

I have worked in or near national parks (Yellowstone and Glacier) for nearly 50 years. No activities have had a greater negative impact on the values of Glacier National Park than have commercial scenic overflights by helicopters. They have destroyed the solitude and quiet that previously were major elements in Glacier's uniqueness. Helicopter tour operators over Glacier daily violate the current FAA altitude advisory, with impunity, disturbing wildlife and destroying the quality of visitor experiences on the ground. Through the National Parks Air Tour Management Act, the FAA needs to prohibit these inappropriate overflights at Glacier and not allow them to begin in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. In contrast, fixed-wing scenic flights at high altitude represent a long-established use over Glacier and have been far less disruptive than have the more recent commercial helicopters tours. Helicopters (louder, with the penetrating sound of blade slap, flying lower and more slowly, hovering) are terrible, unnecessary, and inappropriate intrusions, destroying the quality of the Park experience for the vast majority of visitors.

I support the 5,000-foot AGL altitude as the trigger for the air tour management planning process.

The FAA should defer authority to National Park Service in determining the negative impacts of aircraft noise on park values and visitor enjoyment.

Any existing operators that failed to notify the FAA of their over-park operations should be immediately prohibited from continued commercial flights over the relevant Park.

Please also enforce the no new entrants clause of the Act.

Most importantly, precisely define the process and the time schedule by which air tour management plans will be developed for parks. Respectfully submitted,  
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