

## **Bandelier National Monument Air Tour Management Plan Frequently Asked Questions**

**Note:** General FAQs are published on agency websites: [NPS](#) and [FAA](#) air tour websites.

### **What are the provisions in the Bandelier National Monument Air Tour Management Plan?**

To protect the park's natural and cultural resources, Tribal sacred sites and ceremonial areas, visitor experience, as well as wilderness character inside the Air Tour Management Plan area, commercial air tours will be prohibited over Bandelier National Monument and within half-mile of the park's boundary below 5,000 feet altitude above ground level. The plan will take effect no later than 180 days after February 29, 2024.

### **Why are commercial air tours no longer allowed below 5,000 feet above ground level over the park and within a half mile of its boundary?**

The prohibition of commercial air tours protects cultural resources and landscapes throughout the park by limiting potential disturbances. It also protects Tribal rights and privacy for traditional cultural practices and ceremonies. Learn more about Bandelier's unique and rich cultural heritage on the park's [webpage](#).

### **How does the Air Tour Management Plan protect cultural resources and tribal lands, properties, ceremonies, or practices?**

The restrictions in the Air Tour Management Plan protect nationally recognized sacred and ancestral sites and their natural properties from the noise and disturbance caused by low-flying air tour overflights. Tribes stated that overflights, including commercial air tours, of Bandelier National Monument have disturbed gatherings and traditional religious practices at sacred sites, impacted views to and from sacred peaks, are inappropriate to the sacred landscape and sky, and disrupt the tranquility of accessing the lands for reflection or religious and cultural purposes.

### **How does the final Air Tour Management Plan differ from the draft that was released for public review in 2023?**

The agencies considered and responded to public comments received on the 2023 Draft Air Tour management Plan for Bandelier National Monument and the associated Draft Environmental Assessment. There were no substantive changes to the plan's conditions relating to the management of commercial air tour operations. Changes were made to Sections 2.1 Park Overview and 5.0 Justification for Measures Taken, to further describe the park's purpose and values for which it was established and the Tribal connections that are a fundamental resource and value of the park. Additional explanation regarding the NPS's obligations for the conservation of cultural resources was added to Section 5.0. Minor, non-substantive changes were made to improve clarity.

**What commercial air tours are subject to the Air Tour Management Plan? What about other aircraft that fly over the park?**

Commercial air tours subject to the plan are powered flights for compensation or hire for the purpose of sightseeing over Bandelier National Monument or within a half-mile outside the park's boundary at altitudes below 5,000 feet above ground level. Air tours subject to regulation under the National Parks Air Tour Management Act do not include flights conducted for other purposes (e.g., commercial jets or military overflights), nor does it apply to air tours conducted over lands that are greater than a half mile from the park boundary or public lands managed by agencies other than the National Park Service.

**What factors are evaluated in establishing an Air Tour Management Plan?**

In the Environmental Assessment, each proposed alternative was analyzed 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