

Winter Haven Regional Airport (KGIF)

Airport User Group Safety Meeting

September 9, 2021

Airport User Group Safety Meeting started at 10:00 a.m. by Alex Vacha, Airport General Manager

Welcome Statement - Alex Vacha, Airport Manager

- a. This airport user safety group has been created with the goal of improving safety at the Winter Haven airport. Our plan is to regularly invite all airport users to come together and discuss aviation safety matters with the objective of developing and maintaining a safer flying environment.

Introductions - In Attendance: Robert Jex, FAA, Jamie Beckett, Aspiring Aviators Aero Club, Members of the Winter Haven Pilot's Association, Preston Aviation, DME Services of North Florida, Flight Training 101, Aerostar Flight Training (Kissimmee), Ed Shultz, Jerry Stevens, Dennis & Janeen Kochan, and others.

Safety Mission, Goals, & Resources - FAA Safety Team - Bob Jex, FAAS Team Program Manager

- a. Mission, Goals, and FAAS Team Representatives
 - a. We are focused on safety in airport operations. We perform aircraft accident prevention and safety outreach. Safety outreach is accomplished through educational webinars and events which can be found at faa.safety.gov. Our FAAS Team representatives are volunteers who want to help promote the safety mission. My contact information is 407-487-7064 and Robert.jex@faa.gov.
 - b. Resources available from our FAAS Team Representatives
 - a. Bob Jex – Printed and digital safety materials are available for distribution. There is a network of webinars available to help. We can advertise meetings to any size and target audience. Safety Program Airmen Notification System (SPANS) messages are available to help notify everyone about seminars in a timely manner.
 - b. Jamie Beckett – We have the ability to counsel individuals, and help share resources available from the FAA. As an AOPA representative, I am able to help flying clubs, flight schools, pilots associations, and others in an effort get new people to come out to the airport and to operate correctly. I'll share any information that I can to help. My contact telephone number is 863-224-2133.
 - c. Janeen Kochan – We are here to support the aviation community. I am a designated pilot examiner (DPE) with an office in the airport terminal. The main idea of this group is to promote safety and communicate with each other. We want to help keep everyone safe while ensuring that flight training can be accomplished at the same time. We should be talking with each other to make sure that we are all following the standard procedures. We're not here to be adversarial in any way. I encourage everyone to utilize the faa.safety.gov website. My contact telephone number is 863-207-0484.
 - d. Dennis Kochan – We are here to help in any way that we can.

Public Comments for Safety & Recommendations

- a. Russell Garner – Pilot
 - i. There is an increased amount of Amazon jets flying into Lakeland Airport, and I'm wondering how they are impacting our airspace. Amazon jets have been flying near Lake Parker which has led me to want to keep my distance from Lake Parker now.

- ii. Response: Janeen Kochan - Great observation. There is a new Central Florida Metroplex which is designed to make the airspace more efficient, but we do need to watch as it encroaches closer to our airspace. Excellent point.
- b. Tim Preston – Preston Aviation – Owner/Pilot
 - i. Aircraft on instrument approaches do not merge or give way to existing VFR traffic.
 - ii. Runway 5 is designated as the calm wind runway. This becomes a problem when aircraft correctly decide to use a different runway determined by the wind direction while some aircraft continue to use Runway 5 regardless of the wind direction at the same time.
 - iii. Response: Jerry Stevens - I agree. Aircraft on instrument approaches have been a problem for me as well.
- c. Jo Anne Alcorn – Pilot
 - i. Seaplanes are flying low over the airport. We should encourage the use of radios. I agree with Tim Preston in seeing multiple runways active at the same time.
 - ii. Discussion ensued. It was concluded, amongst a few, that seaplanes are arriving and departing Lake Jessie while overflying the airport.
- d. Roger Buchanan – Pilot
 - i. I prefer to land my glider on Runway 29, and then turn off at the end of the runway onto Taxiway E at E1. That usually works well; however, I'm wondering if I should use the active runway or preferred wind direction runway instead. This change would cause me to have a temporary delay on the preferred wind direction runway after landing.
 - ii. Discussion ensued. Many comments received. Suggestions included announcing that you are a glider and why you are using Runway 29. Other suggestions recommend using the preferred wind direction runway.
 - iii. Response: Jo Anne Alcorn - From the Runway 5 end it is difficult to see aircraft on Runway 11/29.
 - iv. Response: Janeen Kochan - Operational necessity may require the pilot to use a different runway than the active/preferred wind direction runway. You can communicate the reason why it is operationally necessary for you to use a different runway.
 - v. Response: Jerry Stevens - When not using the active/preferred wind runway you are creating confusion. If we want to reduce the likelihood of an accident, then we should remove the confusion.
 - vi. Response: Ed Shultz - When we have Instrument approaches, a VFR traffic pattern, and a glider flying, which runway will everyone be using? There could be three choices for different runways in use. That can be very confusing.
 - vii. Response: Jerry Stevens - Is a control tower a possibility? Is Federal funding available?
 - viii. Response: Janeen Kochan – Traffic count really determines who is eligible for a control tower. Remote towers are a possibility in the future, but for now we are looking at some remedies and outreach to the surrounding airports. We're going to work on what we can do now as a non-towered airport.

- e. Dennis Kochan – Pilot
 - i. The City would have to pay for the control tower which could increase the overall airport costs for tenants. Radios do not give you the right-of-way. Anytime the winds are light and variable (5 knots or less) you should use the preferred runway which is Runway 5.
 - ii. Response: Jerry Stevens – Sometimes the winds pick up or change and pilots are still using Runway 5.
- f. Mike Havertape - WHPA - President/Pilot
 - i. Recommend all pilots purchase an ADS-B in unit. This allows the pilot to see aircraft that have ADS-B out.
- g. Alex Vacha
 - i. We will be reviewing all of the comments received today, and will work to create a recommendations list along with points for continued discussion at future meetings.

FAA Regulations Presentation – Jamie Beckett

- a. There are about 20,000 airports in the United States and only about 500 are non-towered airports. 91.113 tells us how we should be operating. 91.126 states that we must fly a left hand traffic pattern unless there is an established right hand traffic pattern.
- b. In the absence of a regulation, the AIM (Airmen Information Manual) can become regulatory. The most likely place to have a mid-air collision is in the traffic pattern at a non-towered airport during VFR conditions.
- c. In 1999, there was a student flying at Winter Haven Airport using Runway 29. The student was doing everything right. Meanwhile, a transient pilot came in and joined a right hand traffic pattern. One aircraft ended up landing on top of the other. Luckily, no one was killed.
- d. Insurance is a contract for payment. I will pay for a premium, and the insurance company will pay for any damages. The payment for damages is contingent on the pilot performing within Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs).
- e. AC 90-66B Non-Towered Airport Flight Operations provides a recommended traffic pattern entry procedure. This includes entering on a 45 degree left downwind to the active runway.
- f. We have the responsibility to gather all available information. Talk to each other. Don't accept an opinion. Look up the rule or regulation.

Final Comments and Adjournment – Alex Vacha, Airport General Manager

- a. Thank you for joining us. Our next meeting will occur in the 4th Quarter of 2021 (October-December). An advertisement and agenda for the meeting will be delivered in advance.
- b. Janeen Kochan: Please talk to others. This is an open forum. We value everyone's input. We need to try to reach out to everyone and help keep up the communication.

Adjourn – Alex Vacha, Airport General Manager

Meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Minutes prepared by: Alex Vacha.