



# **Reporting Information for Commercial Air Tour Operations over National Park Units**

## **2016 Annual Report**

November 2, 2017

## **About this Version**

This November 2017 version of the *2016 Annual Report* marks the first public release of the air tour reporting summary data for 2016 commercial tours. Care has been taken to ensure accuracy of the data. However, data are subject to change pending receipt of any additional reports or to make corrections if errors are found. If a subsequent version of the annual report is released, any changes from the previous edition will be noted.

November 2, 2017

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Western-Pacific Region  
Los Angeles, California

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Natural Resource Stewardship and Science  
Fort Collins, Colorado

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## Executive Summary

Beginning in 2013, commercial air tour operators who conduct tours over national parks have been required to report their air tour activity to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Park Service (NPS). This *2016 Annual Report* is a summary of the data received for calendar year 2016 air tour activity.

In 2016 there were 81 NPS units where air tours operators had interim operating authority (IOA) to conduct commercial air tours. The system-wide IOA was 196,309 annual tours by all operators, collectively. Based on the 2016 reports submitted by air tour operators:

- 64,235 commercial air tours were flown in 2016 (excluding tours over Grand Canyon, Alaska, and Lake Mead tours determined to be “for transportation only”).
- There were 46 NPS units where at least one air tour was reported to have occurred.
  - 19 parks with more than 50 tours.
  - 27 parks with between 1 and 50 tours.
  - 34 parks with zero reported tours.
- 9 NPS units accounted for 93% of the total annual tours (59,722).
- The remaining 37 NPS units combined accounted for 4,513 annual tours.
- 61 NPS units had 50 or fewer reported tours, which make these units eligible for an exemption from a requirement to prepare an air tour management plan or agreement. NPS and FAA will publish the official exempt list in a notice in the Federal Register.

# 1. Background

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) *Modernization and Reform Act of 2012* amended the *National Parks Air Tour Management Act (NPATMA) of 2000* to include a provision that requires commercial air tour operators conducting air tours over national park units to report their activity to the FAA and the National Park Service (NPS).

FAA and NPS developed the new reporting requirements including the data that would be required to be submitted as well as the frequency of reports and the mechanism by which operators would report. These new reporting requirements went into effect beginning in calendar year 2013.

This *2016 Annual Report* provides a summary of the reporting data that the agencies received from calendar year 2016 reports submitted by commercial air tour operators. This information includes data from air tour operators who submitted quarterly reports, as well as data from operators who submitted annual reports for exempt parks; i.e., those parks with 50 or fewer tours the previous year.

With the submission of the 2016 reports, the agencies continue to compile data about the extent of commercial air tour operations over national park units. This information will assist the agencies in implementing other requirements of NPATMA, including prioritizing efforts to develop voluntary air tour management agreements at national park units where appropriate.

# 2. Introduction

The *Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR-21)* was signed into public law (P.L. 106-181, codified at 49 U.S.C. 40128) on April 5, 2000. Title VIII of this law, called the *National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (NPATMA)* regulates commercial air tour operations over units of the national park system. NPATMA requires the FAA and NPS to develop air tour management plans (ATMPs) for units of the national park system where an operator has requested authority to provide commercial air tours. The objective stated in NPATMA for ATMPs is to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations upon the natural and cultural resources, visitor experiences, and tribal lands.

Section 49 U.S.C §40128(c) had a grandfathering provision that applied to existing operators (those operators who had operated over a national park unit prior to enactment of NPATMA). FAA granted interim operating authority (IOA) to existing operators who applied for operating authority. The intent was to allow the operators to continue to conduct operations until such time as an ATMP was developed for the park. Essentially IOA was an annual limit on the number of

flights an operator could conduct over a national park. The provision allowed FAA to provide an operator with an annual authorization for the greater of –

- (i) the number of flights used by the operator to provide the commercial air tour operations over a national park within the 12-month period prior to the date of the enactment of this section; or
- (ii) the average number of flights per 12-month period used by the operator to provide such operations within the 36-month period prior to such date of enactment, and, for seasonal operations, the number of flights so used during the season or seasons covered by that 12-month period.

NPATMA also required that the IOA granted under NPATMA to be published in the Federal Register for notice and the opportunity for comment. On June 23, 2005 (see 70 FR 36456-36463) the FAA published a *Notice of Interim Operating Authority Granted to Commercial Air Tour Operators Over National Parks and Tribal Lands Within or Abutting National Parks*. The list provided the IOA granted to each operator for each national park unit / abutting tribal lands. On October 7, 2005 (see 70 FR 58778-58784) the FAA published a supplemental notice. The supplemental notice republished the IOA alphabetically by park rather than operator.

The current system-wide IOA is 196,309 annual tours by all operators, collectively. This IOA reflects the revocation of interim operating authority from 25 air tour operators in 2016 who had expired certificates or were no longer in business. The total number of annual flights revoked was 37,757 system-wide.

The *FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012* amended various provisions of NPATMA. Two of them related to reporting. One provision required air tour operators to begin reporting information to FAA and NPS on their operations. Section 49 U.S.C §40128(d):

- (d) Commercial Air Tour Operator Reports.—
  - (1) Report.— Each commercial air tour operator conducting a commercial air tour operation over a national park under interim operating authority granted under subsection (c) or in accordance with an air tour management plan or voluntary agreement under subsection (b) shall submit to the Administrator and the Director a report regarding the number of commercial air tour operations over each national park that are conducted by the operator and such other information as the Administrator and Director may request in order to facilitate administering the provisions of this section.
  - (2) Report submission.— Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, the Administrator and the Director shall jointly issue an initial request for reports under this subsection. The reports shall be

submitted to the Administrator and the Director with a frequency and in a format prescribed by the Administrator and the Director.

Section 49 U.S.C §40128(a)(5):

**EXEMPTION FOR NATIONAL PARKS WITH 50 OR FEWER FLIGHTS EACH YEAR.—**

- (A) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a national park that has 50 or fewer commercial air tour operations over the park each year shall be exempt from the requirements of this section, except as provided in subparagraph (B).
- (B) **WITHDRAWAL OF EXEMPTION.**—If the Director determines that an air tour management plan or voluntary agreement is necessary to protect park resources and values or park visitor use and enjoyment, the Director shall withdraw the exemption of a park under subparagraph (A).
- (C) **LIST OF PARKS.**—
  - (i) **IN GENERAL.**—The Director and Administrator shall jointly publish a list each year of national parks that are covered by the exemption provided under this paragraph.
  - (ii) **NOTIFICATION OF WITHDRAWAL OF EXEMPTION.**—

The Director shall inform the Administrator, in writing, of each determination to withdraw an exemption under subparagraph (B).

- (D) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—A commercial air tour operator conducting commercial air tour operations over a national park that is exempt from the requirements of this section shall submit to the Administrator and the Director a report each year that includes the number of commercial air tour operations the operator conducted during the preceding 1-year period over such park.

### **3. Reporting Requirements**

Section 49 U.S.C §40128(d) requires that each commercial air tour operator, whether they operate under an ATMP, an agreement, or IOA, submit a report to both the FAA and NPS on the number of commercial air tour operations over each park they operate at and “such other information” as the agencies request. This section also indicates that the reports shall be submitted “with a frequency and in a format” prescribed by the agencies.

The OMB control number for this data collection effort is 2120-0750. In December 2012, OMB approved these data collection activities for a 3 year period expiring December 31, 2015. In 2015, OMB approved an FAA request to extend the data collection through December 31, 2018.

In January of 2013, the FAA and NPS distributed a guidance memo to air tour operators that provided information on the new reporting requirements, the data that were being requested, and how they were to submit the data and the frequency with which they were to submit reports. The FAA and NPS also provided a reporting template in the form of an *Excel* spreadsheet, where operators could input their data. With the OMB data collection extension through 2018, the reporting template was revised to reduce and modify some of the required data fields. A copy of the reporting template is provided in Appendix A of this report.

In July of 2015, FAA updated the template for operating specifications (OpSpecs) issued to commercial air tour operators who conduct tours over national park units (FAA Notice, N 8900.312, 7/27/15). Specifically, OpSpec B057, National Park Air Tour Management Operations under 14 CFR 136, was amended to include the reporting requirement and instructions for reporting air tour data on a quarterly basis for all operators conducting air tours over national parks, except for exempt parks. For exempt parks, operators are required to report only on an annual basis.

## 4. Reporting Data for 2016

This section provides information on data collected from the 2016 calendar year reporting. This includes all data submitted by air tour operators through quarterly or annual (for exempt parks) reports. Table 1 lists all NPS units where there is authorization to conduct commercial tours, with park units sorted by the number of tours – most to least. Table 2 provides the same information sorted alphabetically by park. Of the 81 parks in the tables, there were a total of 46 national park units where at least one air tour is reported to have occurred. Overall, 64,235 air tours were reported over these units in 2016. Appendix B shows a map representing the geographic distribution of parks for which operators reported tours in 2016.

**Table 1.** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2016 <sup>a</sup> (Highest to Lowest Reported Tours)

National Park Service Unit	Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Tours <sup>b</sup>
National Parks of New York Harbor Management Unit (NPNH)	Northeast	New York, New Jersey	4,225	5,469	5,059	3,885	18,638
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	Pacific West	Hawaii	3,998	3,418	4,235	3,838	15,489
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	Pacific West	Arizona, Nevada	2,092	936	2,135	2,367	7,530
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	Pacific West	Hawaii	1,264	840	1,242	1,243	4,589
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	Midwest	South Dakota	-	871	3,017	123	4,011

National Park Service Unit	Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Tours <sup>b</sup>
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA)	Intermountain	Arizona, Utah	221	1,380	1,396	823	3,820
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	Pacific West	California	396	434	910	510	2,250
Rainbow Bridge National Monument (RABR)	Intermountain	Utah	100	850	821	294	2,065
Badlands National Park (BADL)	Midwest	South Dakota	-	461	869	-	1,330
Muir Woods National Monument (MUWO)	Pacific West	California	168	200	435	198	1,001
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)	Southeast	Tennessee, North Carolina	128	176	270	236	810
Glacier National Park (GLAC)	Intermountain	Montana	-	110	648	9	767
Bryce Canyon National Park (BRCA)	Intermountain	Utah	16	170	183	88	457
Canyonlands National Park (CANY)	Intermountain	Utah	30	117	158	50	355
Arches National Park (ARCH)	Intermountain	Utah	11	76	133	54	274
Bandelier National Monument (BAND)	Intermountain	New Mexico	24	25	28	28	105
Natural Bridges National Monument (NABR)	Intermountain	Utah	9	26	35	16	86
Point Reyes National Seashore (PORE)	Pacific West	California	9	29	24	21	83
Chaco Culture National Historical Park (CHCU)	Intermountain	New Mexico	11	15	16	16	58
Everglades National Park (EVER)	Southeast	Florida	38	1	-	11	50
Big Cypress National Preserve (BICY)	Southeast	Florida	34	1	-	10	45
Canyon de Chelly National Monument (CACH)	Intermountain	Arizona	7	10	15	12	44
Aztec Ruins National Monument (AZRU)	Intermountain	New Mexico	7	11	11	10	39
Mesa Verde National Park (MEVE)	Intermountain	Colorado	6	10	11	10	37
Big Bend National Park (BIBE)	Intermountain	Texas	-	-	-	-	37
Olympic National Park (OLYM)	Pacific West	Washington	5	7	18	5	35
Navajo National Monument (NAVA)	Intermountain	Arizona	4	7	8	9	28
Biscayne National Park (BISC)	Southeast	Florida	-	-	3	25	28
Acadia National Park (ACAD)	Northeast	Maine	5	6	11	5	27
Hovenweep National Monument (HOVE)	Intermountain	Utah	5	6	8	7	26
Pecos National Historical Park (PECO)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	17
Fort Union National Monument (FOUN)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	16
El Malpais National Monument (ELMA)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	14
Zion National Park (ZION)	Intermountain	Utah	1	2	6	3	12
Capulin Volcano National Monument (CAVO)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	9
Petrified Forest National Park (PEFO)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	2	2	-	8
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site (HUTR)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	2	2	1	8

National Park Service Unit	Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Tours <sup>b</sup>
El Morro National Monument (ELMO)	Intermountain	NM	-	-	-	-	7
Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument (SUCR)	Intermountain	Arizona	1	2	3	1	7
Colorado National Monument (COLM)	Intermountain	Colorado	-	1	2	3	6
Black Canyon Of The Gunnison National Park (BLCA)	Intermountain	Colorado	-	-	-	-	6
Yellowstone National Park (YELL)	Intermountain	Idaho, Montana, Wyoming	-	3	-	1	4
Wupatki National Monument (WUPA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	1	1	-	3
Yosemite National Park (YOSE)	Pacific West	California	-	1	-	1	2
Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CAVE)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	1
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (CAGR)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	1
Cape Hatteras National Seashore (CAHA)	Southeast	North Carolina	-	-	-	-	-
Capitol Reef National Park (CARE)	Intermountain	Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Cedar Breaks National Monument (CEBR)	Intermountain	Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Coronado National Memorial (CORO)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Death Valley National Park (DEVA)	Pacific West	California	-	-	-	-	-
Devils Tower National Monument (DETO)	Intermountain	Wyoming	-	-	-	-	-
Dinosaur National Monument (DINO)	Intermountain	Colorado, Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Dry Tortugas National Park (DRTO)	Southeast	Florida	-	-	-	-	-
Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Fort Davis National Historic Site (FODA)	Intermountain	Texas	-	-	-	-	-
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument (GICL)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	-
Golden Spike National Historic Site (GOSP)	Intermountain	Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Teton National Park (GRTE)	Intermountain	Wyoming	-	-	-	-	-
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve (GRSA)	Intermountain	Colorado	-	-	-	-	-
Guadalupe Mountains National Park (GUMO)	Intermountain	Texas	-	-	-	-	-
Hohokam Pima National Monument (PIMA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Mojave National Preserve (MOJA)	Pacific West	California	-	-	-	-	-
Montezuma Castle National Monument (MOCA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Mount Rainier National Park (MORA)	Pacific West	Washington	-	-	-	-	-
North Cascades National Park (NOCA)	Pacific West	Washington	-	-	-	-	-

National Park Service Unit	Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Tours <sup>b</sup>
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (ORPI)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Petroglyph National Monument (PETR)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	-
Pipe Spring National Monument (PISP)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River (RIGR)	Intermountain	Texas	-	-	-	-	-
Saguaro National Park (SAGU)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument (SAPU)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	-
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR)	Pacific West	California	-	-	-	-	c
San Juan Island National Historical Park (SAJH)	Pacific West	Washington	-	-	-	-	-
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI)	Pacific West	California	-	-	-	-	-
Timpanogos Cave National Monument (TICA)	Intermountain	Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Tumacacori National Historical Park (TUMA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Tuzigoot National Monument (TUZI)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Voyageurs National Park (VOYA)	Midwest	Minnesota	-	-	-	-	-
Walnut Canyon National Monument (WACA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Yucca House National Monument (YUHO)	Intermountain	Colorado	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>			<b>12,815</b>	<b>15,676</b>	<b>21,715</b>	<b>13,913</b>	<b>64,235</b>

a. Data are subject to change pending receipt of additional reports. This table lists parks where commercial air tours are authorized; a dash (-) indicates no reported tours.

b. Totals may exceed sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual total is required.

c. Tours at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park likely occurring in conjunction with Golden Gate. NPS and FAA working to clarify operator reporting requirements.

**Table 2. Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2016<sup>a</sup> (Alphabetical by Park)**

National Park Service Unit	Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Tours <sup>b</sup>
Acadia National Park (ACAD)	Northeast	Maine	5	6	11	5	27
Arches National Park (ARCH)	Intermountain	Utah	11	76	133	54	274
Aztec Ruins National Monument (AZRU)	Intermountain	New Mexico	7	11	11	10	39
Badlands National Park (BADL)	Midwest	South Dakota	-	461	869	-	1,330
Bandelier National Monument (BAND)	Intermountain	New Mexico	24	25	28	28	105
Big Bend National Park (BIBE)	Intermountain	Texas	-	-	-	-	37
Big Cypress National Preserve (BICY)	Southeast	Florida	34	1	-	10	45
Biscayne National Park (BISC)	Southeast	Florida	-	-	3	25	28
Black Canyon Of The Gunnison National Park (BLCA)	Intermountain	Colorado	-	-	-	-	6
Bryce Canyon National Park (BRCA)	Intermountain	Utah	16	170	183	88	457
Canyon de Chelly National Monument (CACH)	Intermountain	Arizona	7	10	15	12	44
Canyonlands National Park (CANY)	Intermountain	Utah	30	117	158	50	355
Cape Hatteras National Seashore (CAHA)	Southeast	North Carolina	-	-	-	-	-
Capitol Reef National Park (CARE)	Intermountain	Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Capulin Volcano National Monument (CAVO)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	9
Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CAVE)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	1
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (CAGR)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	1
Cedar Breaks National Monument (CEBR)	Intermountain	Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Chaco Culture National Historical Park (CHCU)	Intermountain	New Mexico	11	15	16	16	58
Colorado National Monument (COLM)	Intermountain	Colorado	-	1	2	3	6
Coronado National Memorial (CORO)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Death Valley National Park (DEVA)	Pacific West	California	-	-	-	-	-
Devils Tower National Monument (DETO)	Intermountain	Wyoming	-	-	-	-	-
Dinosaur National Monument (DINO)	Intermountain	Colorado, Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Dry Tortugas National Park (DRTO)	Southeast	Florida	-	-	-	-	-
El Malpais National Monument (ELMA)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	14
El Morro National Monument (ELMO)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	7
Everglades National Park (EVER)	Southeast	Florida	38	1	-	11	50
Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Fort Davis National Historic Site (FODA)	Intermountain	Texas	-	-	-	-	-
Fort Union National	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	16

National Park Service Unit	Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Tours <sup>b</sup>
Monument (FOUN)							
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument (GICL)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	-
Glacier National Park (GLAC)	Intermountain	Montana	-	110	648	9	767
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA)	Intermountain	Arizona, Utah	221	1,380	1,396	823	3,820
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	Pacific West	California	396	434	910	510	2,250
Golden Spike National Historic Site (GOSP)	Intermountain	Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Teton National Park (GRTE)	Intermountain	Wyoming	-	-	-	-	-
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve (GRSA)	Intermountain	Colorado	-	-	-	-	-
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)	Southeast	Tennessee, North Carolina	128	176	270	236	810
Guadalupe Mountains National Park (GUMO)	Intermountain	Texas	-	-	-	-	-
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	Pacific West	Hawaii	1,264	840	1,242	1,243	4,589
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	Pacific West	Hawaii	3,998	3,418	4,235	3,838	15,489
Hohokam Pima National Monument (PIMA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Hovenweep National Monument (HOVE)	Intermountain	Utah	5	6	8	7	26
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site (HUTR)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	2	2	1	8
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	Pacific West	Arizona, Nevada	2,092	936	2,135	2,367	7,530
Mesa Verde National Park (MEVE)	Intermountain	Colorado	6	10	11	10	37
Mojave National Preserve (MOJA)	Pacific West	California	-	-	-	-	-
Montezuma Castle National Monument (MOCA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Mount Rainier National Park (MORA)	Pacific West	Washington	-	-	-	-	-
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	Midwest	South Dakota	-	871	3,017	123	4,011
Muir Woods National Monument (MUWO)	Pacific West	California	168	200	435	198	1,001
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Natural Bridges National Monument (NABR)	Intermountain	Utah	9	26	35	16	86
Navajo National Monument (NAVA)	Intermountain	Arizona	4	7	8	9	28
North Cascades National Park (NOCA)	Pacific West	Washington	-	-	-	-	-
Olympic National Park (OLYM)	Pacific West	Washington	5	7	18	5	35
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (ORPI)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Pecos National Historical Park (PECO)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	17
Petrified Forest National Park (PEFO)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	2	2	-	8

National Park Service Unit	Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Tours <sup>b</sup>
Petroglyph National Monument (PETR)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	-
Pipe Spring National Monument (PISP)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Point Reyes National Seashore (PORE)	Pacific West	California	9	29	24	21	83
Rainbow Bridge National Monument (RABR)	Intermountain	Utah	100	850	821	294	2,065
Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River (RIGR)	Intermountain	Texas	-	-	-	-	-
Saguaro National Park (SAGU)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument (SAPU)	Intermountain	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	-
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR)	Pacific West	California	-	-	-	-	c
San Juan Island National Historical Park (SAJH)	Pacific West	Washington	-	-	-	-	-
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI)	Pacific West	California	-	-	-	-	-
Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument (SUCR)	Intermountain	Arizona	1	2	3	1	7
Timpanogos Cave National Monument (TICA)	Intermountain	Utah	-	-	-	-	-
Tumacacori National Historical Park (TUMA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Tuzigoot National Monument (TUZI)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Voyageurs National Park (VOYA)	Midwest	Minnesota	-	-	-	-	-
Walnut Canyon National Monument (WACA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	-	-	-	-
Wupatki National Monument (WUPA)	Intermountain	Arizona	-	1	1	-	3
Yellowstone National Park (YELL)	Intermountain	Idaho, Montana, Wyoming	-	3	-	1	4
Yosemite National Park (YOSE)	Pacific West	California	-	1	-	1	2
Yucca House National Monument (YUHO)	Intermountain	Colorado	-	-	-	-	-
Zion National Park (ZION)	Intermountain	Utah	1	2	6	3	12
<b>Total</b>			<b>12,815</b>	<b>15,676</b>	<b>21,715</b>	<b>13,913</b>	<b>64,235</b>

a. Data are subject to change pending receipt of additional reports. This table lists parks where commercial air tours are authorized; a dash (-) indicates no reported tours.

b. Totals may exceed sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual total is required.

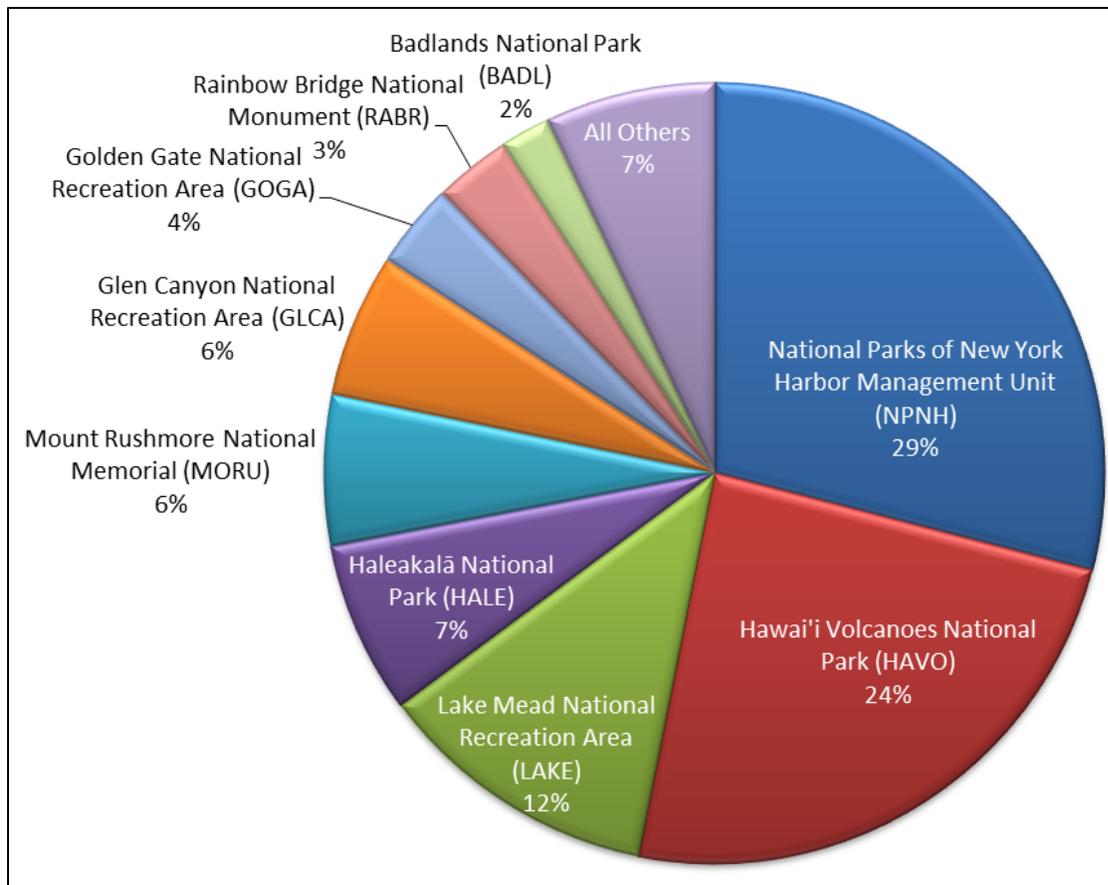
c. Tours at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park likely occurring in conjunction with Golden Gate. NPS and FAA working to clarify operator reporting requirements.

Table 3 and Figure 1 display the air tour activity at the high-activity parks. The bulk of air tour operations were concentrated at nine parks where approximately 93% of the air tour operations reported nationwide occurred. All nine of these park units had over 1,000 reported annual operations, with two of them over 10,000 operations. The largest units, in order of activity, were the National Parks of New York Harbor (which includes Statue of Liberty National Monument and Governor’s Island, and other park units), Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Haleakalā National Park, Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Rainbow Bridge National Monument, and Badlands National Park. Of the remaining 72 parks, 37 combined for just 4,258 annual operations and there were 34 parks with 0 reported tours.

**Table 3.** Reported Commercial Air Tours at High-Activity Parks

<b>National Park Service Unit</b>	<b>Tours</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>Number of Operators <sup>a</sup></b>
National Parks of New York Harbor Management Unit (NPNH)	18,638	29%	2
Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	15,489	24%	6
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	7,530	12%	5
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	4,589	7%	5
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	4,011	6%	3
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA)	3,820	6%	5
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	2,250	4%	2
Rainbow Bridge National Monument (RABR)	2,065	3%	4
Badlands National Park (BADL)	1,330	2%	2
All Others	4,513	7%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,235</b>		

a. Who have reported at least one tour.



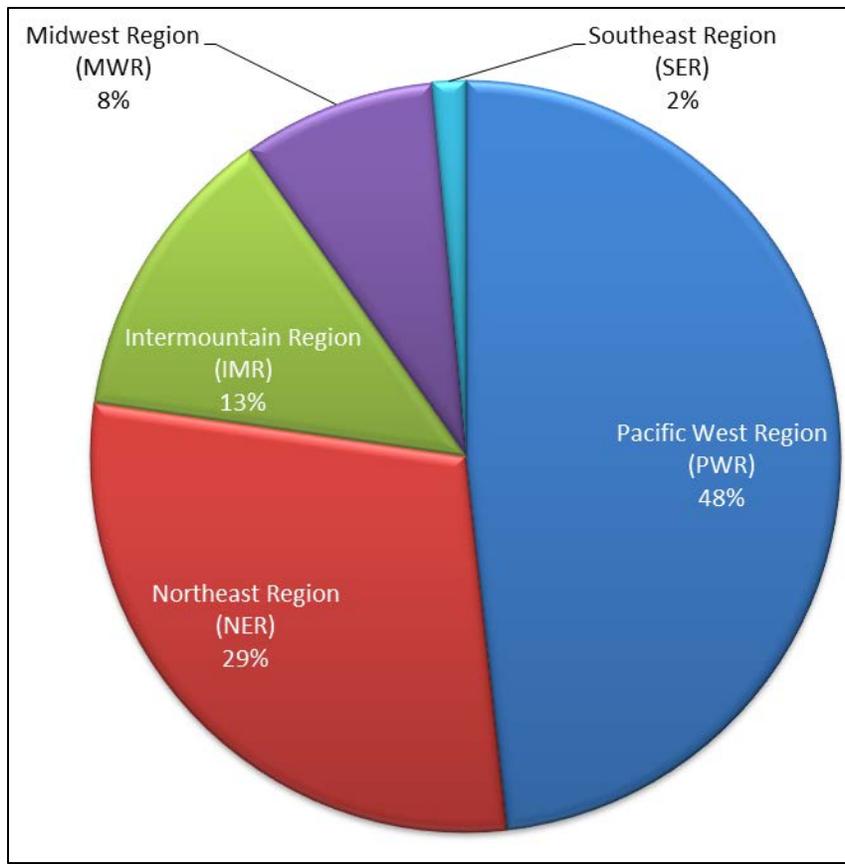
**Figure 1.** Percentage of Reported Commercial Air Tours at High-Activity Parks

Table 4 and Figure 2 display the level of air tour activity by NPS region, including percentage of total, and number of parks in each region for which at least one air tour was reported. While the Northeast Region and the Pacific West Region represent the greatest level of air tour activity, these operations were concentrated over only a few parks. In contrast, there is less activity in the Intermountain Region, but there are significantly more parks over which air tours occur. Appendix C provides a map of NPS regions.

**Table 4.** Reported Commercial Air Tours by Region

Region	Tours	Percent of Total	No. of Parks <sup>a</sup>
Pacific West Region	30,979	48%	8
Northeast Region	18,665	29%	2
Intermountain Region	8,317	13%	30
Midwest Region	5,341	8%	2
Southeast Region	933	1%	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,235</b>		<b>46</b>

a. Where at least one tour has been reported



**Figure 2.** Percentage of Reported Commercial Air Tours by Region

Table 5 and Figure 3 display air tour activity by quarter for 2013-2016. Most parks experience seasonal fluctuations in operations associated with weather and customer demand. Figure 4 displays the annual total number of tours for 2013-2016. The declining trend in tours over the past few years is primarily due to a reduction in activity at the National Parks of New York Harbor, where an agreement between New York City and air tour concessionaires bans air tours on Sundays and mandates a phased reduction of air tours to 50% of 2015 levels by 2017.

**Table 5.** Reported Commercial Air Tours 2013-2016

Year	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Tours <sup>a</sup>
2013	14,755	22,748	24,200	18,718	80,558
2014	13,548	25,402	30,176	20,450	89,752
2015	13,664	23,441	23,077	14,913	75,300
2016	12,815	15,676	21,715	13,913	64,235

a. Annual totals exceed sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual total is required.

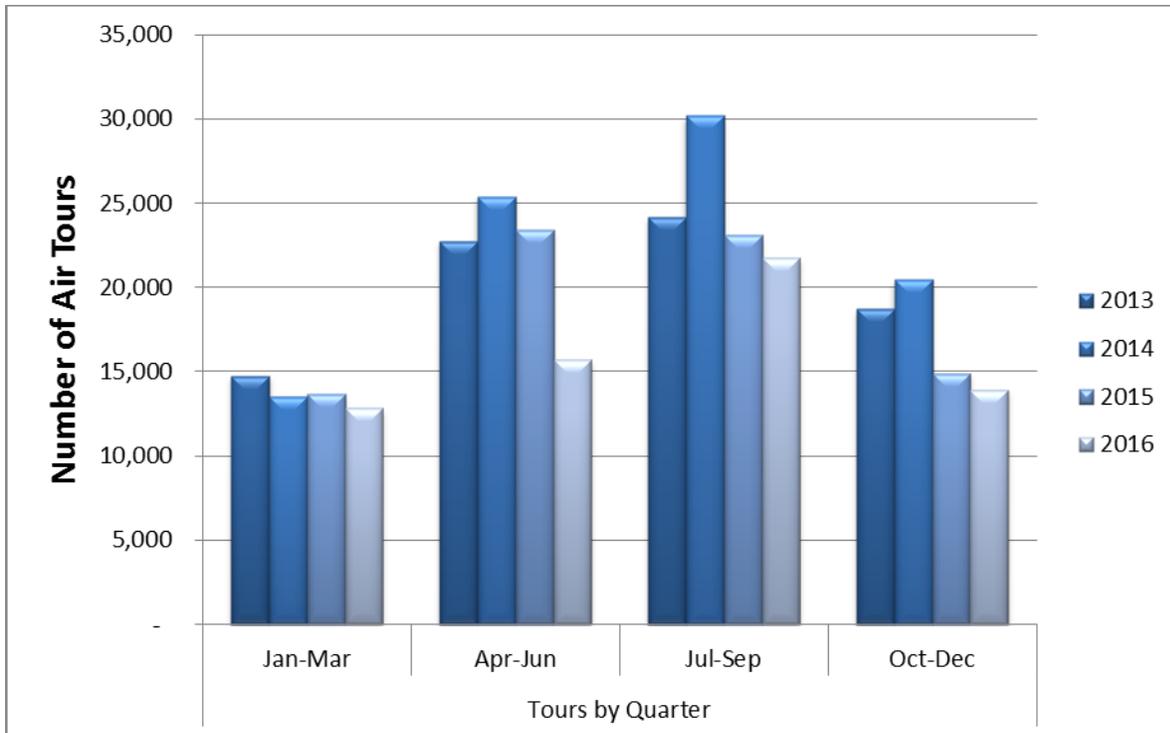


Figure 3. Reported Commercial Air Tours 2013-2016 by Quarter

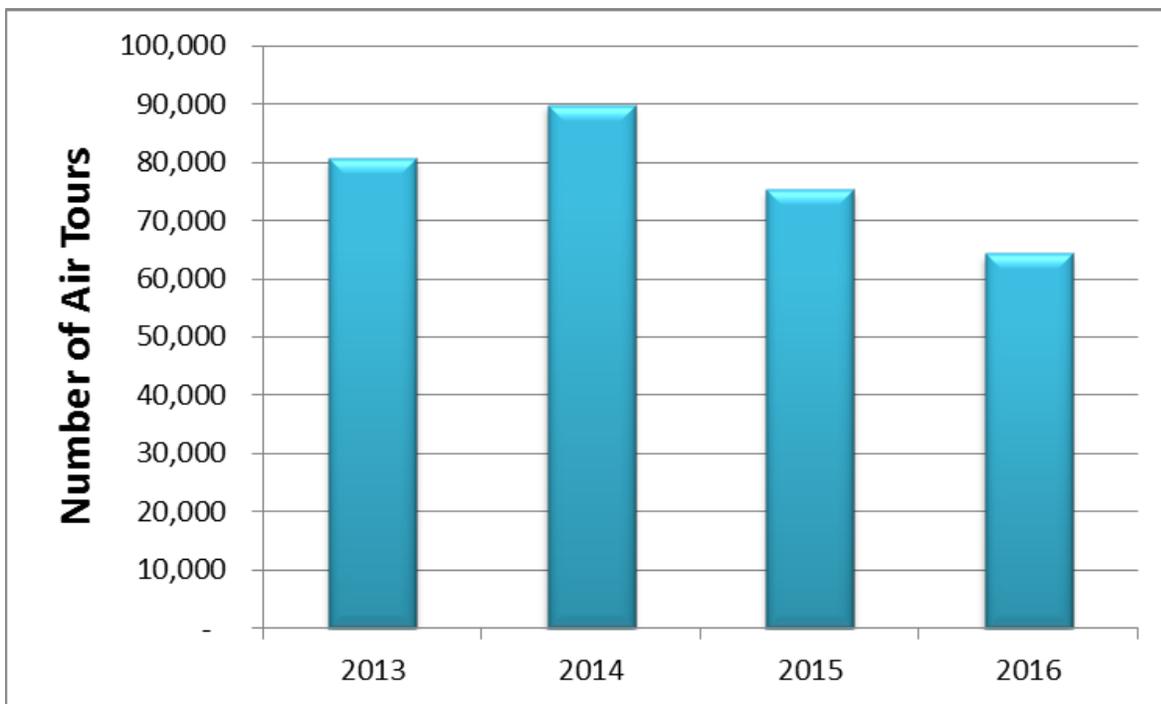


Figure 4. Reported Commercial Air Tours 2013-2016 per Year

Table 6 displays the number of operators conducting tours at the parks. As shown, there was a large spread in the number of air tour operators who give tours at any given park unit, with the number of operators reporting at least one tour at a park unit ranging from one to six. Most units (31) have only one operator conducting tours. Ten units have 2-4 operators, four units have five operators, and one unit (Hawai'i Volcanoes) has six operators who conducted tours.

**Table 6.** Number of Operators per Park Conducting Tours in 2016

Number of Operators	Number of Parks	Percent of Parks
1	31	67%
2	7	15%
3	1	2%
4	2	4%
5	4	9%
6	1	2%

## 5. Exempt Parks List

As previously noted, the NPATMA amendment provision, Section 49 U.S.C §40128(a)(5), exempted national parks with 50 or fewer flights each year from the requirement to establish an ATMP or agreement. The provision required that the agencies publish an annual list of the parks that are covered by this exemption. The new provision required commercial air tour operators who conduct tours over exempt parks to provide the agencies with a report each year on the number of operations they conducted during the preceding year.

Congress anticipated that there might be instances where even 50 or fewer annual air tours could affect the protection of park resources, values or the visitor experience. Therefore, if the NPS determines that an ATMP or agreement is necessary to protect park resources and values or park visitor use and enjoyment, they can withdraw the exemption.

Table 7 lists the exempt parks based on 2015 reporting data as published in the Federal Register (81 FR 75183, Oct. 28, 2016). In 2016, there were 61 parks with 50 or fewer reported annual operations, which is the cutoff limit for an exempt park. As of the publication of this *2016 Annual Report*, FAA and NPS are in the process of finalizing the exempt list based on 2016 data and plan to publish this list in a forthcoming Federal Register notice.

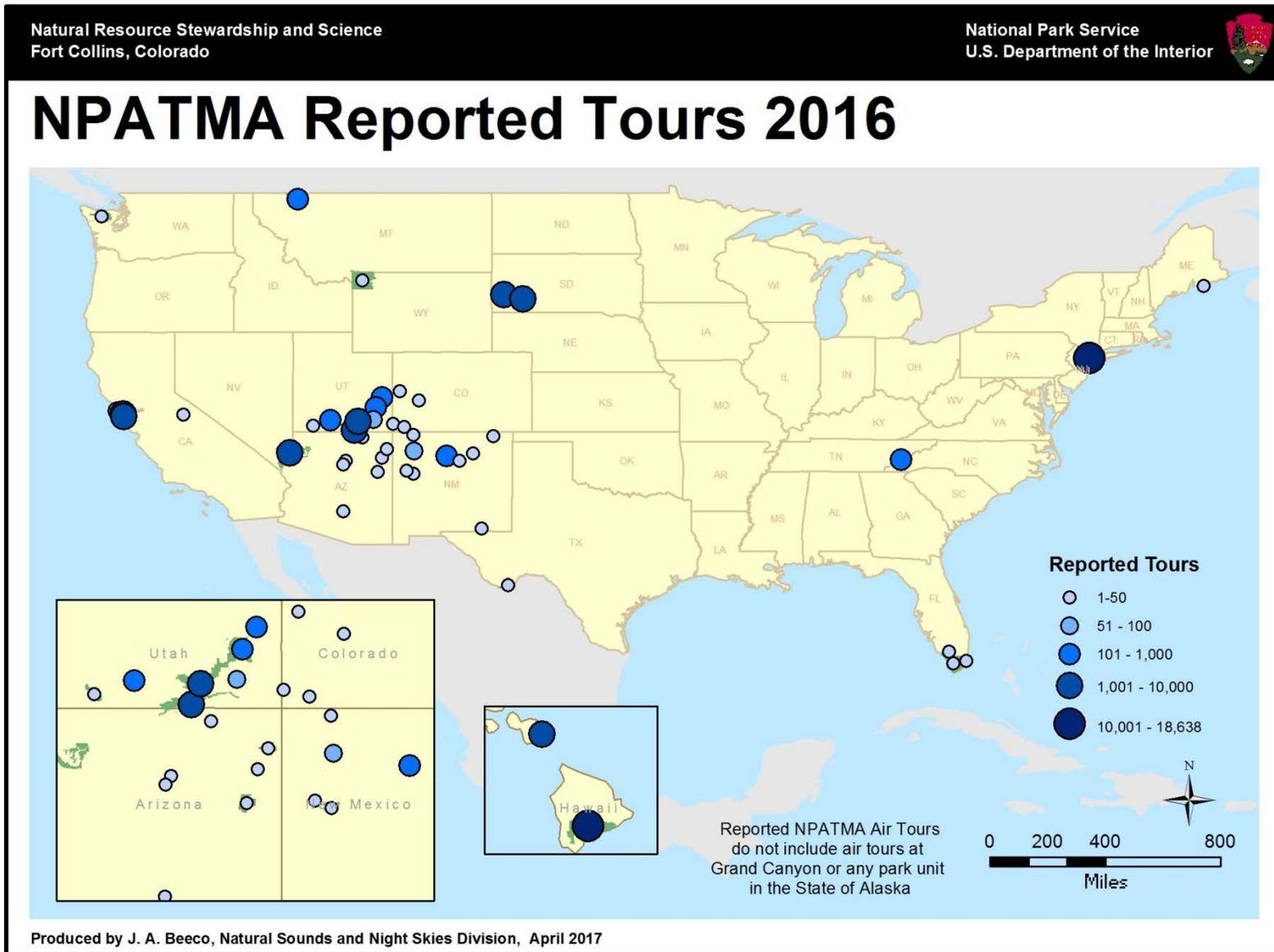
**Table 7.** Exempt Parks List Based on 2015 Air Tour Data

1. Acadia National Park (ACAD)
2. Big Bend National Park (BIBE)
3. Black Canyon Of The Gunnison National Park (BLCA)
4. Cape Hatteras National Seashore (CAHA)
5. Capitol Reef National Park (CARE)
6. Capulin Volcano National Monument (CAVO)
7. Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CAVE)
8. Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (CAGR)
9. Cedar Breaks National Monument (CEBR)
10. Colorado National Monument (COLM)
11. Coronado National Memorial (CORO)
12. Devils Tower National Monument (DETO)
13. Dinosaur National Monument (DINO)
14. Dry Tortugas National Park (DRTO)
15. El Malpais National Monument (ELMA)
16. El Morro National Monument (ELMO)
17. Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)
18. Fort Davis National Historic Site (FODA)
19. Fort Union National Monument (FOUN)
20. Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument (GICL)
21. Golden Spike National Historic Site (GOSP)
22. Grand Teton National Park (GRTE)
23. Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve (GRSA)
24. Guadalupe Mountains National Park (GUMO)
25. Hohokam Pima National Monument (PIMA)
26. Hovenweep National Monument (HOVE)
27. Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site (HUTR)
28. Kings Canyon National Park (SEKI) (listed separately from Sequoia to maintain consistency with the first exempt list published in the Federal Register in Dec. 2012)
29. Mojave National Preserve (MOJA)
30. Montezuma Castle National Monument (MOCA)
31. Navajo National Monument (NAVA)
32. North Cascades National Park (NOCA)
33. Olympic National Park (OLYM)
34. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (ORPI)
35. Pecos National Historical Park (PECO)
36. Petrified Forest National Park (PEFO)
37. Petroglyph National Monument (PETR)
38. Pipe Spring National Monument (PISP)
39. Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River (RIGR)
40. Saguaro National Park (SAGU)
41. Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument (SAPU)
42. San Juan Island National Historical Park (SAJH)
43. Sequoia National Park (SEKI) (listed separately from Kings Canyon to maintain consistency with the first exempt list published in the Federal Register in Dec. 2012)
44. Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument (SUCR)
45. Timpanogos Cave National Monument (TICA)
46. Tumacacori National Historical Park (TUMA)

47. Tuzigoot National Monument (TUZI)
48. Voyageurs National Park (VOYA)
49. Walnut Canyon National Monument (WACA)
50. Wupatki National Monument (WUPA)
51. Yellowstone National Park (YELL)
52. Yosemite National Park (YOSE)
53. Yucca House National Monument (YUHO)
54. Zion National Park (ZION)



## Appendix B. Map of 2016 Air Tour Activity



# Appendix C. NPS Regions

