

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Air Tour Management Plan

Planning, Environment & Public Comment - Frequently Asked Questions

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- General ATMP FAQs:
 - [FAA Website](#)
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- **What will an ATMP do for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park specifically?**
 - The objective of this ATMP, under the Act, is to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations on the Park's natural and cultural landscapes and resources, Native Hawaiian sacred sites and ceremonial areas, Wilderness character, and visitor experience inside the ATMP planning area.

- **What is the current status of the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park ATMP process?**
 - <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/HawaiiVolcanoesATMP> The public comment period for the draft ATMP and draft Environmental Assessment begins on May 16, 2023 and ends on June 20, 2023. Comments must be received by June 20, 2023 at 8:00 PM HST. The NPS and the FAA will analyze the comments received during the public comment period.
 - The NPS and the FAA will host a public meeting on June 7, 2023 at 6:00 – 7:30 PM HST and will share information on online platforms to provide the greatest opportunity for public participation and comment. Notice of availability of the Draft ATMP and Draft EA and instructions on how to comment will also be published in the Federal Register for public review.

- **How do I submit a comment(s) on the Draft ATMP and Draft EA for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park?**
 - The public is encouraged to submit official comments on the Draft ATMP and Draft EA through this NPS PEPC website. You can access the Draft ATMP and Draft EA by clicking "Open for Comment" on the left side of this page and then clicking on the link to the Draft ATMP and Draft EA under "Select a document to review and comment". Select the "Comment Now" button to enter your official comments on the Draft EA. Comments will not be accepted by email. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment (including your personal identifying information) may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.
 - Written comments may be sent via postal mail to the following address:
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
Kaitlyn Rimol, V-326
Attn: Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park ATMP
55 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02142

- **What are commercial air tours that are subject to the ATMP?**
 - Commercial air tours subject to the ATMP are powered flights for compensation or hire for the purpose of sightseeing over Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park or within ½-mile outside

the Park's boundary at altitudes below 5,000 feet above ground level (AGL). This is referred to as the ATMP planning area in the Draft EA and as the ATMP boundary in the Draft ATMP.

- **Which national park receives the most air tours?**
 - Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park has the highest number of reported commercial air tours for the parks that fall under the Act.

- **How many air tour flights are reported over Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park every year?**
 - The yearly average number of commercial air tours conducted over the park from 2017-2019 across all operators is 11,376 tours per year. Commercial operators have Interim Operating Authority (IOA) to fly up to 26,664 flights per year.
 - Operators are required to report every air tour operation they conduct over a national park. As of January 1, 2013, all operators with an IOA or who operate following an ATMP or voluntary agreement are required to report operations and other information semi-annually to the NPS and the FAA. These semi-annual reports are due no later than 30 days after the end of each six-month period.

- **Can an ATMP control the number of flights?**
 - Yes. This Act directed the FAA to lead and the NPS to cooperate on an Air Tour Management Planning process. The NPS has been working with the FAA to develop various alternatives regarding flight routes, numbers, altitudes, timing, mitigations, and incentives for use of quiet technology aircraft. The final ATMP will determine the number of air tours.

- **What is the maximum number of flights allowed each year currently?**
 - Currently, there are 10 air tour operators conducting air tours over the park with a combined IOA for 26,664 commercial air tours annually. The actual number of commercial air tours reported over the Park is much lower.

- **Does the ATMP require that air tours follow specific routes and/or fly at certain altitudes?**
 - Yes, Section 3.2 of the ATMP specifies routes and altitudes. Operators may not deviate from the designated route and altitudes except as necessary for safe operation of an aircraft as determined under Federal Aviation Administration regulations requiring the pilot-in-command to take action to ensure the safe operation of the aircraft, or unless otherwise authorized for a specified purpose. Upon approval of the final ATMP, the operator would not be able to deviate from the routes and altitudes in the ATMP. If pilots are entering or on the designated route and weather conditions do not allow them to follow the route at the prescribed altitude, they must not proceed further on the route. Pilots must safely exit the ATMP boundary.

- **Does the ATMP specify when commercial air tours could occur? Why are specific operating conditions recommended in the ATMP?**
 - Yes. Sections 3.4, 3.5, and Appendix A of the ATMP specify proposed days and times when air tours may occur. The Hawai'i Volcanoes ATMP includes conditions designed to protect natural and cultural resources, Native Hawaiian sacred sites and ceremonial areas, Wilderness character, and visitor experience. These conditions include the number of authorized air tours, routes, altitude, aircraft type, day or time restrictions, and restrictions for particular events. Section 3 of the draft ATMP provides the proposed operating

conditions at the Park.

- **What is the relationship between the Hawai'i Air Tour Common Procedures Manual (HATCPM) and the ATMP?**
 - With respect to the airspace over and within ½-mile of the boundaries of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, the [HATCPM](#) applies to commercial air tour operators, as defined in [14 CFR § 136](#), in receipt of Interim Operating Authority. After the ATMP is developed for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, the operators would need to fly in accordance with the requirements of the ATMP. The HATCPM would not supersede, circumvent, or otherwise change any aspect of, or implementation of the ATMP.

- **Would park visitors be able to hear commercial air tours from the ground?**
 - Whether a visitor on the ground can hear a commercial air tour depends on a number of factors, including proximity to the flight path, type of aircraft, other sources of noise, and surrounding landscape features. Visitors near an aircraft's flight path are more likely to hear the aircraft passing overhead, but other noise sources such as vehicles, people, insects and other wildlife activity, wind, and precipitation can mask the sound of an aircraft. Terrain features and buildings, which block the direct line-of-sight between a noise source and a visitor also may have an effect.

- **How does the ATMP seek to protect cultural resources in the Park?**
 - The annual flight limits in the draft ATMP are intended to protect cultural resources and related cultural landscapes and ethnographic resources throughout the Park by limiting the number of potential disturbances caused by commercial air tours. The ATMP includes conditions as identified during consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

- **How would the ATMP protect Native Hawaiian sacred sites and cultural practices?**
 - The ATMP allows restrictions for particular events, time-of-day, and day-of-week, which are intended to prevent noise interruptions of Native Hawaiian cultural practices and Park events. The ATMP may include additional conditions as identified during consultation with Native Hawaiians and other consulting parties under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), including protections for culturally significant Native Hawaiian lands outside the Park but within ½ mile outside of the Park boundary.
 - In addition, the measures outlined in the ATMP (routes, altitude, day of week, time of day, annual number of flights) are designed to protect culturally significant lands, properties, ceremonies, and practices.

- **What are the impacts of air tours?**
 - The draft EA analyzes each alternative for its potential impact on Park resources, including:
 - Soundscapes (e.g., noise or noise pollution);
 - Native wildlife, including federally listed species;
 - Cultural Resources including sacred landscapes and Traditional Cultural Properties;
 - Wilderness character; and
 - Visitor experience

- **How are air tours outside of the Park regulated?**
 - Applicable regulations that govern aviation safety are found at [14 CFR § 136](#), [Appendix A](#) (formerly Special Federal Aviation Regulation 71), and any FAA exceptions issued to individual operators as outlined by the [Hawai'i Air Tour Common Procedures Manual](#).

- **What happens after the public review period on a Draft ATMP and Draft EA?**
 - Agencies will consider comments received on the Draft ATMP and Draft EA and continue consultations with other agencies, Native Hawaiian organizations, individuals, and other consulting parties, as necessary. A final ATMP and final EA documenting the project's outcomes (including comments received and consultations undertaken) will be developed with ultimate approval resting with the FAA and the NPS.