

# National Park Service



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## Grand Canyon National Park Administrative Flights

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Overflights and Natural Soundscape Program

*Presentation to the Grand Canyon Working Group of NPOAG  
Phoenix, AZ*

*May 2006*

# Brief History of Administrative Flights



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|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1960s | Build cross-Canyon water pipeline using helicopters |
| 1984  | GCNP Overflights Program initiated                  |
| 1986  | GCNP Internal Aviation Management Plan*             |
| 1998  | Started using NOTAR helicopter                      |
| 2003  | No fixed-wing aircraft                              |

\* First internal aviation plan of the NPS. Cut flying time in half. Identified noise abatement routes for routine flights to the North Rim and Inner Canyon.

# 1996 FAA Final Rule\*

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## ❖ NPS Operations

- Committed to converting to quieter aircraft that meet mission requirements
- To the maximum extent possible:
  - ❑ Meet or exceed phase-out schedules for the air tour industry
  - ❑ Honor flight free zones

\* FAA. 1996. Special Flight Rules in the Vicinity of Grand Canyon National Park. Final Rule. Federal Register, Vol 61, No 252, P 69302-69333.

# GCNP Helicopter: MD-900



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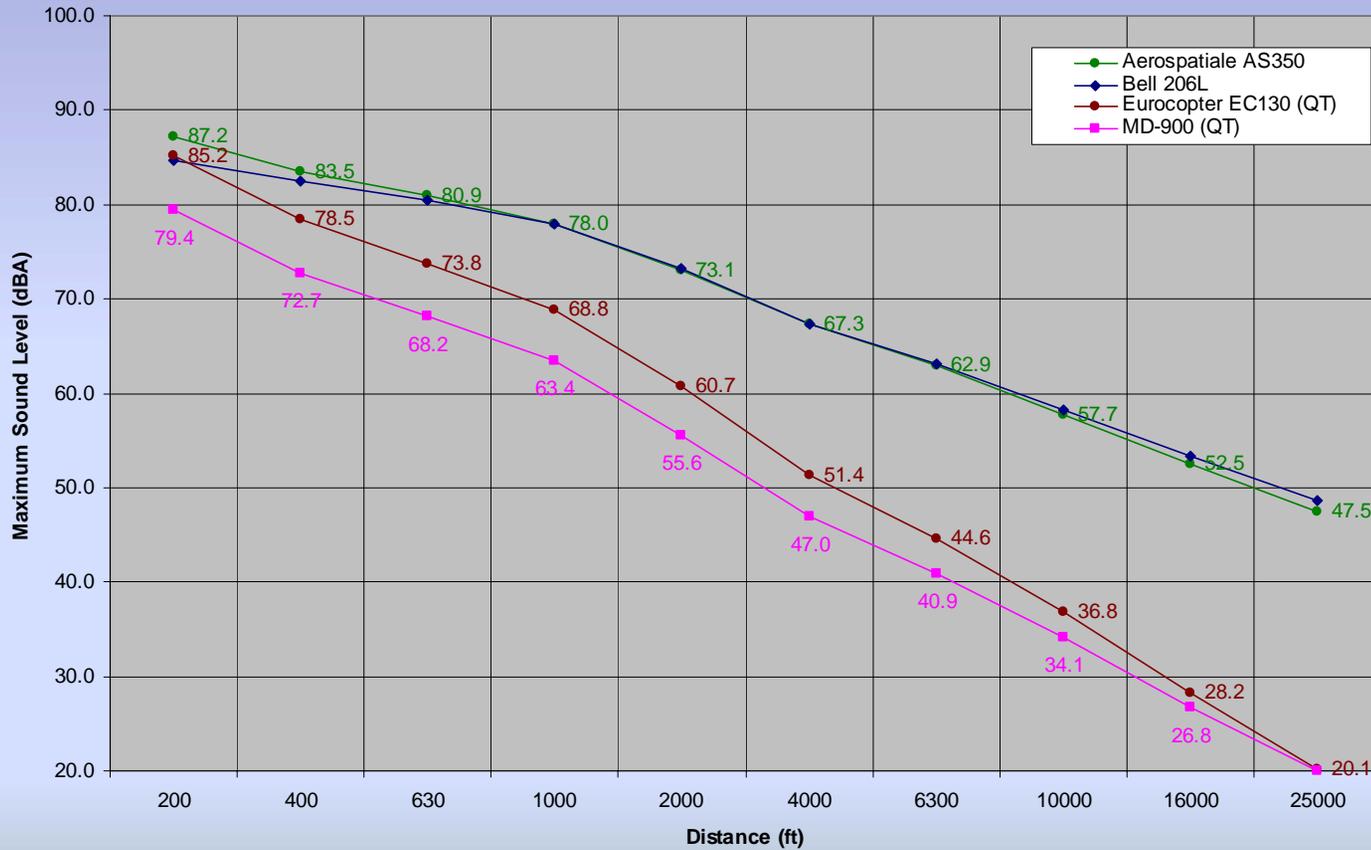
- NO Tail Rotor (NOTAR) reduces noise
- Significant cost to NPS

# Noise-Power-Distance



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INM Noise-Power-Distance Data  
QT Versus Non-QT Comparison for Helicopters



# Types of Administrative Flights

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## ❖ Fire

- Prescribed, suppression, monitoring

## ❖ Protection

- Search and Rescue

## ❖ Maintenance

- Water pipeline
- Trails
- Buildings

## ❖ Other

- Resource studies



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# Pre-Flight Considerations

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- ❖ Minimum Requirements Analysis
  - Consider minimum tools to use in Proposed Wilderness
- ❖ Flight Request
  - Critically reviewed by Superintendent's office
- ❖ Cost
- ❖ Logistics
  - Can the helicopter carry the equipment and staff needed?
  - Can the helicopter land where needed?



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# Minimum Requirement Analysis

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- ❖ Is it an emergency?
- ❖ Is it allowed?
- ❖ Can it be accomplished outside of Proposed Wilderness?
- ❖ Does it conflict with long-term Wilderness planning goals, objectives, or desired future conditions?
- ❖ Can it be accomplished another way?



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# Minimum Requirement Analysis

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## ❖ Minimum Tool

- Explore alternatives
- Evaluate which alternative would have the least impact

## ❖ Reviewed by

- Wilderness Coordinator
- Director of the Science Center
- Deputy Superintendent

# Flight Request

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- ❖ Justification for flight

- Staff time is not necessarily a justification

- ❖ Approved by

- Division Chief
- Deputy Superintendent

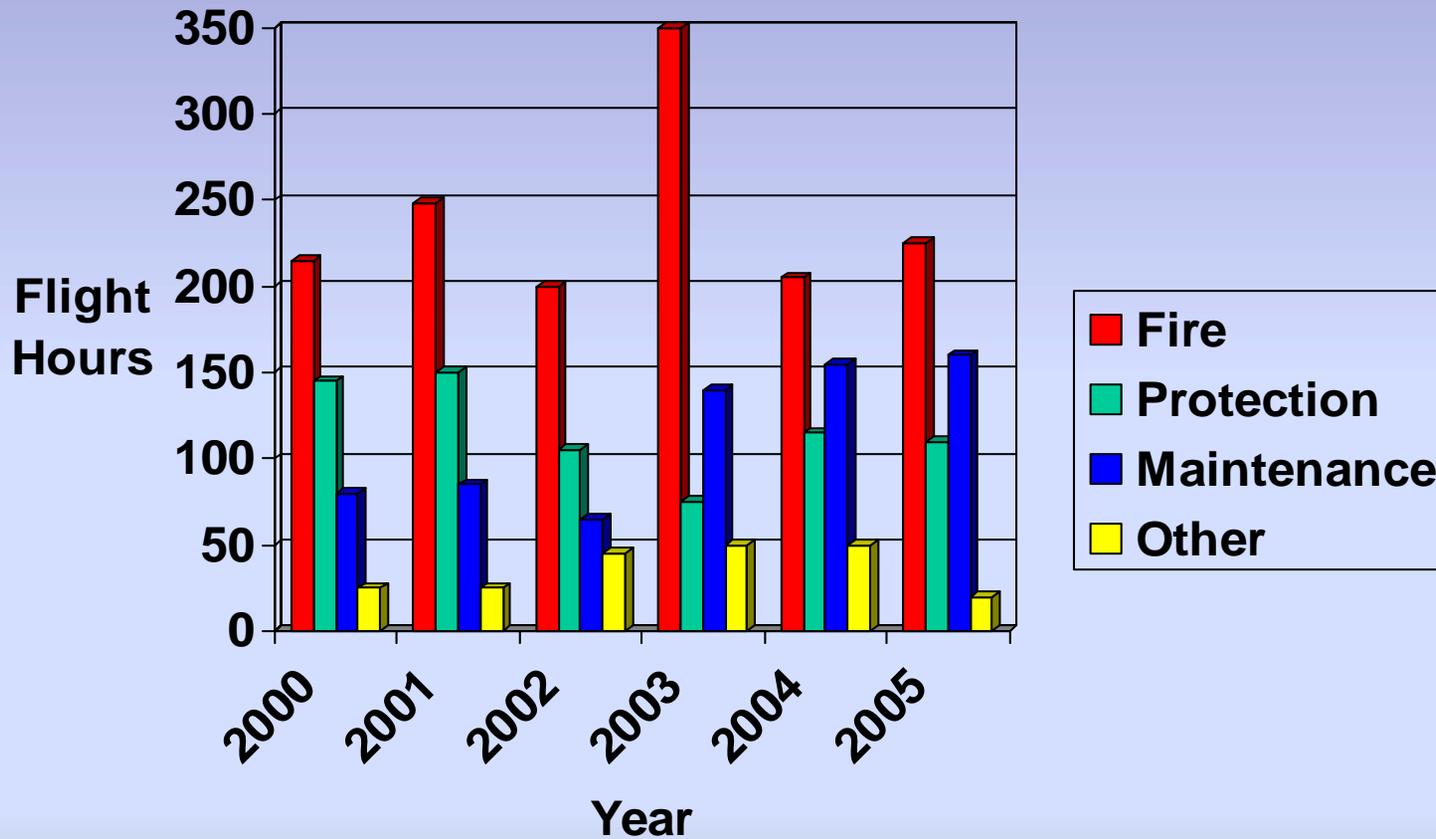


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# Historical Aircraft Use\*



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\* Includes flight hours outside of GCNP

# 2005 Helicopter Use

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| <b>Mission</b> | <b>Flight Hours<br/>over the Park</b> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Fire           | 166                                   |
| Protection     | 92                                    |
| Maintenance    | 165                                   |
| Other          | 19                                    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>442</b>                            |

# More Information

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Interagency Aviation Training

<http://www.iat.gov/>



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*“We need to turn down the static in order  
to enjoy the music of the Canyon.”*

Anonymous