

AERONAUTICAL CHARTING MEETING

Charting Group

Meeting 25-01 – April 23-24, 2025

RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control #25-01-397

Subject:

The addition of charted recommended VFR routes to mountain corridors to assist pilots with pre-flight planning and improve situational awareness.

Background/Discussion:

Last fall, I attended The General Aviation Air Safety Investigators (GAASI) conference in Oklahoma City and got to chatting with some of our contemporaries at the Canadian TSB about how they handle low-level VFR traffic in their western mountainous regions. On their VFR charts, recommended VFR routes are depicted through some of the trickier mountain corridors - to assist in situational awareness. Reference to these can be found in the [Transport Canada — AIM 2023-1 Aeronautical Information Manual TP14371E](#) in section 2.13 on page 413 – 414.



While designed for pre-flight purposes, with the current EFB technology available to pilots, the application of these chart depictions could be far reaching. If we were to implement something of this nature onto our charts in the SE Alaska region, it could greatly benefit the flying community and possibly even save a few lives in the process. The inclusion of these 'suggested' routes would end up displayed on everything from MFDs to handheld GPS units and even devices such as iPads and phones, allowing pilots to see potential options in times of unforeseen poor weather or aircraft performance. The wording in their AIM is as follows:

In the western mountainous region VFR routes may be marked by diamonds on visual navigation charts. The routes are marked for convenience to assist pilots with pre-flight planning. The diamond marks do not imply any special level of facilities and services

along the route. Pilots are cautioned that the use of the marked routes does not absolve them from proper pre-flight planning or the exercising of good airmanship practices during the proposed flight. Alternative unmarked routes are always available, the choice of a suitable route for the intended flight and conditions remains the sole responsibility of the pilot-in-command.

Even adding some hyper localized, regional supplemental charts would be excellent – think VFR Terminal Area Charts but for the Glacier Bay area.

Recommendations:

Include recommended VFR routes depicted throughout some of the mountain corridors, specifically in the mountainous regions of Alaska, to improve pre-flight planning and assist in situational awareness when coupled with moving map displays.

Benefits:

- 1) Would adoption of the recommendation prevent or reduce the likelihood of occurrence of accidents or incidents?
 - a. Absolutely. Many accidents, especially in Alaska, could be prevented by such an implementation. As it currently stands, tribal knowledge is the only way to learn of the safe passage through mountainous regions. The addition of routing on our charts can take a lot of the guesswork out of flight planning in these areas and would also serve to improve overall situational awareness, especially in instances of un-forecasted poor visibility/marginal weather – where VFR routing suggestions could be lifesaving during on-the-fly rerouting/diversions.
- 2) Would adoption of the recommendation mitigate a known or potential safety hazard?
 - a. Yes. The ability for pilot's to better plan their routing through mountain corridors will improve situational awareness, standardize known safe flyways, and remove the need for tribal knowledge when it comes to safe routing. The addition of VFR routes would also greatly improve pilot situational awareness during diversions due to weather or mechanical issues.
- 3) Would adoption of the recommendation resolve a known or potential issue creating operator or Air Traffic Control system errors?
 - a. Yes. The routes are flown VFR and will provide ATC with an approximate course routing instead of assumptions on the position of aircraft. Another benefit would include the improvement of Search and Rescue response services and the added benefit of more precise ALNOT information when aircraft utilize published routes.
- 4) Would adoption of the recommendation increase operational or system efficiencies?
 - a. Yes. Traffic flow into and out of the mountain corridors would be better standardized. Both pilots and ATC would be better aware of backcountry traffic flow and could plan accordingly.

- 5) Would any additional benefits be recognized by adoption of the recommendation?
- a. Yes. While the primary purpose of this addition would be to aid pilots during the pre-flight phase, it would undoubtedly benefit operators that utilize moving map displays to better improve situational awareness in the cockpit.

Comments:

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