



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

800 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Mail list, labeled as Appendix A and  
contained in the Written  
Reevaluation of Environmental  
Assessment, dated October 17, 1997.

Recipients:

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, is announcing the intent to prepare a supplemental environmental assessment (EA). This supplemental EA will address proposed conceptual modifications related to the airspace, and commercial air tour routes and operations in the Vicinity of the Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP). The GCNP and adjacent areas are currently regulated by a Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR), identified as SFAR Number 50-2 and 14 CFR Part 93, Subpart U.

Enclosed is a copy of the Federal Register notice (issued in Washington, DC on February 3, 1999). Also enclosed for your review and comment is a copy of the chart, for planning purposes only, associated with this notice.

The chart represents concepts that are presently under consideration by the FAA. The routes on the west end, highlighted in magenta, would replace the current commercial air tour route structure on the west end. The transportation routes, also highlighted in magenta, would be modified as shown.

The Desert View Flight Free Zone (FFZ) would be expanded as indicated on the east side, in response to Native American concerns. These concerns were raised during the consultation process associated with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 requirements.

The FFZ expansion would require the routes, identified as Black-2 and Green-3, to be shifted to the east. In addition, the boundary of SFAR 50-2 on the east side of the FFZ would have to be expanded.

Written comments on the scope of these conceptual revisions will be accepted until March 5, 1999. They may be delivered or mailed, in triplicate, to: Federal Aviation Administration, Attention: William J. Marx, Manager, Air Traffic Airspace Management, Environmental Programs Division, ATA-300, 800 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20591.

Sincerely,



William J. Marx  
Manager, Environmental  
Programs Division, Office  
of Air Traffic Airspace  
Management

Enclosures

[4910-13]

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Federal Aviation Administration**

Intent to Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Actions Related to the Grand Canyon National Park And To Conduct Scoping.

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

**ACTION:** Notice of intent; request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The FAA, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior (DOI), announces its intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended and applicable environmental laws, regulations and orders. This supplemental EA will address the following proposed actions: 1) new and modifications to existing air tour routes for commercial aircraft operating in the Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA) in the vicinity of Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP), identified as Special Federal Aviation Regulation Number 50-2 (SFAR 50-2); 2) new and modifications to the airspace in the SFRA; and, 3) a limitation on the number of operations by commercial air tour aircraft in the SFRA. These actions represent concepts that are presently under consideration by the FAA. Any changes to the airspace or the air tour routes will be subject to the public notice and comment procedures.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before March 5, 1999. Questions concerning the supplemental EA or the process being applied by the FAA should be directed to William J. Marx at the address listed below or at (202) 267-3075.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on this Notice of Intent may be delivered or mailed, in triplicate, to: Federal Aviation Administration, Attention: William J. Marx, Air Traffic Airspace Management, Environmental Programs Division, ATA-300, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591. Comments may be examined at the above address between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays, except Federal holidays.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:** William J. Marx in writing at the above address or via telephone at (202) 267-3075.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

Based upon further discussions with interested parties and consultation with Native American tribal representatives, the FAA and DOI are specifically considering new commercial air tour routes in the Sanup area and expanding the Desert View Flight Free Zone further east. To a greater degree than existing and prior proposed commercial air tour routes, these proposed actions would minimize impact on traditional

cultural properties that were identified during consultation with Native American tribal representatives pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The scoping process will consist of a public comment period for involved and interested agencies and persons to submit written comments representing the concerns and issues they believe should be addressed in the supplemental EA.

### Background

On May 12, 1997 (62 FR 38233; May 15, 1997) the FAA issued a Notice proposing to modify two flight free zones (FFZ) within GCNP with two corridors through the FFZ. On July 10, 1998 (63 FR 38233; July 15, 1998) the FAA, in consultation with DOI, withdrew this NPRM because the agencies determined not to proceed with an air tour route in the vicinity of National Canyon and were considering alternatives to this route. In addition, a companion document to 63 FR 38233 was published in the Federal Register that amended the Notice No. 96-15 (Noise Limitations NPRM), by removing two sections, which first proposed a National Canyon Corridor (63 FR 38232; July 10, 1998). For a comprehensive history of actions taken and proposed between December 1996 and May 1997, please see the NPRM to extend SFAR 50-2 (63 FR 67544; December 7, 1998).

## The Supplemental EA

Information, data, opinions, and comments obtained throughout the course of the scoping process may be used in the preparation of the supplemental EA. The purpose of this Notice of Intent is to inform the public and local, State, and Federal government agencies that a supplemental EA will be prepared. Also to provide those interested with an opportunity to present their opinions, comments, information, or other relevant observations concerning alternatives and potential environmental impacts relating to implementation of these proposals, particularly in the Sanup area. The proposed actions are concepts presently under consideration by the FAA and DOI.

There is currently a cap on the number of commercial sightseeing aircraft that can operate in the SFRA (61 FR 69317; December 31, 1996). The FAA is also considering rulemaking to establish a cap on the number of flights that these sightseeing aircraft can operate.

To maximize the opportunities for public participation in this environmental process, the FAA will mail copies of this Notice and a graphic (labeled for planning purposes only) showing the proposed changes to the air tour routes and proposed modifications to the airspace to those parties listed in Appendix A of the October 17, 1997 Written

Reevaluation. The graphic containing the proposed air tour route changes and airspace modifications is not being published in today's Federal Register due to the detail on the charts. Again these proposed actions represent a concept presently under consideration by the FAA and DOI. Any changes to the airspace configuration or the air tour routes will be subject to public notice and comment procedures.

In addition, the FAA will utilize for scoping the public comments on the Grand Canyon Final Rule, the Notice of Availability of Proposed Commercial Air Tour Routes, and the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), each dated December 31, 1996, the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Establishment of Corridors in the GCNP SFRA and the Notice of Availability of Commercial Air Tour Routes, both dated May 15, 1997, the Notice of Clarification dated October 31, 1997, the Notice of Meeting [Flagstaff] dated April 10, 1998 (63 FR 18964; April 15, 1998) and the final Environmental Assessment and written reevaluations prepared in support of these Notices and rulemaking documents.

The commercial air tour routes will be issued for public comment in a Notice of Availability of Proposed Air Tour Routes concurrently with Notices of Proposed Rulemaking for the airspace modification and limitation on operations.

The FAA expects to issue the supplemental EA in the summer of 1999, concurrently for public comment with these documents. The FAA plans to provide a period of sixty days for public comment on the supplemental EA. The public will be notified about the availability of the supplemental EA for comment through the Federal Register and other appropriate media.

Any person may have their name added to the mailing list, receive a copy of the graphic containing the proposed changes and modifications, and/or obtain a copy of the supplemental EA when it becomes available, by submitting a request to the FAA contact identified above.

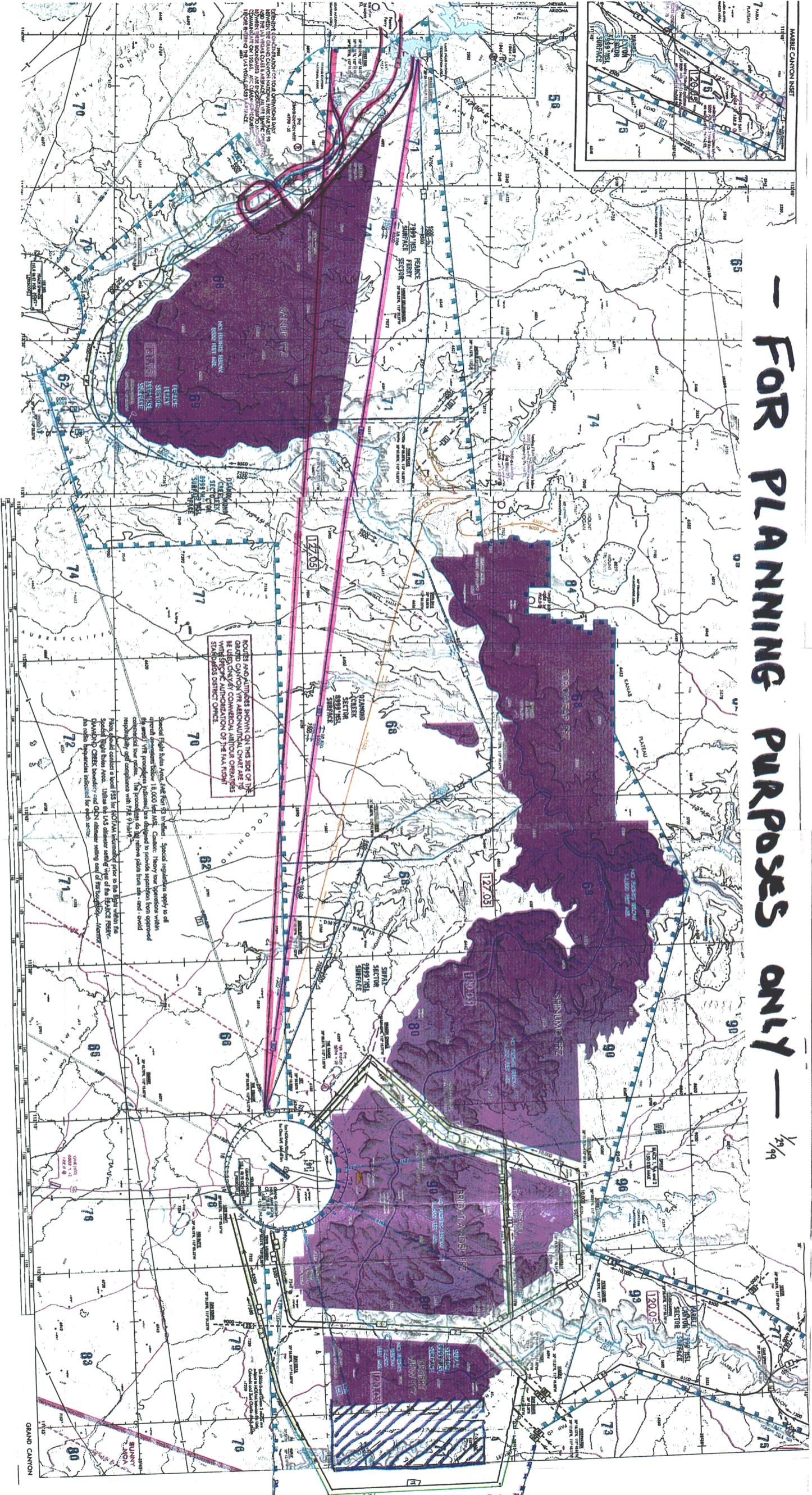
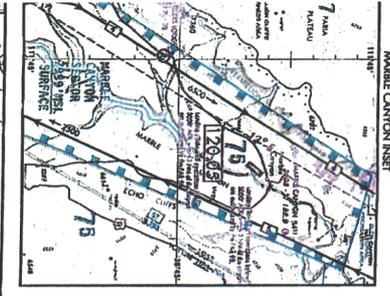
Issued in Washington, D.C. on February 3, 1999.



William J. Marx

Manager, Environmental Programs Division  
Office of Air Traffic Airspace Management

# — FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY — 1/29/99



ROUTES AND ALTITUDES SHOWN ON THE SIDE OF THE GRAND CANYON FOR AERONAUTICAL CHART ARE TO BE USED ONLY FOR COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS UNDER THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE FAA ROUTE SURVEILLANCE DISTRICT OFFICE.

Special Flight Rules Areas are for 1/2 mile radius. Special regulations apply to all operations below 10,000 feet AGL. Caution: Heavy concentration from operations in the area. VFR procedures, restrictions, and altitudes are subject to change without notice. The procedures and altitudes shown on this chart are subject to change without notice. The procedures and altitudes shown on this chart are subject to change without notice.