



Sun Parlor R/C Flyers

Member
of
M.A.A.C.

The Emitter

Windsor, Ontario

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May 2012 - Supplemental

Editor - Dave Murray

Special Supplemental Edition

The next meeting will take place at the Windsor Flying Club at
7:30 PM, Monday, May 14th.

Views expressed in the editorial section of our newsletter the Emitter; do not necessarily represent the views of the executive. Editorial comment is strictly the opinion of the author. Any member in good standing is welcome to contribute to our newsletter in any way and editorials will be published from signed submissions.

Editor's Notes

By Dave Murray

This is a special addition of the Emitter to inform the membership that Past President Dave Doyon is intending to make an official motion that will be of interest to all members. In his words:

Members:

On Monday May 14th 2012 Sun Parlor R/C Flyers will hold the last regularly scheduled general meeting of the 2011-2012 season. I David Doyon will be making a motion to authorize the installation of an approximately 30'x 150' synthetic runway. I will have samples of the products available along with the cost of the different options. The members who attended the visit at KRAM field can answer any questions or concerns. I will have a map of the field available. A detailed report was included in the May 2012 Emitter and a report on the site visit has been emailed to all members that have an email account listed with SPRCF.

All members who have an interest in this mater are invited to attend the May 14th meeting.

Thank You
David Doyon
Member

Below is a copy of the report by Dave Doyon on the investigative trip to the KRAM field near Grand Rapids Michigan:

KRAM field visit

May 6th 2012

6 SPRCF members visited the KRAM flying field in Alto Michigan to evaluate and report on the synthetic runway material that has been installed. The members attending were:

David Doyon, Dave Kool, Bill Jarvis, Clarence Calder, Dave Murray, Peter Frise.

We were greeted by:

Nikolei Zinsli – Club president Ed Bradley-club safety officer along with a number of other KRAM members. KRAM was very welcoming and we all had a great time. When we first arrived we noticed the large runway (300' x 60'). The shelter/storage shed and the large number of starting stations. The KRAM field is located in a farming area. Last year 2 new commercial cow barns have been erected about a ¼ of a mile away to the left side of their runway. Also a large holding pond (containing the waste from the cows) has been built about ¼ mile in front of the runway. The wind was not blowing from the pond we were told this was a good thing due to the smell.

We asked about resistance to the idea when it first installed. He told us one of their members was a member of a club in Texas who has had it down for about 10 years and introduced the idea to the club. The club was continually searching for ways to improve the grass surface with little results. Members had concerns and they did the best to address those concerns. In the end they purchased the product and installed it at their field. Now even members who were against the change enjoy the surface.

We were taken on the runway to see the Geotex product they used close-up. The product has been down for 6 years now and is still in very good shape. Over time the product has changed from dark black to a medium gray color but has maintained its strength. They showed us how the product blends with the surrounding grass. The transition from Geotex to grass was relatively flat. We asked how the planes reacted and were told the only problems was if one wheel was on the Geotex and the other on grass the plane would turn toward the wheel on the grass. The seams between the strips of Geotex were very flat and the only concern was some small tail wheels can catch a seam when taxiing. There were some patches in the surface. Any prop strikes were repaired with a brush of roofing tar. They usually go over the runway every month or two to patch any prop strikes. There were surprising few in the 6 years of use. There were some larger patches from major crashes and one person driving over the taxiway with the mulching blade running when the surface was new. The larger patches were squares of the same product placed over roofing tar over the damaged area. Once patched the only noticeable damage was cosmetic. The runway follows the contour of the ground. Their field is not flat. I would estimate the runway change in elevation by about a 1 foot one end to the other. When they cut the field they just run two wheels on the lawn mower on the edge on the Geotex and no damage occurs.

The perimeter was stapled down about every 3 inches with 6' turf staples. No staples in the center area. The entire 300' x 60' field was put down in 4 hours by about 20 people. They did recommend we kill the grass under the surface first then mow it as short as possible to give the best flying surface. They laid it over live grass and in took quite a while surface to lay flat to the ground. . We were given a sample of the material and the staples used. A drawing of the tool they made to drive the staples in will be emailed to us.

I was now time to fly off the surface. They have two taxiways to the main strip. The airplanes rolled very smoothly with no tendency to nose-over or catch a wheel. I flew a 47" electric P51 with retractable landing gear and my 19" Beast micro plane. Both planes had no difficulty in the surface and were able to taxi out, takeoff, land and taxi back to the pit area. I was able to do touch and go landings with both airplanes on the surface with no tendency to catch a wheel. Both airplanes had no difficulty with any of the seams or patches. The white center line on the runway was very helpful to use as a reference in landing. Other SPRCF members flew electric jets and some 3D type airplanes with similar results. One thing we noticed is that we need to adjust on flying for the smoother surface and allow the airplane to build up speed before takeoff. In grass we usually try to clear the grass as soon as possible. On a smooth runway it is best to let the airplane fly first.

There were a number at KRAM members at the field also. They fly airplanes from small electrics to large 1/3 scale IMAC 3D planes. We were able to see how they reacted to the surface. Talking to the pilots the most commonly mentioned thing was the consistently smooth and predictable surface. No long grass, weeds or holes in the grass to catch a wheel on taxiing, takeoff or landing. The surface is much easier on landing gear, gear mounting plates and retractable landing gear hold up better. The surface is not abrasive like asphalt so they don't have the problem of damaging planes that slide along the surface. The negative things they mentioned were that you needed a slow idle since there is less resistance on landing. You have to apply throttle slower on takeoff to avoid torque induced turns. Major crashes and some prop strikes cause damage to the surface that they have to repair. They also maintain a grass runway behind the main runway for any one not wanting to use the smooth surface. I did notice one area that was not as tight as the rest of the runway. Apparently they tried a vibrating roller in it resulted in the damage. They said they could remove the staples in that area and stretch in back out but it was not causing any problems so no one wanted to do the work.

KRAM has an agreement for their site that was deeded by the previous owner of the property. They pay about \$2,000/year rent. With the new additions of the cows and the smell, they felt they may have to move to another location on the property, apparently the property is very large and there are other suitable sites. Nik indicated they did not feel this was such a big deal because they would roll up the surface and move it to the new location or build a new runway and then move the existing product as a secondary runway. The members I talked to indicated they would not even consider using a grass surface again as their primary runway after using Geotex. One thing I noticed was how large a 300' x 60' runway was. It appears they normally use about a 1/3 of the field for takeoff and landing. They made it 60' wide so they can angle on takeoff and landing when the wind is crosswind. Their runway starts about 25' from the flight stations and this seems to provide a good balance of safety and visibility.

See the May Emitter for photographs of the visit.

Editor's Summary:

For whatever reason, this has become a contentious issue in the club and is being rigorously resisted by some members.

I think that it is important to note that the KRAM members told us that they had the same kind of resistance from a small number of very noisy members and that those same members are now some of the most active users of the surface and would not want to be without it.

We also understand that AMA in the United States is a strong booster of this technology for creating runways as there has been a lot of issues of clubs having to move and establish new fields which is of significant concern to AMA. AMA after all wants new members and that can't happen unless individual clubs have good fields.

For me at least, the experience of others should be a strong indicator of our direction.

As Editor, I have given everyone a chance to express their views and have their say. All comments both for and against have been published. I have personally taken some flak for supporting this initiative and expressing a view on the subject.

Whatever the outcome, Dave Doyon has put a great deal of effort into researching this material with the motivation of making our club a better and more attractive offering for existing and new members. Please attend the meeting so that you can be heard and your vote on Dave's resolution can be registered. We owe this to Dave and his many efforts to improve our club over the last few years.

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