

TOUR HELICOPTER OPERATORS HAWAII ISLAND / HICoP BOARD  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2016 10:00AM  
483 HOOKIA PLACE, HILO

MINUTES

1. Meeting begins 10:15am

Present:

HICoP Board Members Present: Brittany, Bob, Storm, Daryl, Russ

Tour Operators Invited and Present:

- a. Gregg Lundberg President: Blue Hawaiian
- b. Eric Lincoln: Director of Operations Blue Hawaiian
- c. Darl Evans: Blue Hawaiian Pilot
- d. Paul Morris: (Operations) Sunshine Helicopters
- e. Troy Scott: Paradise Helicopters
- f. Preston Meyers: President Safari Helicopters
- g. Calvin Dorn: Owner Paradise

Special Guest:

- h. Ken: Invited as representative from HPP

2. HICoP Board describes tour helicopter noise impacts:

- a. Russ shows video from Mt View, Upper Wailuku River, Russ' home.
  - i. Preston asserts that he lives near flight path in Maui and he does not experience helicopter noise as loud as what is recorded.
  - ii. Paul reports that there is an approach and departure route agreement with towers on other islands.
  - iii. Question from Gregg: How was approximate AGL determined by those shooting video?
    - a. Answer: From trial and error, information from our meeting with FISDO/FAA, and Eric's test AGL flights over Daryl's home.
  - iv. Preston reports that "years ago" there was a route put in place to minimize impact to the people living in the area- Nelson's Corridor.
  - v. There is a 1500 ft requirement over Storm's development and Storm asserts the data does not show that is being followed. Paradise Helicopters challenges the data collected by Storm in the flight reports as collected from transponders.
  - vi. Brittany expresses the route over her house and shares the story of how she lost her job as a direct result of the helicopter noise.
  - vii. Open question to helicopter tour representatives to see if they can determine the AGL from video? It is determined that AGL could not be accurately determined from video.
  - viii. ACTION ITEM: Obtain calibrated camera or some other device to accurately determine the height of the helicopters over different communities.

3. Tour helicopter operators describe current routes flown

- a. There is set path / route for Helicopters
  - b. Paul reports that when any helicopter pilot comes from Boiling points they make contact with the tower at Hilo Airport and the tower will tell them to be at a prescribed altitude/route.
  - c. ACTION ITEM: Find out what the control tower is telling the helicopter. The West arrival pattern for runway 3: over Brittany's house and neighborhood.
  - d. Safari Tours: They have a Lava tour and a Waterfall tour: Pilots are instructed to vary their flights to minimize their impact over the residents. Travel over HPP to Lava (or wherever they want that varies their flight path.) Flights are instructed to not fly the same path so they don't impact any one place. Waterfall and lava tour goes the same general path and then up to boiling points and then over Hilo to the airport. 5-6 Hilo flights daily (max capacity of 8, flights starting 8:30am and finished by 5pm.) 50/50 split by both tours. Minimum "expeditions."
  - e. Sunshine Helicopters Tour: Depart from Kawaihae area, Pohakuloa, above mauna loa station, go over Kalani area, go through the Glenwood corridor, chain of craters road, go to lava, then back hug the Nelson Corridor at 3500 feet and then mauka of Akaka falls. As long as the weather is good follows shoreline to Waipio, Waimanu Valley, follow Hawi side of Waimea and then back to Kawaihae. 8-10 flights per day per helicopter 7:30am-9am. Late afternoon flight in North Kohala later in the day. Fully equipped to fly over the ocean.
  - f. Paradise: Comes over saddle if coming from Kona side and follow much the same flight pattern/path as Sunshine. Paradise does MD 500 and Bell and mostly waterfall tours. Can do 10 tours per helicopter with 3-2 helicopters. 80/20 split between lava and waterfalls- only one with an IOA with the parks. From Kona, fly down to Kona and along the eastern side of Pohakuloa and then down to lava. Weather permitting. Some days they may follow the coast have 4 max flights from Kona.
  - g. Blue Hawaii: From Hilo out the airport to Kamehameha school campus then, weather permitting, decides if they follow the highway, try to disperse the flights over the Nelson corridor which was agreed upon 20 years ago. NDB beacon is the meeting point to shuttle the tour groups into the channel to go to the Lava. Optimal glide angle is an issue to flying over water. Sunshine and blue have emergency floats. Photoshoots can fly at whatever altitude and wherever they really want to go... different rules of engagement Rules 91, 135, and 136 (Manual). Troy explains that weather permitting they are able to disperse. Blue Helicopter tours have approximately 36 tours per day. Darl asserts the regulation is 2000ft over HPP, or 1500 AGL over Ainaloa. Sometimes follow the shore line. If going Kona side follows much the same as Paradise.
  - h. ACTION ITEM: FLIGHT PATH/FLIGHT PATTERN is the proper terminology will need to include excursions in the language of any proposed changes as well.
  - j. Paradise Asserts that there are actually 1 less helicopter on Hawaii island than in 1980's per their memory.
4. Discussion of opportunities/available alternatives to remove tour helicopter noise impacts from Hawaii Island Communities,
- a. Darl reports that when you add altitude you end up increasing the cone of noise so as a result it effects more people.
  - b. Appendix A "Hawaii Air Tour Common Procedures Manual" is not being re-written however the rest of the manual is being changed.

- c. When there was no limit on the AGL, they would go low over the forest but believe that they are not allowed due to the Appendix A. Due to clouds they must be within a certain clearance making a route that is over more people and higher up which creates more noise. They would prefer going to 300ft over forest.
- d. Preston reports that the weather changes very quickly along the coast and can hit very bad weather, if you can no longer see the shoreline you are in violation of the FAA.
- e. Troy reports that the impact of the cost associated with going along the coast. He reports that the LI route is about twin engine helicopters and all operators on this Island have single engine.
- f. Paul reports that the safety concerns with having the off shore route
- g. LI ROUTE suggested by Bob:
- h. Water routes increase risk. Over shoreline is better. Pressure from tourists to fly lower. Profit margins are 5% in the Helicopter industry.
- i. ACTION ITEM: Feasibility study as the additional costs associated with flights over the water/shore instead of over homes.
- j. Paul reports that as the helicopter association they met as a group with the FAA and out of that meeting came the flight manual and Appendix A. They would like to go 500ft or lower to reduce their noise impact and cloud clearance is no longer an issue. The helicopter tour operators collectively agree that they would go 500ft and a quarter mile from homes if they were allowed to in the manual. The Appendix A is a perversion of what they originally intended.
- k. Changing location of airport/helipad is discussed as an option to explore.
- l. Russ' video mashup is shown. Video taken from Paradise's website as well as Russ' home. Paradise defends their marketing video as not realistic and just used for advertising.
- m. Brittany discusses tour operators setting a standard of low flying in marketing videos on their websites and photos. Also market research of 43% images on Instagram posted with #bluehawaiianhelicopters were of coastal shots. Troy from Paradise quips that they are Kohala Coastline, to which Brittany retorts they are not all of Kohala they include Kalapana and Pahoia coasts

#### 5. Action Items:

- a. Explore alternative helipad locations
- b. Ocean Route
- c. Fly over more forest at a lower altitude
- d. Outreach to HPP association to have meeting to get feedback
- e. Get visuals of AGL to distribute to public
- f. Gregg and Darl will be meeting with pilots to reinforce the rules and have a no tolerance policy and discipline pilots when they are found not operating their helicopters with Aloha.
- g. Helicopter companies are working on a tracking system for their helicopters
- h. Paul chosen to be tour company liaison/representative
- i. Tour company operators to go to Hilo Airport Air Traffic Control Tower to better understand how the controllers are directing their helicopters over Hilo and direct them from going over Brittany's neighborhood all day