

It looks like this subject of LZ preservation is gaining traction and recent popularity, as it is being discussed all over the place all of the sudden. The nuts and bolts of it can be both positive and negative. I had enough heartburn about some of the things that I'd experienced lately that I simply chose to avoid full discussion of them or the whole show could have been negative...

A few accusations and statements were made at the pilot meeting I referenced that PPG pilot need to be made aware of:

The most vocal anti, tried to claim that it was an FAR violation to have people between any taxiway and an active runway. WRONG. Especially in my case where it is on private property. His statement has a shred of truth in than when instrument meteorological conditions exists (low weather) AND instrument landing system approaches are in use, areas near the runway have to be kept clear so that signals emitted by the landing transmission devices are not bent or interfered with by vehicles or aircraft. One only needs to look at PPG school arrangements where open spaces between runways and taxiways are always utilized with full concurrence of the airport's management. (i.e. Lake Wales, Avon Park, Valkaria and many others across the country)

It's summer. Mowing is almost always happening at airports. Tractors and people are often out there along with airplanes. If the airport has A.T.I.S. they will often use the term "use caution for men and equipment adjacent to runways and taxiways." This is why it never hurts to know a little more than just what FAR 103 says.

Had I been new to aviation, his throwing out of this "technicality" with all the authority of a retired FAA inspector, may have caused me to cease even trying... Instead I said B.S. and started to gain the vocal support of others. This is a selfish man who wants an airport of his own.

On to airports:

In addition to the, "You need to have an aviation band radio" attack...(You don't legally under the FARs)...A common tactic amongst FBO operators is to pretend as if someone on staff is the airport's administrator. If you get "No" as an answer from one of these people, understand that they may be acting with their own interests in mind, not necessarily speaking as the authority. The airport administrator is a person of public record. Search about the airport and insure that the person you're getting that "No" from is truly the person who has the responsibility to make that decision.

A question we never came back to was the "If they get federal funding don't they have to say yes?" Well yes and no. The charge to admins is that they make decisions about all things at the airport, based on safety first. So if they are going to say no ultralight aviation, they have just potentially assigned themselves a huge written feasibility term paper length project, that will become permanent public record. That document is subject to review, counter argument and embarrassing turn over. However if the PPG pilot just accepts "no" as the answer, the document never needs to be created. This is why it is so important to approach this issue professionally and with thorough record keeping at every step, if you really want to challenge the short "No" answer.. Most admins are not going to want to have to go through a sustained effort to PROVE why ultralight operations are UN-SAFE, because it is not something they can substantiate. When these arguments are pushed uphill within the FAA to the regional management level, they are almost always overridden.