Johnson Creek (3U2)

Recommended Standard Operating Procedures

7/2025

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➨Introduction

Welcome to Johnson Creek (3U2), one of Idaho's premier backcountry airstrip destinations. Mountain flying in Idaho offers some of general aviation's most gratifying experiences, with nearly 100 backcountry airstrips providing access to unparalleled outdoor recreation—including camping, fishing, and hiking.

However, flying in Idaho's mountains is a serious and challenging endeavor, as evidenced by recent accidents. Safe backcountry flying requires rock-solid skills in slow flight and airspeed control, intimate knowledge of your aircraft's performance, and well-defined personal limitations. More importantly, it demands a safe, conservative, and professional attitude. A safe flight is a stress-free and enjoyable flight.

The procedures in this document are not a substitute for proper mountain flying training. Pilots interested in developing these skills will find excellent flight training resources on the second page of this document.

These preferred operating procedures were collaboratively developed by the FAA, NTSB, local flight training providers, and the Idaho Division of Aeronautics. Our goal is to establish a standard for safe operating practices at Johnson Creek Airport, including proper planning, communication, traffic patterns, and in-flight decision-making. These procedures represent proven best practices, developed through collaboration with aviation authorities and grounded in real-world experience to promote safe and enjoyable flying in Idaho.

We look forward to your safe arrival at Johnson Creek Airport.

Idaho Division of Aeronautics

Figure 1 - Johnson Creek (3U2)

✈Preflight Planning

Johnson Creek (3U2) often hosts the highest concentration of aircraft among Idaho's backcountry airstrips. Adherence to these procedures is essential for maintaining safety.

Flight planning should include:

- Verifying thorough aircraft maintenance status
- Reviewing current NOTAMs
- Preparing for backcountry aviation operations
- Studying Idaho mountain flying techniques
- Calculate takeoff and landing distances and climb performance
- Practicing courteous behavior with other pilots and visitors
- Assessing weather conditions en-route and during your stay
- Familiarizing yourself with search and rescue protocols
- Packing appropriate survival gear

IMPORTANT:
Do not attempt operations at Johnson Creek without solid mountain flying experience. The Idaho Division of Aeronautics strongly recommends airport checkout prior to landing.

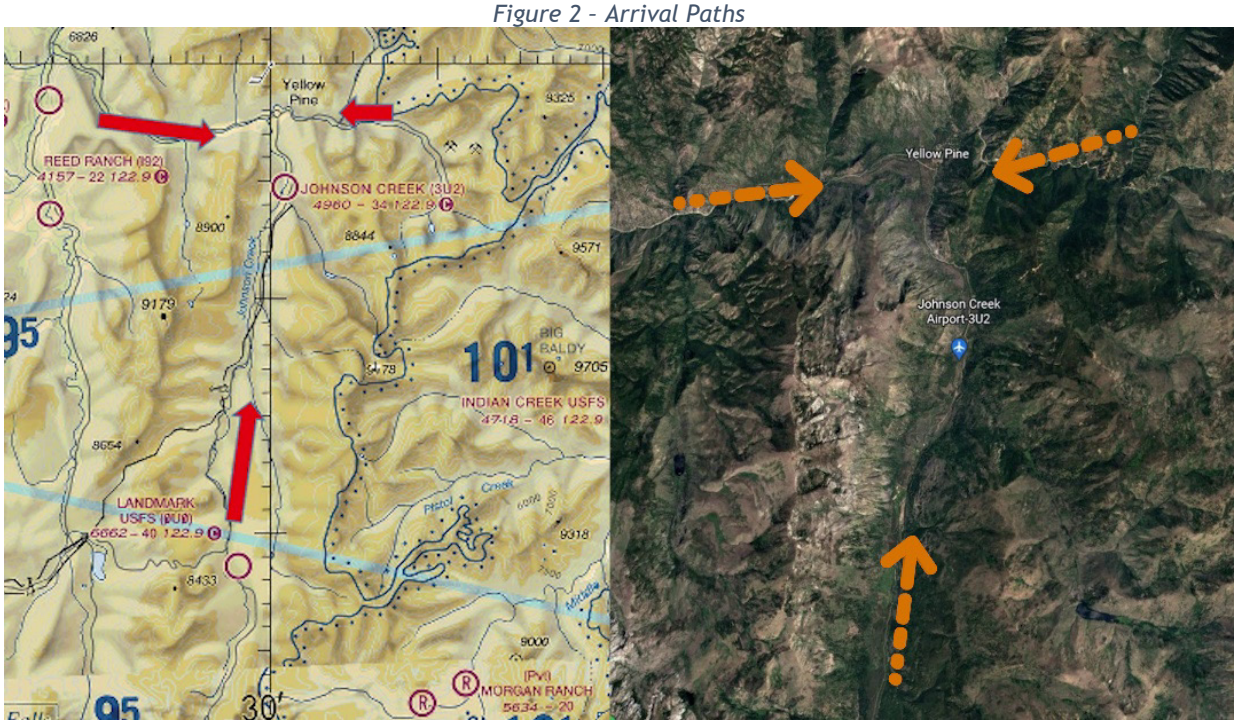
REFER TO THE PERORMANCE SECTION OF YOUR AIRCRAFT'S PILOT OPERATING HANDBOOK (POH)

Backcountry Flight Instructors:
Contact the Idaho Aviation Association (IAA) at
idahoaviation.com/contact/
Phone: (508) 803-5722

Route Planning

Arrivals

Figure 2 - Arrival Paths

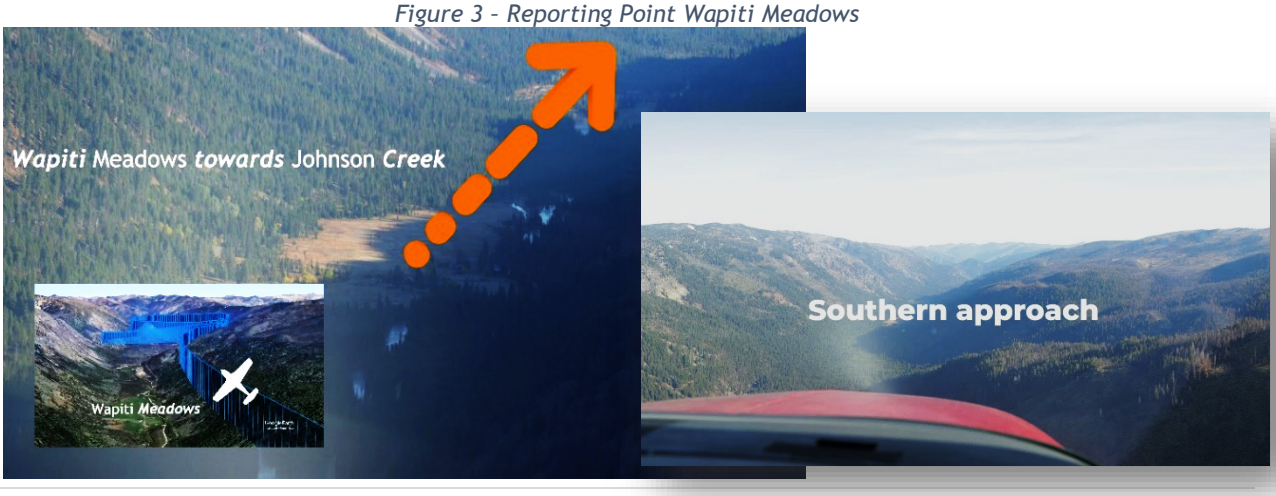


CAUTION:
Providing consistent position reports, conducting thorough traffic scans, and utilizing landing lights are critical throughout the descent and approach into Johnson Creek. **SHADOWS CAST BY MOUNTAINS AND TREES CAN OBSCURE OBJECTS ON THE RUNWAY.** After landing, taxi clear of the runway and proceed immediately to the designated parking area to ensure safety and maintain traffic flow.

From the South:

- Announce your distance, direction, and altitude from Johnson Creek Airport.
- Check in at Reporting Point Wapiti Meadows, 3.5 miles south of Johnson Creek. **Wapiti Meadows: N44 51.24 / W115 30.31**
- **WARNING:** Charter traffic at or above 9,000 MSL at Wapiti Meadows
- Offset to the right and fly up the right side of the canyon to enter downwind for landing.

Figure 3 - Reporting Point Wapiti Meadows



Landing Runway 17

- Maintain 1,500’ AFE (Above Field Elevation) or a minimum of 6,400’ MSL until established at Reporting Point Wapiti Meadows (see Figure 14).
- Configure your airplane for canyon maneuvering speed.
- Announce when you over Wapiti Meadows, providing your altitude and stating your intentions.
- If needed, circle to visually inspect the airfield for obstacles and hazards such as airplanes, animals, vehicles, and sprinklers.
- Conduct a standard left-hand pattern including upwind, crosswind, downwind, base, and final legs.

Figure 4 - Southern Entry into the Pattern

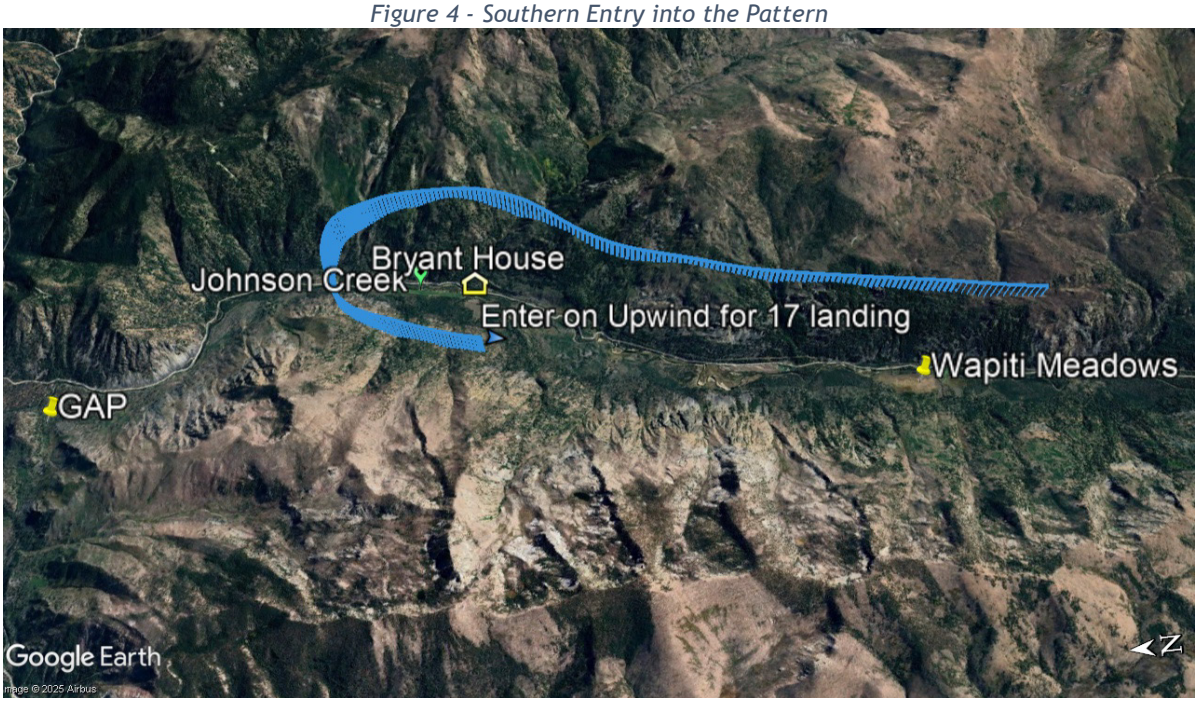
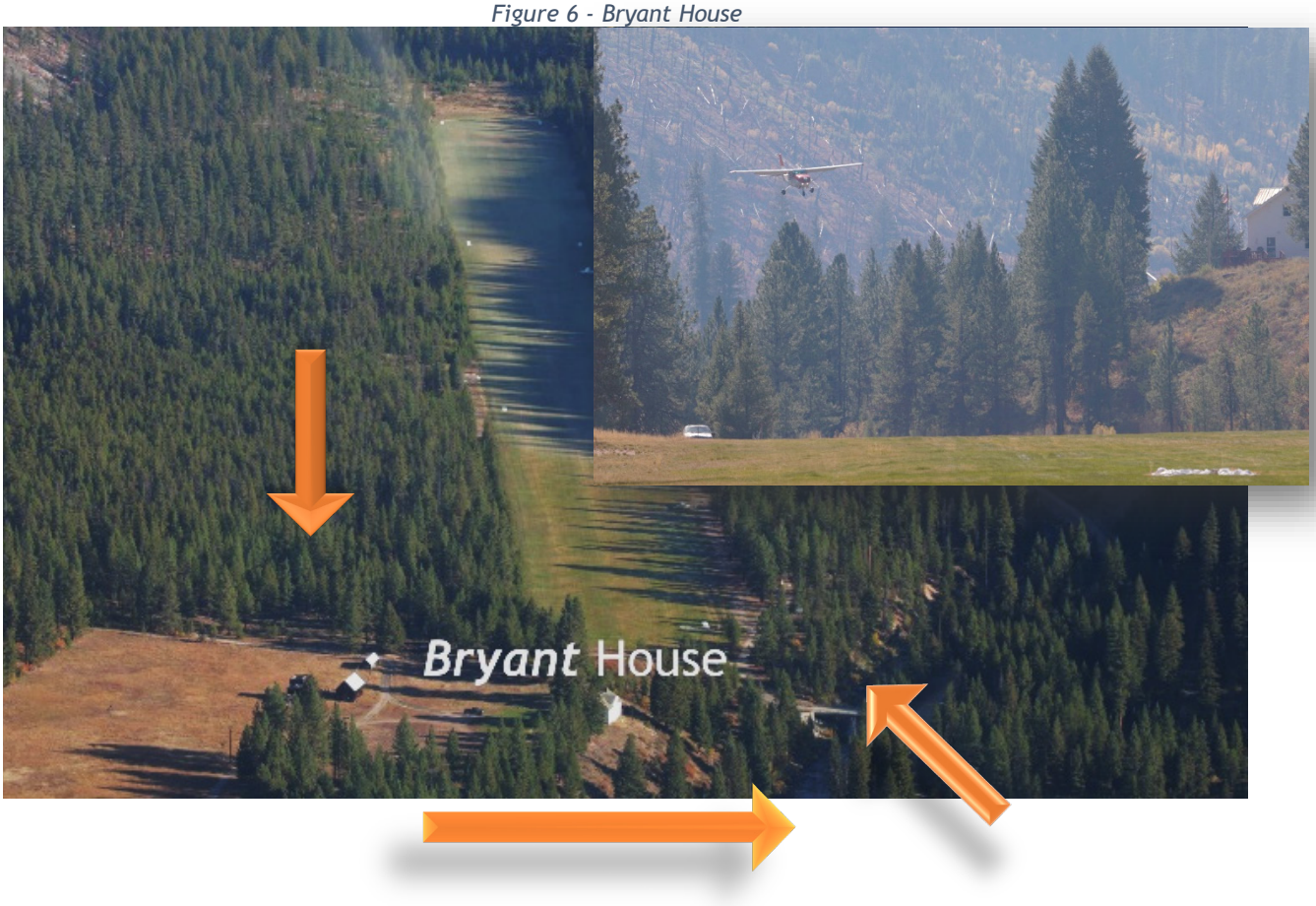


Figure 5 - Upwind Entry into Pattern for 17

Landing Runway 35

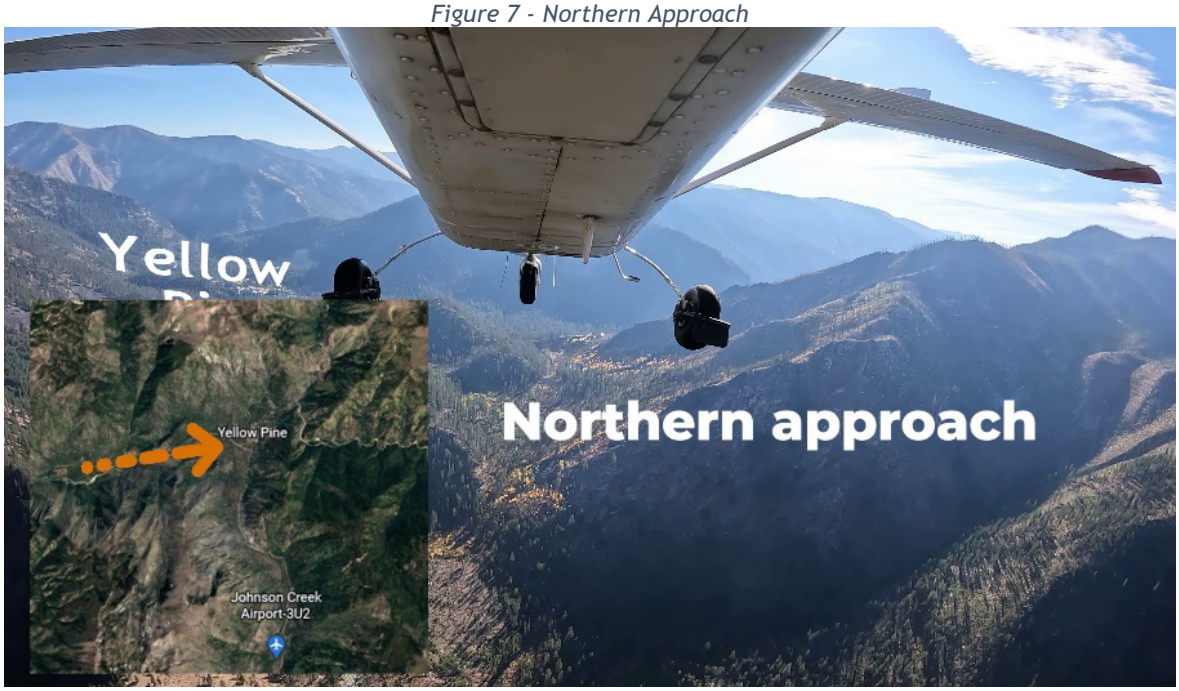
- Landing downstream to the north is **NOT** recommended.
- Landings to the north should only be considered when wind or weather conditions make landing to the south unsafe.
- Maintain 1,500’ AFE (Above Field Elevation) or a minimum of 6,400’ MSL until established at Reporting Point Wapiti Meadows.
- Announce when you are 3 miles south of Johnson Creek over Wapiti Meadows, providing your altitude and stating your intentions.
- Configure your airplane to canyon maneuvering speed.
- If needed, circle to visually inspect the airfield for obstacles and hazards such as airplanes, animals, vehicles, and sprinklers.
- Conduct a standard left-hand pattern including upwind, crosswind, downwind, base, and final legs.
- Do not overfly the Bryant house (white house) (see Figure 6) located at the south end of the airfield.
- Fly the dog leg past the Bryant house and turn base south of it.

Figure 6 - Bryant House



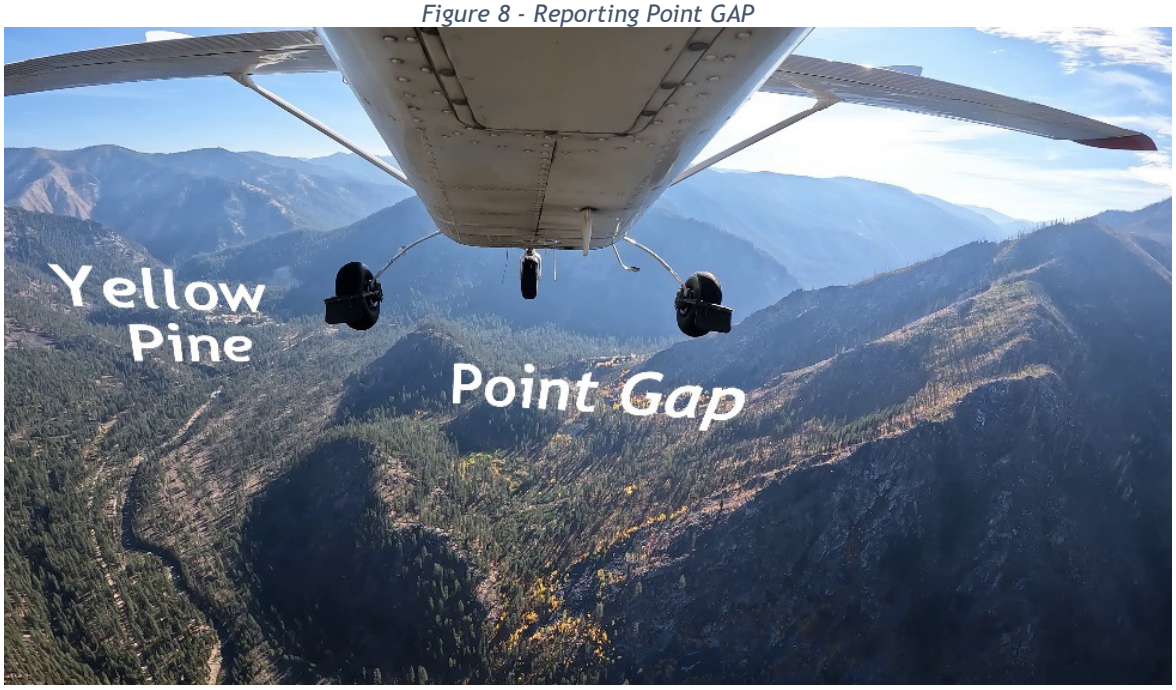
From the North:

Figure 7 - Northern Approach



- Announce your distance, direction, and altitude from Johnson Creek Airport.
- Approach via Yellow Pine, flying up the river.
- Check in at the Reporting Point GAP (see Figure 8), southwest of Yellow Pine. **GAP: N44 57.23 / W115 30.14**
- Hug the right side of the valley, flying upwind to visually inspect the airfield for obstacles and hazards such as airplanes, animals, vehicles, and sprinklers.

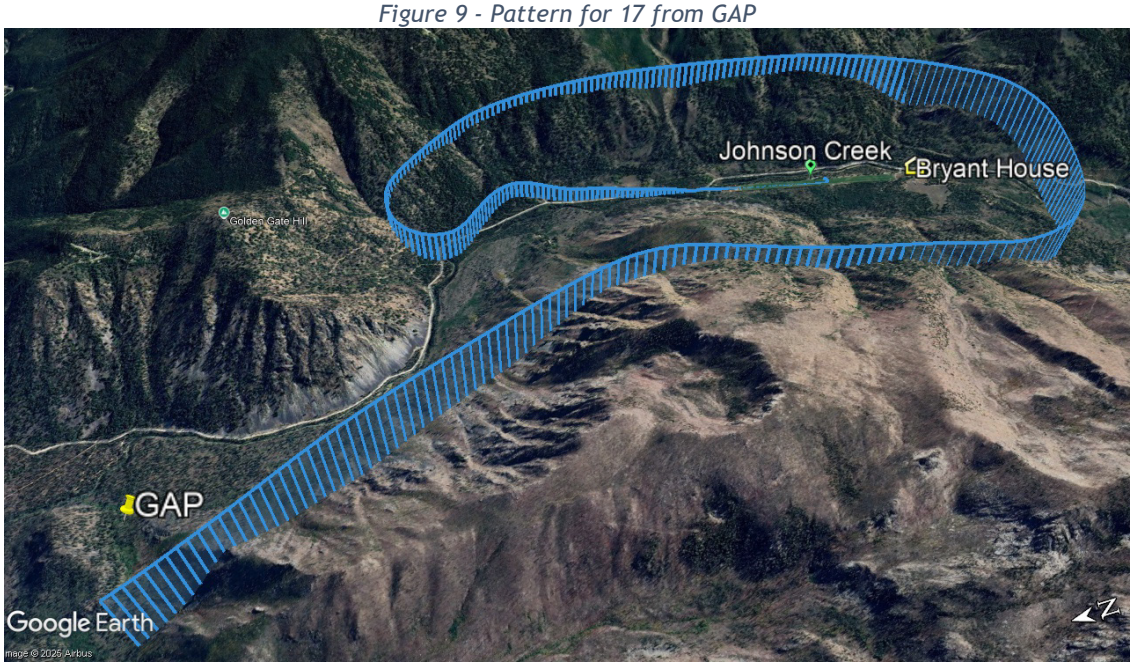
Figure 8 - Reporting Point GAP



Landing Runway 17

- Maintain 1,500’ AFE (Above Field Elevation) or a minimum of 6,400’ MSL until established at Reporting Point GAP (see Figure 8).
- Announce when you are 3 miles north of Johnson Creek over GAP, providing your altitude and stating your intentions.
- Configure your airplane to canyon maneuvering speed.
- **Do not** overfly the Bryant house (white house) (see Figure 6) located at the south end of the airfield.
- Fly the upwind leg past the Bryant house and turn crosswind south of it.

Figure 9 - Pattern for 17 from GAP



Landing Runway 35

- Landing downstream to the north is **NOT** recommended.
- Landings to the north should only be considered when wind or weather conditions make landing to the south unsafe.
- Maintain 1,500’ AFE (Above Field Elevation) or a minimum of 6,400’ MSL until established at Reporting Point GAP (see Figure 8).
- Announce when you are 3 miles north of Johnson Creek over GAP, providing your altitude and stating your intentions.
- Configure your airplane to canyon maneuvering speed.
- Do not overfly the Bryant house (white house, see Figure 6) located at the south end of the airfield.
- Fly the downwind leg past the Bryant house and turn base south of it.

Straight-in Landing

Straight-in landings to Runway 17 or Runway 35 are **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED**.

WARNING:

- Not joining the traffic pattern increases the risk of midair collisions.

- Radio calls may be masked by terrain.
- You may not see obstacles and hazards such as airplanes, animals, vehicles, or sprinklers on the runway until you are on final approach.

Landing Abort Procedures

IMPORTANT:

- Abort the landing early if you cannot land on-speed, on aim-point, and within the first 1/3 of the runway.
- Early recognition to abort is crucial and requires instinctive action by the pilot.

Abort Altitude

- Predetermined abort altitude: typically 300-500' AFE (Above Field Elevation).
- Choose an altitude that ensures a safe abort procedure and avoids overflying the Bryant house (white house) (see Figure 6).

Early Abort Path

- Climb down the runway until you reach a safe altitude.
- Once at a safe altitude, offset to the right to avoid obstacles and terrain.
- There is plenty of room around the trees to the right of the Bryant house.
- **Do not** overfly the Bryant house (white house) (see Figure 6) located at the south end of the airfield.
- **Do not** fly down the center of the canyon to make a 180-degree turn. This technique has contributed to accidents at Johnson Creek.

Figure 10 - Early Abort Path

Late Abort Path

- Aim for the lower trees to the left of the Bryant house (see Figure 11and Figure 13).
- This path provides the best chance to avoid obstacles if a late go-around is necessary.
- This is also the recommended path for aircraft taking off on Runway 17 to the south.
- **Do not** overfly the Bryant house (white house, see Figure 6) located at the south end of the airfield.
- **Do not** fly down the center of the canyon to make a 180-degree turn. This technique has contributed to accidents at Johnson Creek.

Figure 11 - Late Abort Path

Departures

Primary departure is northbound:

- Climb up the valley toward Yellow Pine.
- Do not directly overfly Yellow Pine
- Report:
  - Passing Yellow Pine
  - Flight direction
  - Altitude

Southbound flights:

- Use the same climb path
- Turn south onto runway 17 upwind once you gain altitude
- Continue south over Wapiti Meadows

CAUTION:
Declaring intentions, scanning for traffic and use of landing lights are encouraged for departures.

Figure 12 - Runway 35 Departure

Departing Runway 35

North Departure-Example: "Johnson Creek traffic, Cessna 20836 departing to the north climbing towards Yellow Pine".

Departing Runway 17

Departing Runway 17 is **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED**.

WHY?

- Your takeoff path is directly toward the Bryant house and rising terrain.
- Southerly winds prevail in the late afternoon. Aircraft should remain on the ground until more favorable conditions exist.
- High density altitude conditions have contributed to several accidents at Johnson Creek.

If conditions favor runway 17, fly to the left of the Bryant house towards the lower trees (see Figure 11 and Figure 13)

Figure 13 - Runway 17 Departure / Late Abort Path

⚠ Safety Alerts

Arrivals

- **BE ALERT** for high-density traffic en-route to Johnson Creek during fly-ins.
- **Runway 17:** Prior to making your base to final turn, be sure to scan the final for any straight-in traffic. **STRAIGHT-IN TRAFFIC PROCEDURES ARE STRONGLY DISCOURAGED**.
- Aircraft should make inbound Reporting Point calls at GAP (3 miles north), and Wapiti Meadows (3 miles south). State your intentions on backcountry frequency 122.9. Refer to the Route Planning section of this guide.

Example: "Johnson Creek traffic, Skylane 123 inbound at 7,000 over Wapiti Meadows. Will enter a left downwind, landing runway 17 Johnson Creek."

- If your landing appears unsafe because of altitude, spacing, speed of preceding aircraft, or any other reason, abort your landing and initiate a go-around above 300' AFE.
- **COMMON ERRORS:** excessive speed and/or altitude, landing long, and late go-arounds.
- Avoid over-flight of the Bryant house (white house) (see Figure 6) which sits on the south end of the airport.
- **FORMATION ARRIVALS ARE HIGHLY DISCOURAGED**

Departures

- **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED DEPARTING RWY 17**; your path is directly towards the Bryant house (white house) (see Figure 6) and rising terrain. Depart runway 17 only when wind and/or weather conditions dictate.
- Aircraft should make outbound Reporting Point calls at GAP and Wapiti Meadows. State your intentions. Refer to the Route Planning section of this guide.

Example: "Johnson Creek traffic, Skylane 123 over GAP at 6,500, departing to the west."

- **FORMATION DEPARTURES ARE HIGHLY DISCOURAGED**

Airport Notes

MISHAPS, INCIDENTS, OR ACCIDENTS must be reported to the **Valley County Sheriff's dispatch at (208) 382-5160** and the **Boise FAA Flight Standards Office at (208) 387-4000**.

- **Safety is priority Number One!**
- Landing traffic should clear the runway and expedite to parking.
- Use of landing lights while in the pattern is recommended.
- Consider remaining in the parking area until aircraft on final have landed.

- **DISCHARGING OF FIREARMS AT THE JOHNSON CREEK AIRPORT IS PROHIBITED**.
- Pilot training is discouraged at Johnson Creek Airport during organized fly-ins.
- Johnson Creek airport has a phone available and WI-FI service located at the pavilion (March-September) for flight planning services (800-WX-BRIEF).
- Fuel is not available at Johnson Creek Airport. Fuel can be delivered to Johnson Creek Airport with prior arrangements.
- **BE FAMILIAR WITH HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE OPERATIONS**.
- Aerobatic maneuvers, formation flying, and low passes are all highly discouraged over Johnson Creek Airport particularly during fly-ins.
- Non-radio equipped aircraft are not recommended during Johnson Creek Airport fly-ins.
- You are always responsible for your safety and the safety of those in your group.

Checklist Add-ons

1. Check ELT on **121.5** before shutdown
2. Monitor 121.5 during flight
3. Close flight plan with FAA

REMINDER:
121.5 ELTs are no longer satellite monitored. Consider upgrading to a **406 ELT**, **PLB**, or **SPOT** device.

Common Courtesy

- Be considerate of other wilderness users
- Fly quietly and safely
- Minimize practice landings and takeoffs

Important Contacts

Agency	Phone Number
Idaho Division of Aeronautics	208-334-8775
Leidos Flight Service, 1-800-WX-BRIEF	800-992-7433
Valley County Police Dispatch	208-382-5160
Johnson Creek Caretakers	208-633-3333

Download the latest SOP version

www.itd.idaho.gov/aero
Click on:

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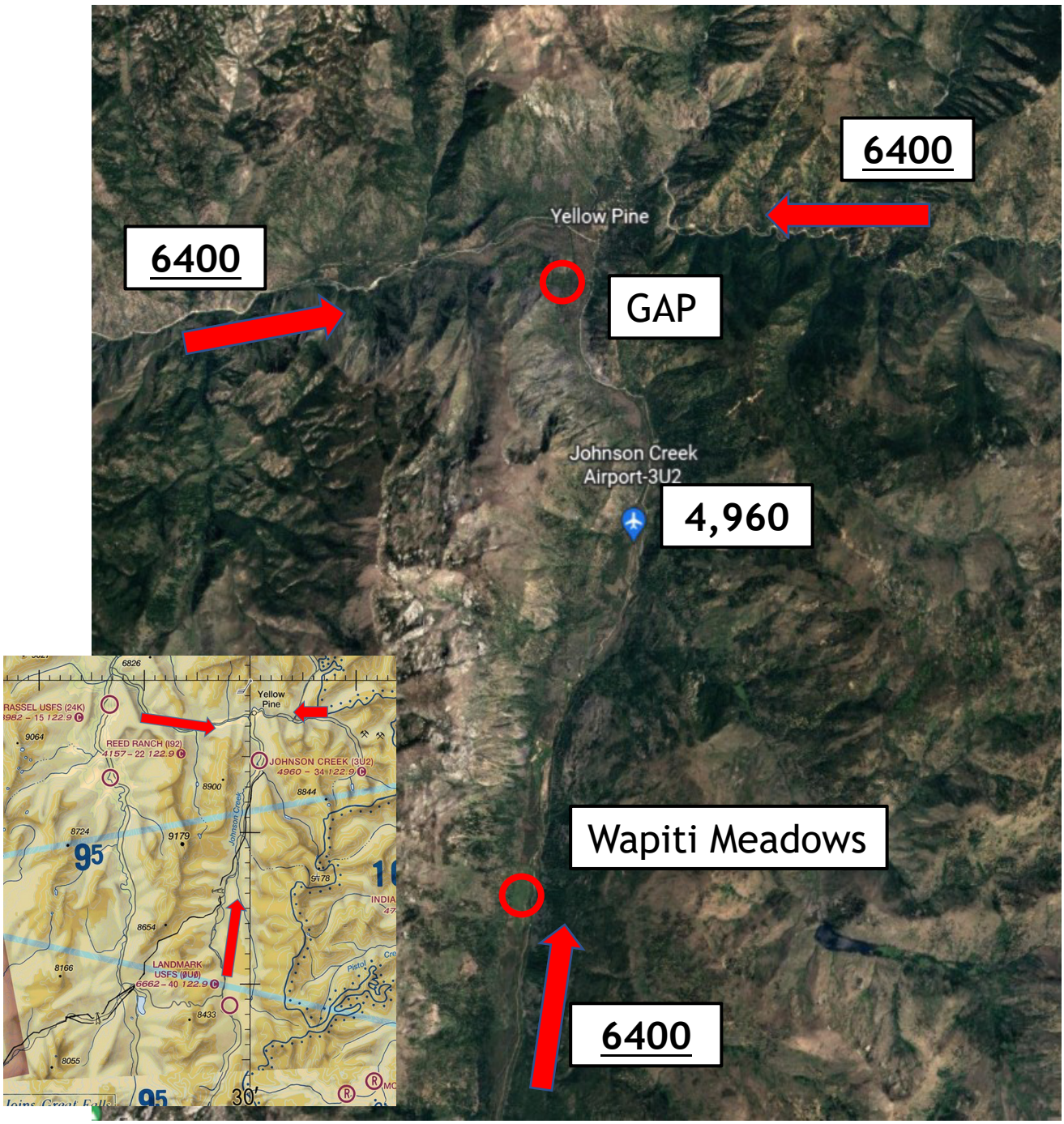
Figure 14 - Johnson Creek (3U2) Entry Overview



NOTES

FLYING INTO THE BACKCOUNTRY?

Please respect and protect these special places.

- ✓ Be considerate of other backcountry users
- ✓ Safely reduce your noise signature
- ✓ Train at home — no touch-and-goes in the backcountry
- ✓ Pack it in / pack it out
- ✓ Use CTAF 122.9 — minimize chatter

theRAF.org

The Recreational Aviation Foundation preserves, improves, and creates airstrips for recreational access.

WARNING, PILOTS!

DENSITY ALTITUDE CAN KILL!

High density altitude means longer takeoff and landing distances and shallow climb gradients.

Airport Name:

Johnson Creek (3U2)

Airport Elevation:

4,960 MSL

Standard Temperature at This Aiport:

5 °C / 41 °F

IMPORTANT! The density altitudes listed below reflect a ***STANDARD DAY*** at this airport. Altimeter settings below 29.92 will increase density altitude and decrease aircraft performance.

TEMPERATURE	DENSITY ALTITUDE
13°C/55°F	5,920 MSL
15°C/59°F	6,160 MSL
18°C/65°F	6,520 MSL
21°C/70°F	6,880 MSL
24°C/75°F	7,240 MSL
27°C/80°F	7,600 MSL
29°C/85°F	7,840 MSL
32°C/90°F	8,200 MSL
35°C/95°F	8,560 MSL
38°C/100°F	8,920 MSL

AIRCRAFT PERFORMANCE

What is Density Altitude?

Density altitude is pressure altitude corrected for nonstandard temperature. In other words, the density of the air decreases as altitude, temperature, and humidity increase. This degrades power, thrust, lift, and flight control effectiveness. In a sense, it's the altitude at which the airplane "feels" it's flying. The thinner air results in longer takeoff and landing distances and degraded climb performance.

Know your aircraft performance!
To learn more, scan the code below.

ASI.AOPA.org/spotlight/mountainflying

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