

Daniel's Mountain Site Guide (DM)

If questions contact flight_director@chgpa.org

Last Updated: June 3, 2025

Minimum Rating: P2/H2

Site Direction: S

Flyable Directions: **Ideal:** SW to SSE(185-210) **Acceptable:** 165° - 230°

Wind Speed

Wind Speeds	Min	Ideal	Max	Gust
Hang Glider	5	10	25	10
Paraglider	5	7	18	5

Glide Slope to LZ: about 4.6:1 (.7 miles)

Vertical: 880'

Type of Launch: Grassy steep slope in narrow slot

Type of LZ: Large sloping grass field

Soarable: Ridge and thermal

Location: Stanardsville, VA

Miles from: DC: 100 (2:05 hrs.)

Turnaround Time: 35 mins drive (about 17 mins each way)

Can be hiked up in about 35-40 mins

Launch Coordinates: 38.31077, -78.51204

LZ Parking coordinates: 38.299948249707164, -78.51085605917102

Parking: 5 Cars / 6-8 at LZ

Owner Launch: Flying Pigs Land Trust; Roger Ritenour

Owner LZ: Wayne Powell

Setup/Breakdown: 4 gliders / LZ unlimited

Road Conditions: gravel/unimproved road, 4WD required

Gated access: halfway the gravel road up is a gate with numerical keypad lock. The code is only for members. For the current code, refer to [Members - Private Site Access Information](#) section.

Please contact the the flight director flight_director@chgpa.com or President president@chgpa.com if there are any issues with the code.

WARNING: The descriptions of typical flying conditions listed in this site guide reflect the experience of the authors of the guide. The conditions that you encounter at the site may differ, sometimes substantially, from those encountered by the authors. The descriptions of their experiences may not be relevant to the likely experience of any other pilot,

particularly one who is relatively inexperienced or new to the site.

A decision to launch is always that of the individual pilot. When deciding whether or not to fly, a pilot may wish to take into account the descriptions in this site guide but must also consider numerous other factors including the pilot's training and experience, familiarity with the site, equipment, physical and mental condition and the specific weather conditions in existence at the time of the decision along with what the conditions may change to.

IMPORTANT!

- **Spring has strong narrow thermals and also strong sink.**
Take enough margin to clear the trees coming into land.
- USHPA and CHGPA membership required.
- Seek a site introduction and walk the LZ to be sure you understand the preferred landing approach.
- **ONLY 4*4 VEHICLES ALLOWED ON THE GRAVEL ROAD** called Old Mountain Rd (starting as soon as you leave the paved road called Snow Mountain rd.) up to launch.
If your wheels are skidding, that's a sign to not drive your car on that road. It will damage the road. And the neighbors will complain.
- **DRIVE SLOWLY** on the gravel road up to launch!
- Be nice to the neighbors. No parking on or on the side of the gravel road up to launch. Neighbors can be hostile and cars have been keyed.
- **DO NOT** park in front of two LZ gates. Park completely off of the road and best not adjacent to neighbor lawns.
- Privately owned launch could be closed at any time!
- There are cameras on launch and on the gravel road driving up.
- Pilots only allowed driving up.
- No camping allowed nowhere, not LZ nor at launch.

Emergency Help: 911 or Univ. of VA (540) 924-2231

Directions to Site: Search for Daniels Mountain Stanardsville, VA in Google maps or use the coordinates mentioned above.

- From Washington DC: 100 miles, 2:05 hours
- From Strasburg, VA: 70 miles, 1:35 hours

General Description

The Daniels Mountain launch near Stanardsville, VA is owned by Roger Ritenour with a land trust to the Flying Pigs. This launch was originally cut around 1985-1986, and has been flown continuously since. The launch is entirely surrounded by trees but it is wide enough for safe launches. Launching in no wind is not recommended.

First Flight Preparation

Before the first flight, new or visiting pilots must get an in person site briefing and walk the LZ areas to identify various potential issues and obtain an explanation of the landing approach.

Acceptable Flying Conditions

Daniels Launch faces S and is flyable from SW to SSE wind directions. Thermal activity can be present starting mid morning (11 AM). This site is acceptable for pilots with a P2 rating and have sufficient experience with thermic conditions.

The normal wind speeds for flyable days are between 4 to 15 mph for Paragliders, and up to 20 mph for Hang Gliders. Best after 1 pm. The site allows for both ridge soaring and thermalling and is known for good glass off conditions. Weak gusts of up to 14 mph may exist as mild thermals pass through. Flying is not recommended if gusts are higher than 10 mph differential. Flying is not recommended on gusty SW winds.

The launch shape is in general forgiving with straight in winds from the flyable directions (SW to SSE) with optimal between SSW and S.

Launching in no wind is not advisable due to the height of trees as of January 2021. The site is south facing so it grows quickly and get overgrown. If the trees out front are tall, a breeze is required to clear them.

Not recommended on gusty SW winds, as it can be very turbulent in the air. There is rotor coming over the main ridge of the Shenandoah.

Cross winds on launch from the SE or W should be avoided as they create turbulence.

Obstacles

The launch is surrounded by tall trees and is considered a typical East Coast slot launch.

The LZ is surrounded by tall trees and fences on all sides but are big enough to set up inside the fields. Power lines extend along Snow Mountain Road.

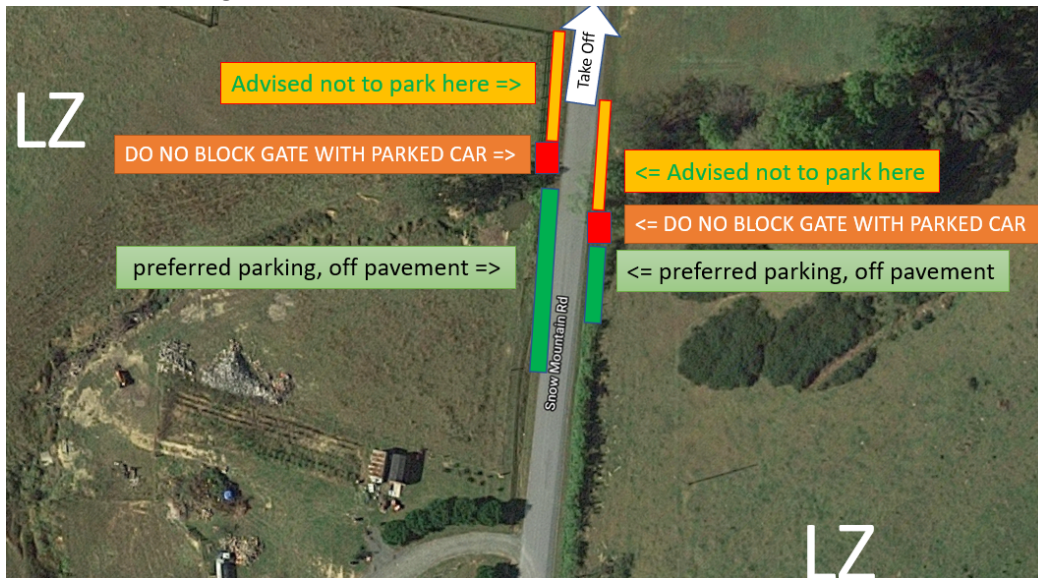
Vehicular Parking and driving info

There is parking at the launch for a few 4WD cars, as well as plenty of parking near the LZ.

Only 4*4 vehicles on the gravel road (Old Mountain rd) Do not park on that gravel road anywhere because neighbors are hostile.



Do not park in front of the gate in the LZ and make sure you park off of the road.
 Also advised not to park at the West side of the gates, better East side, this to steer away from the neighbors and avoid damage to the side of the road in winter.



If hiking up, one can also park at the entrance of Old Mountain road but not on Old Mountain road.
 Best to park on Snow Mountain Rd. past the junction at the right, off pavement and keeping the access to the mailboxes clear.
 This is private property but the owners have not complained so far. They live in the next house to the right going West on Snow Mountain Rd.

DO NOT PARK YOUR CAR ON OLD MOUNTAIN ROAD, except at the launch area.
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Spectators

Usually none, but neighbors may sometimes exercise/hike the road up.

Glider Control

Pilots are advised to have their wings either folded or balled up with their harness on top of it when not in use. Ample space to spread out several wings at the launch site.

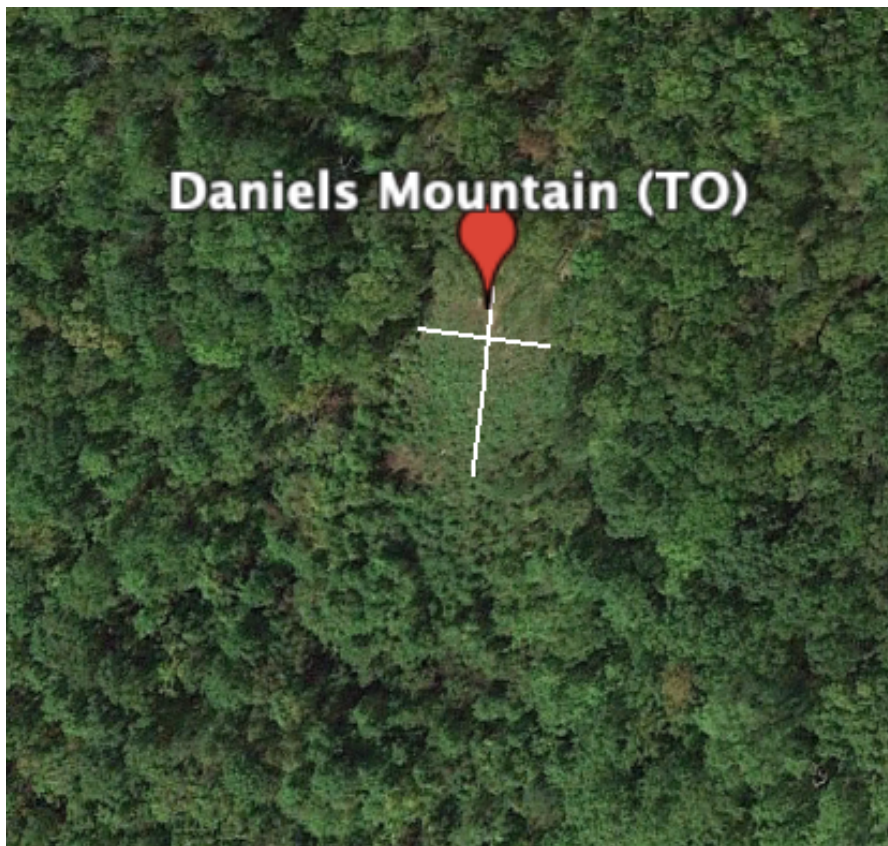
Landing Zone

The landing zones are mostly grass fields with sloping areas. They are surrounded by tall trees and/or fences. The main Power line runs along Snow Mountain Road on its north side. The site allows for an S-pattern landing path into the prevailing wind direction and when with enough altitude a standard airport approach landing is recommended. The site is within glide of launch, however pilots often misjudge the distance to the LZ with potential sink along the way. If you are below launch level, you should be heading to the LZ.

Avoid landing on the dark patches, as they are full of thorny and sticky bushes.
At the LZ the pilots should take their wing toward the gates and pack it up.

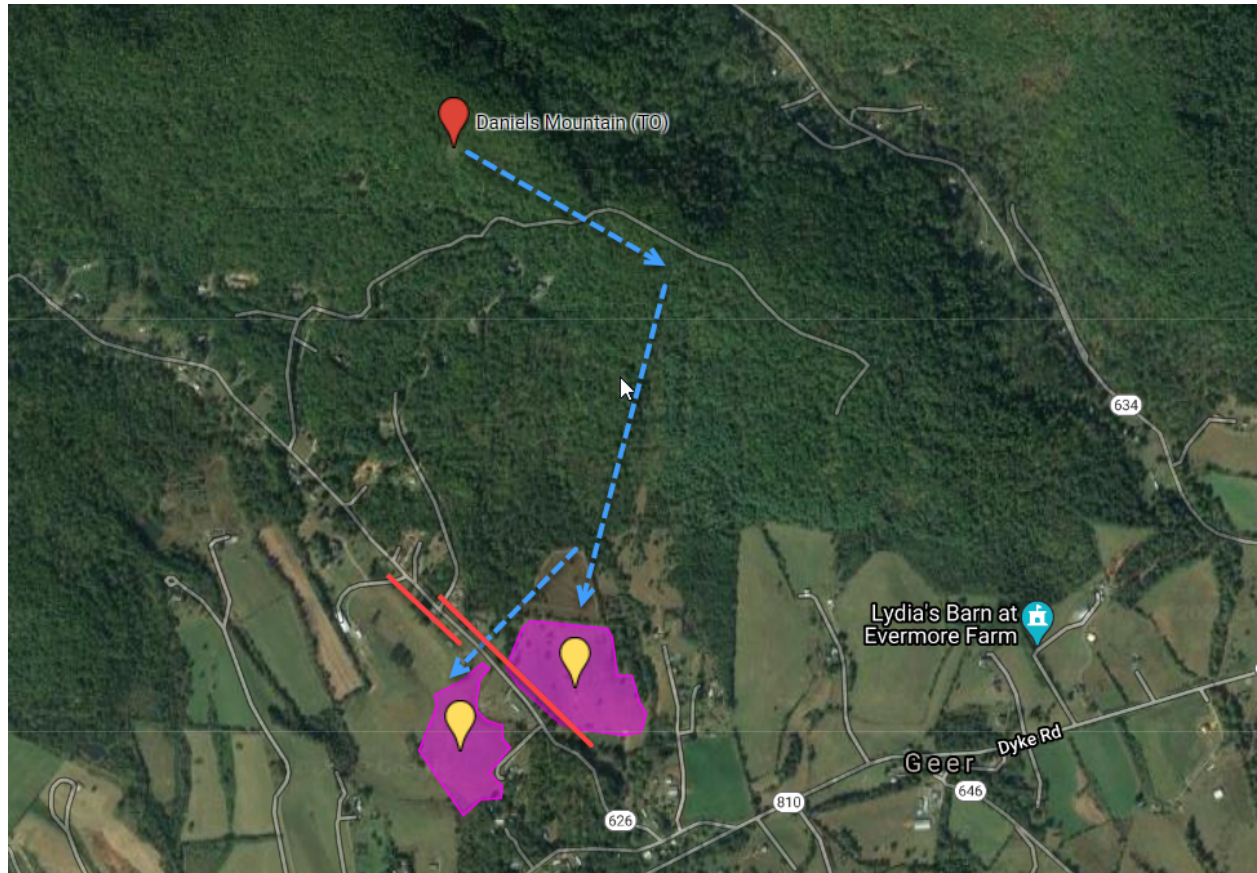
Site Images

Overview of Daniels Mountain Launch (Top) and LZs (bottom).



Recommended Landing Approach

From launch, turn left and then take a S heading straight to the closest LZ (dotted blue arrow). The field north of the closest LZ can be used as a bail out. Red lines are power lines.



OFF LIMIT FIELD LZ AREA

The red shaded field is off limits. In case you do land. Pick up your glider and walk out asap. Do not fold your glider in this field.



Hiking Up info

We advise you to hike up using the road and gravel road, and not the woods.

- The woods have year around ticks and are private property.
- The woods also get dense once the growth starts in spring.
- ! Be aware that you might encounter black bears hiking up.

From the LZ area, next to Snow Mountain Road, the hike up to take off is about 33min.

Starting from the entrance of the gravel road called Old Mountain road is about 25min.

Video links

Playlist DM

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjRquM9TSWxEcfpigG0m3qjfykNzKT5U>

Maintenance Info

CleanUp History

2021 03 28 : Team cleanup including new Ryobi Club Trimming tool, +8 participants



Status

Very trimmed, very good

2021 06 13 Deep clean by Tom Felix, Syrus , Randy, Josh2nd and Nelson, several trees cut in front.



2021 07 Large PG crew came out and cut trees below and also cut left and right. More side maintenance will be done

Status

Very trimmed, very good

2022 06 Launch pad groomed by several members

Status

Very trimmed, very good

Incident History

2021/07/04

Pilot launched in very light conditions and got a frontal. The pilot landed in the greenery. Need to anticipate better what the wing is doing. Advised to do more training hill exercise. Pilot is familiar with the site. No damage, no injury.

2021/07/04

Pilot P3 , new to the site, launched in LV conditions and took a line to the trees. After correction to strong with the opposite brake the wing stopped flying and the pilot landed in the greenery, Be better aware of slot launches and steering out of them, Training hill to get to know the wing better to avoid over piloting. No damage, no injury.

2021/07/31

Student Pilot under supervision pulled too much brake and spun the glider. He was instructed by radio to "hands up" but he did not. The instructor asked to pull the reserve but the student did not hear it but anyway pulled the reserve. Tree landing. Damage unknown, injury unknown.

2022/04/05

P2 pilot with +50 flights and +100h enjoys a glass off flight soaring the ridgeline. The conditions that day are typical spring with stronger thermal and strong sink. After losing height the pilot flies towards the LZ area and encounters more sink as expected. The pilots comes up short and lands on private property in a tree. The fire brigade is able to rescue him. Glider is damaged but the pilot is not injured.

Take enough margin going to the LZ for sure in Spring as the sink can get strong. IF you are sinking after launch and are getting under take off height = straight line to the left LZ that has a bail out in front. The bail out is emergency landing only.

2023/04/30

Second phase of the carpet install. Randy, Cyrus and Tom also cut saplings and did grooming

Middle section was installed earlier in season, two additional sections installed at both ends



Tarp project info also here

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1u-_9gT0QDL_T3zyLz8NquTnTnFdGvFDoPq8SBhAbSKo/edit