

## Fall 2023 Flying Trip Report

After our camping trip to Kremmling, we thought it would be fun to relocate the Cub to Mack Mesa airport (CO10) near Mack, CO and fly short trips from that base. We made arrangements to stay at various campgrounds in the Fruta area. We packed up our car with our regular and airplane camping gear. My wife Marja drove our car to Mack Mesa and I flew the Cub. Unlike our camping trip to Kremmling I was by-myself in the Cub and had minimal gear. I took off from KLMO and climbed to 14,000 feet before approaching the mountains which worked out well getting over Rollings Pass. The turbulence was moderate for a Cub but it persisted for the 2.5 hour flight to Mack Mesa. I was happy to get on the ground.



Heading for Rolling Pass at 14,000 feet altitude. The mountains don't look so big up here.



Mack Mesa Airport CO10. Grass strip at other end of runway and State camp ground at trees in-line with runway. .



Best Grass Strip In Colorado, Mack Mesa?

Mack Mesa is a beautiful little airport located on a mesa. The runway is asphalt but turns into a beautiful grass runway at the eastern end. A STOL aircraft can easily operate on the grass runway. The transition from the asphalt to the grass is seamless. The airport is managed by Ladd Klingsmith and is happy to see visitors to the private airport. There is a grass camping area and toilet in the hangar building but less than 2 miles down the road from Mack Mesa is Highline Lake State Park. This State Park has showers and laundry machines so it was a convenient place to stay.

We made early morning flights to various places in Colorado and Utah. In the afternoon we either rested or took our kayak out on Highline Lake. We made the short drive into Fruta for shopping. They have a nice city center with coffee shops, restaurants and a sports bar / brew pub. We also went to Fruta's very nice recreation center to exercise which is attached to the library. Plenty of free WiFi.



Kayaking on Highline State Park

Places we flew from Mack Mesa Airport

Marble Colorado Airstrip

This has to be the best backcountry strip in Colorado. The flight in and out of the valley is breath-taking surrounded by the high mountain peaks. The runway is well maintained and plenty long for STOL operations. There is room for several aircraft and camping tents. It is like camping at a KOA, hot water showers, electrical power, cooking kitchen (even a microwave) fire rings (wood included). The only drawback is phone reception and WiFi is non-existent. A short walk into town you will find a very popular barbeque restaurant and outfitters for four-wheel drives and tours to the mill.





Marble, CO Airstrip is in middle of the valley



Marble Camping Area

Paonia, CO

Interesting little airport and town. Again, the airport is on a mesa so it is like landing on an aircraft carrier. There is a courtesy car and a shelter for camping. Bathroom facilities but no shower. Avgas was some of the cheapest we found. The airport manager was very helpful arranging the courtesy car and recommendations on what to see in town. Paonia has an artist feel to it and we were told that is designated as a Colorado art district. We had brunch at the bakery and was not disappointed.



North Fork Valley Airport (7V2) near Paonia, CO

Colorado National Monument

The Colorado National Monument gave us the most surprising views of our trip. The northern end of the park is amazing with the multiple curving canyons carved by water running from the mountain top to the Colorado river. It is very difficult to get to this area by any means so there are few visitors. One area adventurous people visit is called Rattle Snake Gulch which included two large arches. We were able to find the arches from the air using Google Maps.





Colorado Monument . Looks like dinosaur foot prints.

## Arches Park

Arches was not as spectacular from the air as I expected. The famous arch rock formations are hard to see from the air and respect for the many tourists in the area prevents an airplane from getting too close. There were some interesting rock formations in the less populated northern part of the park near the Canyonlands Regional Airport.



## Grand Junction Area



Book Cliffs Mountains and Mount Garfield in the back ground



Gateway, CO

## Canyonlands

Canyonlands was very scenic and is very impressive from the air. Flying down the winding Green River you over fly all kinds of interesting rock formations that have been cut over the centuries by the river. We overflew Mineral Bottom landing strip but was not brave enough to land since we were by ourselves. We did note base jumpers parachuting off the cliffs next to the airstrip. Gives you an idea of the cannon wall height. We continued down the river to the confluence where the Green and Colorado rivers merge. We noted that the Colorado river was green and the Green River was brown. We headed up the Colorado River to the LOOP, pretty amazing. Continued up the river over flying Caveman airstrip (which is closed) and I believe some white potassium drying against the red rocks. Nice contrast. We ended the loop at Moab with some interesting formations just as you overfly the city.





## Canyonlands



## Colorado and Green River Confluence



Canyonlands (The Loop)



Valley of Castles



The Towers.

All-in-all, we spent ten days at Mack Mesa. Next, we moved our base over to Monticello, Utah.



Near Moab, Utah. Potash Evaporation Ponds