

## Site Guide, and Rules for Mt. Brace Outdoor Club – here: The infamous Mt. Race Launch

Paragliding and hang gliding are expressions of freedom, including our freedom to choose our own life and take our own risks. To sustain a flying Club in the US we have to stay aware of the context in which we fly. Here at Brace our launches are on N.Y. Taconic State Park land, and our privilege to launch there is revocable. Lawsuits of many kinds are always possible. We also have the usual potential for issues with the local landowners who are our neighbors.

The tiny, only for experts launchable rock plateau at **Race Mountain** (severe cliff, sharp rocks, facing east, and located about 5 miles ENE from the regular Brace launch) however falls into Massachusetts, and is inside the Mt. Washington State Forest. It is not an actively used or promoted club launch, the last known flights have occurred years ago, no use permits exist or have been ever applied for, and no land owners of the fields below the Mt. Race launch have ever been contacted for their approval. The Mt. Brace Club does not manage this rocky patch, nor recommends trying to launch from it. We don't care about it, nor about any other of the many rocky promontories along this mountain ridge. In fact, when East wind conditions are present, the much better option is to head to Mt. Greylock, also facing east, a safer, larger, and much easier site, reachable by car and without a hike, with the additional advantage of being fully sanctioned, top to bottom. The only reason you are reading about it now is that many years ago a few Mt. Brace regulars have undertaken and documented (possibly illegal) flights from Mt. Race (Thank You Leonardo!), and because back then this potential Race launch was simultaneously noted in some old club communication. With that, the current USHPA insurance procedures are forcing the Mt. Brace club to treat this cliff as if it were a current, normal and recommended launch, including the publication of its existence, and to submit paper work like elaborate risk assessment worksheets as if the Mt. Race were a willingly adopted part of the Mt. Brace agenda, which it decidedly is not. So here it is.

**Please, then, be respectful of the rules, of the rangers, and of all the people that you meet, in order that we may all be able to fly here for many years to come. You are an ambassador of our sport and of our Club! Thanks, and see you in the air.**

## The Pilot's Checklist

To come out and fly Mt. Brace you need the following:

1. Current USHPA membership \*
2. Current annual or daily Mt. Brace Outdoor Club membership, with a current signed waiver \*
3. USHPA P3/H3 rating or higher. **P2/H2s can fly too but for safety reasons it's a little more complicated** – see P2/H2 information below
4. A helmet and protective footwear
5. A radio that can receive and transmit on the USHPA frequencies. Regularly used frequencies include **151.505** and **144.440** MHz
6. **Sign in the Pilot book** in the Mt Brace LZ before heading up to launch
7. **Call the ranger** if you are the first pilot signing in or if you have any doubt whether the ranger has been called. It's easy. Call (518) 329-3993 and say, *"I'm calling from the Brace Club. I just wanted to let you know we will be flying today."*

However, if you decide to try flying Mt. Race, you're on your own. And if that's all you do, don't bother with USHPA or Mt. Brace Club membership. Mt. Race is too far away, and we can't police it from where we are. Radio communication from behind the other side of the ridge cannot be received at the Mt. Brace LZ. Do not sign into our book, do not call any NY State Taconic Park Ranger (they have nothing to do with the Massachusetts forests) – the potential Mt. Race launch is not ours, is not sanctioned, not current, and no land owner permits or process for flying Mt. Race exist. In fact, the Mt. Brace Club wants nothing to do with it, or you, if you are flying it anyway. The same goes for any of the many other crazy cliffs along our mountain

range – just because you decide to launch from one –possibly illegally- doesn't mean the Mt. Brace club is going to take any ownership of you, your flying, or your chosen launch pad.

If you are new here, you are welcome! **Please read the rest of the rules** (below) before you come and arrange for a site intro before you fly for the first time. To make an assessment about weather conditions, check forecasts for Millerton, NY 12546.

Your membership dues to Mt. Brace Outdoor Club go towards paying the rent, maintenance, insurance, cutting the grass, garbage disposal, the use of the facilities and parking.

[http://mtbraceclub.com/fees\\_regular](http://mtbraceclub.com/fees_regular)

## In addition to The Pilot's Checklist mentioned above:

1. You must be a daily or annual member of the **Mt. Brace Outdoor Club** to fly from Brace Mountain. Please carry your proof of membership with you, as well as your USHPA card.
2. The N.Y. Taconic State Park is public land, and the launch on top of Mt. Brace is squarely in it.
3. The potential launch site at Race Mountain is in the Mt. Washington State Forest of Massachusetts. The Mt. Brace Club has no contact with those authorities. We do not manage this launch, nor are we recommending it.
4. The Taconic State Park has no jurisdiction over Race mountain.
5. The Taconic State Park policy does limit any flying activity from Mt. Brace to Mt. Brace Outdoor Club members only. **This means that if you fly without joining first, a ranger can issue you an expensive citation. You also risk losing your future flying privileges if you ignore the site rules.**
6. All annual member pilots must sign a Club waiver once each calendar year. Please take responsibility for getting this done. Day pilots have to sign a waiver every time they fly Mt. Brace. Waivers have to be co-signed by a Club member.
7. Waivers are so important that we have to say this: In the event that you launch from Mt. Brace without having signed a waiver, be aware that:  
**Regardless of anything else, your act of launching your aircraft signifies your full and complete acceptance of the waivers of both the Mt. Brace Outdoor Club and the US Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (USHPA). If you don't accept the waivers, don't fly.**
8. Brace launch requires a USHPA intermediate rating **P3/H3** or higher to fly unobserved.
9. The main Mt. Brace launch is narrow, with uneven terrain, and even some very good pilots have been in the bushes. Good ground handling skills are essential to launching safely.
10. In the air, please be attentive to pilots on launch and keep clear when someone is set up and ready to take off.
11. To practice in the Mt Brace LZ you must be a member of USHPA and pay the Mt Brace Outdoor Club due with waivers signed. To leave the ground on the training hills you must have a P1 rating or be under instructor supervision.
12. No motorized flying.\*
13. No acrobatics or stunt maneuvers in flight.\*
14. No flying when winds exceed 26 MPH. No radical speed wings, or intentional proximity flying.\*
15. No flying alone.\*
16. Camping is permitted in N.Y. Taconic State Park only at Rudd Pond and Copake Falls.
17. Dogs are permitted if they are controlled. If there is a chance that your dog will chase pilots who are landing (or who are launching, if you hike your dog to launch) please keep your dog on a leash. Dogs are distracting and have caused crashes.

18. Please know that you are financially liable for any damage that you, your guests, your children, or your pets cause to the Club, landowner property, or the N.Y. Taconic State Park. Even the USHPA insurance comes with a deductible, for which the involved pilot is responsible.
19. Rides to launch of Mt. Brace: On busy days, members of the Club may run a shuttle for a modest fee. Otherwise:
  - Backside trailhead: Please organize rides to the backside trailhead to minimize the number of vehicles parked there.
  - Front side trailheads: Please do not use a front side trailhead until you have been briefed by a Club member as there are some landowner issues. Please, do not leave a car, **ever**, at the north front side trailhead. If you leave your car at the south front side trailhead, it's important not to land there. Land in the main LZ and catch a ride to your car.
  - Note that the front side trails are steeper and longer than the backside, covering about 1500 vertical feet.
20. Always pack out your trash.

Thanks for reading our rules. We wish you high flights and soft landings!

\* These rules are in the N.Y. Taconic State Park Permit.