Salty Approach
Pilot Guidelines

1. **Introduction:**

North (Upper) Captiva's Salty Approach (FL90) is a unique airstrip located on a Florida west-coast barrier island 19 miles west of Page Field (FMY) in Fort Myers. North Captiva boasts beautiful tropical landscapes and year-round sunny weather.

Guest and Visit passes: Pilots flying to Salty Approach as a member's guest, or as a renter of a member's rental property, should apply for a **guest** pass. Pilots wishing to fly to Salty Approach as a visitor (not as a guest or member property renter) should apply for a **visit** pass. **Visit** passes are reviewed and issued on a case-by-case basis. An application for a **guest** or **visit** pass can be requested via email to the Salty Approach LLC managers at info.sallc@gmail.com.

There is no cost for a Salty Approach **guest** pass. Two types of **visit** passes are available: 1) **one-day pass**, $100; and, 2) **seven-day-extendable pass**, $700. Only one of each type of pass is issued per pilot per lifetime. The seven-day-extendable pass can be extended up to fourteen days (total) at a cost of $100 per day for each day beyond seven days. Days are counted by calendar and partial days are counted as full days. For example, arriving May 1st at 5:00 p.m. and leaving May 7th at 10:00 a.m. equates to seven days. If fewer than seven days are used by the pass holder between arrival and departure, all seven days of the pass are counted as being used; i.e. the pass must be used for contiguous days.

Guest and **visit** passes must be visibly displayed in or on the aircraft while the aircraft is parked at Salty Approach.

Salty Approach Membership: A limited number of Salty Approach Pilot (use-right) memberships are typically available for purchase from current members. Contact the Salty Approach managers via email at info.sallc@gmail.com for a list of members currently interested in selling their membership.

Know the airport: As a private airstrip, Salty Approach is not governed by FAA guidelines. Requirements for a runway safety zone or for certain obstruction clearance do not apply at Salty Approach. Operating an aircraft into or out of the Salty Approach airstrip can be a challenge even for experienced pilots. Pilots operating at Salty Approach must be aware of its unique characteristics and must be prepared to address several approach-to-landing (or departure) conditions that are atypical of most airports. This document outlines a number of important points but it is not comprehensive. To ensure cognizance and promote situational awareness, pilots planning to operate at Salty Approach should become familiar with each item listed and should be prepared to respond to the unexpected.

2. **Airstrip:**

The Salty Approach airstrip is oriented east-west and has a 6°west declination. The eastward runway is designated "10" and the westward is "28". The airstrip is approximately 2000' in length, 120' wide and varies in altitude from approximately 1' (east end) to 3' (west end). Although the airstrip is 120' wide, the usable runway width is approximately 40' and includes a 50' apron on the south side and a 30' apron to the north. The active-use length of the airstrip is marked with small red or orange-colored flags that are placed at each sprinkler head along the

strip. The active use length is biased northward – again, note that there is 50' apron to the south and 30 apron to the north. Avoid taxiing or landing near the flags as there is a depressed (approximately 2' in diameter area) around each sprinkler head that is well below the airstrip surface. Most of the airstrip is lined with trees (and houses) on both the north and south sides, with an average tree height of 30'. The airstrip extends the full width of North Captiva island and therefore both ends of the runway terminate into sandy beach areas that are often used by visitors.

The common traffic advisory frequency is 122.75MHz, which is also actively used by flight training schools for communicating use of the local practice area. The advisory frequency is equipped with a SayWeather automated weather advisory system that can be accessed with either 3 mic keys (winds only) or 4 mic keys (full advisory). Current conditions can also be accessed via ForeFlight, iFly or 8Flight EFBs, or through "SayWeather online" (SayWxAir) via www.saywxair.com/airport/FL90 (includes weather cam images) or via text by texting "M FL90" (for METAR, FL90) to 727 4SAYWX4 (727 472 9994).

Salty Approach operating rules allow take off operations from 1 hour before sunrise to 1 hour after sunset and landings from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. Touch and go operations are not permitted. A standard left-hand, 800' pattern is used at Salty Approach.

3. Tree-lined Runway:

Salty Approach is lined on both the north and south sides by trees and houses. An exception is the south east one-third which has an adjacent road, docks and lower-lying land (and water) with few trees. In windy conditions, obstructions in general can produce unknown surface wind conditions, so called "mechanical turbulence". Winds at the airstrip-ends, above and below the treetops can be **radically** different. In strong crosswinds, wind of 20+ knots can become nearly calm at 10 feet above the airstrip, or, strong downdrafts can be produced. Even strong winds aligned with the airstrip can produce "standing waves" at low levels making aircraft control a challenge. It is important that the pilot be aware of unpredictable conditions in strong-wind situations and it is especially important that the pilot be skilled in quickly adjusting AOA, rudder, airspeed, power, flaps, etc. to accommodate rapidly changing wind conditions while landing or departing. On departure, consider short-field take-off procedures. Remaining below the treetops for the full length of the airstrip can be beneficial but the pilot should proceed as his/her judgement indicates.

4. Wildlife (mostly birds, turtles)

North Captiva is a place of beautiful nature. The island is home to many full-time resident and migratory birds, and is a favorite stomping-ground for gopher turtles. The pilot should carefully eye the airstrip before departure for the presence of large birds or turtles. Gopher turtles are large (1ft. to 2ft. in diameter) but can be difficult to spot. They are also fast enough to easily go from airstrip fence-line to runway center in less than the time it takes to complete a run-up. It is best to practice short/soft takeoff procedures to minimize take-off-roll which will reduce the risk of collision with a turtle. Keep in mind though that a high AOA on takeoff can also impede good view of the runway thus making it more difficult to spot a startled bird or notice an intrepid turtle.

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5. Beachgoers

There is signage at each end of the runway warning beachgoers of the active airstrip and to not loiter or congregate at the runway ends. As sometimes happens, relaxing visitors either do not see or read the signs or they choose to ignore them. Be aware of umbrellas, golf carts, kites, etc. at the runway ends. A low approach can serve as good warning to beachgoers that an aircraft is about to land and is recommended at 100' AGL or more.

6. King Tides

North Captiva is a barrier island and it has areas that are susceptible to flooding if tides and weather conditions favor it. So called "king" tides and prevailing winds from south to southeast can cause flooding on the island. The east half of the Salty Approach airstrip can be flooded due to winds and tides (or nearby tropical weather) and can be under more than 4" of salt (or brackish) water. Taking off or landing in such conditions is not recommended. ~~The SayWeather automated advisory system is equipped with soil moisture and ground water sensors. A caution of "runway may be soft" is appended if the soil is saturated. A caution of "runway may be flooded" is appended if standing water is measured at approximately the runway center.~~ (currently no ground water sensors on SayWeather). Checking the NOAA tide forecast website for tide conditions can be very helpful when planning to fly to or from Salty Approach. Note: flood water from king tides is brackish. Facility for freshwater rinsing of aircraft may be available at Salty Approach for a fee – contact the managers at info.sallc@gmail.com if the aircraft needs to be rinsed.

7. Inclement Weather

Although IFR departure is permitted, Salty Approach is generally a day-only, VFR airport. Fall, winter and spring can bring strong winds and fast moving fronts that can produce squalls - usually short-lived storms that can be waited out. Summer often (potentially daily) produces air-mass thunderstorms that can develop quickly and can be highly localized. Further, June thru November is hurricane season in Florida. As with any planned flight, checking weather conditions and local area forecasts is crucial. Be especially mindful of developing conditions that can produce strong winds and/or heavy rain or low visibility. Landing at Salty Approach after recent rainfall requires careful control as the grass can be slippery and braking ability can be limited or non-existent. Plan accordingly!

8. Parking

The south 50' apron is used for aircraft parking at Salty Approach. Open areas, generally not adjacent to ***occupied*** airstrip homes, are available for parking. When parking, please be mindful of damaged turf. Please consider not parking in areas where turf is obviously damaged or is recovering. Aircraft should be parked facing the active use length of the airstrip (facing north) and should be "pushed back" to maximize distance from the active length. If turning northward under power, please be mindful of your propwash and your parking location with respect to airstrip homes. Propwash, if excessive, can cause damage, can produce excessive dust (blown sand), and can cause injury. The pilot "owns their propwash" so be aware of your responsibility for any property damage or injuries incurred. Parking parallel to the airstrip then rotating the aircraft by hand is a popular alternative. In general, the tail of the aircraft should be within a few

feet of the airstrip fence line. Helicopters should park parallel to the airstrip, positioned well away from fixed wing aircraft, with rotors generally aligned east-west – preferably strapped or locked.

9. Access

Access to the Salty Approach airstrip is only available through locked gates – this includes foot traffic and golf carts. Golf cart access is through the south "fire shed" gate at the bend in Seair Lane. The lock combination is 1227. Golf carts can be driven on the south 50' apron provided that it is for aircraft loading and unloading operations. By Salty Approach rules, golf carts are otherwise not permitted anywhere on the airstrip. Golf cart operators should proceed directly between the access gate to or from their aircraft. Golf carts should be parked off of airport property or only in designated areas.

10. Sprinklers

The Salty Approach turf airstrip is well maintained and regularly watered and mowed. Sprinklers line the usable landing portion of the airstrip and their location is identified by small red or orange marker flags. Takeoffs and landings should only occur between the marker flags. When taxiing, be certain to remain well clear of the sprinkler heads. The area around each sprinkler is maintained to be clear of turf – a nosewheel could be susceptible to being stuck if dropped into a sprinkler head "pocket". Sprinklers are timer controlled and generally only operate during non-daylight hours. The aircraft parking areas may be irrigated, that is, aircraft can be subject to hard water from the sprinkler system. Contact the salty approach mangers at info.sallc@gmail.com if you need to protect your aircraft from irrigation system spray.

11. Low Approach

A low approach can be helpful for: 1) determining surface wind conditions; 2) alerting beachgoers of landing aircraft; 3) checking the airstrip for wildlife; 4) assessing airstrip flooding; 5) alerting mowing operator of landing aircraft; and, 6) ensuring parked aircraft are well clear of the runway. Be certain to exercise good judgment – generally one low approach is sufficient to assess the airstrip. Excessive, especially multiple high-speed, low operations over the airstrip can result in revocation of any issued pass. Be mindful as well of other aircraft in the area, e.g. banner towers, transient helicopters, and tour aircraft that could be operating at low altitude, especially along the Gulf coast. Lee county mosquito control operates helicopters regularly on and around North Captiva, including operations at Salty Approach.

12. Recommended Operations Limitations

Turf airstrips require constant maintenance and Salty Approach is no exception. Pilots should consider the following recommended limitations: 1) not exceeding two rotations on the day of arrival and two rotations on the day of departure; and, 2) not exceeding one rotation per day for any day between the arrival day and the departure day. (One rotation is one takeoff and one landing.) These limitations are recommendations only and are not rule-based hard limits.

Salty Approach rules do not allow practice operations. A touch and go is not permitted except in case of emergency or to avoid substantial damage.

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13. Aircraft

The Salty Approach runway, especially the eastern one half, can be soft and, if turf conditions are unknown, should be considered soft. Aircraft suitable for soft turf runways should be the only aircraft operated into or out of Salty Approach. Salty Approach rules limit operations to fixed-wing aircraft manufacturer-rated at or below 5000 lb. gross takeoff weight. (Rotor-wing aircraft are not weight limited.) If in doubt, contact the Salty Approach managers for guidance at info.sallc@gmail.com.

Any aircraft operated at Salty Approach must be operated within annual (or 100 hour in case of rentals) inspection limits, have current transponder certification, and have current applicable insurance. **Note: r**epair facilities are not available at Salty Approach so (potentially costly) arrangements must be made for repair of any aircraft that requires maintenance after landing.

14. Braking

The turf at Salty Approach is mostly composed of Saint Augustine grass. Saint Augustine grass is a tough and resilient ground cover. However, the soil composition under the grass is sand, crushed shell, a mix of sand and shell or loose loamy soil. Braking can easily uproot the grass from the underlying grainy soil leaving a rut and severely damaged grass. To further accentuate the problem, saltwater intrusion from tidal flooding can stress the grass making the root system weak. Further still, areas not receiving enough irrigation water tend to support indigenous ground cover (rather than grass) which often has little root system, that is, the airstrip's **ground cover is fragile**. Heavy braking should be avoided unless absolutely needed for safety reasons. Locked-brake turning should also be avoided unless absolutely necessary to safely maneuver the aircraft. Any ruts or turf damage caused by the aircraft should be repaired in a manner similar to addressing divots on a golf course. Replace the torn turf, tamp it in place and level ruts by applying full body weight in small incremental segments over the affected area. Note: landing at Salty Approach after recent rainfall requires careful control as the grass can be slippery and braking ability can be limited or non-existent.

15. Automated Weather

Salty Approach is equipped with a SayWeather automated advisory weather system. The system is continuously updated with weather data sourced from a weather station that is deployed slightly east of the airstrip center point. The SayWeather weather station's anemometer and wind vane are situated approximately 28' above the airstrip surface. At the deployed height, wind information provided by the SayWeather system is more an indication of winds slightly above treetops, not winds at ground level.

SayWeather advisories are activated by keying the mic three times for winds only, or four times for a full advisory. The full advisory includes wind (direction and speed), gusts, temperature, dew point, altimeter and density altitude. (Ceiling and visibility information is not included in the advisory.)

~~The SayWeather automated advisory system is equipped with soil moisture and ground water sensors. A caution of "runway may be soft" is appended if the airstrip soil is saturated. A caution of "runway may be flooded" is appended if standing water is measured at~~

~~approximately the runway center; the PIC should consider abandoning landing upon hearing this warning. (Fortunately, the airstrip dries reasonably quickly so checking the automated advisory a few hours later could indicate flooding conditions have abated.)~~ Checking the NOAA tide forecast website for expected tide conditions can be helpful when planning to fly to or from Salty Approach.

The Salty Approach SayWeather system reports live weather information to the internet. Current conditions can be accessed via ForeFlight, iFly or 8Flight EFBs, or through "SayWeather online" (SayWxAir) via www.saywxair.com/airport/FL90 (includes weather cam images) or via text by texting "M FL90" (for METAR, FL90) to 727 4SAYWX4 (727 472 9994).

16. Communications

Salty Approach, like public-use-airports, follows protocol for airport communications. Aircraft should follow FAA guidelines for non-controlled-airport communication e.g. calling ten miles out, five miles out, announce flyby, pattern position, etc. and use 122.75Mhz as the CTAF.

17. Fuel Dumping

The US EPA can impose fines up to $40,000 for dumping sumped fuel on the ground. Sumped fuel should either be filtered and returned to the aircraft fuel tank or disposed of in accordance with EPA guidelines. **Do not empty sumped fuel** on the ground. Wells that supply homes along the airstrip are often close to the airstrip.

18. Insurance

Pilots operating at Salty Approach must have current insurance.

19. Recent Experience

Any pilot planning a flight to Salty Approach should have sufficient recent experience with both the aircraft being flown and operating aircraft into and out of short, soft, tree-lined airstrips.

20. Non-reporting Aircraft

The Florida west coast is a popular aviation route. Further, local aviation businesses generate revenue from flying the coastline, for example, tour helicopters and banner tow aircraft. Although against recommended communications procedures near airports, some aircraft do not use the Salty Approach CTAF to announce position, direction of flight, altitude or intentions. Frequent visits by Lee County Mosquito Control helicopters can also be expected – most often landing and departing with no radio communications. The Salty Approach pilot must be aware that there could be aircraft operating in the area that are either not monitoring the Salty Approach CTAF or are not transmitting relevant flight information. Departing at very low altitude until clear of the area and before starting a climb or turn should be considered.

21. Unauthorized encroachment

Salty Approach is a fenced private airstrip. Despite posted signs and fencing, encroachment by foot traffic and/or golf cart sometimes occurs. Pilots should be aware that the airstrip could suddenly become occupied by an unaware trespasser, either on foot or in vehicle. (Salty

Approach LLC is held harmless of any pedestrian or pilot indiscretion or reckless actions and is not liable for same.)