

**AERONAUTICAL CHARTING FORUM**  
**Charting Group**  
**Meeting 13-01 – April 24-25, 2013**

**RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT**

**FAA Control # ACF-CG RD 13-01-259**

**Subject:** Airspace Changes Effective Prior to Chart Revision.

**Background/Discussion:** As RNAV instrument approach procedures proliferate airspace action is necessarily taken to provide controlled airspace protection for all segments of such IAPs (also ODPs) and, in some cases, additional controlled airspace is required to provide a smooth egress from the en route structure. This is occurring more in the western United States where large areas of Class G airspace below 14,500 remain as well as Class G airspace areas higher than 1,200 feet, AGL, but lower than 14,500. These airspace amendments more often than not do not coincide with the revision date of the applicable sectional aeronautical chart. In some cases two sectionals can be involved with two different revision dates. The amendment is carried in the sectional chart update section of the pertinent Airport/Facility Directory. Attached is an example page from the November 15, 2012, Northwest A/FD. (Figure 1) The example airspace actions are for Dillon and Roundup, Montana. Dillon is an existing IFR airport but with greatly expanded airspace. Roundup is a new IFR airport.

Note that the airspace descriptions are stated in latitude/longitude, which is essentially a restatement of the rule-making. In this format these data are useless to the pilot unless painstakingly plotted on the applicable sectional or sectional charts. Note in the case of Roundup the airspace action involves two sides of two different sectional charts, which renders meaningful plotting impractical.

**Recommendations:** That such airspace modifications be made available on an FAA website in an easily understood graphical format (a “chart chunk”), and where more than one sectional is involved, be portrayed in a seamless format as in Figure 2 (from the iPad Foreflight application). The graphic link should be printed with the textual rule description in the A/FD and remain on the website until the applicable sectional or sectional charts have been updated to reflect the current airspace.

**Comments:** This proposal affects the A/FD and also would require timely submission of a “chart chunk” to a specified FAA website on a timely basis.

**Submitted by:** Rich Boll

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**Date:** 22 January 2013



**MEETING ACF 13-01:** Rich Boll, NBAA, was not able to attend the ACF and Bob Lamond, NBAA, briefed the topic in his absence. Bob stated that there is a disconnect between the timing of changes in Class D & E airspace areas and the publication dates of the VFR charts on which those changes are published. Airspace changes which occur between Visual Chart publication dates are published in the Chart Bulletin section of the Airport/Facility Directories (AFDs) until such time as they can be incorporated onto the charts. These text descriptions of the parameters of airspace areas (point-to-point listings of latitudes & longitudes) are extremely hard to visualize and do not communicate the changes well to users.

It is requested that the FAA generate a graphic depiction of newly-revised airspace areas that can be posted to a public website on the effective date of the change. This graphic could also be incorporated into the Chart Bulletin section of the AFD where the airspace revision is published in text form.

Rich Fecht, AJV-321, agreed that NBAA's proposal would significantly aid users in understanding interim airspace changes, but voiced that the Visual Charting Team is unable, at this time, to pursue charting enhancements due to current financial constraints. He stated that he would support full vetting of this proposal within his Team if and when funding allows.

Melissa McCaffrey, AOPA, brought to the audience's attention that the same issue exists when Special Use Airspace (SUA) areas are revised between the dates of the subject VFR chart's publication cycle. Melissa stated that Military Operation Areas (MOAs) and Restricted Airspace areas have been published in the past on interim dates and users may sometimes wait for months until the graphic depictions appear on a VFR Sectional chart.

Paul Gallant, AJV-11, responded to AOPA's comments, stating that a letter of inquiry was sent to Lynn Ray, AJV-0, Vice President of Mission Support, on this subject. Paul stated that all airspace actions are made effective on the enroute (56-day AIRAC) cycle dates. These dates cannot possibly always coincide with the subject VFR Chart cycle, as VFR Sectional charts are only published every 6 months. He also pointed out that often these areas plot on 2 separate VFR charts, which usually do not have the same publication dates.

Bob commented that these airspace actions are years in the making and suggested that some sort of "heads up" be given to pilots prior to publication. He suggested perhaps charting the areas prior to their revision dates with an explanatory note containing the effective date. Paul responded to Bob's suggestion stating that a similar proposal was looked at in the past and was not implemented.

Valerie Watson, AJV-3B, stated that charting items prior to effective date is something AeroNav Products has never done and would require significant coordination, dialog with Legal and that, in her estimation, would probably not be approved.

Ted Thompson, Jeppesen, commented that Jeppesen had attempted something similar to what Bob suggested and encountered numerous problems. Ted is not in favor or pursuing this avenue.

Paul stated that his office currently posts graphic revisions to SUAs on a public website. Valerie suggested that when such SUAs are revised, the AFD Chart Bulletin entry include a link to this site. This would provide easy access to a graphic depiction of at least SUA changes to users. Bob Carlson, AJV-322, stated that he will investigate publishing the URL to

graphic SUA changes in the AFD Chart Bulletin. Valerie noted that this action does not address the interim Class airspace revisions.

Melissa commented that the problem with the current methodology is that interim Class airspace revisions are disseminated to pilots textually and pilots cannot visualize the change, nor do most plot the new airspace on their charts. Melissa added that often pilots will phone AOPA to ask the Association to plot the airspace and generate a graphic.

**STATUS: OPEN**

**ACTION:** Rich Fecht, AJV-321, will research the feasibility of providing interim Class airspace graphic portrayals and will report at next ACF.

**ACTION:** Bob Carlson, AJV-322, will investigate adding the Airspace & Rules URL for graphic SUA revisions to the Chart Bulletin section of the AFD and will report at next ACF.

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**MEETING 13-02:**

Valerie Watson, AJV-3, [briefed the issue](#). Bob Carlson, AJV-322, stated that currently there is no assigned responsibility within the AeroNav Products organization to create graphics that depict airspace (Class Airspace, MOA, SUA, etc.) changes that occur between VFR chart cycles. Under the current fiscal/staffing environment, AeroNav Products is not able to allocate resources to generate the special chart depictions requested by this proposal and that the textual descriptions in the Chart Bulletin portion of the Airport Facility Directories will have to suffice for the present.

Paul Gallant, AJV-11, commented that his department attempts, whenever possible, to coordinate airspace changes to Visual Charting cycles, but that this cannot always be done.

Some interim airspace changes are published in the Notices to Airmen Publication (NTAP), but Melissa McCaffrey, AOPA, stated that pilots are not consulting the NTAP.

Rick Fecht, AJV-321, stated that AeroNav Products is currently unable to provide interim graphics, but Visual Charts will eventually be produced on a 56 day chart production cycle. No date has been set for implementation of the shortened charting cycle, but when it occurs, it will satisfy this request.

**STATUS: CLOSED**