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U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

CITY OF SAUSALITO
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Western-Pacific Region
Special Programs Staff

P.O. Box 92007
Los Angeles, CA 90009

July 28, 2011

Planning Director
City of Sausalito
Planning Department
420 Litho St
Sausalito, CA 94965-2921

Re: Air Tour Management Plan Development at Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, and Point Reyes National Seashore

Dear City of Sausalito,

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS), has initiated development of Air Tour Management Plans (ATMP) for Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), and Point Reyes National Seashore (the Seashore). The ATMP for GGNRA will include Muir Woods National Monument and Fort Point National Historic Site, both directly managed by GGNRA, and the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SF Maritime NHP), an independently managed national park unit adjacent to GGNRA. The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in the scoping process.

The ATMPs are being developed pursuant to the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-181) and its implementing regulations (14 CFR Part 136, Subpart B, National Parks Air Tour Management). Per section 40128(b)(1)(B) of the Act, the objective of any ATMP shall be to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations upon the natural and cultural resources, visitor experiences, and tribal lands. It should be noted that the ATMP has no authorization over other non-air-tour operations such as military and general aviation. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and FAA Order 1050.1E, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared. One or more EAs will be prepared for the separate ATMPs at GGNRA and SF Maritime NHP, and the Seashore.

The FAA has granted Interim Operating Authority (IOA) to two commercial air tour operators to conduct air tours over GGNRA, the Seashore, and SF Maritime NHP at the maximum flight limits shown in the table below.

Existing Operators with IOA	Flights per Year under IOA		
	GGNRA	SF Maritime NHP	The Seashore
San Francisco Helicopter Tours	2,900	2,900	2,900
San Francisco Seaplane Tours	2,190	2,190	2,190

The FAA and NPS are now inviting the public, agencies, tribes, and other interested parties to provide comments, suggestions, issues, and concerns regarding commercial air tours and their potential impacts on the visitor experience and natural, cultural, and historical resources. Input is also welcome on other areas to be addressed in the environmental process, such as past, present, and future actions (which, when considered with ATMP alternatives, may result in potentially significant cumulative impacts), and potential ATMP alternatives to consider in addition to the current IOA limits shown in the table above.

In addition, to be inclusive of all SF area national park units, the FAA and NPS are also disseminating this information to the following parks and their respective stakeholder mailing lists in the scoping process: Rosie the Riveter/World War II Homefront National Historical Park, John Muir National Historic Site, Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site, and Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial. No air tour operators have been granted IOA to operate tours over these other SF area national park units.

The FAA is now communicating with your agency for the following reasons:

1. To advise your agency of the preparation of ATMPs and one or more EAs;
2. To request any relevant information that your agency may have regarding the ATMPs; and,
3. To solicit scoping comments.

As part of scoping, the FAA has published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register and has made a scoping packet available online and at libraries in the vicinity of the parks. You may submit comments and view scoping documents on the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment website at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BayArea_ATMP, or you may send comments to the mailing address below. The scoping period extends through September 28, 2011.

Additionally, two scoping meetings are being held at the times and locations below, where members of the project team will be available to describe and answer questions about the project.

August 16, 2011: 4:30 – 6:30 PM
Public Scoping Meeting
GGNRA Headquarters
Fort Mason Building 201
San Francisco, CA

August 17, 2011: 4:30 – 6:30 PM
Public Open House
Bay Model Visitor Center
2100 Bridgeway
Sausalito, CA

Additional information on the ATMP Program and specific parks can be found at:

- http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/arc/programs/air_tour_management_plan/

Information on the specific parks included in this scoping notice can be found at the following websites:

Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Point Reyes National Seashore
San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park
Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site
John Muir National Historic Site
Rosie the Riveter/WWII Homefront NHS
Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial

<http://www.nps.gov/goga>
<http://www.nps.gov/pore>
<http://www.nps.gov/safr>
<http://www.nps.gov/euon>
<http://www.nps.gov/jomu>
<http://www.nps.gov/rori>

<http://www.nps.gov/poch>

Questions or non-scoping comments may be directed to me. We extend our sincere appreciation for your input and participation.

Sincerely,



Keith Lusk
Special Programs Staff, Western Pacific Region
Federal Aviation Administration
P.O. Box 92007
Los Angeles, CA 90009-2007
310-725-3808

Cc: Frank Dean, General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Cicely Muldoon, Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore
Craig Kenkel, Superintendent, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Tom Leatherman, Superintendent, John Muir NHS, Eugene O'Neil NHS, Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front NHP, Port Chicago Naval Magazine NM
Vicki McCusker, NPS Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division

Air Tour Management Plans

Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Point Reyes National Seashore

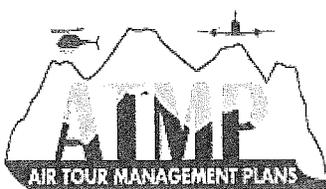


Source: NPS

Air Tour Management Plan Development at Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS), has initiated development of Air Tour Management Plans (ATMPs) for Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), and Point Reyes National Seashore (the Seashore). The ATMP for GGNRA will include Muir Woods National Monument and Fort Point National Historic Site, both directly managed by GGNRA, and the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SF Maritime NHP), an independently managed national park unit adjacent to GGNRA.

The objective of the ATMPs is to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any,



of commercial air tour operations on the natural resources, cultural resources, visitor experiences, and tribal lands within or abutting GGNRA and the Seashore.

The proposed federal action is the establishment of separate ATMPs at GGNRA and the Seashore – in accordance with 14 CFR Part 136. The ATMP for each individual park will only apply to the airspace below 5,000 feet AGL (above ground level) over the area encompassed by the park and to the half-mile buffer zone surrounding the park's boundary. The ATMP applies to all commercial air tour operations in this airspace, unless, for the purposes of safe operation of an aircraft as determined under the rules and regulations of the FAA, the pilot-in-command is required to take action to ensure the safe operation of the aircraft. Aircraft takeoffs and landings are also exempt.

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose and need for this project stem from the enactment of the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (NPATMA), which directed the FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, to establish an ATMP for any national park or tribal land for which such a plan is not in effect whenever a person applies for authority to conduct a commercial air tour operation over the park.

The NPATMA specifically requires that the environmental impacts associated with the establishment of an ATMP be assessed under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, determined that a combined Environmental Assessment would be initiated for the separate ATMPs at GGNRA and the Seashore.



Source: NPS

Current Air Tour Operations

Currently two air tour operators (San Francisco Helicopter Tours and San Francisco Seaplane Tours) have been granted Interim Operating Authority (IOA) to operate air tours over the GGNRA and the Seashore. The IOA represents the total authorized air tours per year and is based on the number of air tours the operator reported that they flew prior to NPATMA.

Existing Operators with IOA	Flights per Year under IOA		
	GGNRA	SF Maritime NHP	The Seashore
San Francisco Helicopter Tours	2,900	2,900	2,900
San Francisco Seaplane Tours	2,190	2,190	2,190

The air tour operators currently offer for-hire helicopter and seaplane tours in the San Francisco Bay Area. Some air tours fly over portions of GGNRA while no designated tours currently fly over the Seashore. Park areas that are advertised by air tour operators include:

- Golden Gate Bridge
- Alcatraz Island
- Angel Island
- Presidio of San Francisco
- Muir Woods
- Pacific Ocean and the scenic coastline

To be inclusive of all SF area national park units, the FAA and NPS are also disseminating this information to the following parks and their respective stakeholder mailing lists in the scoping process:

- Rosie the Riveter/World War II Homefront National Historical Park
- John Muir National Historic Site
- Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site
- Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial

Air Tour Management Plan Development Process

Scoping (current stage)

- Range of issues and alternatives to be assessed
- Public and agency input requested

Alternatives Development

- Selection of the alternatives for the draft EA

Draft Environmental Assessment & Draft Air Tour Management Plan

- Evaluates impacts to environmental and community resources
- Public and agency input requested

Final Environmental Assessment & Final Air Tour Management Plan

- Preferred Alternative identified, including flight routes and operating parameters

Record of Decision

- Documents the Selected Alternative

FAA Rulemaking

- Establishes enforceable rules
- Public and agency input requested

Public Scoping

Comments due by September 28, 2011

The NPS and FAA are inviting the public to provide input, suggestions, and comments regarding the ATMPs. Issues and concerns from the public, government agencies, and organizations will assist the NPS and FAA in preparation of the Environmental Assessment. The scoping period will be held from publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register through September 28, 2011.

Comments may be submitted:

- Online at the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment website:

http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BayArea_ATMP

- In writing at the public open house
- Or by mail to:

Keith Lusk

Special Programs Staff, Western Pacific Region
Federal Aviation Administration
P.O. Box 92007
Los Angeles, CA 90009-2007

Public Meetings

Two public meetings are being held as part of this scoping process where members of the project team will be available to describe and answer questions about the project. One will be an open house, the other will be a public scoping meeting. The times and locations for these events are provided below.

Tuesday, August 16, 2011

Public Scoping Meeting
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
GGNRA Headquarters
Fort Mason Building 201
San Francisco, CA

Wednesday, August 17, 2011

Public Open House
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Bay Model Visitor Center
2100 Bridgeway
Sausalito, CA

Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Fort Mason, Building 201
San Francisco, CA 94123-1307

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U.S. Postage
PAID
Sacramento, CA
Permit No. 1704



Jeremy Graves, Community Development Director
City of Sausalito
420 Litho St
Sausalito, CA 94965-2921

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Please submit comments by September 28, 2011

For More Information About Air Tour Management Plans and the Parks

A detailed scoping packet providing more information about the park units and Air Tour Management Plan process is available online at the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment website:

http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BayArea_ATMP

Or at:

www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/arc/programs/air_tour_management_plan/

For more information on GGNRA, the Seashore, and San Francisco Maritime NHP, visit the NPS website at:

www.nps.gov/goga
www.nps.gov/pore
www.nps.gov/safr

Submit written scoping comments or general questions on the ATMP to:

Keith Lusk
Special Programs Staff, Western Pacific Region
Federal Aviation Administration
P.O. Box 92007
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310-725-3808