

# Flight Seeing Lake Powell 2009

(aka The Fantastic Vintage Mooney Group Fly-in to Page AZ)

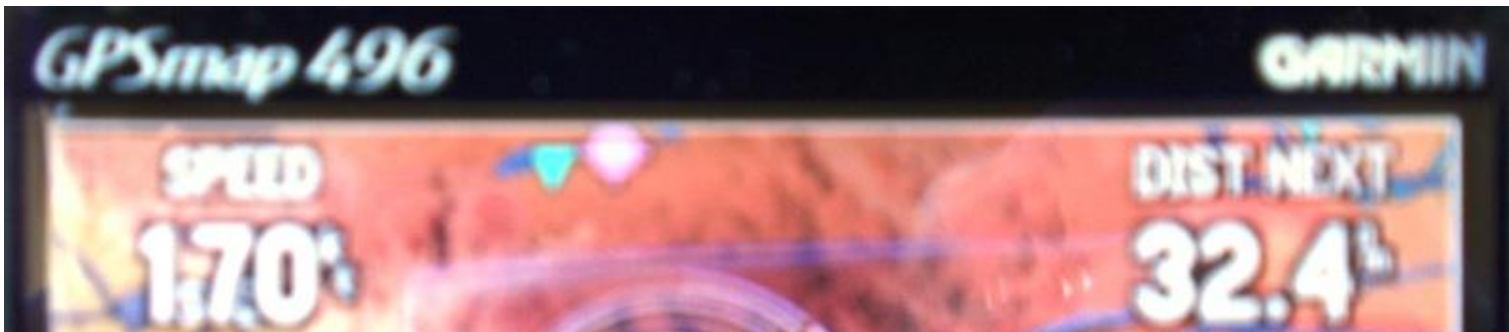
This flight offered many palatable presentations out of the plane's plastic windows based on what I knew at the time. I emailed if anyone wanted to go along this time as I usually tend to do. Several people wanted to come along, but they could not fit it into their work schedule, as I wanted to leave Corona on Friday so I would not get to the fly-in late. I had made all of the VMG name tags for everyone and I wanted to be there on time so I could assist in handing them out.

My plan was to fly from Corona CA to Phoenix AZ on Friday so it would be only a 1 ½ hour flight Saturday morning to get to join the Vintage Mooney Group on time. “The best laid plans of mice and men”. Have you been there?

I took a vacation day on Friday so no rushing around was in the plans. After I kissed my wife goodbye, I drove to AJO and pre-flighted my Mooney. I had plenty of time and I launched around 2:30 and cruise-climbed eastward out of the LA Basin. Remembering how many of you like the pictures available to me from my lofty perch, I snapped my first shot of the residences at the eastern end of the LA Basin a mile below me. So far the flight was smooth, just the way we all like them.



Passing through the Banning Pass, the airplane started to jiggle a little, and then some more. It was becoming irritating. I took a picture to prove that the tailwind had boosted my groundspeed to 170 knots but the turbulence blurred it. It did not let up, and so we bumped and banged our way eastward for the next hour plus.





Cruising eastward through the Banning pass with I-10 leading the way down there

I did get a chance to look to the right and get a picture of the Salton Sea and the crops growing on the northern side between the bumps (turbulence) that ruined 40% of my pictures that day.



High clouds, The Salton Sea, and fields of potential produce

It seems that I always want to explain something to you in every story. As you were not on board this flight, this is offered to you. You know how, when you look up and see those magnificent jet airliner white contrails (condensation trails) stretching across the blue sky overhead? This time I looked down and wondered what that dark streak was. Then it dawned on me that it was the shadow of a jet airliner contrail overhead. I just gotta show this to you.



Looking south, Interstate I-10 and the contrail's shadow over there



At 3:40 the terrain was rugged and at 3:45 it was smooth and cultivated coming to the Colorado River



Turbulence did a number on my hair and my photography

Because of the tailwinds, I arrived in an hour and  $\frac{3}{4}$ , beating my previous time for the flight. I had a nice dinner with my daughter Teresa and her husband Darrin and prepared to go to sleep for the night. A living room couch had been set up for me with sheets and a pillow, but I am too long or the couch was too short. A few minutes later, I got up, put the sheets and pillow on the living room carpet, and fell blissfully off to sleep.

### Saturday:

I popped up out of (bed) at 7-something to get to join the Vintage Mooney Group on time. Darrin was in the kitchen talking to Teresa so I grabbed a cup of coffee to wake up and get ready to go. Then I found out that he had to go back out as he had more work to do before we could go to the airport. A lot of time went by, a lot.

I checked in with FAA Flight Service and heard that our flight would be clear and smooth. Wrong, it was clear and bumpy. I waited and waited. When Darrin got home again, he drove us to the airport. He walked around my Mooney and pre-flighted everything while I recorded our fuel and oil levels. There was no sense rushing anything, life is what it is.



We were instructed to taxi to runway Seven Right via Charlie and Charlie Two (7R - C - C2)

It was already 10:45 AM and lunch was 250 miles away. We launched eastward and 3 miles out, we were cleared to turn north. I-17 known locally as the Black Canyon Highway was right below us.



It was now 11:10 and we had a *long* way to go for lunch

We were floating a mile or two over the highway bound travelers below. They had a smoother ride but we were going almost 3 times faster, and we could go in a straight line. Up ahead, our flight path ran just outside of the restricted area that protects Grand Canyon visitors from our airplane noise.





Thanks to optical zoom, enhanced by cropping the pictures on the PC, I was able to bring these Grand Canyon pictures up close for your viewing pleasure. The Colorado River created this canyon and it still flows by at the bottom. Finally, runway 33 was right in front of us at Page.



The page AZ airport is located just 4 miles south of the Utah Border.

As mentioned above, my main reason for arriving at the page AZ airport was to attend the Vintage Mooney Group Fly-in. We always get together for lunch. This time, we got there after lunch! We got there just in time to hear the after lunch announcements. Darrin paid for our lunch which consisted of several slices of cold pizza and cold Pepsi. Our host for the day was Cliff Biggs, who is based right there in Page. He had obtained a large hangar for our use and that's why Cliff's Boss's Mitsubishi MU-2 twin turbo prop airplane was parked on the ramp just outside. It holds around 10 people. While I was still eating my second slice of cold pizza, the bulk of the VMG folks hopped aboard local ground transportation for the tour of the Antelope Slot Canyon led by Navajo guides. I had the chance to shake cliff's hand with my personal thanks for putting this on. I also gave his wife Carol, a VMG hug.



The bit of time we had at a lunch table



I ordered some fuel and when the fuel truck had retreated to the FBO base of operations, we were left all alone. We had to take each other's pictures just to prove that we really were there. We were not done having fun yet, Cliff had prepared a Lake Powell flight-seeing route for us pilots, so we headed a few miles north to see what was out there. Oh, my gosh, by golly, for you fellow mid-westerners.



First up, was the upscale local marina







Oooo - Ahhhh!



Oh yes, this abundant beauty was better than pizza and made it all worthwhile

It is easy to see why anyone would like to rent a houseboat here for a family vacation. Truly, this is away from it all. Thanks Cliff, for this flight-seeing route available to all of us VMG pilots.



Lake Powell just seemed to go on forever



Cliff, has a very engaging smile - this picture was taken by Phil the next day on a VMG rafting trip



On the way home, I was again reminded that water is the essence of life. This river flowing through otherwise barren landscape allows the visible trees and shrubs to flourish, as well as the not visible animal life that surely co-exists in that region.




It was coming up on 4:00 as we approached the city of Williams on Interstate 40 some 20 miles west of Flagstaff AZ. The Kaibab National Forest lies just beyond. We motored on south to Phoenix.




For those of you who adore your grandkids, let me include a picture I took on Sunday . Except these are not my grandchildren, these are my great-grandchildren, Riley and Celeste, drawing their special creations with chalk in the driveway. Oh what pure fun they're having. No batteries required.




**Current Conditions**  
Riverside, California (Airport)  
Updated: 1:12 PM PDT on October 12, 2009

 **61 °F**  
**Overcast**


Humidity: 63%  
Dew Point: 48 °F  
Wind: 5 mph from the West  
Pressure: 29.86 in (Falling)  
Visibility: 10.0 miles  
UV: 2 out of 16  
Clouds: Overcast 2900 ft (Above Ground Level)

**Radar** **Webcam**

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**Monday**

 **67° F | 56° F**  
Chance of Rain  
**20% chance of precipitation**  
[Hourly](#)

I stayed over Sunday night as Monday 10/12 was a court holiday. Monday had flying weather surprises in store for me. Although it was awesome outside in Phoenix, the LA Basin was socked in with a low (2900') overcast, per this weatherunderground.com information. I let Kim, my supervisor at work know. She is a very understanding gal, and knows what bad weather can mean to me.



The tinted windows make it nicer for flying, but mess with the colors of the pictures I take

When I finally had good enough flying weather on Thursday, Darrin again drove us to the Deer Valley airport. He did his usual Mooney preflight inspection except for the fuel and oil levels, which I always check and log myself. This picture it is so typical. Even after I get inside, buckled up, and go through my pre-start checklist, he is always watching to make sure I have covered every point. We said goodbye, and soon I was off for a two hour flight trip to Corona again.



An hour later I was over the town of Quartzsite which hosts mineral and gem shows and swap meets which bring in 1½ million visitors every year. Huge tent and RV 'cities' spring up during those times.



On the way home, I again noticed how the Interstate is laid out to circumvent all of the high terrain



Irrigation from the nearby Colorado River makes the Blythe area perpetually green



The GPS Terrain page shows safe passage through the Banning Pass as I stay on course. Of course looking out the window confirms this for daytime flights. For night flights, flying right over Interstate 10 always adds visual assurance.



Trip totals include 1069nm and almost 7½ hours of flying

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