

# Air Tour Management Plans

Golden Gate National Recreation Area  
Point Reyes National Seashore



Source: NPS

## Air Tour Management Plan Development at Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS), has initiated development of Air Tour Management Plans (ATMPs) for Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), and Point Reyes National Seashore (the Seashore). The ATMP for GGNRA will include Muir Woods National Monument and Fort Point National Historic Site, both directly managed by GGNRA, and the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SF Maritime NHP), an independently managed national park unit adjacent to GGNRA.

The objective of the ATMPs is to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any,



of commercial air tour operations on the natural resources, cultural resources, visitor experiences, and tribal lands within or abutting GGNRA and the Seashore.

The proposed federal action is the establishment of separate ATMPs at GGNRA and the Seashore – in accordance with 14 CFR Part 136. The ATMP for each individual park will only apply to the airspace below 5,000 feet AGL (above ground level) over the area encompassed by the park and to the half-mile buffer zone surrounding the park's boundary. The ATMP applies to all commercial air tour operations in this airspace, unless, for the purposes of safe operation of an aircraft as determined under the rules and regulations of the FAA, the pilot-in-command is required to take action to ensure the safe operation of the aircraft. Aircraft takeoffs and landings are also exempt.

## Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose and need for this project stem from the enactment of the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (NPATMA), which directed the FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, to establish an ATMP for any national park or tribal land for which such a plan is not in effect whenever a person applies for authority to conduct a commercial air tour operation over the park.

The NPATMA specifically requires that the environmental impacts associated with the establishment of an ATMP be assessed under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, determined that a combined Environmental Assessment would be initiated for the separate ATMPs at GGNRA and the Seashore.



Source: NPS

## Current Air Tour Operations

Currently two air tour operators (San Francisco Helicopter Tours and San Francisco Seaplane Tours) have been granted Interim Operating Authority (IOA) to operate air tours over the GGNRA and the Seashore. The IOA represents the total authorized air tours per year and is based on the number of air tours the operator reported that they flew prior to NPATMA.

Existing Operators with IOA	Flights per Year under IOA		
	GGNRA	SF Maritime NHP	The Seashore
San Francisco Helicopter Tours	2,900	2,900	2,900
San Francisco Seaplane Tours	2,190	2,190	2,190

The air tour operators currently offer for-hire helicopter and seaplane tours in the San Francisco Bay Area. Some air tours fly over portions of GGNRA while no designated tours currently fly over the Seashore. Park areas that are advertised by air tour operators include:

- Golden Gate Bridge
- Alcatraz Island
- Angel Island
- Presidio of San Francisco
- Muir Woods
- Pacific Ocean and the scenic coastline

To be inclusive of all SF area national park units, the FAA and NPS are also disseminating this information to the following parks and their respective stakeholder mailing lists in the scoping process:

- Rosie the Riveter/World War II Homefront National Historical Park
- John Muir National Historic Site
- Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site
- Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial

# Air Tour Management Plan Development Process

## Scoping (current stage)

- Range of issues and alternatives to be assessed
- Public and agency input requested

## Alternatives Development

- Selection of the alternatives for the draft EA

## Draft Environmental Assessment & Draft Air Tour Management Plan

- Evaluates impacts to environmental and community resources
- Public and agency input requested

## Final Environmental Assessment & Final Air Tour Management Plan

- Preferred Alternative identified, including flight routes and operating parameters

## Record of Decision

- Documents the Selected Alternative

## FAA Rulemaking

- Establishes enforceable rules
- Public and agency input requested

## Public Scoping

### Comments due by September 28, 2011

The NPS and FAA are inviting the public to provide input, suggestions, and comments regarding the ATMPs. Issues and concerns from the public, government agencies, and organizations will assist the NPS and FAA in preparation of the Environmental Assessment. The scoping period will be held from publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register through September 28, 2011.

Comments may be submitted:

- Online at the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment website:

[http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BayArea\\_ATMP](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BayArea_ATMP)

- In writing at the public open house
- Or by mail to:

#### Keith Lusk

Special Programs Staff, Western Pacific Region  
Federal Aviation Administration  
P.O. Box 92007  
Los Angeles, CA 90009-2007

## Public Meetings

Two public meetings are being held as part of this scoping process where members of the project team will be available to describe and answer questions about the project. One will be an open house, the other will be a public scoping meeting. The times and locations for these events are provided below.

### **Tuesday, August 16, 2011**

Public Scoping Meeting  
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.  
GGNRA Headquarters  
Fort Mason Building 201  
San Francisco, CA

### **Wednesday, August 17, 2011**

Public Open House  
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.  
Bay Model Visitor Center  
2100 Bridgeway  
Sausalito, CA

Golden Gate National Recreation Area  
Fort Mason, Building 201  
San Francisco, CA 94123-1307

Prsrt Std  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Sacramento, CA  
Permit No. 1704

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Please submit comments by September 28, 2011

## For More Information About Air Tour Management Plans and the Parks

A detailed scoping packet providing more information about the park units and Air Tour Management Plan process is available online at the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment website:

[http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BayArea\\_ATMP](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BayArea_ATMP)

Or at:

[www.faa.gov/about/office\\_org/headquarters\\_offices/arc/programs/air\\_tour\\_management\\_plan/](http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/arc/programs/air_tour_management_plan/)

For more information on GGNRA, the Seashore, and San Francisco Maritime NHP, visit the NPS website at:

[www.nps.gov/goga](http://www.nps.gov/goga)  
[www.nps.gov/pore](http://www.nps.gov/pore)  
[www.nps.gov/safr](http://www.nps.gov/safr)

Submit written scoping comments or general questions on the ATMP to:

**Keith Lusk**

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Federal Aviation Administration  
P.O. Box 92007  
Los Angeles, CA 90009-2007  
310-725-3808