2418

2026 OPERATING PROCEDURES
For Minden Soaring Club at the Minden-Tahoe Airport (MEV)

WELCOME
These operating procedures have been developed to help provide a safe, efficient, and friendly environment for glider pilots, students, and ride customers, as well as other users of MEV. Please take the time to read through the 2026 version of this document.

HOURS OF OPERATION
MSC normal business hours for 2026 are 9 AM – 5 PM, every day of the week in the summer months except when it is raining cats and dogs, semi's are blowing over on the highway, or hail larger than baseball's is falling.

CHECKOUTS
MSC operates sailplanes in some of the most outstanding and challenging soaring conditions in the world. To safely fly in this environment many pilots who have not flown in similar conditions require extra training, especially if they are low-time or not current.

For the safety of our customers and our equipment, MSC has certain requirements that must be met before a pilot is allowed to receive tows, fly in wave, enter the "wave window", rent a glider, or fly cross-country in an MSC glider.

MSC membership, area checkout, and anti-collision device – required of all pilots before receiving a tow by MSC tow planes.

Glider Checkout – required for each type of glider the customer rents.

Wave Checkout – required before customers can fly MSC gliders in wave conditions.

Wave Window Checkout – required before flying above 18,000' into the Minden Wave Windows.

Cross Country Checkout – required before flying an MSC glider out of glide range of MEV.

These checkouts must be repeated every 12 months, although at the discretion of an MSC instructor, the checkout requirements may be waived.

If you plan on visiting from out of town, let us know in advance and we will make sure you receive the appropriate checkout materials so that you may review them before you arrive.

MINDEN-TAHOE AIRPORT
MEV is a non-towered airport. However, the airport can be quite busy, especially during the summer months. Traffic consists of everything from parachutists, ultralights, small training aircraft, helicopters, and gliders, to large business jets.

There are two crossing runways at MEV, 34/16 and 30/12. Runway 34/16 is 7,395 feet long and 30/12 is 5,289 feet long. The runway length when launching from the staging area is 4,300'.

Study the material at Airport Information – Minden-Tahoe Airport before arriving.

OXYGEN USE

MSC gliders are equipped with Mountain High EDS oxygen units. Pilots are responsible for knowing how to use this system (please ask for a briefing if unfamiliar). We recommend you use oxygen above 10,000' MSL. Put on the nasal cannula and adjust the regulator as part of your prelaunch checklist

MSC members must be checked out in oxygen refill procedures to self-refill. Otherwise, pilots must request a refill from the MSC staff. Mistakes made during refill which result in oxygen cylinder equalization will be subject to a $150 fee for the wasted oxygen.

Oxygen refills are $35 (small cylinder), $45 (medium cylinder), and $75 (large cylinders).

CHECK IN

All private owners needing a tow must notify MSC the day before you plan to fly, with proposed launch time, via WhatsApp, phone, or text message. The office staff will verify that you are familiar with these SOPs and will arrange for staff to assist you with assembly, oxygen, and tow out, staff permitting. If you need MSC to provide assistance with land out retrieves, leave written instructions providing the location of your vehicle, trailer, and keys. Retrieves using your vehicle are at the discretion of MSC staff.

VISITING PRIVATE OWNERS

Visit the Airport Office next to the blue MSC hangar. Get a gate pass to drive your trailer into the airport and pay for a tie down spot. If you want to tow your glider across runways to the staging area you must take a test and get an access waiver card. Otherwise, MSC staff or MSC pilots will provide this service for you.

GLIDER ASSEMBLY

Private owners can assemble their gliders on the apron to the northeast of the office, or in the south tie down area. Glider assembly is not permitted in any area that results in a taxiway being blocked. Towing glider trailers across the runways is not allowed unless the driver has an airport access waiver card and is usually not necessary.
Please make sure your trailer is tied down when not attached to a vehicle. Strong winds and dust devils can damage your trailer, and other trailers and aircraft in the vicinity. Do not leave your glider canopy or trailer open.

GROUND MOVEMENT

Moving from the ramp to the glider staging area means crossing both runways. Soaring pilots are to limit surface movements to the absolute minimum as required by the FAA and airport management.

Only authorized personnel are allowed to drive vehicles on the airport runways and taxiways. You are required to display an airport-issued access waiver to move assembled gliders from the ramp to the glider staging area using a golf cart or other vehicle. To obtain a waiver, contact the airport office (775) 782-9871. In addition, all vehicles must have an orange and white checkered flag or orange flashing beacon and a radio tuned to 123.05 to drive in the waivered area.

If you do not have an access waiver, an MSC staff member will assist you in moving your glider to the staging area and back to the ramp after your flight. Please arrange to have your glider moved to the staging area before 11am on busy summer days. During peak launch times, there may be a significant delay in towing your glider to the staging area due to a lack of available staff and increased aircraft traffic.

WEAK-LINKS

The breaking strength of the rope that MSC uses for towing is 2000 pounds. If your glider requires a weak-link, you are responsible for providing the link and instructing the line crew how to use it.

RADIO USE

Each glider receiving a tow from SoaringNV must have a working radio. Due to today's widespread use of ADSB by both airplanes and gliders, use your N number when transmitting for landing so that other aircraft can identify you on the traffic screen.

Frequencies:	
Minden CTAF	123.05
Minden AWOS	119.325
Glider-to-glider	123.3 or 123.5
NorCal Approach (south of Reno)	119.2
NorCal Approach (north of Reno)	126.3
Reno Tower	118.7

Minden's CTAF is 123.05. You must be on this frequency when departing or flying in the pattern. It is highly recommended that you tune to this frequency when approaching or operating in the vicinity of the airport and not actively using a different frequency. Communication between gliders when away from the airport is usually on 123.3, although some pilots also use 123.5. Chatter on the CTAF frequency must be kept to a minimum. If you need to convey information about lift, discuss flight direction or plans, etc., please switch to 123.3 or 123.5.

To help increase safety for all aircraft in the area around MEV, NorCal Approach has requested increased radio monitoring from gilder pilots when above 10,000' MSL within 40 NM of Reno.

When crossing the Carson Valley from the east or west between 11,000' and 14.000' monitor NorCal on 119.2 and be prepared to work with high speed traffic descending to land in Reno on north wind days. Avoid extended flight to the north or south on the Reno runway approach path.

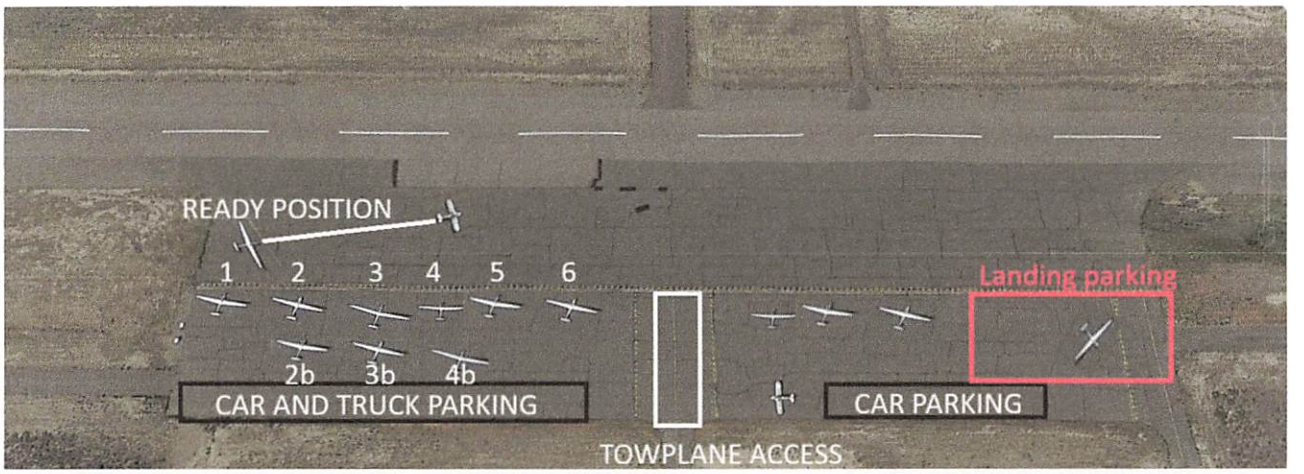
Note that Truckee pilots notify NorCal when crossing the Carson Valley from the east to cross the mountains and land in Truckee.

CROSSING RUNWAYS

Please complete pre-flight inspections, positive control checks, flight computer entries, radio checks, and bathroom breaks before moving your glider to the runway/staging area. Avoid multiple runway crossings.

STAGING/LAUNCHING

We operate on runway 30 when the wind permits. With density altitude below 6,000'MSL, or for single place gliders, we can launch in front of the glider staging area. Gliders are staged behind the hold short line. Spot 1 is reserved for gliders launching immediately. Spot 2 and up are used by gliders as they arrive and have priority launch positions. Any pilot wearing a parachute and sitting in the glider ready to go has priority over other gliders regardless of spot number. The glider is pushed onto the staging area, rotated, and pushed back if necessary for the launch. Gliders can also be staged in the 2b and 2c examples, knowing that they are trapped until the gliders in front of them launch.



At higher density altitudes or in heavier gliders with water ballast, you may want to tow your glider back to use the full length of runway 30. Park the glider on taxiway Bravo or the gravel glider taxilane until you are ready to launch so that the runway is not blocked.

If the wind favors runway 12, 16 or 34, we will stage and tow from those runways. For runways 16 and 34 this is commonly done from the intersection provided the glider is not too heavy and density altitude is not a factor. Do not block taxiways. When staging in the intersection, all gliders must be parked on the far edges of the intersection in the green painted areas. Large corporate jets must be able to taxi through the intersection.

Radio Check
Please perform a radio check before pushing out. We want to spend as little time as possible on the runway, so be ready to go when the tow plane pulls in front of you. The tow hook up is not the time to find out your radio doesn't work. If you are not ready to start your tow immediately, please stay behind the yellow hold short lines.

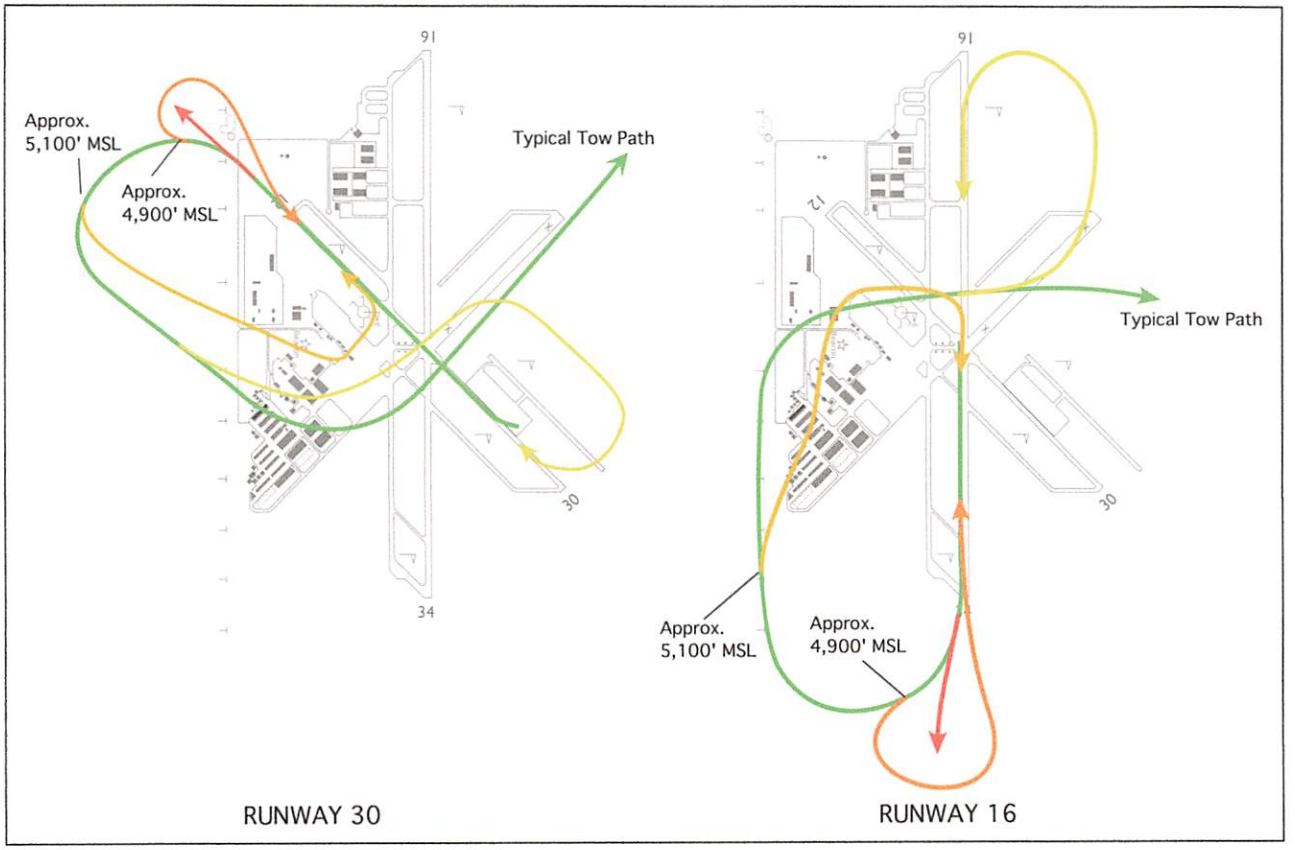
Intersection Launches
If you plan on launching from the intersection on runway 34, please coordinate with the MSC line crew. DO NOT pull your glider onto the runway until you have been informed that a tow plane is ready for you. Please understand that during peak times, we try to launch gliders as efficiently, quickly, and fairly as possible. However, often preference will be given to the gliders in the staging area. If you want to ensure a timely departure, arrange to have your glider in the staging area before you are ready to launch.

Motor Glider Launches
Motor gliders under power should follow standard procedures for power traffic at MEV. Motor gliders launching from 34 should make a right turn after departing to avoid tow planes launching from 30, and to provide an easy right pattern for 30 in case of an engine failure. If launching from 30, a standard left 270° turn should be made inside of the normal traffic pattern for 34.

Pilots flying self-launch motorgliders are expected to be members of the MSC and help support the organization which works hard to provide soaring to our community.

ROPE BREAK PROCEDURES
The following diagram shows the typical emergency procedures in case of a premature release from tow. The green line shows our normal tow path. Below 200' AGL, you should land roughly straight ahead, as shown by the red line. Between 200' and 400' AGL, a 180° turn is possible, followed by a downwind landing (orange line). Above 400' AGL, an abbreviated pattern (left or right) can be performed. If a strong wind is blowing, a 180° turn may require 500' or more!

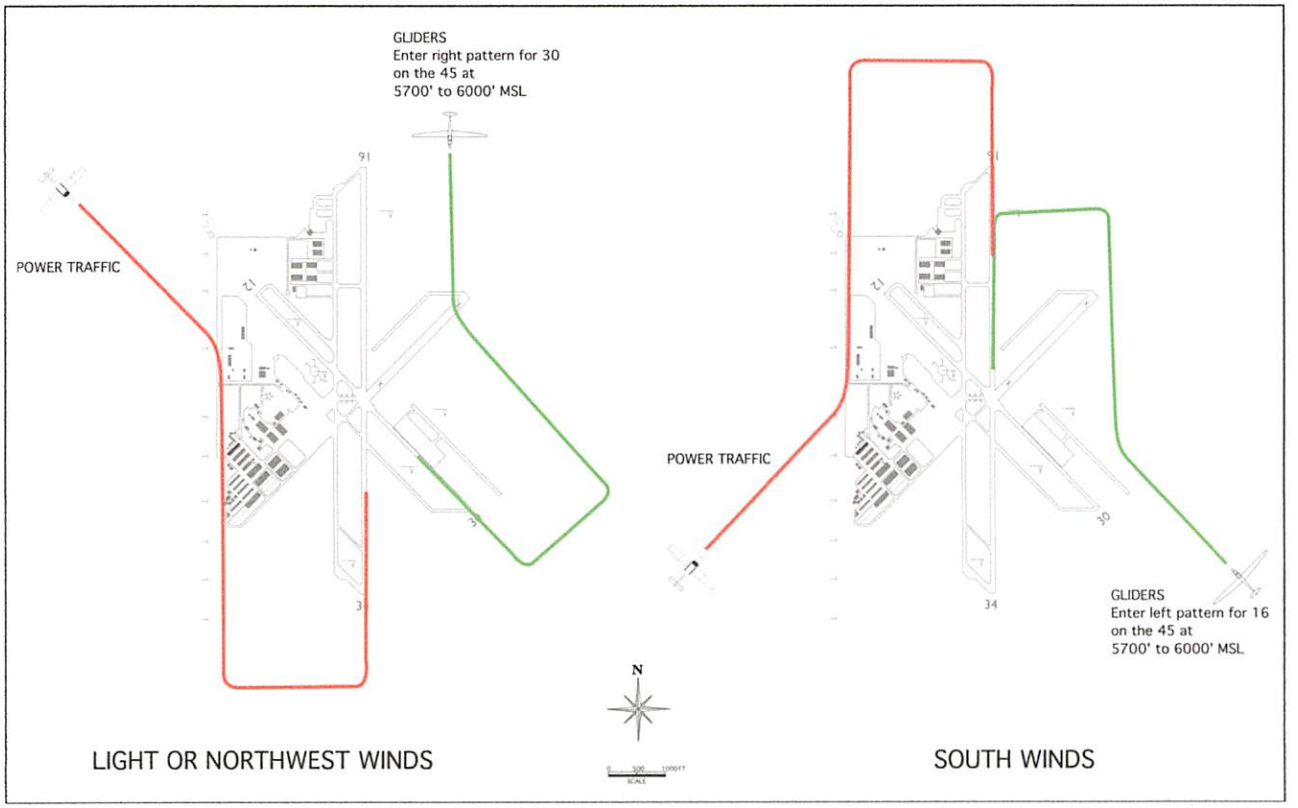
The preferred rope break procedures may vary depending on wind and other conditions. A rope break below 200' may require a landing in one of three fields off the end of 30. Know where these fields are. A 120° turn to runway 16 may be best plan. Know before you go!



Standard Rope Break Procedures

STANDARD LANDING PATTERNS AT MINDEN

To maintain separation between power and glider traffic at MEV, gliders fly patterns to the east of the airport and powered aircraft fly patterns to the west. Under calm conditions, power traffic uses 34 and glider traffic uses 30. Powered aircraft use a left-hand pattern for 34 and 30 and a right-hand pattern for 16 and 12; gliders use a right-hand pattern for 30 and 34 and a left-hand pattern for 12 and 16. Wind conditions occasionally require all types of aircraft use the same runway. When flying on the west side of the airport, gliders should stay above 7,000' MSL. If conditions require landing on the closed runway (runway 21), use a left-hand pattern.



We try to give way to jet traffic whenever possible. We don't want to make a landing jet go around because it will have to circle the valley and make an additional approach which may be more dangerous and noisier for everyone than if they can just quickly get on the ground.

If you are safely able to allow the high speed traffic to land first, communicate your intentions: "Glider Five Delta Delta will loiter and allow the jet to land first" or "Glider Seven Four Zulu will land short on 30, not a factor for landing traffic on 34", which lets everyone know that you are playing nice with your fellow aviators.
After landing and rolling into the intersection, move your glider clear of the intersection as soon as practical. After landing and rolling into the staging area, move your glider past the hold short lines as soon as practical. If you have already landed, be on the lookout to help your fellow pilots land and clear the runway. We are all in this together!

SKYDIVERS

The drop zone is next to the Starbucks coffee plant in the square dirt field east of runway 16. This is close to the right-hand pattern entry to runway 30. Know the location of the drop zone and be aware of Skydive radio alerts to jumpers in the air.

LANDING

Check the AWOS (119.325) before landing so you will know which runway is appropriate. It is not uncommon for winds to shift in the afternoon. Most landings are on runway 30. Since most cars are in the staging area, this is also the normal runway exit location. It is also the easiest and safest in most conditions due to expansive asphalt to drop a wing onto. Always test your brakes before pulling off the runway. If your brakes fail, stay on the runway!

If you plan on rolling through the intersection of the runways, make sure that there is no cross traffic. If for any reason your radio has failed (such as a dead battery), DO NOT roll through the intersection.

Many wingtips have been scraped up making the left turn from 30 through the intersection onto taxiway Charlie.

If landing wind favors 34 or 16, plan to land long so you can roll to the intersection and clear the runway. Once you land, please clear the runway as soon as possible.

In very strong southwest winds, the closed runway (Runway 21) may be the safest option. Investigate this on the ground before launch so you are comfortable with your choice. We also recommend you use a higher/faster approach to accommodate strong wind gradient on short final.

Once you have landed, please clear the runway (cross the hold-short lines) as quickly as possible. If you are unable to "taxi" off the runway, quickly get out of your glider and pull it clear. This is important for safety, as well as for keeping good relations between power and glider traffic by not blocking the runways.

LATE RETURNS/RETRIEVES

During the summer, MSC will have ground staff on the airport until 5:00 p.m. You must make arrangements in advance if you plan on returning to the airport after that time and will need assistance. Please provide MSC with a status update around 5:00 p.m. if you have final glide back to the airport, or if you think you may need a retrieve.

Retrieval is at the discretion of MSC and will be determined on a case-by-case basis, based on staff availability and your location. Please fly with a land-out kit and be prepared to spend the night if you land out in a remote area. Our staff will get you as soon as we can.

Because of the nature of the high desert, we teach an airport-to-airport flying style. Although we want each pilot to have the confidence to land anywhere, we encourage all land-outs to be at an airstrip.

Aero-retrieves will only be conducted from approved airfields, subject to the discretion of

MSC and the tow pilot. Rates are based on the time the tow plane is gone from MEV-'round trip'. Ground retrieve of gliders is billed round trip, by the hour, with an additional mileage charge.

Ground retrieves of rental gliders will be done under the supervision of an employee of MSC. Glider rental is charged (up to 5 hours per day) during regular business hours, until the glider is back at MEV, assembled and ready to fly. Non-MSC gliders will be retrieved when staff personnel are available. Private glider owners are encouraged to have their own crew on stand-by. The use of private automobiles for retrieves by MEV staff is at the discretion of MEV.

RESERVATION/CANCELATION POLICY

MSC policies regarding reservations and cancellations are published on our website, and are available in the front office. All customers need to be familiar with the current policies.

WHITE MOUNTAIN PROCEDURE ALPHA

In the summer months a large number of gliders fly at high speed on the White and Inyo Mountains. Closing speeds for two gliders flying near redline are very high and it is hard to see the thin profile of an oncoming glider. Procedure Alpha recommends checkpoints at which you should make radio transmissions announcing your position, altitude, and direction of travel on 123.5. We ask you to obtain and familiarize yourself with Procedure Alpha while flying there. Copies are available.

FLARM AND TRANSPONDERS

Transponders are very important in the Minden/Reno flight environment to provide separation awareness between slow moving gliders and high speed traffic. Flarm is very important to provide collision warnings between gliders. A transponder or Flarm is required for a tow.

GUST FRONTS

Storm downbursts are highly dangerous and unfortunately very common in the Carson Valley. Precipitation and Virga below cumulonimbus clouds can produce extreme vertical velocities, especially when striking the downslope of a mountain which directs all of the energy in one direction – towards the airport!

Be prepared to land early before overdevelopment happens or be prepared to turn around and fly away to another airport or loiter at high altitude away from the Carson Valley until things settle down again. Have a plan and know before you go!

SPECIAL GUIDELINES FOR FLYING OVER HEAVENLY SKI RESORT

MSC requires all staff pilots and renters of MSC gliders to maintain a minimum distance of 1000' AGL over Heavenly Mountain Resort Ski Area. This is an enhancement to part 61.119 of the FAR's, done in cooperation with Heavenly management. For specific boundaries, please refer to the topographical map below.

Area of Special Guideline flying over Heavenly Ski Resort.

Weather and wind conditions are variable over the mountains, with land-out options limited within the Tahoe Basin. Please remember the South Lake Tahoe Airport (TVL) is the best place to land in the Basin if return to Minden Tahoe Airport (MEV) is not possible. Skiers and hikers frequent the trails on the US Forest Service property making up Heavenly Mountain Resort. In addition to the buildings and structures dotting the hills, there are many difficult-to-see cables, making for hazardous conditions for pilot, passenger and people on the ground. Violation of this guideline, other than for pilot emergency, will be taken seriously and may result in refusal of rental privileges.

Plenty of ridge flight can be experienced to the North or South of Heavenly Valley along the Carson Range.

Pilots flying their own gliders are asked to understand that Heavenly Mountain Resort is a busy resort with people, equipment, and cables. SoaringNV strives to be a good neighbor in supporting all forms of outdoor recreation with the utmost margin of safety.

The bottom line is: maintain at least 1000' from Heavenly Mountain Resort. Thanks for making our soaring safer and being a good neighbor!