

Spotlight - *Tavares, Florida*

AMERICA'S SEAPLANE CITY TO HOST SEAPLANE-A-PALOOZA 2018!

The term "palooza" can take a variety of forms, usually relating to a big festival, an all-out extravaganza and/ or an incredible party. In "America's Seaplane City," Tavares, Florida seaplanes are combined with a festival atmosphere each spring for the annual SEAPLANE-A-PALOOZA event. This weekend-long event goes far beyond a conventional aviation fly-in, bringing the seaplane branded community together with seaplane pilots from around the country!

Plan to splash in at the Tavares Seaplane Base (FA1) on your way to Sun 'n Fun 2018 for SEAPLANE-A-PALOOZA, which will be held Sat., April 7th & Sun., April 8th.

On September 11th, 2017 the Tavares Seaplane Base sustained significant damage during Hurricane Irma. An intensive and coordinated effort quickly began to return the seaplane base to service. After nearly a two-month cleanup effort involving the removal of more than two dozen boats and many damaged and sunk dock sections, the seaplane base was soon returned to service with shoreline parking, apron parking, fueling on the apron and limited dockage.

On November 18th, 2017, the City of Tavares hosted the rescheduled, annual Monster Splash Fly-In. The Seaplane Base was show ready and the event was a great success with more than two dozen aircraft in attendance. With the 2017 Monster Splash experience in addition to a new mixed-use ramp and paved parking area available for the 2018 event at the facility, the Tavares Seaplane Base is revved up and ready to host the 2018 SEAPLANE-A-PALOOZA event!

Don't float? No problem, we didn't forget about you! The Leesburg International Airport is a quick 5 miles by land and a shuttle bus will run both days between the Leesburg Airport and Tavares Seaplane Base. So if your wings have wheels, you will still be able to come join the fun!

Attendees can find close by accommodations to enjoy the entire weekend-long event.

The Key West Resort located in downtown Tavares, provides a view of the Tavares Seaplane Base from each of their more than seventy guest rooms. Additional hotels in the area are accessible by taxi. Pilots looking for a more rustic experience are welcome to stay in the Pilot's Camping Area near their aircraft in Wootton Park.



From arrival to departure, visitors will find themselves in the Tavares Waterfront Entertainment District, with a variety of dining and entertainment options to enjoy all within easy walking distance.

Festivities on Saturday will ramp up with seaplane arrivals beginning early in the day. A mandatory pilots' meeting for flying contest participants will be held late Saturday morning, with the flying contests set to kick-off around midday. Under the watchful eye of the AirBoss and to the praises of a public address announcer, seaplane pilots will compete in four contests on Saturday.

First is the fastest takeoff, just as the name describes the goal is to safely depart the water in flight as quickly as possible in terms of time. The AirBoss will give a "Go" command once the pilot signals ready and the contest judge will start the time clock. Once the aircraft is in the air and remains off the water, the time will be noted. A skip on the water extends the time, and the shortest time wins.

Next up, is the fan-favorite watermelon bomb drop contest. Pilots are given three

handheld-sized watermelons with the goal of sinking a buoy in the lake. A large red buoy, secured in the lake will be the target and pilots will have the opportunity to make a pass in cruise flight at 200 feet above the water level while their bombardier takes aim at the buoy.

Following the "bomb drop" runs, comes the spot landing contest. As the crowd watches from the shore, pilots will do whatever it takes to safely splash down in the water between two large buoys forming a landing zone.

The final contest is an accuracy landing event, where pilots aim to splash down between the buoys again, this time managing their energy to have a constant approach to landing. This event requires the highest level of flight control mastery and energy management from competing pilots.

Jones Brothers Air and Seaplane Adventures, based year round at the Tavares Seaplane Base will be holding their first-ever Seaplane Bingo Games!

In an effort to give back to the community Jones Brothers will be offering scholarships to local students to pursue aviation education and training. Their first fundraiser will be the seaplane bingo games held in conjunction with the Seaplane-A-Palooza event. Following the flying contests on Saturday, Jones Brothers' seaplanes will fly a similar pattern to the "bomb drop" event, however their bombardier will take aim at a grid in the water.

Pilots are encouraged to stay for the evening in Tavares, or to return on Sunday morning for a free pancake breakfast! The local EAA group, Chapter 534 from the Leesburg International Airport will be providing a pancake breakfast for pilots and passengers on Sunday morning. Pilots will be able to fill up and then take part in another exciting flying activity during the day on Sunday before completing the journey to Lakeland for Sun 'n Fun.

For more information on the event and registration details, visit the City of Tavares website at: <http://www.tavares.org/899/Seaplane-Base-Marina>