

National Parks Overflights Advisory Group (NPOAG) Draft Meeting Minutes from  
September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Telcon

Participants:

NPOAG Member	Employer or Interest Group	Participated
<b>Rory Majenty</b>	<b>Hualapai Nation</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Martin Begaye</b>	<b>Navajo Parks and Recreation Department</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Alan Stephen</b>	<b>Grand Canyon Airlines</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Matthew Zuccaro</b>	<b>Helicopter Association International</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Gregory Miller</b>	<b>American Hiking Society</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Michael Sutton</b>	<b>National Audubon Society</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Heidi Williams</b>	<b>Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mark Francis</b>	<b>Red Tail Aviation</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Dick Hingson</b>	<b>Sierra Club</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Open Seat</b>	<b>Environmental Concerns</b>	<b>N/A</b>

FAA Western-Pacific Region Participants – Faviola Garcia, Keith Lusk, Dale Bouffiu

NPS Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division (NSNSD) Participants – Vicki Ward, Brent Lignell, Karen Trevino

After the call the telcon bridging system was queried to identify how many participants were on the call, 23 lines (some with multiple participants) were identified, which would include NPOAG members, agency staff, as well as the public.

### **Chair Introductions, Roll Call, and Opening Comments** by Vicki Ward

The meeting summary will be posted to the FAA Air Tour Management Plan website. Welcome to new members Mike Sutton and Mark Francis; welcome back Matt Zuccaro. Brief backgrounds provided by Mike Sutton and Mark Francis.

### **Co-Chair Opening Comments** by Dale Bouffiou

Indicated that both Barry Brayer and Bill Withycombe had retired at the beginning of the year. Neither replaced yet, hope to have new Regional Administrator in near future. Dale will be taking on NPOAG co-chair duties for now. Faviola Garcia has recently moved over to assist on the ATMP program. Reported that budgets are still tight and likely to remain tight in future. Looks forward to implementing new voluntary agreement process.

### **NPOAG Updates** (Vicki Ward / Keith Lusk)

Approval of Rapid City NPOAG meeting minutes – Vicki went over the action items from the notes from the May 16, 2012 NPOAG meeting.

Action Items 1, 2, and 3 are on-going and will be accomplished by the FAA and NPS co-chairs.

Action Item 4, status of Petrified Forest: the park became exempt and FAA and NPS closed out the NEPA process in early 2013

Action Item 5: Additional NPOAG meeting in 2012: time and budgets did not allow for this to be accomplished

Action Item 6: Conflict between air tour fees and recreational user fees: this was in reference to a proposed amendment to NPATMA sponsored by Senators Wyden and Alexander in 2012. The amendment did not pass, however, there was no intent to double charge for fees.

Action Item 7: NPS denied all pending IOA requests in May 2012, there are no other requests pending

Action Item 8: NPS makes impairment determinations during the National Environmental Policy Act process. Since the NEPA process for Mount Rushmore ATMP has been put on hold, and will likely be accomplished via a voluntary agreement, an impairment determination will not be done.

All NPOAG members participating in the call approved the Rapid City minutes. The final version will be posted on the FAA Air Tour Management Plan website:

[http://www.faa.gov/about/office\\_org/headquarters\\_offices/arc/programs/air\\_tour\\_management\\_plan/parks\\_overflights\\_group/minutes.cfm](http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/arc/programs/air_tour_management_plan/parks_overflights_group/minutes.cfm)

**Continuing sequester / budget effects:** Natural Sounds and Night Skies had to cut Division budget by 8% and anticipate similar cuts every year for the next ten years; also affected backfilling vacant positions with the result that one person was handling the entire air tour management plan workload that used to be handled by three people, in addition to becoming NPOAG chair. Brent Lignell was recently hired, however, and he is working on reporting and will work on voluntary agreements. Budget sequestration also cut travel budgets and it is unlikely that FAA and NPS will be able to hold face to face meetings since we will not be able to pay for travel costs of NPOAG members. The National Parks Air Tour Management Act says NPOAG members may be allowed travel expenses but it is not required that the agencies pay for travel expenses. The NPOAG members were asked for input on future ways to meet given limited agency travel budgets. Matt Zuccaro suggested NPOAG members come to Fort Collins or Los Angeles instead if that may be a cost savings. Of those asked, air tour operators (Matt, Alan, and Heidi) said they could pay their own way, Greg Miller indicated he couldn't, Dick Hingson said that may be possible.

Alan Stephen asked about the status of FAA monies that had been obligated to Volpe in support of the ATMP program. Keith conveyed that the funding that FAA had committed to Volpe was spent on the expenses associated with development of ATMPs and other technical research projects related to ATMPs. One of the benefits of voluntary agreements are reduced costs to develop compared to an ATMP.

**Recent selections, current openings, future openings:** Keith summarized recent selection of Mark Francis, Michael Sutton, reappointment of Matt Zuccaro. Dick Hingson's seat is the next up for reappointment as it will expire May 30, 2014. FAA and NPS will publish another Federal Register notice to solicit more applications for the open environmental seat.

**Federal lobbyist disclosure requirements:** Keith went over the Office of Management and Budget guidance regarding Federally registered lobbyists serving on advisory groups (see attached summary)

**Air Tour Reporting** (Vicki Ward / Keith Lusk / Faviola Garcia / Brent Lignell): See summary in attachment

- FAA / NPS implementation of reporting requirements
- Quarterly reports – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of 2013
- Exempt park list update

**Discussion on air tour reporting:** Alan asked about how he should negatively report. Keith indicated he could just put that information in the Notes section of the template, identify which parks no tours occurred over for that quarter.

Input from Matt on air tour operators perspectives on the new air tour reporting requirements. Mainly generic logistical / paperwork issues, operators want equal compliance for everybody, everybody needs to report. Alan said it was identical to Grand Canyon reporting, so they are used to it, not a major burden. They have automated system, "All Pro", that takes most of the flight information which they

can populate the information to the template. Dick Hingson said it was invaluable to begin getting that data. Greg was happy that we seem to be getting a more streamlined approach and trying to find a good approach; Greg asked if someone will be checking IOA, which was confirmed by Keith and Vicki. Karen asked if with new technology there were other options – flight tracking? Matt indicated there was no magic box, transponders interface with air traffic control, but that doesn't translate to template data. Alan agreed, thinks reporting system will get less burdensome with more operator experience in submitting data.

**Voluntary Agreements** (Vicki Ward / Keith Lusk): see summary of each park VA process in the attachment

- Big Cypress National Preserve
- Biscayne National Park
- Badlands National Park
- Mount Rushmore National Memorial
- Acadia National Park
- Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Voluntary Agreement Template:

Action Item: can the draft template be provided to NPOAG? FAA and NPS will find out.

**Discussion on Voluntary Agreements:** Alan asked about Glen Canyon, does everybody have to sign VA or are VAs done piecemeal, can one operator hold up process by declining? The intent is to have all operators to sign on to a voluntary agreement. Alan also asked about transferability of IOA, like Grand Canyon, could that be put into VA?

Dick asked about what is addressed under park management issues in a VA. Does it include noise limits, take into account soundscape plans? Yes.

Asked NPOAG about ideas for compliance.

Future meetings: When asked about length of call, Matt indicated that should be driven by agenda / subject matter. One hour may suffice, or maybe 3 depending upon agenda.