

**KICKOFF MEETING MINUTES – FINAL
MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK – AIR TOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN (ATMP)**

Date: October 8, 2009, Time 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM PT

Location: Mount Rainier Education Center, 55210 238th Ave E, Ashford, WA 98304

Attendees:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
 - Program Manager, Special Programs Staff: Keith Lusk
 - National Air Tour Safety Office (NATSO): Paul Joly
 - Special Assistant to the Regional Administrator, Northwest Mountain Region: Marianne Anderson
 - Attorney, Northwest Mountain Region: Patricia Deem
 - Flight Standards District Office (FSDO): Chip Peterson

- National Park Service (NPS)
 - Project Manager, Natural Sounds Program (NSP): Lelaina Marin
 - Deputy Superintendent (Acting Superintendent), Mount Rainier National Park: Randy King
 - Chief of Natural and Cultural Resources (Acting Deputy Superintendent), Mount Rainier National Park: Roger Andrascik
 - Biologist, Mount Rainier National Park: Barbara Samora
 - Park Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park: Stefan Lofgren
 - Park Ranger (Protection), Mount Rainier National Park: Geoff Walker
 - Biological Science Technician, Mount Rainier National Park: Rebecca Lofgren
 - West District Interpreter, Mount Rainier National Park: Lee Taylor
 - Biological Science Technician, Mount Rainier National Park: Ellen Myers
 - Chief Park Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park: Chuck Young
 - Environmental Protection Specialist, Mount Rainier National Park: Karen Thompson
 - Cultural Resource Specialist, Mount Rainier National Park: Greg Burtchard

- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe)
 - Mount Rainier National Park ATMP Project Manager: Jennifer Papazian
 - Acoustics Engineer: Cynthia Lee

- Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB)
 - Program Manager: Jeffrey Paul
 - Project Manager: Scott Polzin

A copy of the meeting attendance sign-in sheet, which includes contact information for the attendees, can be found in Attachment A.

Agenda:

- 8:30-8:40 Welcome and Introduction
 (*Keith Lusk, Lelaina Marin, Randy King, and Jeff Paul*)
- Meeting goals and objectives

PROGRAMMATIC DISCUSSIONS

- 8:40-9:00 ATMP Team identification and roles and responsibilities
(*FAA and NPS*)
- FAA (Western Pacific Region, Northwest Mountain Region, NATSO)
 - NPS (Natural Sounds Program, Regional Office, Mount Rainier National Park staff)
 - Volpe
 - PB
- 9:00-9:10 ATMP Public Video (9 minutes)
- 9:10-10:40 Briefing of ATMP/NEPA process
(*Keith Lusk and Lelaina Marin*)
- Review of The National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000
 - ATMP/NEPA development process
 - Scope of ATMP program
 - Current activities
 - New park starts
 - Planning and Environmental Analysis
 - Preliminary alternatives discussion
 - Scoping Process (with input from NPS)
 - Alternatives development process
 - Section 106 and tribal matters (with input from NPS)
 - Rulemaking
 - Schedule
- 10:40-10:55 *Break*
- 10:55 – 12:00 General introduction to Mount Rainier National Park resources
(*Barbara Samora*)
- 12:00-1:00 *Lunch*
- 1:00-1:45 Acoustics discussion – Baseline Ambient Data
(*Cyndy Lee*)
- Baseline Ambient Data
 - Acoustic Zones
 - Site Selection Considerations
 - Data Collected
 - Data Analysis
 - Results
 - Computer Modeling
 - Ambient Mapping
 - Types of Output
 - Computer Modeling
- 1:45-2:15 Air tour operations at Mount Rainier National Park
(*Paul Joly*)
- Current and new entrant operators
 - Number of existing and new entrant air tour operations
 - Flight tracks
 - Issues and concerns
- 2:15-2:30 *Break*
- 2:30-3:45 Preliminary alternatives discussion
(*NPS and FAA*)
- 3:45-4:00 Closing Discussion/Adjourn
(*Keith Lusk, Lelaina Marin, Randy King, and Jeffrey Paul*)

Minutes:

8:30-8:40 Welcome and Introduction (Randy King, Keith Lusk, Lelaina Marin, and Jeffrey Paul)

1. General remarks and welcome from Randy King
2. General remarks and welcome from Keith Lusk
3. General remarks and welcome from Lelaina Marin
4. General overview of the meeting goals and objectives from Jeffrey Paul

8:40-9:00 Programmatic Discussions (Keith Lusk, Lelaina Marin, Jennifer Papazian, and Jeffrey Paul)

1. Overview of FAA role and staff (*Keith Lusk*)
 - 1.1 Review of staff and charge “to develop air tour management plans (ATMPs) nationwide”
 - 1.2 Safety is an important aspect of an ATMP
2. Overview of NPS Natural Sounds Program and staff (*Lelaina Marin*)
 - 2.1 Really looking to Mount Rainier National Park staff for input on park resources and visitor experience
3. Overview of the Volpe Center’s role (*Jennifer Papazian*)
 - 3.1 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and acoustics support
4. Overview of PB’s role (*Jeffrey Paul*)
5. Review of oversight role by National Parks Overflight Advisory Group (NPOAG) (*Keith Lusk*)
 - 5.1 10 members – four from environmental community, three from air tour operators, one from general aviation, two tribal, plus FAA and NPS
 - 5.2 Meets at least one time a year – next meeting early November
6. **Q:** What role will Section 106 and Section 7 play? (*Roger Andrascik*) **A:** It will occur in parallel with NEPA and early outreach is important.
7. **Q:** Is there tribal representation? (*Randy King*) **A:** Typically do not have tribes at initial kickoff meeting but will consult with them throughout process.

9:00-9:10 ATMP Public Video

1. Watched video

9:10-10:50 Briefing of ATMP/NEPA process (Keith Lusk and Lelaina Marin)

1. FAA is the lead agency and NPS is cooperating agency
2. Review of National Park Air Tour Management Act (NPATMA) of 2000
 - 2.1 Roles of the FAA and NPS
 - 2.2 Includes area within ½-mile buffer of park, under 5000 feet above ground level (AGL), and abutting tribal lands
 - 2.3 Review of exceptions to NPATMA
 - 2.3.1 **Q:** How long has Rocky Mountain National Park been an exception to NPATMA? **A:** Ever since NPATMA was enacted.
 - 2.4 ATMPs must comply with the NEPA
 - 2.5 If tribal lands abut the Park, tribe must be solicited as a cooperating agency
 - 2.5.1 Currently have two parks with tribal lands abutting or inside the park unit
 - 2.5.1.1 Badlands National Park and Death Valley National Park
 - 2.5.1.2 At Badlands, the Oglala Sioux tribe has been invited to be a cooperating agency. At Death Valley, tribes are being invited as a cooperating agency.

- 2.5.2 Tribal reservations are not abutting Mount Rainier National Park but tribes do have an interest in the area
- 2.6 Each agency, FAA and NPS, must sign the NEPA decision document
 - 2.6.1 If it is an environmental assessment (EA) and there are no significant impacts
 - 2.6.1.1 FAA issues a combined Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) / Record of Decision (ROD)
 - 2.6.1.2 NPS issues a FONSI
- 4. Details of the nationwide scope of the ATMP program
 - 4.1 FAA has received applications for air tour operations at 85 parks
 - 4.2 Interim Operating Authority (IOA) has been granted to air tour operators that allows them to continue to fly until an ATMP is developed
 - 4.2.1 IOA allows the same number of operations as was flown the year before enactment of or average of 3 years prior to NPATMA
 - 4.2.2 Air tour operators should not be exceeding IOA
 - 4.2.3 **Q:** Is the IOA number annual operations? **A:** Yes, it is an annual limit operators are not supposed to exceed.
 - 4.3 **Q:** How are new applicants handled? (*Lee Taylor*) **A:** There is a process in place. FAA requires submittal information and does a safety review. NPS checks that the request does not result in a noise problem for the Park. Then FAA and NPS must agree to allow a new entrant to fly. Existing air tour operators can also ask for increase.
 - 4.4 **Q:** At what level within NPS is this processed? **A:** At the Superintendent level and NSP office, but final approval comes from the Director.
 - 4.5 **Q:** When looking at the ATMP process, safety and noise are primary concerns - does an ATMP have to satisfy both of these to have an ATMP and/or allow a new entrant? (*Randy King*) **A:** Safety analysis will be done by FAA. Both FAA and NPS must sign off on new entrants and the NEPA decision document. (*Patricia Deem*)
 - 4.6 **Q:** Is the process different if there have not been historical flights? **A:** No, they would still be considered a new entrant.
 - 4.7 **Q:** What is an air tour operator? Most fixed base operators (FBO) will offer contract flights, are they considered “air tour operators”? (*Stefan Lofgren*) **A:** FAA will contact a FBO if they know they are operating tours over the Park. The FBO charter should say they do not have operating authority to fly over the Park but there are limits to NPATMA requirements such as flying beyond the ½-mile buffer or above the 5,000 feet AGL limit. There are about 7 criteria in NPATMA that define “air tour.” (*Paul Joly*)
 - 4.8 **Q:** The ATMP process may not capture all commercial flights over 5,000 feet AGL? **A:** Correct, but will be catching the bulk of “air tour” operations. (*Paul Joly*)
 - 4.9 **Q:** How are people filming or conducting flights for the purpose of the scattering of human ashes accounted for? (*Chuck Young*) **A:** These types of flights are not sightseeing so are not captured by NPATMA because it has a narrow focus on air tours and not all private or other commercial flights.
 - 4.10 **Q:** How are new applicants dealt with after an ATMP issued? **A:** IOA is in effect until an ATMP is completed. Once the ATMP is released it will specify which operator gets what and it will become Operating Authority (OA). IOA ends 180 days after enactment of an ATMP. If there is a cap or restriction in operation levels then there will be the need to develop a competitive bidding process to allocate flights among operators.
 - 4.11 **Q:** What parks have approved ATMPs? (*Barbara Samora*) **A:** None.
 - 4.11.1 **Q:** Why? **A:** Interpreting and implementing NPATMA takes time. There are differences in FAA and NPS mandates and how to analyze impacts. FAA’s has concern of how impact determinations may affect other operations (e.g. operations at airports).
 - 4.12 **Q:** How long has the ATMP effort at Mount Rushmore National Memorial been underway? **A:** Since 2003.

- 4.13 Q: How many ATMPs are currently underway? A: Five.
- 5. Review of a map showing all locations requiring ATMPs
- 6. Five ATMPs currently underway – two in South Dakota (Badlands National Park and Mount Rushmore National Memorial), two in Hawaii (Haleakala National Park and Hawaii Volcanoes National Park), and one in California (Death Valley National Park)
 - 6.1 Mount Rushmore Draft EA anticipated release by the end of year
 - 6.2 Badlands is developing the Preliminary Draft EA and is being revised based on comments and what worked at Mount Rushmore
 - 6.3 Haleakala and Hawaii Volcanoes started as EAs but moved to environmental impact statements (EISs) due to the level of controversy and concern; they are currently in the alternatives development process
 - 6.3.1 Q: How do you integrate Native Hawaiian's into the process? (Greg Burtchard) A: Through consultations with Kapuna groups and the Section 106 process.
 - 6.4 Death Valley National Park ATMP is undergoing a different “streamlined” process that includes an Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC) that allows stakeholders to be involved throughout the process
- 7. ATMPs expected to start at 17 new parks within the next two years
 - 7.1 Mount Rainier National Park today
 - 7.2 Statue of Liberty National and Governors Island National Monuments next week
 - 7.3 Glacier National Park in early 2010
 - 7.4 Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, and Point Reyes National Seashore in mid-FY 2010
 - 7.5 Petrified Forest National Park, Navajo National Monument, and Canyon de Chelly National Monument, in mid-FY 2010
 - 7.6 Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Acadia National Park, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in mid to late FY 2010
 - 7.7 Biscayne National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park, and Dry Tortugas National Park in FY 2011
- 8. Federal action for an ATMP
 - 8.1 14 CFR 136, codified provisions for NPATMA in FAA regulations
- 9. ATMP NEPA process
 - 9.1 Process will result in a NEPA document and an ATMP document
 - 9.2 Review of NEPA process
 - 9.3 Two directives
 - 9.3.1 FAA Order 1050.1E (significant and less than significant impact determinations)
 - 9.3.2 NPS DO#12 (negligible, minor, moderate, major, and unacceptable impact and impairment determinations)
- 10. Preliminary alternatives discussion
 - 10.1 Kickoff meeting and preliminary meeting discussions
 - 10.2 Bounding alternatives – no air tours up to unrestricted
 - 10.3 After scoping meeting a meeting will be held to discuss alternatives in more detail
- 11. Scoping process
 - 11.1 Public involvement opportunities
 - 11.2 NPATMA only requires one public meeting
 - 11.2.1 Typically hold meeting after draft NEPA document is released
 - 11.2.2 Public meeting not necessarily required at scoping but can have more than just one meeting
 - 11.3 Notice of Intent (NOI) is issued

- 11.4 Agencies and other opportunities to provide input
- 11.5 **Q:** Would US Forest Service (USFS) be a cooperating agency? (*Karen Thompson*) **A:** No, but consultation with them will occur.
- 11.6 Identification of stakeholders and resource agencies
- 11.7 Mount Rainier National Park is special because of its distinct feature, Mount Rainier
- 11.8 Collecting agreements with the Native American tribes are in place
- 11.9 There are six tribes around Mount Rainier National Park but none within or adjacent to the Park
 - 11.9.1 Confederated Bands and Tribes of the Yakama Nation (the largest) – Treaty with the Yakama
 - 11.9.2 Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (most active) – Treaty of Medicine Creek and Treaty of Point Elliot
 - 11.9.3 Nisqually Indian Tribe – Treaty of Medicine Creek
 - 11.9.4 Puyallup Tribe of Indians – Treaty of Medicine Creek
 - 11.9.5 Squaxin Island Indian Tribe – Treaty of Medicine Creek
 - 11.9.6 Cowlitz Indian Tribe – non-treaty tribe
- 11.10 All the tribes have traditional use lands on Mount Rainier and/or directly ceded lands under terms of one to three treaties in exchange for certain continuing rights and privileges
- 11.11 Need to get the US Military involved in scoping
 - 11.11.1 **Q:** Why involve US Military but not commercial operations in the process? **A:** The military flies at altitudes comparable to air tours, so would have the greatest potential to affect them. Commercial aircraft fly at very high altitudes, so would have minimal effect on air tours.
- 11.12 **Q:** How do we deal with the commercial aircraft vendor taking customers over Mount Rainier National Park? (*Stefan Lofgren*) **A:** Not as a stakeholder but try to resolve conflict through FSDO working with the commercial businesses. (*Marianne Anderson*)
- 11.13 **Q:** Are there any adjacent state or local parks nearby? **A:** Federation Forest State Park is north of Mount Rainier along the White River.
- 11.14 Mount Rainier National Park staff has a list of possible stakeholders, including environmental groups, which they will provide to Lelaina
- 11.15 Questions concerning if separate meetings with tribes will be needed
 - 11.15.1 NPS will query tribes about whether or not they are interested
- 11.16 Karen Thompson (MORA) can be the contact person for getting the stakeholder list and the contact person for the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) system (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>)
 - 11.16.1 Initial list of stakeholders identified on flip charts:

Agencies		
USFWS	Mt. Baker – Snoqualmie NF	WSDOT (aviation)
Native American tribes	Wenatchee NF	Fort Lewis (US Army)
USFS	WSDOE	McCord Air Force Base
WSHPO & THPO	WSFWS	NAS Whidbey Island (US Navy)
Gifford Pinchot NF	EPA	USGS – Volcanic Observatory
Federation Forest (WA)	Pierce County	Lewis County
WS Dept. of Tourism		
Environmental Groups		
Mountaineers (hiking)	NW Env. Advocates	AM. Alpine Club
Climbing concessions	NPCA	Pacific Crest Trail
PEER	Commercial Use Authority	Wilderness Watch
Sierra Club	Commercial land holders (Hancock, Plum Creek)	Crystal Mountain

- 11.17 PEPC will be used and maybe FAA’s docket system
 - 11.17.1 Lelaina will be responsible for setting up the project in PEPC
- 11.18 Quantity of meetings

- 11.18.1 Five or six with tribes (one per tribe)
- 11.18.2 Agency scoping meeting
- 11.18.3 Three public scoping meetings held at various venues – Seattle, Tacoma, Ashford
- 11.19 Suggest including USFWS and USFS at alternatives development meeting (*Randy King*)
 - 11.19.1 No agencies have been at previous alternatives development meetings but there has been a separate agency scoping meeting in addition to the public scoping meeting
- 11.20 Mount Rainier National Park has a park distribution list (includes tribes, media contacts, neighbors, partners, and legislative contacts),
 - 11.20.1 Work with Karen Thompson, Barbara Samora, and Brian Boden to obtain
- 11.21 Greg Burtchard will be involved with working with the Tribes
- 12. Alternatives Development – NPATMA
 - 12.1 Review of what NPATMA states regarding the content of an ATMP (Sections a-f)
 - 12.2 FAA has defined what constitutes “quiet technology”
 - 12.2.1 NPOAG recommended adoption of specifications being used in Grand Canyon for quiet technology to also be used for ATMPs
 - 12.3 Review of quiet technology and incentive for air tour operators
 - 12.4 **Q:** Regarding identification of a flight as it happens, can we mandate the type of identification or tracking equipment they carry on-board? (*Stefan Lofgren*) **A:** There are problems with requiring equipment, for instance cost is prohibitive in many cases.
 - 12.5 **Q:** What about Aviation Digital Data Service (ADDS)? (*Stefan Lofgren*) **A:** It will be a tool but not “hard wired” into the process.
 - 12.6 **Q:** With the NPS push for carbon neutral at the park, how is this accounted for? (*Chuck Young*) **A:** FAA and NPS have guidance being used for air quality analysis through NEPA.
 - 12.7 **Q:** How is AGL defined if you have a mountain being flown over? (*Roger Andrascik*) **A:** AGL is the ground above which the pilot is flying over. (*Paul Joly*)
 - 12.8 **Q:** Are there some provisions to go back and re-evaluate once ATMP established? **A:** It could possibly be part of monitoring set in the ATMP or another NEPA process could be done if drastic enough change occurs. (*Marianne Anderson*)
 - 12.9 **Q:** At Mount Rushmore, if you are one mile away from the Monument but still 5,000 feet AGL, sound impacts would be extensive because one mile is so close, yes? **A:** Air tour operators want to capture the most out of an air tour, which will require operators to go below 5,000 feet. A meaningful air tour experience will be captured within the ATMP.
 - 12.10 **Q:** Regarding bounding alternatives, how does the presence of designated wilderness affect the alternatives? **A:** Flights must be 500 feet away from a person or structure and above 2,000 feet which is set by FAA. The Wilderness Act only addresses the landing of aircraft in wilderness. It does not address air tours and noise specifically. Wilderness will also affect the route structures developed in alternatives development (e.g. follow a road). (*Stefan Lofgren*)
 - 12.11 **Q:** How specific can you get on conditions of the ATMP? If it gets into CFR with a specific route or season we will not be tied into that unless there is another rulemaking process? How is the fact that conditions and use patterns are changing being dealt with in the ATMP? For example, regarding new technology, how easy will it be to change things within the ATMP once it is through rulemaking? This will be a “key point” that is needed. Something short of rulemaking will be needed. (*Chuck Young*) **A:** It will depend on the extent of change required and whether new rulemaking would be required.
 - 12.12 **Q:** What if T&E species move, we can’t plan for where T&E species are moving? **A:** Process was not written such that it can’t be changed later; however, do not want to make it flexible on a regular basis.
 - 12.13 **Q:** Will we get a sense of what the air tour clients want to see? (*Roger Andrascik*) **A:** FAA (FSDO) can get that information from operators. There was an IOU for FSDO to get a handle on what works for an air tour here.

- 12.14 **Q:** Other than the Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) that protects Mt. St. Helens, is there anything other than CFR to govern air tours? **A:** No.

10:50-11:05 Break

11:05-11:16 Briefing of ATMP/NEPA process cont. (Keith Lusk and Lelaina Marin)

1. Review of alternatives development process
2. Milestones
 - 2.1 Reviewed milestones handout
 - 2.2 Scoping in November-January 2010
 - 2.3 Alternatives Development Meeting February-March 2010
 - 2.4 Preliminary Draft EA out for comments November-December 2010
 - 2.5 Draft EA out for public review January-March 2011
 - 2.6 **Q:** NPS does not typically do a Draft EA? **A:** Balancing both FAA and NPS NEPA guidance.
 - 2.7 Schedule tries to be sensitive to peak season with Park
 - 2.7.1 During peak season the development of alternatives and analysis of impacts occurs so Park staff is not heavily involved until again in the fall
 - 2.8 **Q:** Does the schedule need to be solidified today? **A:** No.

11:16 – 11:54 General introduction to Mount Rainier National Park resources (Barbara Samora)

1. Regional perspective of park
 - 1.1 Highly visible in region; icon in region
2. Surrounded by several wilderness areas as well as private lands
 - 2.1 54% is USFS and of that 33% of surrounding lands is wilderness
3. 97% wilderness in park
4. 1,600 – 14,000 feet in elevation
5. 147 miles of roads, 300+ miles of trails, 40 backcountry camps
6. Developed areas – three large campgrounds accessible by vehicles
7. NW side of park is Mowich Lake with walk in campground
8. Annual visitation 1.5-2.0 million
 - 8.1 240,000 overnight
 - 8.2 13,000 climbers (old number) – attempt to summit Mt. Rainier
 - 8.3 20,000 backpackers
 - 8.4 Most visitors come from area surrounding park (60%)
 - 8.4.1 Majority from five counties around park
 - 8.5 Most are repeat visitors with 6 hours or less for visit
9. 92% of people surveyed said natural quiet is a significant attribute of this park
10. 26 named glaciers covering 35 square miles
11. Over 400 rivers and streams
12. Mount Rainier is considered active because it erupted in the last 200 years
13. Number of areas are mapped as high hazard areas
14. Very dynamic place in terms of natural disturbances
15. Seismic stations are USGS and University of Washington
 - 15.1 Volcano monitoring with USGS as prime coordinator
16. Forests – significant portion is old growth
17. Sub-alpine is the primary area where most visitors spend their time

18. Winter storms from the southwest and summer storms from the northwest
19. Heaviest snow falls between 5,000-11,000 feet elevation
20. 60 inches at lower elevations to over 1,000 inches at Paradise
21. Snow until July typically
22. Some plant species of concern but not nearly as many as animal species
23. Mountain goats sensitive to sounds and often something visitors want to see
24. Pika – very sensitive to climate change and first species being considered for listing due to climate change
25. NPS can provide complete species lists
26. Many of the sensitive species are bats
27. Most birds are summer visitors
 - 27.1 Northern Spotted Owl
 - 27.1.1 Very sensitive to noise (lots of literature)
 - 27.1.2 Federal threatened species
 - 27.1.3 In decline in Mount Rainier National Park and region
 - 27.2 Marbled Murrelet
 - 27.2.1 Goes all the way to Puget Sound to get food and then back to feed young
 - 27.2.2 Has never been confirmed on eastern side of Mount Rainier National Park but entire Park is habitat area
 - 27.2.3 Nesting occurs from beginning of March through September
28. Amphibian species would be sensitive to noise
29. Recent DNA of cutthroat shows lots of hybrid species due to stocking that was occurring until early 1970's
30. Never seen the large steelhead reds but Tribes have indicated they have seen them
31. Dolly Varden is a listed species because can only differentiate in the lab not in the field
32. Ice worms – know a little bit about these
33. Monitoring of species
 - 33.1 Landbird, as part of long term monitoring program; indicators of environmental change
 - 33.2 Elk, important 30 years ago due to clear cutting, elk began moving to sub-alpine area
 - 33.3 Amphibians, for special status and other associated with high mountain lakes (e.g. Western Toad)
34. NPS has data on most of the species
35. Soundscape planning 2002-2003
 - 35.1 Adjacent land uses, in particular logging
 - 35.2 Snowmobiles
 - 35.2.1 GMP says will not have, but currently allow limited number on roads in winter with goal to go through rulemaking
 - 35.2.2 No permits needed
 - 35.2.3 Almost none come within the Park, maybe 50 a year are within proximity to the Park
 - 35.3 Harley Davidson's going up and down State Route 410 are number one noise problem on east side
 - 35.3.1 Right now considered part of visitor experience
 - 35.3.2 Motorcycles seem to be modified to make more noise
 - 35.4 Acoustic zones – difficult to get away from the sound of noise
36. GMP outlined management zones
 - 36.1 Each zone has description of how it is managed and will be developing standards
37. National Historic Landmark
 - 37.1 Designated in late 1990's

- 37.2 Encompasses all developed areas, including roads, and 93 mile Wonderland Trail and Northern Loop trail
- 37.3 Represents 1935 master plan of development in National Parks (e.g. log buildings, stones, etc.)
- 37.4 Prime example of that type of architecture
- 37.5 NPS has good written description and can provide
- 38. Lots of winter recreation, including camping and skiing, but primarily in the Paradise Area
- 39. Skiers and snowshoes along State Route 410
- 40. Avalanche dangers will need to be considered
- 41. Park makes large effort to keep road to Paradise open so significant amount of snow removal each day
- 42. 17,500 wilderness visitors in 2009
 - 42.1.1 40% (7,000) went to Camp Muir
 - 42.2 If there is a concentrated use it would be at Muir, and that is just overnight – multiply significantly for day use

11:54-1:16 Lunch

1:16-1:40 Acoustics discussion – Baseline Ambient Data (Cynthia Lee)

- 1. Acoustic Support
 - 1.1 Monitoring was completed by NSP
 - 1.2 Discussion of baseline ambient data collected and overview of upcoming computer modeling
- 2. Baseline ambient data
 - 2.1 Collected in winter 2006 and summer 2007
 - 2.2 Preliminary acoustic zones are developed using National Land Cover Database (NLCD), and refined based on discussions with local NPS staff
 - 2.3 NPS and FAA building national ambient database
- 3. Site selection considerations
 - 3.1 Want to make sure locations represent the acoustic zone, are safe, and not disturbed by visitors or wildlife
 - 3.2 Can also locate near air tour routes, if know where they are, as well as noise sensitive locations
- 4. Site locations at Mount Rainier National Park
 - 4.1 Six summer sites but only one in winter due to flooding and access issues
 - 4.2 Needs coverage on glacier area
 - 4.3 The Park has collected data from two additional sites
- 5. Data Collected
 - 5.1 24 hours, 25-30 days per season
 - 5.2 Short term observer logging at each site to document sounds heard
- 6. Analysis
 - 6.1 Metrics and descriptors computed
 - 6.2 The natural ambient is typically used by NPS as baseline ambient condition; the FAA typically uses the existing ambient without the sound source of interest (i.e., air tours)
- 7. Daytime sound exceedence levels
 - 7.1 Provides a comparison of sound levels at all measurement sites
 - 7.2 Included three additional locations for comparison purposes (Haleakala, urban area in Florida, and Boston, MA)
- 8. **Q:** In general, is higher elevation the quietest? **A:** Yes, fewer visitors, less wildlife, and more exposed to wind.
- 9. Winter 2006 the Park was closed due to flooding

10. Will need more monitoring completed to capture acoustics year round since tours are year round (specifically need more monitoring in the winter season)
11. % Time Audible
 - 11.1 Fixed-wing vs. jet vs. other vs. natural
 - 11.2 Current data does not distinguish fixed-wing aircraft as air tour or non air tour; this data was not available as existing flight routes were not known
12. Next steps
 - 12.1 More monitoring for winter ambient
 - 12.2 Existing sites and possibly new sites for glacier/alpine areas
 - 12.3 Ambient maps – winter ambient and summer ambient
13. Ambient mapping will be done
 - 13.1 NPS uses natural ambient and FAA uses existing ambient without air tours as the baseline from which to determine impacts
 - 13.2 Computation of ambients based on offsite listening and analysis of audio recordings
 - 13.3 Impression is that most flights are general aviation, is that wrong?
 - 13.3.1 Do not have data on where general aviation flies
 - 13.3.2 When monitoring picks up general aviation (single engine aircraft) there is no way to know if it is air tour operations
 - 13.3.3 It will be a huge challenge to distinguish between general aviation and air tour operations
 - 13.3.4 May need to log the type of aircraft; but that will be difficult since most people do not know aircraft type
 - 13.3.5 Using ADDS may help determine who and what airplanes are flying over the Park
14. Types of output – noise contours and location points
15. Review of example noise contour
 - 15.1 Provides a footprint that can represent sound level or time
 - 15.2 Location points provides results at specific locations
 - 15.3 FAA and NPS will need to decide which metrics to use and data output
16. The use of Natural ambient is in NPS Management Policies
17. FAA uses Existing Ambient without source of interest (i.e., air tours)
18. **Q:** How do we find middle ground? **A:** That is one of the biggest challenges.

1:40-2:40 Air tour operations at Mount Rainier National Park (Paul Joly and Chip Peterson)

1. Definition of existing commercial air tour operator and explanation of IOA
2. Definition of new entrant commercial air tour operator
 - 2.1 NPATMA has provisions for air tour operators to be able to fly if after two years an ATMP is not in place
 - 2.2 Originally 13 new entrant applications nationwide
 - 2.3 FAA re-contacted each of the 13 applicants and only five were still interested
 - 2.4 FAA said safety issues were addressed for the five and NPS looked at possible noise issues
3. Air tour operators at Mount Rainier National Park
 - 3.1 Vashon Air – 74 flights – four passenger small aircraft – most active
 - 3.2 Classic Helicopter Corp – 32 flights – been around a long time but down to one helicopter
 - 3.3 Island Air, Inc. – 3 flights
 - 3.4 Rite Bros. Aviation, Inc. – 2 flights – helicopter
 - 3.5 Wings of Wenatchee, Inc – 3 flights – small aircraft
 - 3.6 Total annual operations = 114 flights

4. Pavco was identified as an air tour operator on read ahead materials but there was no data from FSDO at the meeting, believe they have 60 IOA for tribal land not abutting the Park, so this operator does not have IOA for Mount Rainier
5. Operators currently flying well below IOA
6. Air tour route for operations coming from Wenatchee
 - 6.1 Enter through Chinook Pass
 - 6.2 Clockwise around peak passing over glaciers
 - 6.3 Flying at 7,000 to 8,000 feet
 - 6.4 Use this altitude due to winds, the actual view, and the size of mountain keeps aircraft backed off to get the entire mountain in the view
7. Air tour route for operations coming from Puget Sound
 - 7.1 Counter-clockwise around mountain and then out along Mowich River
 - 7.2 Flying at 6,000 to 8,000 mean sea level
8. Cost prohibitive to fly from Seattle area due to distance
9. **Q:** How much does tour cost? **A:** In a small fixed wing aircraft about \$300 an hour; 50 minutes there, 20-25 minutes around the mountain, and then back.
10. Packwood Airport plans are ambitious, expanding runway and adding hangars, and could create a great opportunity for an air tour operation base
11. **Q:** Is there currently no base of air tour operations from surrounding airports? **A:** Correct, no air tour operators have a base of operations from surrounding airports; however, private general aviation pilots may be leaving from surrounding airports.
12. **Q:** What is the distance between the mountain and the flight route and is the flight route fixed? **A:** Nothing is fixed; it depends on weather and aircraft. The aircraft are in constant movement around the mountain. There is no circling around more than once.
13. **Q:** What other features of the park, besides a view of the summit, are air tour operators marketing? **A:** You can see everything in one pass.
14. **Q:** Are there FAA imposed limitations on altitude? **A:** Yes. Air tours operate to get the best views. The type of aircraft dictates the altitude since the wings are located above the aircraft passengers.
15. **Q:** Are air tour operators advertising to see wildlife (e.g. elk herds)? **A:** No, they are not, but if they happen to see wildlife they will point it out; but not out searching for wildlife.
16. **Q:** If under 10,000 feet are there no oxygen requirements? **A:** Yes, that is correct.
17. **Q:** Do you have any sense of how air tours are being marketed or to whom (e.g. as cruise ships tours)? **A:** They are marketing on web sites and some advertise on cruise ships; however, air tour customers are mostly local people with relatives visiting for instance.
18. **Q:** Do they fly year round? **A:** In winter it is pretty rare you would be able to get around the mountain. They can but it is few and far between. They operate mostly in the late spring and summer.
19. **Q:** Do they report the number of flights annually? **A:** No, there is no requirement to do so.
20. **Q:** Are there any time of day variances? **A:** There is no data on this, but they mostly operate mid-morning.
21. **Q:** Don't they pretty much police themselves? **A:** Yes, pretty much.
22. **Q:** Does FAA have flight plans for private aircraft? **A:** Radar coverage is limited. A flight plan is so general you could not tell where they fly. It may or may not even mention Mount Rainier. It is not a realistic source for data.
23. **Q:** So no flights coming down from north or south along the Cascades? **A:** Right, they skirt the Cascades and start just like these two routes.
24. Visual flight rules (VFR)
 - 24.1 Pilots responsible for their own safety and separation between aircraft
 - 24.2 Positive controlled environment now
 - 24.3 FAA gives the pilots a lot of latitude to make safety judgments

- 24.4 When you start to constrain the VFR environment then there are concerns; how much is too much
- 24.5 Must maintain ability to maneuver safely
- 24.6 Weather is a big factor to consider
- 24.7 Emergency landing areas, pilots will want to follow routes that allow for them to set down
- 24.8 Pilots follow the same routes quite often because they want to remain safe
- 24.9 Patterns will start to emerge within the air tour community and we need to understand why there are patterns
- 24.10 Air tour operator sells viewing time, it is an entertainment experience
- 24.11 The feature attracts the flights
- 24.12 Lots of human factors that the pilots must be aware of
- 25. FAA met with top 50 Park Superintendents about 10 years ago
 - 25.1 FAA and NPS agency missions and cultures
 - 25.2 Permissive vs. Restrictive
 - 25.2.1 FAA is Permissive, you can do anything but what we tell you you can't
 - 25.2.2 NPS is Restrictive, you can't do anything but what we tell you you can
 - 25.3 NPS is best at defining resource requirements and must do this for the ATMP process
 - 25.4 If NPS can do this then FAA can help define operational requirements
 - 25.5 If NPS can identify requirements and FAA creates a flight route map that meets all NPS needs, would NPS really care what it looks like? If yes, then did NPS really define its resource requirements appropriately?
 - 25.6 Sticking a pilot on a hard line is a bad thing to do; you lose a lot of safety margin when you do this
- 26. Mount Rainier National Park is fairly small in size. Based on the route map it seems that the routes are somewhat defined. If the peak is what people are really interested in then we are kind of restricted. (*Roger Andrascik*)
- 27. **Q:** Are the routes you (NPS) saw a problem? **A:** What NPS is asking is can they be changed.
- 28. Still need to do the analysis but this is the starting point
- 29. **Q:** Would a tour operator choose to fly in and out? **A:** No, they would typical want to fly around the summit because that is what the customers want to see.
- 30. The route shown could be closer or further or higher or lower, it is a general route
- 31. The Park has prescriptive management zones
- 32. One way is to look at this is from resource impacts but more important question is how to assess the visitor needs of one group vs. another (e.g. air tour visitor vs. backcountry hiker)
- 33. 6,000 to 8,000 feet is a zone that is heavily used by Park visitors
- 34. Aircraft between view and mountain would impact their experience
- 35. Air tour visitors have standing and need to be considered (*Paul Joly*)
- 36. Can we assign quantitative thresholds to go with the management zones? Those kinds of things help build something. If the thresholds stay subjective it will always be difficult to analyze. (*Paul Joly*)
- 37. How many people impacted vs. those benefited? This is something to consider. (*Paul Joly*)
- 38. NPS is talking about different visitors; even if you multiply the air tours by four or five the number of people in the Park affected vs. air tour visitors the number affected is greatly more in the Park
- 39. Need data to really understand impacts (*Paul Joly*)
 - 39.1 Yes, there should be more data but timeframe for study does not allow for more research to be completed. (*Barbara Samora*)
 - 39.2 Other Parks have data on visitor experience and impacts that could be used
- 40. If there is a dBA threshold then you could move the aircraft to help get the noise lower in certain areas

2:40-2:54 Break

2:54-3:47 Preliminary alternatives discussion (Keith Lusk, Lelaina Marin, and Jeffrey Paul)

1. EA vs. EIS
 - 1.1 Depends on the proposal, if increasing operations, level of impacts, or controversy
 - 1.2 NPS environmental screening form helps determine
 - 1.3 Scoping will help determine controversy
 - 1.4 Will need to meet the purpose and need, goals and objectives of the Park and FAA
2. Alternatives
 - 2.1 What's most important?
 - 2.2 Not pinning down alternatives today
 - 2.3 Setting the stage for the alternatives development meeting
3. **Q:** Based on other Parks experience, is there a logical range of alternatives? We have the book ends and then what are the variations? The two alternatives may be too extreme. **A:** Unrestricted alternative has been considered but dismissed from analysis at some other Parks.
4. **Q:** What does the GMP guidance give? **A:** Prescriptive zones and visitor expectations for use within those zones.
5. **Q:** Based on scoping, can milestones change? **A:** Yes, need Parks input and support to meet schedule and it can change. Milestones today were a first cut and based on experience but could be ambitious.
 - 5.1 Milestones presumes EA but could change based on what comes out of scoping
6. **Q:** How do you deal with a projected future condition based on additional helicopters and departure flights getting handled from say a surrounding airport? **A:** Include one alternative with helicopters from a new location.
7. If you come at it from a resource impact approach you could deal with it since you would have a threshold (*Paul Joly*)
8. Maybe it's noise level and duration (*NPS*)
9. Would want to predict demand with alternatives (*NPS*)
10. In the past, alternatives have factored in assumed growth rates, but have not looked at future scenario of operator going to a new heliport (*FAA*)
11. **Q:** What is the lifespan of the ATMP? **A:** An ATMP could be amended at anytime by the Administrator in cooperation with the Director.
12. **Q:** We know current operators but how do you identify future operators? **A:** Could ask at the scoping meeting.
13. **Q:** Would alternatives or decisions dictate how many companies or operations? **A:** They can dictate total operations, when, where, type, etc.
 - 13.1 If restricting at some level then there is a competitive bidding process that would be a joint process with the ATMP
14. **Q:** What is the definition of No Action? **A:** Codifying IOA.
15. **Q:** Is there a way to regulate non-air tour operations? **A:** No, jurisdiction from ATMP is spelled out in NPATMA.
 - 15.1 Non-air tour flights are part of the existing conditions at the Park
 - 15.2 Cumulative effects will need to be captured
16. **Q:** What have the other parks done as far as range of alternatives? **A:** Mount Rushmore had eight to start. Analyzed all alternatives at IOA and Park determined impairment for seven of the eight, which led to re-analyzing. Looked at results and varying operation levels. Now focusing on existing routes at four or five operation levels. Have one alternative with time of day restrictions during high visitor use period.

17. **Q:** What are some of the other IOA levels? **A:** 5,608 at Mount Rushmore. 4,100 +/- at Badlands. 20,000+ at Haleakala and Volcanoes. 67 at Death Valley. 30,000 at Statue of Liberty and Governors Island. 91,000 at Grand Canyon.
18. Mount Rainier has a low level of air tour use, so to what degree does that affect alternatives development? Even estimating 1.5% growth may end up with a demand that does not exist. (NPS)
19. Looking to the Park to start developing ideas on alternatives
20. Alternatives development meeting is a round table discussion to help start alternatives development
21. Preliminary identification of a list of needs:
 - 21.1 Future projects for cumulative analysis
 - 21.2 GIS layer/data (e.g. management zones and list of future conditions, such as land acquisitions)
 - 21.3 Visitor survey data
 - 21.4 Species list and data
 - 21.5 Description on historic district
 - 21.6 Snowmobile routes
 - 21.7 Stakeholder and distribution lists
 - 21.8 Visitor attraction points for visitor experience noise and visual
22. Future projects including park operations using aircraft
23. **Q:** Have some Parks defined a noise impact level at locations in the Park and then manage the aircraft to stay below those impacts? **A:** Not yet.
24. The Park already creates noise levels in certain areas of the Park and if you knew those levels then you could use them as a base
25. If you have indicators and thresholds to manage for, you could manage for air tours but not for general aviation and other commercial. How do you manage air tours once you reach the threshold?
26. Thresholds will need to vary based on the resources you are considering wildlife is different than visitors
27. There are studies out there on the effect on noise on people and there are some out there that focused specifically on visitors within the Park; Muir Woods is a good example of where the study has occurred
28. One thing to consider is that visitors taking photos should not have aircraft in their viewshed
29. FAA does not have a range of alternatives in mind yet; just starting to consider alternatives
30. Could monitor commercial flights on the web to determine how many were passing the Park on select days
31. Have to account for the human experience
 - 31.1 Have spent lots of time on visitor experience in past analysis
32. The Park is a Wilderness Park and is in the middle of a culture that appreciates wilderness so maybe the expectation is different at the Park
33. The Park is a box; could you cut it into quarters with thresholds for each using different metrics

3:47-4:00 Closing Discussion/Adjourn (Keith Lusk, Randy King, and Lelaina Marin)

1. **Q:** How many people will be involved with the next steps? **A:** The same people from FAA, NPS, Volpe and consultant.
2. Alternatives Development Meeting would be two days
3. Scoping would be over a few days
4. Review of scoping process and what level of effort would be needed from local Park staff
5. Will work with Park staff to develop a meeting format that is desirable to the Park
6. Timing might be challenging approaching the Holiday season; also, there is a new planning project being kicked off and people will be busy through mid-November; may need to shift scoping dates
7. Have not had a lot of EAs coming from the Park but are now working on a few so there may be public saturation
8. Public notice would be done by FAA but would work with the Park on a news release and scoping packet

9. Scoping may work best mid- to late-January
10. Discussed possibly holding three public meetings – Ashford, Tacoma, Seattle
11. Closing remarks by Keith Lusk
12. Closing remarks by Randy King
13. Closing remarks by Lelaina Marin

Action Items

1. Lelaina Marin will re-group with Park staff to consider schedule and see if can commit to the milestone schedule
2. Keith Lusk, Lelaina Marin, and Park staff to coordinate possible dates, locations (Seattle, Tacoma, and Ashford) and quantity of agency and public scoping meetings as well as meeting format
3. Keith Lusk, Lelaina Marin, and Greg Burtchard to coordinate meetings with Native American tribes; need to determine quantity of meetings, locations, and dates
4. Lelaina Marin to work with Karen Thompson, Barbara Samora, and Brian Boden to obtain the Park's stakeholder and distribution lists
5. Lelaina Marin to work with Karen Thompson to set up PEPC
6. Park staff to provide information on potential future Park acquisition areas/boundary changes
7. Park staff to provide GIS layers/data, such as:
 - Summer and Winter management zones
 - List of desired future conditions
 - Acoustic zones
 - Dominant vegetation and ecological systems
 - Trails and climbing routes
 - Adjacent lands
 - Volcanic hazards
 - Proposed boundary change
 - Areas of sensitive habitat or species
 - Areas of cultural significance
8. Park staff to provide a list of future projects for cumulative analysis purposes (includes Park projects/activities as well as adjacent projects outside the Park)
9. Park staff to provide visitor survey data
10. Park staff to provide species list and data
11. Park staff to provide description/data on National Historic Landmark District
12. Park staff to provide information on snowmobile use within the Park (e.g. description of activities, preferred routes, estimated number of users, time of year when it occurs, etc.)
13. Park staff to identify visitor attraction points for visitor experience noise and visual analysis
14. FAA and NPS to start developing ideas on potential alternatives

Attachment A – Meeting Attendance Sign-In Sheet

Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) Program

**KICKOFF MEETING ATTENDANCE SHEET
MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK – AIR TOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN (ATMP)**

Date: October 8, 2009, Time 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM PT

Location: Mount Rainier Education Center, 55210 238th Ave E, Ashford, WA 98304

Name and Title	Agency	Phone #	E mail
1. KEITH LUSK PROGRAM MGR	FAA	310 705 3808	keith.lusk@faa.gov
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5. Scott Polzin	PB	503 271 1579	polzin@pbworld.com
6. PAUL JOLY	FAA	702-491-3736	paul.a.joly@faa.gov
7. CHIP PETERSEN	FAA	425 227 2027	CLIFTON.PETERSON@FAA.GOV
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9. Greg Switcheard	MORA	360-569-2211 x3362	greg-switcheard@nps.gov
10. ELLEN MYERS (FOR MARION REID)	MORA	360-509-2211 x5373	Ellen_myers@NPS.GOV MARION_REID@NPS.GOV
11. Rebecca Lofgren	MORA	360-569-2211 3371	Rebecca - A - Lofgren@nps.gov
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Mount Rainier National Park – ATMP Kickoff Meeting Attendance

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Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) Program

**KICKOFF MEETING ATTENDANCE SHEET
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Date: October 8, 2009, Time 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM PT

Location: Mount Rainier Education Center, 55210 238th Ave E, Ashford, WA 98304

	Name and Title	Agency	Phone #	E mail
13.	RANDY KING ACTING SUPT.	NPS	360-569-2211 x 2302	Randy_King@nps.gov
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15.	Karen Thompson Env. Prot. Specialist	NPS	X 3376 360.569.2211	karen_thompson@nps.gov
16.	CHUCK YOUNG CHIEF RANGER	NPS	360-569-2211 x 3300	chuck_young@nps.gov
17.	Lee Taylor Chief of Interpretation	NPS	360-569-2211 x 3303	lee_taylor@nps.gov
18.	Roger Andrusick, Acting Supt.	NPS	360 569 2211 x 3380	roger_andrusick@nps.gov
19.	Barbara Samora Biologist, Swinerton Program/Mgr	NPS	360-569-2211 x 3372	barbara_samora@nps.gov
20.	Patricia Deem, FAA Attorney	FAA	425-227-2757	patricia.deem@faa.gov
21.	Lelaina Marin, Planner, Natural Sciences Program	NPS	970-225-3552	Lelaina_Marin@nps.gov
22.				
23.				
24.				

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