 1,800-foot sweep on the flying side of the reference line.)

Flight area clear of potential hazards (such as individuals working, playing, or traveling outdoors; buildings having glass surfaces facing the flying area; or a storage facility containing volatile products or compressed gases) at least 1,000 feet left and right and 500 feet in front of the pilot. Most flying is contained within 1,000 feet either end from field center reference point and 500 feet in front of reference point. Field center reference point is shown in FIGURE 1, but is essentially edge of runway at center of field. (See alternate site layouts.)

Distances referenced may be increased or decreased according to site usage.

### D. Signs: Suggested Minimum Posting Requirements for Public Notice

- “Flying Site” (This sign may be incorporated with the field rules but should be the leading words in a larger letter size at the top of the sign. Placement of the sign should be situated so that spectators can easily read it.)
- Field rules
- Current official AMA Safety Code

### E. Equipment:

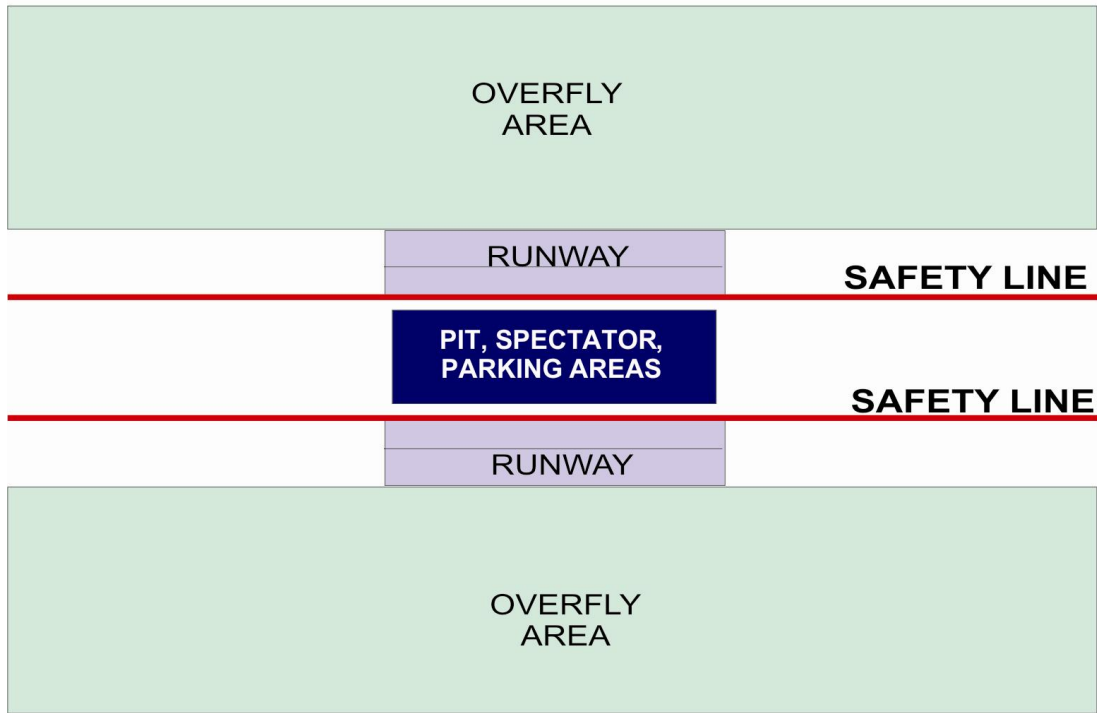
- Frequency control board
- First-aid kit
- Fire extinguisher with appropriate ratings
- “No spectators beyond this point without escort”
- Designated parking area (signs at boundaries)
- Emergency telephone numbers

- GPS coordinates
- Location of nearest hospital or emergency medical facility

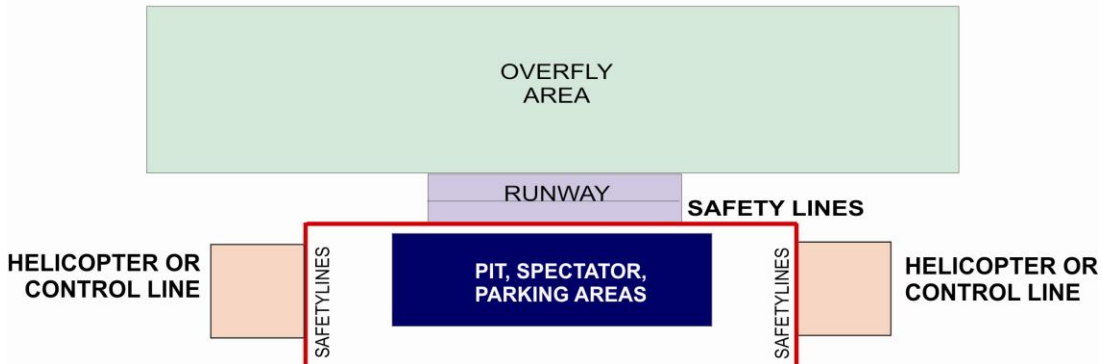
F. Alternate RC Flying Site Suggestions

Sites may be configured in various ways to accommodate multiple flying areas for simultaneous use. Care must be taken to fulfill the requirements found in the official AMA Safety Code, including the Specialized Supplemental Safety Codes, Standards, and Regulations. Simplified field layouts are illustrated in the following diagrams. (Not to scale.)

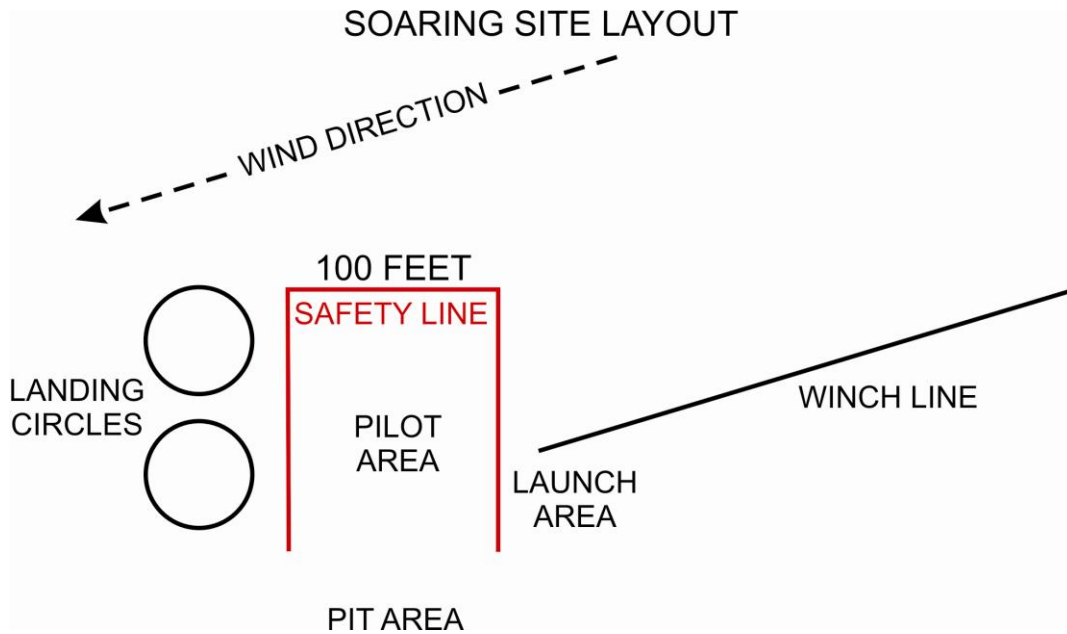
**PARALLEL SITE LAYOUT**



**COMBINATION SITE LAYOUT**







From the Official Academy of Model Aeronautics National Model Aircraft Safety Code Radio Control Section, item 5:

I will not knowingly operate my model aircraft within three (3) miles of any preexisting flying site without a frequency-management agreement. A frequency-management agreement may be an allocation of frequencies for each site, a day-use agreement between sites, or testing which determines that no interference exists. A frequency-management agreement may exist between two or more AMA chartered clubs, AMA clubs and individual AMA members, or individual AMA members. Frequency-management agreements, including an interference test report if the agreement indicates no interference exists, will be signed by all parties and copies provided to AMA Headquarters.

Spread spectrum technology (2.4 GHz) being sold by most RC manufacturers is completely legal for use in all RC categories. Many of the new Ready-to-Fly (RTF) airplane sets are being delivered with these systems. Spread spectrum does not itself require keeping track of a specific frequency and will not interfere with systems already in use. Please abide by your local club's frequency-management system.

#### Document 535-C—AMA Frequency Management Agreements

There can be more than two parties involved in a Frequency Management Agreement. Be sure to assign the designated frequencies to all parties and inform all involved members (i.e., post the assignments at the flying site). Please note that only officers of the chartered club can sign the Frequency Management Agreements on behalf of the club.

1st Party	2nd Party
AMA chartered club	AMA chartered club
AMA chartered club	Club not affiliated with AMA
AMA chartered club	Individual AMA member*
Individual AMA member	Individual AMA member
Individual AMA member	Individual not affiliated with AMA

### Important:

Once a Frequency Management Agreement is in place, it does not have to be renewed on a yearly basis. It is valid until one or both parties (if AMA chartered club) disband, relocate, or sell the property. The agreement is only valid for the specific parties named, which means that if a club disbands and another AMA chartered club/individual member uses the flying site, a new Frequency Management Agreement will have to be created, signed by all parties involved, and copies sent to AMA HQ.

Participants in the Frequency Management Agreement are responsible for informing any guest flying at the site about the agreement and enforcing that only frequencies assigned for that particular site are used!

### Flying Site Suggestions

AMA has an extensive package of support materials which, if utilized, can be of help in getting or keeping a flying site. To obtain this material, contact your Flying Site Coordinator (Tony Stillman at [fsac@modelaircraft.org](mailto:fsac@modelaircraft.org) or 1-800-435-9262, or AMA HQ directly. There is no charge for the materials.

Items in the club assistance program include the “Getting and Keeping Flying Sites” packet and videos that are useful in club presentations in addition to the AMA Safety Code. In any case, local clubs may establish safe flying rules for their sites. These automatically become some part of the AMA Safety Code and must be adhered to per General item 3.

### Safety Recommendations

The majority of model flying that takes place today is recreational rather than within a formal competition framework, and sometimes on publicly accessible sites with little or no formal control. Any accident involving model aircraft may result in property damage and/or bodily injury.

Apart from the direct harm, a less obvious result is the poor image of model flying that results from media coverage of such accidents, which may lead to public antagonism and the loss of flying facilities. It is therefore of the utmost importance that all model fliers observe safety rules.

Safety rules are not an obstacle to the enjoyment of model flying; they help prove that model fliers are the responsible people they claim to be. It is not a sign of intelligence to show one’s own skill by flying among or above spectators. It is to his or her personal benefit to make certain that no action on his or her part will result in an accident. It is therefore very important not to fly any model aircraft in competition or in the presence of spectators until it has been proven airworthy by having been flight-tested.

Immediately before each flight, the pilot should verify the model’s condition and proper functioning to ensure a safe and efficient flight. The flier should check for proper fitting and placement of parts, with special attention to engines and propellers.

It is imperative that all flying sites, especially CL, be situated as far as practical from power lines. For FF aircraft, the starting area must be carefully chosen. Considerations

include wind strength and direction, relative position of buildings, runways, vehicle parking, spectator areas, and the place where models are assumed to land after a normal flight, according to the wind.

The following constitute good general safety practices.

- Never attempt to retrieve a model from electric power lines. Contact the local power company.
- Refrain from using repaired propellers and rotor blades or those that are cracked, nicked, or unbalanced.
- Stay clear of the propeller arc while starting or running any engine or motor.
- Avoid stopping engines by throwing rags or other objects into the propeller.
- Refrain from using a pointed spinner, propeller fasteners, or knife-edge leading edges.
- Paint tips of propellers a bright color to better define the arc of propeller rotation.
- Check the propeller and spinner for tightness before each operation.
- Learn and check for the proper grain patterns in wooden propellers to ensure strength in high-rpm operation.
- Exercise extreme caution in adjusting needle valve settings on engines. Most adjustments should be performed from behind the model, thus avoiding reaching around a spinning propeller.
- Ensure that ballast or heavy parts are not subject to loosening or jettisoning in flight.
- For RC, perform a range check before each flying session and a check of flight functions before each flight.
- For CL, inspect the lines, bellcrank, and connectors before each flight.
- Carefully read and use the manufacturer's recommendations for its products.
- Establish a spectator control system for any site used. Post the various rules required for the specific site. Enforce them!
- All model liquid fuels need to be stored and handled properly. In particular, gasoline should only be stored, transported, and dispensed from a specifically designed and approved container. When handling fuels near models, there should be no smoking. Avoid hooking up any starter, pump, or battery that may produce arcing in the immediate area where fuel is located.
- Post emergency instructions, including hospital and doctor telephone numbers and addresses. Provide a first-aid kit if possible. Encourage the use of eye and ear protectors and flying with a buddy or observer.
- Provide your local EMT station with directions to your flying site.

Notice to AMA Members Interested in Model Rocketry, RC Cars, and Boats:

Members interested in model rocketry, operation of radio-controlled cars, and boats are encouraged to obtain a copy of the official safety codes used by the various organizations. These codes may be obtained by contacting the various rocketry, car, and boat groups at [www.modelaircraft.org](http://www.modelaircraft.org). There are prepurchase requirements for the operation and/or purchase of model rocket engines in various states. Check out your state government Web site (often the state fire marshal's office) to determine if additional regulations are applicable in your state.

## Section IV

### Wrap-Up

Flying sites are our second greatest resource, modelers being the most significant. However, you can't keep modelers if you don't have a place for them to enjoy their hobby.

Keep this manual handy as you conduct your daily business as a club; ask your local associate vice president and your district vice president for advice and assistance on any issue that faces the club. They don't know everything but can certainly offer advice and experience, and they know staff members at AMA HQ who can get you the answers when they are unsure.

The mission of the Flying Site Assistance Coordinator is to support the membership and clubs in obtaining and retaining flying sites. I take this job seriously and pledge to you my sincerest efforts when you need them. Do not hesitate to send me an e-mail or call so that I can assist you with your issues. I can be reached at 1-800-435-9262 and [fsac@modelaircraft.org](mailto:fsac@modelaircraft.org).

If you have ideas for additions to this book, please send them to me so others can benefit from your experiences.

Tony Stillman  
Flying Site Assistance Coordinator

#### **Other Helpful Documents and DVDs** **Available Upon Request**

- List of Landfill Model Airplane Flying Sites
- List of Park Model Airplane Flying Sites
- List of Airport Model Airplane Flying Sites
- Ask about our other various lists of model airplane flying sites
- Sample Lease Agreements
- Model Aviation* "How To" Articles
- Wildlife and Ecology Information/Studies
- Support Letters
- Soaring the Superfund Skies* DVD
- Wings in the Wilderness* DVD
- Flying Site Acquisition for Park Flying Fields* DVD