

About Wings Across America 2008 (WAA-08)

A group of model airplane enthusiasts will fly a battery powered radio controlled airplane called a ParkFlyer in all 48 contiguous United States. The name they have given this adventure is Wings Across America 2008 or WAA-08 for short. What sets this project apart from all the others ever attempted or completed is that the pilots will hand deliver the plane from pilot to pilot. The plane will never be shipped by mail to its next destination. This method will be creating a "chain" of pilots that will fly this model airplane all across the United States and back to the starting point. Upon completion of the adventure, the model airplane will have flown in 48 states and cover a distance of over 25,000 miles. The plane will end her journey at home field about 5 years after it made its maiden flight in eastern Virginia. Currently, 356 pilots have registered to take part in this history making project as well as 246 Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) Chartered clubs are hosting the adventure as the plane makes its way across the United States of America.

WAA-08 is the creation of Frank Geisler of Gloucester, Virginia. Frank is an avid RC pilot, USAF veteran, and AMA leader member who volunteers his free time to help promote the sport of model aviation. When Frank discussed this project with some of his friends it was received with such enthusiasm that the project was born of this energy. All that was needed were to find hundreds of RC pilots across the US and in every state willing to fly the plane at their home field then drive to the next pilot, thus forming a nationwide network of pilots who would fly an RC airplane across America. The RC community is always looking at ways to promote the hobby and introduce the fun, excitement, and learning opportunities this hobby has to offer to young adults. This is an excellent way to showcase this hobby to a lot of young Americans.

All of the equipment used for WAA-08 has been donated by the participating pilots. Fortunately, one of the pilots owns Stevens AeroModels in Colorado Springs, CO. Bill Stevens donated a balsa wood built plane called a SQUIRT, which stands for Simple Quiet Robust Trainer. This tough little 38" wingspan parkflyer is easy to fly and should take the abuse that over 350 pilots can dish out. Bill also talked his Horizon Hobby sales representative into donating their newest high-tech radio system to go along with the plane, the Spektrum DX6i radio. A battery charger was donated by Jeff Williams of SuperFly, and the batteries from MaxAmps. To ensure the plane survived the 25,000 mile journey in the backs of cars and pickup trucks, Steve Griffin of Victor, ID designed and built a custom made travel box for the plane and support equipment.

The RC community has really embraced the idea of flying this plane across America. I have had the privilege to speak with many wonderful people participating in this adventure and have never been involved in any activity which has so many people willing to help one another. The sense of camaraderie demonstrated by the pilots in this project has been outstanding, and I am humbled by it all but yet proud to be a participant. The RC community is always looking at ways to promote the hobby and introduce the fun, excitement, and learning opportunities this hobby has to offer to young adults. What better way is there then to fly a model airplane around the USA?

If you would like more details about this adventure please go to www.WAA-08.org.

About AMA

Founded in 1936, the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) is the world's largest sport aviation organization, representing a membership of more than 150,000 for the purpose of promotion, development, education, advancement, and safeguarding of modeling activities.

AMA is the voice of its membership, providing liaison with the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Communications Commission and other government agencies. AMA also works with local governments, zoning boards, and parks departments to promote the interests of local chartered clubs.

AMA seeks to introduce young men and women to the art and craft of aeromodeling. Through an active educational outreach program, AMA supports teachers and community-based organizations who wish to infuse topics in math, science, and technology with aviation activities.

For more information visit www.modelaircraft.org or call 800-435-9262.