

away from Hermit's Rest and significantly lessens the impact of aircraft noise on those visitors. The necessity for a total closing of the Dragon corridor was considered and rejected since the agencies do not believe it is necessary to achieve the statutory mandate.

The FAA is not considering the TOIL request to convert the Dragon Corridor to quiet aircraft at this time. The FAA and NPS have not yet defined the characteristics that qualify as quiet technology. Thus, any request to convert to quiet technology at this time is premature.

#### **Sanup FFZ (Blue Direct North, Blue Direct South)**

Clark County Department of Aviation says that the FAA's failure to provide sufficient explanation or support for its decision to drop any version of a Blue 1 route creates another dangerous precedent for western aviation. The FAA proposes to eliminate the most-used and highest-revenue tour route on the basis of concerns about possible impacts to Native American cultural or religious sites. However, the FAA does not identify with any specificity what resources are affected by Blue 1, how they are affected or the applicable standard of impact. Without this information, Clark County notes that the public has no ability to assess whether FAA's decision is justified or arbitrary.

National Air Transportation Association objects to the elimination of a vital air tour route from Las Vegas, Nevada. Transferring this corridor to a less scenic "transportation corridor" severely restricts the air tour experience from Las Vegas.

Air Vegas states that with the elimination of the Blue 1 route there needs to be an extended "sightseeing" flight available to Las Vegas fixed wing operators in the western portion of the park. There is also no reverse air tour. Without some changes to the proposed route system there will not be a viable air tour system out of Las Vegas.

Twin Otter International, Ltd., (TOIL) suggests that the existing north rim fixed-wing air tour route and the existing Blue 1 (Las Vegas to Grand Canyon) be limited to quiet aircraft in 2 years.

**FAA Response:** The route map remains as originally set forth in the notice with respect to Blue Direct North and Blue Direct South.

The Blue 1 was severed by the southward extension of the Toroweap-Thunder River FFZ, which was adopted in the 1996 final rule. Since this section of the 1996 final rule has not been implemented yet, air tour operators

have continued to operate on the Blue 1. The FFZ extension is due to be implemented on January 31, 2000. Thus, at that time, the Blue 1 would have to be modified in order to be used as a tour route.

In order for the FAA to meet the goal of substantial restoration of natural quiet, decisions had to be made as to how to reduce the current level of noise impacting on GCNP. The Blue 1 air tour route passed over some of the most sensitive backcountry habitat in the GCNP as well as raising significant controversy with some Native American tribes residing under or near the flight path for Blue 1. The FAA decided to keep the east and west end air tours, which would still allow operators transiting from Las Vegas to Tusayan a flight path that offered GCNP vistas while transiting to and from the Park.

TOIL's recommendation for a quiet technology route along the existing Blue 1 is premature given that a final rule implementing a quiet technology standard has not yet been adapted.

#### **Grand Canyon West Vicinity (Blue 2, Green 4)**

The Hualapai Nation (hereafter the Hualapai Tribe) states that the routes flown by transport flights have served as de facto Brown routes for the Hualapai Tribe comparable to the route proposed to serve the Havasupai Tribe. The Hualapai Tribe would like an officially designated Brown route created that would not be subject to caps, consistent with Congress' intent not to interfere with transportation flights to the Park or tribal lands. To ensure that the Hualapai Tribe's Brown route is used only by flights transporting persons to and from the Hualapai Reservation, the FAA could specify that all flights utilizing the route must have the permission of the Hualapai Tribe to land on the Hualapai Reservation.

**FAA Response:** The FAA has addressed the Hualapai Tribe's concerns in the final rule, Commercial Air Tour Limitations in the Grand Canyon National Park Special Flight Rules Area, also published in this **Federal Register**. Thus, there is no need to create a Brown route to service the Hualapai Reservation.

#### **General Aviation**

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) recommends that the FAA identify and chart VFR waypoints and latitude and longitude coordinates for the Dragon and Zuni Point corridors as both have difficult dog-leg course changes. AOPA's other comments, related to flight-free zones and corridors, are addressed in the final

rule on airspace modification in GCNP published concurrently in this **Federal Register**.

**FAA Response:** The General Aviation commenters are reminded that the proposed route map only depicted the air tour routes and corridors and not the general aviation corridors. The general aviation corridors, when published as part of the official map, will contain the necessary latitude and longitude coordinates for navigation.

#### **Environmental Review**

The FAA has prepared a final supplemental environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for this action to ensure conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Copies of the EA have been circulated to interested parties and placed in the docket, where it is available for review.

Dated: Issued in Washington, DC on March 28, 2000.

**Jane F. Garvey,**

*Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration.*

[FR Doc. 00-7951 Filed 3-28-00; 4:59 pm]

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## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Federal Aviation Administration**

#### **Notice of Availability of the Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Actions Relating to the Grand Canyon National Park**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Hualapai Indian Tribe, announces the availability of the Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the proposed Special Flight Rules in the vicinity of Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP) and Commercial Air Tour Routes (64 FR 37296 and 37304, July 9, 1999).

The Final SEA (FSEA) was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, FAA Order 1050.1D, Policies and Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, and other applicable environmental laws, and regulations. The FSEA assesses the effects of proposed Federal actions under consideration by the FAA and the Department of the Interior (DOI). These actions are vital for the FAA to assist the

NPS in fulfilling its statutory mandate of the National Park Overflights Act, Public Law 100-91, to provide for the substantial restoration of natural quiet in the GCNP by 2008, as called for by Presidential Memorandum dated April 22, 1996, Earth Day Initiative, Parks for Tomorrow. The Undertaking includes those actions for which implementation has been delayed since December 1996, as well as those currently proposed by the FAA. The currently proposed actions include (1) modifying the Special Federal Aviation Regulation Number 50-2; (2) modifying the commercial air tour routes within the Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA); and (3) limiting the commercial air tour operations.

**DATES:** There is no comment period associated with release of this document. However, any party to this proceeding, having a substantial interest may appeal the order to the Courts of Appeals of the United States or to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upon petition, filed within 60 days of issuance of the Final Rules.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the Final SEA is being mailed to all those commenting, either in writing or orally at one of the public meetings and who provided a return address, on the Draft SEA (DSEA). A postcard will be mailed to those individuals that received a copy of the DSEA but did not provide comments indicating how a copy of the FSEA can be obtained. Additional requests for copies of the FSEA should be directed to: Federal Aviation Administration, Air Traffic Airspace Management, Environmental Programs Division, Attention: Tina Hunter, ATA-300.1, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Questions concerning this Final SEA or the environmental process followed should be directed to the FAA, Air Traffic Airspace Management, Environmental Programs Division, ATA-300, Attention: Mr. William Marx, via telephone at (202) 267-3075, or in writing to the address above.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FAA and DOI considered the proposed actions to assist the NPS in achieving its congressional mandate to provide for the substantial restoration of natural quiet at GCNP. Based upon consultation with Federal, State and local agencies and Native American tribal representatives, and in response to public comments, FAA made revisions to the DSEA and prepared the Final SEA. The FAA modified the Preferred Alternative to address socioeconomic

concerns of the Hualapai Tribe and the Navajo Nation and concerns expressed by air tour operators and general aviation pilots. The major changes to the Preferred Alternative between the DSEA and Final SEA are as follows:

(1) Commercial air tour operations that transit the SFRA along Blue-2 and Green-4, that operate under a written contract with the Hualapai Tribe, and that have an operations specification authorizing such flights will be excepted from the commercial air tour allocation requirement. The Hualapai Tribe indicated that the Operations Limitation as proposed in the June 1999 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking would significantly adversely impact the Tribe's economic development efforts. The modifications to the Preferred Alternative will avoid negative impacts to the socioeconomic activities of the Hualapai Indian Tribe;

(2) A turnaround has been added in the Zuni Point Corridor in the vicinity of Gunthers Castle in response to comments from the commercial air tour industry that a turn-around in this corridor was necessary to provide the operators with a safe and economic alternative to the Saddle Mountain route;

(3) The Desert View Flight Free Zone (FFZ) has been modified to extend eastward only to the GCNP boundary in response to safety concerns expressed by general aviation pilots and socioeconomic concerns expressed by the Cameron and Gap/Bodaway Chapters of the Navajo Nation. To allow protection for areas containing TCPs identified during Section 106 consultation, FAA left in place the proposed enlargement of the SFRA eastern boundary and the relocation of commercial air tour routes known as Black-2 and Green-3;

(4) The SRFA boundary has been modified on the southeast corner in response to comments from the general aviation community regarding the Sunny Military Operating Area, and the latitude and longitude dimensions within the proposed Final Rule have been corrected;

(5) The description of the future Bright Angel Incentive Corridor has been corrected;

(6) The Toroweap/Shinumo FFZ has been modified to exclude Hualapai reservation lands; and,

(7) The wording in the document has been clarified based on public and agency comments.

The Final Rule for the Modification to the Airspace in the SFRA, the Final Rule for Limitations to Commercial Air Tours and the Notice of Route Availability (with the accompanying

chart) are also being released concurrently with this Final SEA. A summary of the background information relative to the Undertaking is contained in each of these documents.

### The Supplemental EA

The scoping process for this Supplemental EA consisted of a public comment period for those interested agencies and parties to submit written comments representing the concerns and issues they believed should be addressed. The FAA received a total of 20 written comments. The Draft SEA, published in June 1999 contained a summary of those comments in Appendix G. FAA and DOI held two public hearings during the comment period, the first in Flagstaff, Arizona on August 17, 1999 and the second in Las Vegas, Nevada on August 19, 1999. The FAA received a total of 51 comments on the Draft SEA (both written and verbal).

Information, data, opinions, and comments obtained throughout the process were used in preparing the FSEA. The purpose of this Notice is to inform Federal, State, local and government agencies, and the public of the availability of the Final SEA. To maximize the opportunities for public participation in this environmental process, the FAA has mailed copies of the Final SEA, the two Final Rules, and the Notice of Route Availability and graphic to those individuals and agencies that commented on the Draft SEA. The graphic containing the proposed route changes and airspace modifications is not being published in today's **Federal Register** due to the detail on the charts.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on March 28, 2000.

**William J. Marx,**

*Manager, Environmental Programs Division,  
Office of Air Traffic Airspace Management.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### RTCA Special Committee 194 ATM Data Link Implementation

Pursuant to section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463, 5 U.S.C., Appendix 2), notice is hereby given for Special Committee 194 meeting to be held April 24-27, 2000, starting at 9 a.m. The meeting will be held at RTCA, 1140 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 1020, Washington, DC 20036.