AERONAUTICAL CHARTING FORUM
Charting Group
Meeting 14-01 – April 29- May 1, 2014

RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control # ACF-CG RD 14-01-278

Subject: Alaska Designated Common Traffic Advisory Frequency Area Chart Depictions

Background/Discussion: As a result of several Alaskan mid-air collisions and near mid-air collisions, representatives from the FAA, Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA), Alaska Airmen's Association, the Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation, Alaska Air Carriers Association, along with other aviation industry and government organizations formed the Mat-Su Mid-Air Collision Avoidance Working Group.

NTSB findings recently included a review of the CTAF frequencies used in the area around several accident sites and revealed the use of multiple primary radio frequencies, but due to the high concentration of aerodromes in the area, many of the frequency boundaries overlap.

The members of the Working Group examined existing guidance, conducted a pilot survey and sought direct input from FAA lines of business, military operators, general aviation and air taxi pilots and CFI's who use this airspace on a regular basis. A set of recommendations was made to reduce confusing guidance concerning CTAF frequencies (identified in the NTSB findings), and improve aviation safety. These recommendations included establishment of designated CTAF Areas for discrete geographic areas, as opposed to the standard 10 mile radius around an airport.

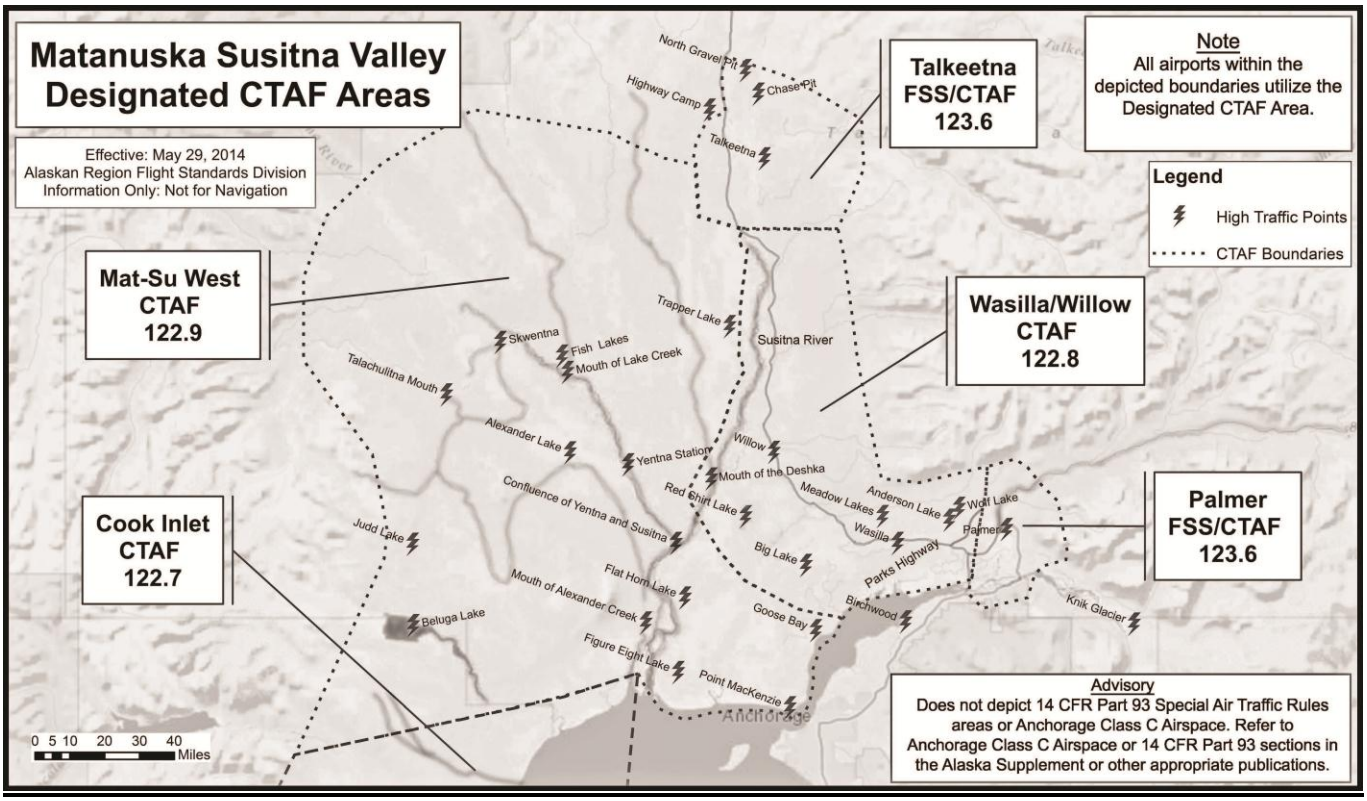
Although the definition of CTAF and MULTICOM speak specifically to airport operations, discrete CTAF frequencies have been associated with communications in Alaskan FAA publications in high traffic areas for many years. Examples of such CTAFs include the Denali Flight Advisory, White Mountain Area Flight Advisory, and Juneau High Density Traffic Area all of which are contained in the FAA Alaska Supplement and involve air-to-air communications. Discussions with the Federal Communications Commission resulted in concurrence with the use of CTAF frequencies for designated areas.

It is expected that these CTAF Areas will be published in an upcoming release of the Alaska Supplement (Alaska's Facility Directory). Additionally, in coordination with multiples lines of business, we have submitted a change request for the Airmen's Information Manual (AIM) to incorporate the historically established practice of utilizing these frequencies over designated high density traffic areas. While publishing this information in the Alaska Supplement provides a positive pre-flight planning tool, the aeronautical chart is the most popular and preferred tool for navigation, yet there are no charting conventions or approved chart symbology for designated CTAF areas. While special features have been included in Sectional Charts in the Juneau area, these features are often lost to users of electronic editions of the charts, which are becoming increasingly popular. Also, attached are samples of current graphics which exist either on FAA Sectionals or within the Alaska Supplement.

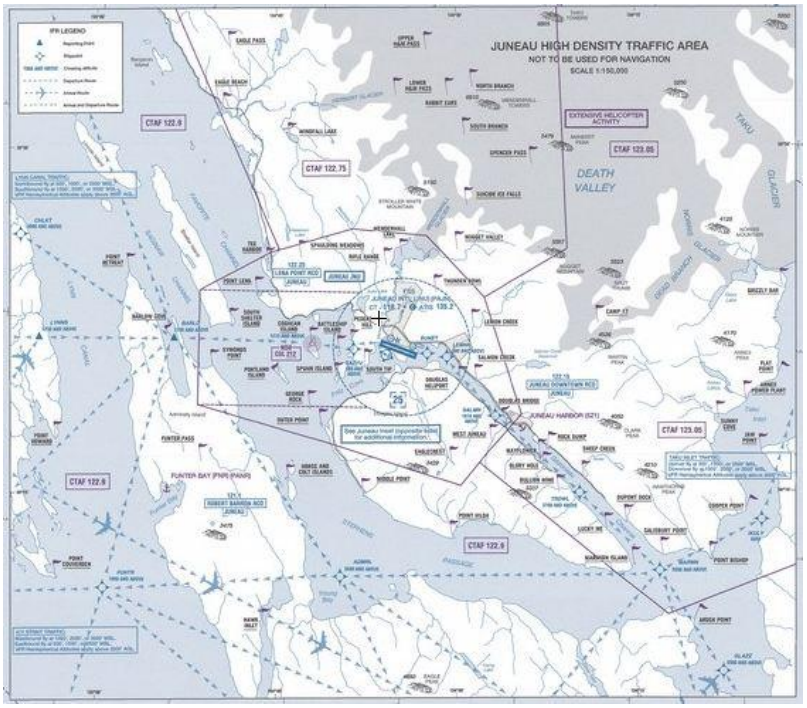
Recommendations:

We recommend that charting conventions and symbology be developed to show CTAF Area boundaries for aeronautical charts in order to provide consistent CTAF information for airmen. This methodology should lead to a reduction in near mid-air collision by eliminating conflicting, confusing guidance and provides for easily accessible information. Conventions need to apply both to printed and electronic charts.

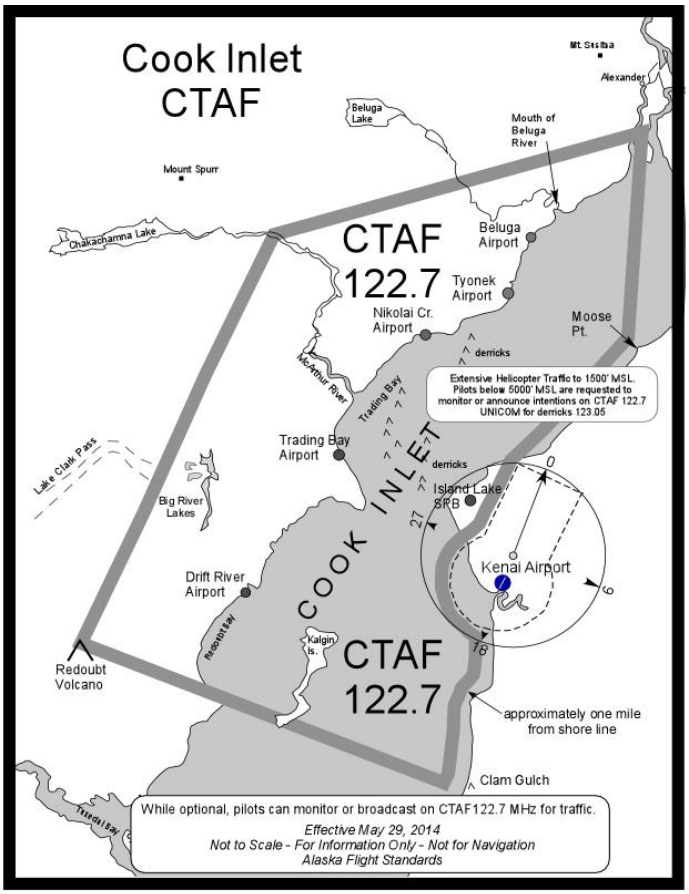
Attachments:



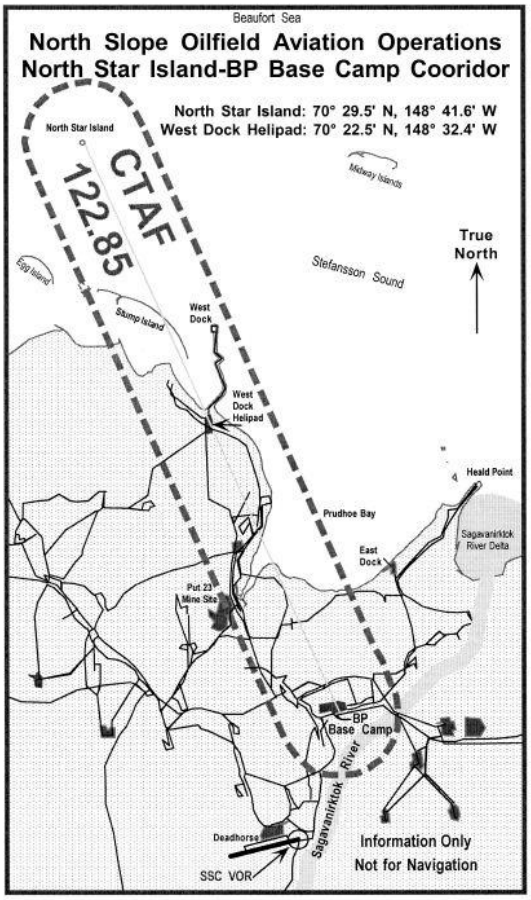
Mat-Su Valley Designated CTAF Areas.jpg



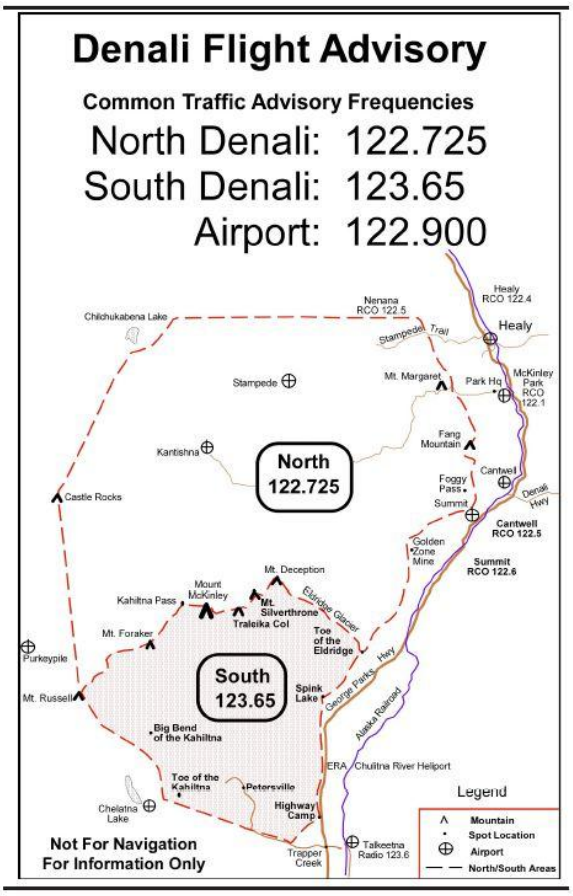
Juneau High Density Traffic Area inset.jpg



Cook Inlet CTAF Area.jpg



North Slope CTAF Corridor.jpg



Denali Flight Advisory CTAF Areas.jpg

Comments:

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ACF 14-01:

Mike Yorke, AAL-03, presented this issue. Mike described several mid-air collisions and near mid-air collisions that have occurred in Alaska. The findings of the NTSB were that there was inadequate visual lookout contributed to by a lack of standardization of CTAF frequencies. As a result, a government/industry working group was formed to come up with recommendations reduce the confusion regarding overlapping CTAF areas with different frequencies.

One of the recommendations generated by the Working Group is the establishment of designated CTAF area boundaries. The CTAF areas are already set to be published graphically in the Special Notices section of the Alaska Supplement. The working group is proposing a

change to charting convention to add the symbology for CTAF area boundaries to Visual Charts.

John Moore, Jeppesen, stated that once these areas are charted for Alaska, this concept may be desired elsewhere. John stated that the FAA should look carefully at the impacts of depicting CTAF areas on visual charts. Mike agreed that if this concept works well, it is likely that Alaska will ask for more of these areas to be charted in the future. Valerie stated that the charting offices would not want to see this concept expand into the lower 48. She stressed that the charting specifications that would allow these boundaries on the Alaskan charts would also apply to the entire chart series.

Ron Haag, AJV-321, reported that the May 29, 2014, Juneau Sectional chart will include the addition of CTAF frequencies associated with airports. Ron inquired if this could be a solution to the problem.

Mike stated that he still thinks that adding boundary lines to the chart to define the parameters of the areas is of greater value. Adding a CTAF boundary line is the only way the pilot will know where the frequency changeover is. Ron stated that adding CTAF boundary lines to the sectional may not be very useful to pilots if the areas are too small to be shown clearly on the chart. He suggested the possibility of a separate inset that would be available digitally.

Melissa McCaffrey, AOPA, commented that there is value in showing this information on an inset similar to the Juneau High Density Traffic Area inset. Ron stated that there is not enough room on the Anchorage Section or TAC charts to place an inset. He stated that the Anchorage enroute inset currently does not cover enough space to cover these areas. Ron will look into the possibility of adjusting this inset coverage.

George Sempeles, AOV-310, recommended that a note could be placed on the sectional to direct pilots to a separate publication. Valerie spoke in support of this notion & voiced that consideration should be given to directing users via chart notes to the detailed CTAF Area graphics in the Alaska Supplement or insets, and warned that the addition of linework in small-scale areas on Sectional charts will likely compromise the portrayal of existing data. Mike agreed that he would like to see a note on the chart.

Melissa suggested that Ron be made part of the working group for this issue. Ron stated that there are a range of possible solutions that he will investigate and he will coordinate with Mike and the working group to address this issue.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Ron Haag, AJV-321, will coordinate with Mike Yorke, AAL-03, to investigate the possible solutions discussed, develop prototype graphics and report at the next ACF.

MEETING 14-02

Mike Yorke, AAL-03, reviewed the issue. Mike showed the audience the new VFR graphics generated by FAA AeroNav Products' Visual Charting Team. The new inset chart, titled Matanuska Sustia Valley CTAF, illustrates the outer parameters defining the CTAF usage in the area. Mike acknowledged and praised the efforts of the VFR Charting Team in making the new

inset and in getting it published in such a short period of time. Mike then proposed that CTAF boundaries also be applied to the Sectional Chart for Anchorage.

Mellisa Rudinger, AOPA, also praised the new chart and joined Mike in support of depiction of the CTAF boundaries on the Sectional chart.

Ron Haag, AJV-3212, asked the audience if the new inset chart is sufficient or is there a perceived need to do more, such as putting the CTAF boundaries on the Sectional Chart. Ron emphasized that there are currently no charting specifications for adding CTAF boundaries to Sectional Charts.

In response to Ron's question, Mike commented that the current CTAF inset chart is helpful for users who purchase paper charts, but is not readily accessible when using digital charting applications.

Ron will investigate the digital chart website and see if the inset chart can be more easily found and accessed.

Valerie Watson, AJV-344, stated that CTAF boundaries will not be added to the Sectional charts, the parameters of CTAF areas are not formally defined, are not captured in a sanctioned database and even if they could be depicted, would cause a great deal of clutter on the charts. These areas and the inset that has been produced are really informational and she believes the inset should be labeled "Not for Navigation".

John Moore, Jeppesen, agreed and voiced that if the intent was to add CTAF boundaries to Sectional charts, the boundaries would first need to be defined, formalized and databased in NASR. Ted Thompson, Jeppesen, pointed out that once a chart like the CTAF inset is created, pilots perceive that the boundaries depicted are firm/formal boundaries.

There was discussion within the audience to how CTAF information could be potentially depicted on a Sectional chart and how the CTAF boundaries could potentially be geo-referenced for use by digital chart applications. There was a suggestion that perhaps the parameters of the inset could be shown and identified on the Sectional Chart. The Visual chart team will investigate this possibility.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Ron Haag, AJV-3212, will explore ways to identify on the Sectional chart the existence and possibly parameters of the inset, so that users are aware of its existence. He will also add "Not for Navigation" to the inset. Ron and will report back at the next ACF.

MEETING 15-01:

Rick Fecht, AJV-5223, reviewed the topic. Rick presented examples of the revised charting of the Alaskan CTAF areas on the Anchorage chart inset. The sectional chart now includes a text box to direct users to the CTAF area inset.

Mike York, AAL-03, praised the work done by the Visual Charting team. Mike reported that the response he has received back from chart users in Alaska has been positive.

STATUS: CLOSED