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Reading the weather and sky are essential skills for soaring glider pilots. To help with the weather, there are a number of tools available, including what is called the RASP (**R**egional **A**tmospheric **S**oaring **P**rediction Boundary Layer Information Prediction maps) which is a specialised weather analysis tool intended for glider pilots. The tool that generates the maps was written by "Dr Jack", a meteorologist and glider pilot. However, the current website and forecasts are produced completely independently from Dr Jack.

For Hawkes Bay, you need the North Island, south east of Hamilton which can be found at https://rasp.nz/rasp/listForecasts.php?region=NZNORTH_C

There are a wide range of forecasts available, including Thermal Updraft Velocity and Bouyancy/Shear Ratio, Thermaling Height, Cumulus Cloudbase where CuPotential is more than 0, Boundary Layer Cloud Cover, Surface Wind, Boundary Layer Max Up/Down (Convergence), Vertical Velocity and Wind at 700 mb (~10,000 feet) (and other heights, shows when wave is predicted) and Upper Air Soundings (SkewT-LogP).

The Upper Air Soundings (SkewT-LogP) show temperature, dew point and winds with altitude. This information can be used to evaluate stability, cloudbase, top of cloud, wind profile, and many other atmospheric features. A very good introduction to these diagrams (specifically tephigrams, which the SkewT-LogP diagram is very similar to) is attached below with permission from Dr Ian M. Brooks.

So what are you waiting for? To learn more about the weather and the “air pockets” you fly through in powered aircraft, come and join the gliding club.

Further details about the club and learning to glide are on the gliding club website at http://www.glidinghbw.co.nz/