

**Lake Mead National Recreation Area  
Air Tour Management Plan  
Planning and National Environmental Policy Act  
Scoping Document**

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## **Part 1 - Introduction to the Project**

### **A. Introduction**

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS), has initiated the development of an Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) for Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAME) pursuant to the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-181) and its implementing regulations contained in Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 136, *National Parks Air Tour Management*. The objective of the ATMP is to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations upon the natural resources, cultural resources, and visitor experiences of LAME.

A commercial air tour operation is defined as a flight conducted for compensation or hire in a powered aircraft where a purpose of the flight is sightseeing over a national park, within ½ mile outside the boundary of any national park or over tribal lands, during which the aircraft flies below a minimum altitude of 5,000 feet (except for the purposes of takeoff or landing, or as necessary for the safe operation of the aircraft), or less than 1 mile laterally from any geographic feature within the park unless more than ½ mile outside the boundary. A commercial air tour operator is any person who conducts a commercial air tour operation.

In accordance with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act, LAME ATMP: may prohibit commercial air tour operations in whole or in part; may establish conditions for the conduct of commercial air tour operations; shall apply to all commercial air tour operations within ½ mile outside the boundary of the National Recreation Area; shall include incentives for the adoption of quiet aircraft technology; and shall provide for the initial allocation of opportunities to conduct commercial air tour operations if the plan limits the number of such operations. The need for implementation of any of these measures must be justified and documented in the ATMP and within the Finding of No Significant Impact/Record of Decision.

The National Parks Air Tour Management Act states that this area "shall not apply to any air tour operator while flying over or near Lake Mead National Recreation Area solely as a transportation route, to conduct an air tour over the Grand Canyon National Park".

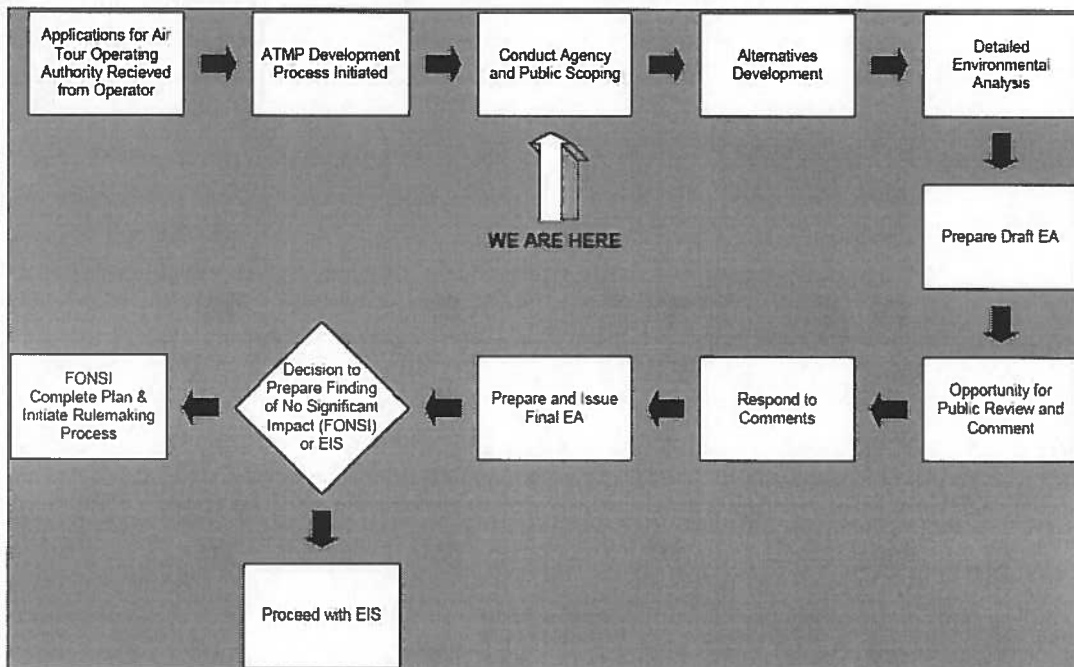
### **B. Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) Development Process**

The process is initiated in a particular location following the receipt of an Application for Air Tour Operating Authority from an existing or new entrant commercial air tour operator. The FAA has received applications for Commercial Air Tour Operating Authority from twenty existing operators and one new entrant for LAME. The ATMP Planning and Environmental Assessment process is summarized in Figure 1. The scoping process has been initiated early in ATMP planning to ensure an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the

significant issues related to commercial air tour operations over and within ½ mile of the Recreation Area. Following completion of the planning and environmental process, appropriate implementation actions will be taken for the selected ATMP alternative. This may include Federal Rulemaking (see Figure 1).

In developing the ATMP and any associated rulemaking actions, the FAA is required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National Environmental Policy Act), and its implementing regulations contained in 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 (hereafter referred to as “the regulations”). The regulations mandate that the FAA and NPS shall, to the fullest extent possible, interpret and administer the policies, regulations and public laws of the United States in accordance the policies set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act and these regulations (1500.2(a)). The regulations also mandate that the FAA and NPS shall, to the fullest extent possible, use the National Environmental Policy Act process to identify and assess the reasonable alternatives to proposed actions that will avoid or minimize adverse effects of these actions upon the quality of the human environment and use all practical means, consistent with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and other essential considerations of national policy, to restore and enhance the quality of the human environment and avoid or minimize any possible adverse effects of their actions upon the quality of the human environment (1500.2(e) and 1500.2(f)). For the purposes of complying with sections 1501.3 and 1501.5 through 1501.8 of Council of Environmental Quality regulations, the FAA is the lead agency and the NPS is a cooperating agency.

Figure 1 - ATMP Planning and Environmental Assessment Process



The FAA will, in cooperation with the National Park Service, prepare an Environmental Assessment in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1D. The FAA may decide to proceed with the development of an Environmental Impact Statement at any time during the development of the Environmental Assessment. This notwithstanding, following the planned development of the EA, either a Finding of No Significant Impact or an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared. Prior to implementation of the ATMP and following any Federal rulemaking actions, a Record of Decision will be prepared.

Additional information on the ATMP Program is available on the FAA's ATMP Website located at [www.atmp.faa.gov](http://www.atmp.faa.gov). Interested parties may request information regarding the development of this and other ATMPs through this website.

## **Part 2 – Setting**

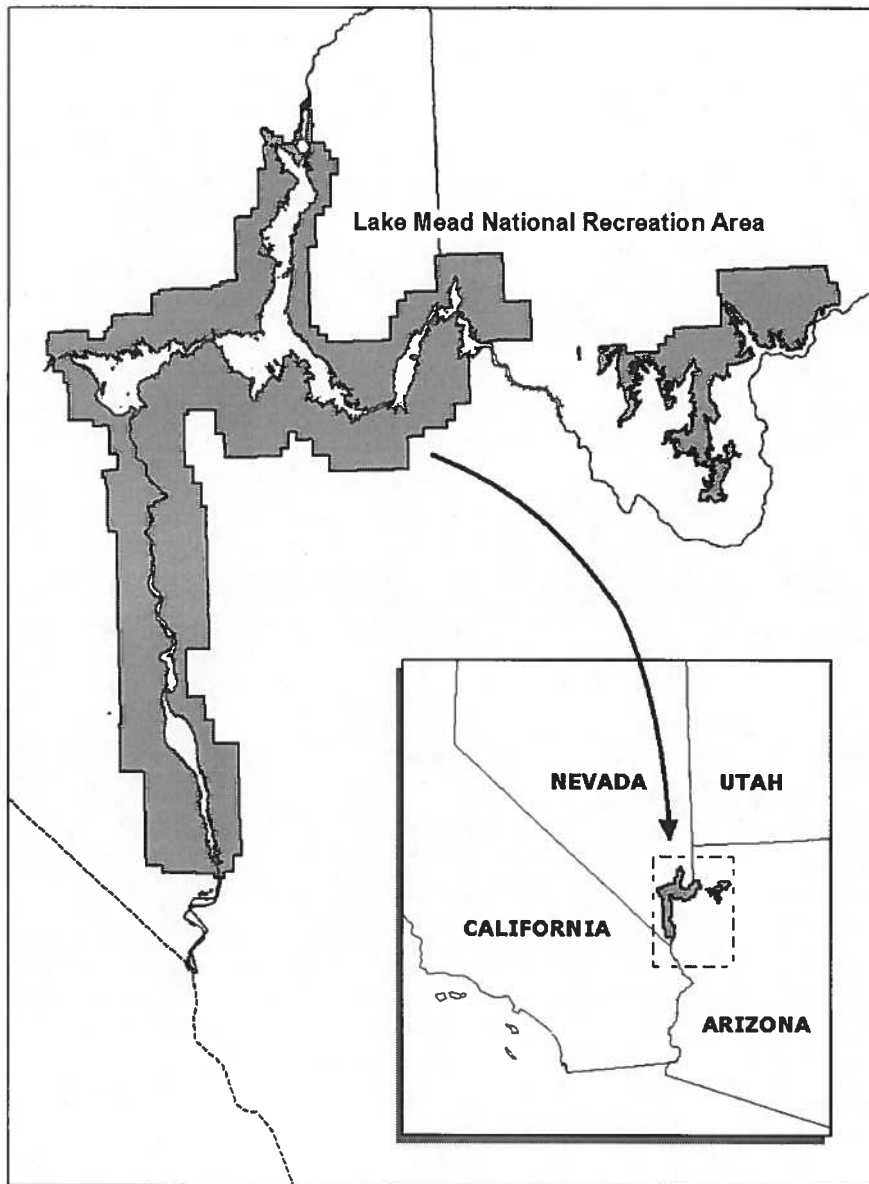
### **A. Introduction**

The ATMP planning area consists of Lake Mead National Recreation Area including the NPS portion of the Parashant National Monument (Figure 2). The FAA will consider impacts on potentially affected resources located within the planning area but not in excess of a ½ mile outside its boundary. The discussion below summarily describes the setting for the Lake Mead National Recreation Area ATMP project. A description of the Recreation Area's natural resources, cultural resources, visitor experiences, and commercial air tour activity are provided to assist the public and agencies in the preparation of meaningful comments.

### **B. Lake Mead National Recreation Area**

Lake Mead National Recreation Area encompasses 142 miles of the Colorado River in Northwestern Arizona (Mohave County) and Southern Nevada (Clark County). It is centered on two artificial lakes--Lake Mead and Lake Mohave. Lake Mead National Recreation Area contains 1,484,159 acres of Federal land and 12,568 acres of non-Federal land, making it the third largest area administered by the NPS outside of Alaska. The park contains over 184,000 acres of congressionally designated wilderness in 9 separate units. An additional 493,000 acres in Nevada and Arizona are proposed wilderness areas. The Recreation Area also consists of a portion of the Shivwits Plateau located east of the Grand Wash Cliffs and north of the Sanup Plateau. This area was designated as part of the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument on January 11, 2000. The Monument is jointly managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the NPS, and LAME continues to have primary management authority over the NPS portion of the monument. The ATMP planning process (in accordance with the Act) and the decision whether or not to regulate air tours applies only to NPS lands, and not to the Bureau of Land Management portion of the monument except for the half mile strip outside the park unit boundary.

Figure 2. Lake Mead National Recreation Area  
Source: National Park Service



**Purposes and Values**

The overall context for park purposes and values (including resources) is defined in NPS Management Policies 2001 (1.4.6). Lake Mead National Recreation Area, including the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, purposes and values lie within this general context. Specific purposes and values can be found in the authorizing legislation for the Lake Mead National Recreation Area (P.L. 88-639) and the Presidential Proclamation of January 11, 2000 designating the Grand-Canyon Parashant National Monument, to

include lands within the boundary of Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Descriptions of attributes are provided in the General Management Plan for the park. Values of the park are implicit in the statements of purpose, but they are expressed specifically in the park mission statement.

#### *Purposes*

- Designated as this nation's first recreation area for the purposes of public recreation, benefit, and use, and in a manner that will preserve, develop and enhance the scientific, historic, scenic, and other important features of the area;
- To retain, for scientific inquiry, long-term preservation, and public use and enjoyment for present and future generations, well-preserved examples of scientific and historic objects of interest and to protect those objects from destruction, or removal of any features;
- Preserve 184,000 acres of designated wilderness, and preserve the wilderness character of an additional 266,000 acres with existing wilderness character and associated wilderness values;
- Preserve the flora and fauna and natural processes;
- Interpret the history of Native Americans who inhabited the area, including the undisturbed archaeological evidence, displaying the long and rich human history spanning more than 12,000 years;
- Preserve and interpret geological features that are considered some of the most significant representation in North America. These include exposed Paleozoic and Mesozoic sedimentary strata on the boundary between two major geologic provinces, the Basin and Range and the Colorado Plateau and an abundant fossil record; and
- Provide for a variety of appropriate recreational experiences, in a manner that preserves the spectacular resource setting of the area.

#### *Values*

- The ecological diversity resulting from the junction of two physiographic ecoregions: the Basin and Range and Colorado Plateau; and three floristic provinces: the Mojave Desert, Great Basin, and Colorado Plateau, including a diversity of wildlife. Three of America's four desert ecosystems converge at Lake Mead National Recreation Area: the Mojave, the Great Basin, and the Sonoran Deserts;
- Lake Mead is home to the desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, coyotes, kit fox, bobcat, mountain lions ringtail cats, beaver, at least 18 species of bats, numerous lizard, snake and bird species. Threatened and endangered species such as the desert tortoise and peregrine falcon, and Colorado River fish are also found here;
- Over 900 identified archeological sites representing many different Native American tribes;
- Wilderness character that includes natural quiet, solitude, clear air, vastness and natural processes;
- Geological deposits spanning 1.7 billion years;
- A setting for people to explore and appreciate, through such activities as hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, scenic vista, research, educational opportunities and quiet contemplation;

- One of the primary distinctions of the Parashant National Monument is its rugged, primitive character that offers hardy visitors the opportunity to experience wide open spaces and solitude. The monument proclamation states, “Full of natural splendor and a sense of solitude, this area remains remote and unspoiled, qualities that are essential to the protection of the scientific and historic resources it contains”;
- Remote and unspoiled landscapes with limited travel corridors;
- The Parashant Monument encompasses one of the larger undeveloped, isolated landscapes in the contiguous United States. The vastness of the area supports large-scale ecological processes. These processes, combined with low levels of resource conflicts, provide an unprecedented opportunity for ecological research; and
- Historic resources, such as ranch structures and corrals, fences, water tanks, ruins of sawmills, old mining sites, and historic routes, exist in nearly their original context, relatively undisturbed by vandalism. These historic places provide a unique opportunity for public interpretation and education about the historical and social significance of these early lifestyles.

*Recreational Context.* Designated as this nation’s first recreation area, Lake Mead provides diverse recreational opportunities for millions of visitors each year. The enabling legislation recognized the high public value for recreation in a quality setting, establishing the area for the purposes of public recreation, benefit, and use, and in a manner that will preserve, develop and enhance the scientific, historic, scenic, and other important features of the area. The NPS is charged with providing a variety of appropriate recreational experiences, in a manner that preserves the spectacular resource setting of the area.

Highly urbanized Las Vegas is located just west of the park, while rapidly developing Laughlin, Nevada and Bullhead City, Arizona are situated at the southern border. The city of Mesquite, NV, adjacent to the Grand Canyon-Parashant, is the fastest growing city of the fastest growing county and state. In addition, the park attracts visitors from more far-reaching areas such as California. Peak visitation occurs between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend each year. While the majority of people come to enjoy water-based recreation, such as boating, swimming, fishing, others enjoy land-based hiking, camping, wildlife viewing and sightseeing as well.

The Recreation Area contains outstanding backcountry resources, including the opportunity to explore some of the most remote areas of the contiguous United States. The recreation context of the National Park Service includes management of 184,000 acres of designated wilderness, and preservation of the wilderness character of an additional 493,000 acres in Nevada and Arizona proposed or proposed potential wilderness areas. Those wilderness characteristics and associated values include natural quiet, solitude, clear air, vastness and natural processes.

*Cultural Resources.* The range of cultural resources within Lake Mead National Recreation Area encompasses archeological and ethnographic resources, historic structures, and cultural landscapes. Native Americans have occupied LAME and

adjacent areas in southern Nevada and western Arizona over the last 10,000 to 12,000 years. The park contains a variety of traditional cultural areas and sacred sites. Foremost among these is the Spirit Mountain area, within the Newberry Mountains, listed as a Traditional Cultural Property.

Cultural resources from the historic past are just as rich and varied. They include structures relating to Mormon settlement and enterprise along the Colorado and Virgin Rivers as well as structures relating to ranching, mining, exploration, and the construction of the Hoover Dam. There are seven sites on the National Register of Historic Places: Homestake Mine, Grand Gulch Mine-St. Thomas Freight Road, Horse Valley Ranch, Ringbolt Rapids, Quartette Mining Company Railroad Grade, Willow Beach Gauging Station, and the U.S. Government Railroad Grade.

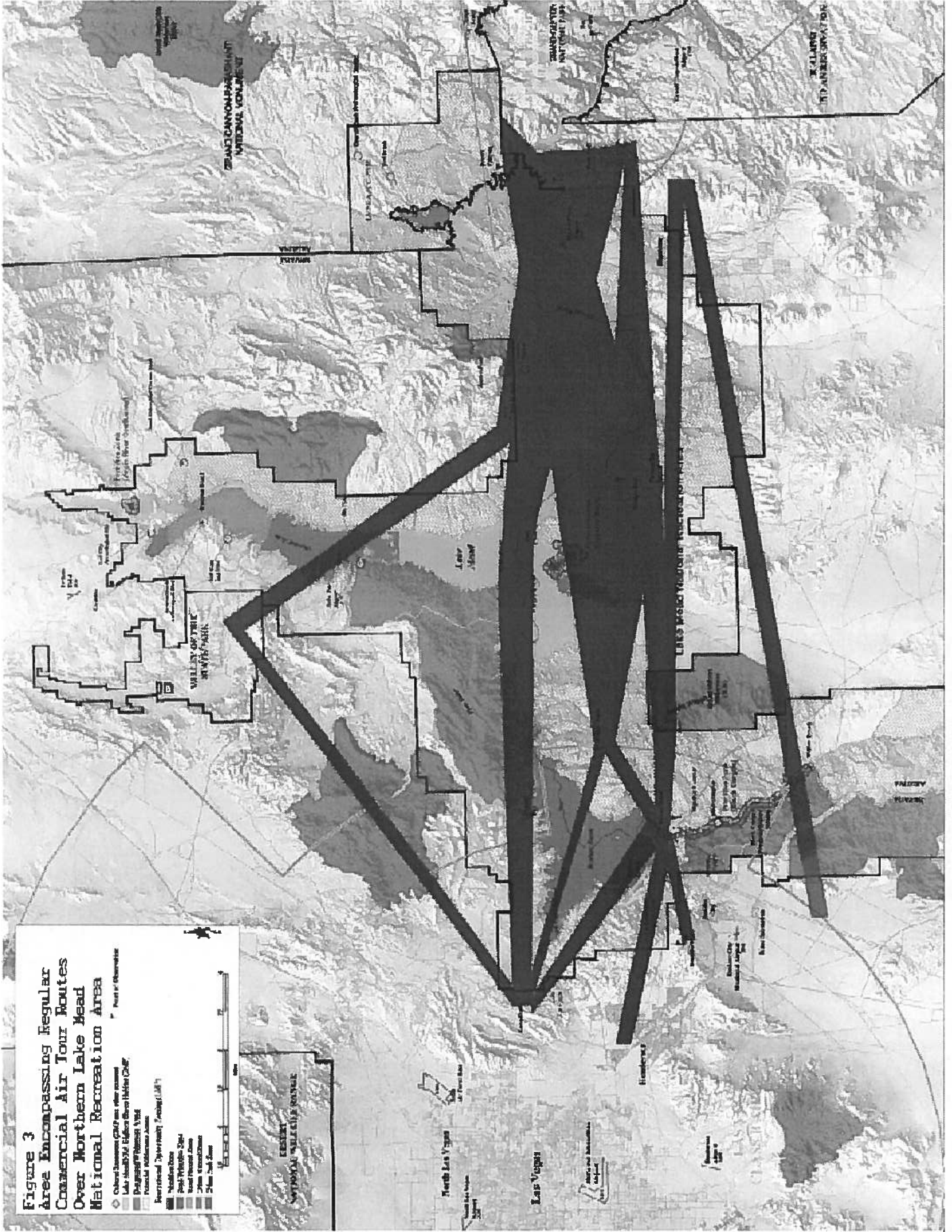
### **C. Commercial Air Tour Activity and Visitor Experience**

There are currently twenty existing operators who provide commercial air tours over and within ½ mile outside the boundary of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. These commercial air tour operations are conducted utilizing both fixed-wing and rotor-wing aircraft. Eighty-two thousand, one hundred seventy-five commercial air tour operations are authorized to be conducted over LAME under Interim Operating Authority. These numbers are based on the operator's applications for Air Tour Operating Authority submitted pursuant to Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 136. In the applications, each operator was required to report the greater of the number of commercial air tour operations conducted during the twelve-month period preceding April 5, 2000, or the annual average number of commercial air tour operations conducted by the operator during the three-year period preceding April 5, 2000. In accordance with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act and Part 136, the annual air tour operations over and within ½ mile outside the boundary of LAME are currently capped at the number of operations reported in the operator's application, unless otherwise authorized by the FAA and NPS, or until the ATMP is implemented.

The majority of commercial air tour operations that fly over LAME are concentrated over the northern portion of LAME. Current commercial air tour flights in this area (including Grand Canyon transportation routes) involve a complex system of routes, altitudes, and communications. This flight track system was instituted for safety purposes in cooperation with the FAA, the commercial operators, and LAME. Most of the operations in the northern area originate from airports in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area (Henderson Executive Airport, McCarran International Airport, North Las Vegas Air Terminal). The northern portion of LAME, over which commercial air tour operations are regularly conducted, are shown in Figure 3.

A small number of commercial air tour operations are conducted over and in the vicinity of Lake Mohave in the southern section of LAME. These operations originate from the Laughlin Bullhead International Airport and typically do not extend any farther north than Katherine's Landing, which is located just north of the Davis Dam.





**Figure 3**  
**Area Encompassing Regular**  
**Commercial Air Tour Routes**  
**Over Northern Lakehead**  
**National Recreation Area**

- ◆ Cultural Resources (CRA) sites, other resources
- ◆ Lakehead National Recreation Area
- ◆ National Recreation Area
- ◆ Recreation Opportunity Planning (ROP)
- ◆ Wilderness Area
- ◆ Park Primitive Sites
- ◆ Scenic Viewpoint
- ◆ State Park Sites



Of the twenty existing commercial air tour operators there are only two operators who provide commercial air tour operations over LAME exclusively. The remaining eighteen operators are also authorized to conduct air tour operations over the Grand Canyon National Park. The FAA suspects that a large number of the reported operations described in the preceding paragraphs are conducted solely as a transportation route to the Grand Canyon National Park. In these cases, any overflight and dialogue referencing LAME area features are considered purely incidental to the trip. The National Parks Air Tour Management Act states that the Act, and thereby LAME Air Tour Management Plan, "shall not apply to any air tour operator while flying over or near Lake Mead National Recreation Area solely as a transportation route, to conduct an air tour over the Grand Canyon National Park". As part of this project, the FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, will establish criteria to differentiate such Grand Canyon transportation route operations from commercial air tour operations conducted over LAME.

Those who experience LAME solely by means of a commercial air tour are considered legitimate visitors to the park although their experience of the park resources and values may be quite different from that of the ground or water based visitor. The air tour visitor experiences the panoramic vistas, geography, and other features of the area from the unique perspective of the aerial platform, in contrast to that experienced by the ground or water based visitor. Additionally, the elderly and handicapped air tour visitor is afforded an opportunity to experience areas of LAME that would otherwise be inaccessible to them. Along with the aerial views of the area, most commercial air tour operators provide an interpretive presentation of the history, purpose, and/or geographic features of LAME.

The Hoover Dam is a popular feature for air tour viewing. Six thousand, four hundred-fifteen of the total reported LAME commercial air tour operations are exclusive to the Hoover Dam. It is important to note that while the Hoover Dam is located outside of LAME in an area managed by the Bureau of Reclamation, it is, however located within a ½ mile of the boundary of LAME. Because the Air Tour Management Plan will apply to all commercial air tour operations conducted within ½ mile outside LAME, the plan will address commercial air tour operations conducted in the Hoover Dam area.

All existing commercial air tour operations that overfly LAME are certificated by the FAA in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 14, Parts 91,135, or 121. Part 93 and Special Federal Aviation Regulation 50-2 define a Special Flight Rules Area over the Grand Canyon and vicinity (including certain eastern portions of LAME) and impose additional requirements for air tour operators within that airspace. The scope of this project will not conflict with existing Grand Canyon Special Flight Rules Area operations. Additionally, the FAA has proposed national safety standards to govern commercial air tours (Docket No. FAA 1988 4521; Notice No.03-10)(See Federal Register 60572, October 22, 2003).

### **Part 3 - Federal Action and Range of Alternatives**

#### **A. Federal Action**

The Federal action associated with this project is the establishment of an Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) for Lake Mead National Recreation Area. The ATMP would establish acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations upon the natural and cultural resources, and visitor experiences, the objective set forth in the Air Tour Management Act of 2000. The purpose and need for this project also stem from the aforementioned Act, wherein the U.S. Congress directed the FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, to establish an ATMP for any national park or tribal lands for which such a plan is not in effect whenever a person applies for authority to conduct a commercial air tour operation over the park. Twenty-one persons have applied to the FAA for operating authority to conduct commercial air tour operations over LAME, which triggers the need to develop an ATMP at this park. Seventeen of these operators have operating authority inside the Grand Canyon National Park. Following completion of the ATMP planning and environmental process, appropriate implementation actions will be taken for the selected ATMP alternative, and may include Federal Rulemaking. The FAA and NPS are actively preparing to make a decision on one or more alternative means of meeting the Air Tour Management Plan objective while also complying with the existing legislative, regulatory, and, to the greatest extent possible, the policy mandates of both agencies.

In Section 802 of the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000, Congress found, in relevant part, that (1) the FAA has sole authority to control airspace over the United States; (2) the FAA has the authority to preserve, protect, and enhance the environment by minimizing, mitigating, or preventing the adverse effects of aircraft overflights on public and tribal lands; and, (3) the NPS has the responsibility of conserving the scenery and natural and historic objects and wildlife in national parks and of providing for the enjoyment of the national parks in ways that leave the national parks unimpaired for future generations. The relevant FAA legislative, regulatory, and policy mandates are primarily defined by the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (49 U.S.C. 40103(b)), the Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (49 U.S.C. 40128), and the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. 303(c)). The relevant NPS legislative, regulatory, and policy mandates are primarily defined by the Organic Act of 1916 (16 USC 1, 2-4), the General Authorities Act of 1976 (16 USC 1a-1 through 1a-8), the Redwoods Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-250, 92 Stat. 163, 16 USC 1a-1), and the enabling legislation specific to the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. The determination of significant adverse impacts, if any, for this ATMP will be made by the FAA in cooperation with the NPS, based on the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 as well as the aforementioned legislative, regulatory, and policy mandates of the FAA and the NPS, other pertinent environmental laws, and the purposes and values of Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

The Air Tour Management Act of 2000 specifies that the ATMP be developed by means of a public process. The current scoping process is one of the early elements of that public process and as a result, a specific "preferred alternative" for the ATMP has not yet

been identified. No determination has yet been made on the justification or need for any limitations or restrictions on commercial air tour operations over and in the vicinity of LAME with the exception of those specified in existing Federal Regulations. The FAA and NPS preferred ATMP alternative will be identified following scoping and following the conduct of a complete environmental analysis. The FAA and NPS may identify a preferred alternative in the Draft Environmental Assessment, which will be made available for public review and comment.

## **B. Range of Alternatives**

### **1. No Action Alternative**

The environmental impacts of the No Action alternative must be considered for comparative purposes in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the implementing regulation of the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40, CFR Parts 1500-1508). This consideration is required even in situations such as this Program, where the FAA and NPS are under legislative command to develop an ATMP. The “No Action” alternative assumes the continuation of the present course of action as can be expected if an ATMP is not developed for the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Existing caps on the number of commercial air tour operations and the limitations on new entrants imposed under Code of Federal Regulations Part 136 will also be assumed to continue in effect under this No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative will be more fully described and will be carried forward for detailed analysis in the Environmental Assessment.

### **2. No Prohibitions, Conditions, Restrictions, or Limitations Alternative**

An ATMP alternative that assumes no prohibitions, conditions, restrictions or limitations on commercial air tour operations will be analyzed. Under this alternative, there would be no caps, limitations, restrictions, or federally specified routes for commercial air tour operations over the Recreation Area other than those specified in existing Federal safety regulations.

### **3. Other Alternatives**

The FAA, in cooperation with NPS, will determine if any mitigation measures are justified and develop other alternatives that will incorporate such mitigation measures as deemed appropriate. If mitigation measures are justified, a range of potential mitigation measures will be screened for possible use at LAME. The FAA and NPS are emphasizing creativity while weighing alternatives to mitigate potential adverse impacts, if any, on park resources and values. Table 1 provides a list of potential mitigation measures, which may be utilized either individually or in combination. The Air Tour Management Act specifically authorizes the use of these measures when their use is justified and the need is documented. Additional mitigation measures and alternatives might be suggested by the NPS, as a cooperating agency, and by the public, tribes or by other agencies. Such alternatives could be carried through analysis in response to specific issues about the effects of commercial air tour operations on park resources and visitor experiences. Consideration of the impacts of such alternatives may also provide a basis or justification for mitigation.

Table 1 - Potential Mitigation Measures

| <b>POTENTIAL MITIGATION MEASURES – PROHIBITIONS and CONDITIONS</b>                           |
|--|
| In-Whole Prohibition on Commercial Air Tour Operations                                       |
| In-Part Prohibition on Commercial Air Tour Operations  |
| Establishment of Commercial Air Tour Routes  |
| Establishment of Maximum and/or Minimum Commercial Air Tour Altitudes                        |
| Time-of-Day Restrictions for Commercial Air Tour Operations (Including Curfews)              |
| Restrictions on Commercial Air Tour Operations for Particular Events                         |
| Maximum Number of Commercial Air Tour Flights Per Unit of Time (Capacity Limits)             |
| Conditions Necessary for Mitigation of Intrusions on Privacy on Tribal Lands                 |
| Other Prohibitions or Conditions Necessary for Mitigation of Noise, Visual, or Other Impacts |

Alternatives that are not practicable or otherwise do not satisfy the Purpose and Need for the project would not be carried forward for detailed analysis within the Environmental Assessment. A reasonable number of alternatives and the no action alternative will be carried forward for detailed analysis. A discussion of each of the initial alternatives not carried forward and the reasons for it not being carried forward will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The public will have an opportunity to view the alternatives analysis when the Draft Environmental Assessment is distributed for public review and comment.

**C. Provisions Common to All Alternatives**

Grand Canyon Commercial air tour operators must continue to operate in accordance with the provisions of Grand Canyon Special Federal Aviation Regulation 50-2 (SFAR) and CFR Title 14, Part 93, Subpart U. This continuing requirement will be assumed for all ATMP alternatives. The one-half mile boundary of the ATMP does not apply to Grand Canyon tour operations conducted pursuant to SFAR 50-2.

As required by the Air Tour Management Act, any ATMP alternative that establishes commercial air tour routes, minimum or maximum altitudes, caps, or curfews shall also include incentives for the adoption of quiet aircraft technology. This requirement will be satisfied for any alternative for which it is applicable. The incentives may include:

- Preferred Routes (if any routes are proposed)
- Preferred Altitudes (if any maximum or minimum altitudes are proposed)
- Partial or Total Relief from Caps (if any caps are imposed)
- Partial or Total Relief from Curfews (if any curfews are imposed)
- Other Appropriate Incentives

## **Part 4 - Initial List of Environmental Issues**

### **A. Introduction**

For the purposes of preparing environmental documents under the National Environmental Policy Act, the FAA is the lead agency and the NPS is a cooperating agency. The FAA and NPS have executed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding implementation of the Air Tour Management Act and development of ATMPs. The Agencies have agreed, among other things, that the development of ATMPs and associated environmental document(s) under National Environmental Policy Act will be a fully cooperative process recognizing and complying, to the greatest extent possible consistent with the FAA's responsibility as lead agency, with the existing legislative, regulatory, and policy mandates of both agencies. The Air Tour Management Act specifically requires that "...the Administrator and the Director shall each sign the environmental decision document required by section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332) which may include a Finding Of No Significant Impact, an Environmental Assessment, or an Environmental Impact Statement, and the Record of Decision for the Air Tour Management Plan."

FAA Order 1050.1D, *Policies and Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*, sets forth specific environmental analysis procedures to be used in preparing Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements. A copy of the Order is available via the FAA's website at [www.aee.faa.gov/e3/1050pt1d](http://www.aee.faa.gov/e3/1050pt1d). In accordance with this Order, the impacts (including cumulative impacts) of existing commercial air tour operations and any ATMP alternatives carried forward for detailed study will be evaluated in each of the 18 environmental impact categories listed below.

### **B. Environmental Impact Categories**

1. Impacts on Air Quality (including potential visibility impairment)
2. Impacts on Historical, Architectural, Archeological, & Cultural Resources and Settings
3. Impacts on Ocean Resources
4. Light Emissions and Visual Impacts
5. Compatible Land Use Impacts (including Tribal Lands)
6. Impacts on use of (consumable) natural resources and Energy Supply
7. Construction Impacts
8. Noise Impacts (including impacts to visitor experience)
9. Impacts on properties protected under 49 U.S.C. 303 (DOT Act 4(f))
10. Secondary (Induced) Impacts
11. Impacts on Farmland
12. Socioeconomic Impacts (including Environmental Justice)
13. Impacts on Fish, Wildlife, and Plants (including Threatened and Endangered Species)
14. Impacts on Water Quality
15. Impacts on Floodplains and Floodways
16. Impacts on Wetlands
17. Impacts of Hazardous Materials and Solid Waste

## 18. Impacts on Wild and Scenic Rivers

It is recognized that, by the very nature of the setting of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area in the Mojave Desert, certain resource categories are not present and will not be impacted (e.g. coastal resources, farmlands, wild and scenic rivers).

### **C. Initial Issues**

One objective of this scoping process is to assist the FAA in determining the scope and the significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the Environmental Assessment. As a result the FAA may identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not relevant thereby narrowing the discussion of these issues in the Environmental Assessment. At this early stage in the planning process and the analysis described in Part 4B above notwithstanding, the FAA and NPS considering the following environmental issues to be particularly relevant:

- Potential noise impacts;
- Potential impacts on visitor experience;
- Potential impacts on sites of importance to Native Americans;
- The number and types of flights over Lake Mead that fit the exemption for aircraft in route to and from the Grand Canyon National Park, while exhibiting operational characteristics of an air tour over LAME itself.

The FAA is now inviting the public, tribes, agencies, and other interested parties to provide comments, suggestions, and input regarding the scope, issues, and concerns regarding commercial air tours and their potential impacts to be addressed in the environmental process and related to the development of the ATMP for LAME. If you wish to provide comments responding to this scoping document, you may mail comments to the name and address below. The time available for comments is 45 days. Please note that names and addresses of people who comment become part of public record. If you wish to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations, businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses available for public inspection in their entirety.