

National Parks Air Tour Management Program



**Federal Aviation
Administration**



**National Park
Service**

**WELCOME –
We will begin shortly**

April 17, 2024



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Service**

Draft Air Tour
Management Plan for:

**Canyon de Chelly
National Monument**

April 17, 2024



Welcome

- Thank you for joining us today.
- Today's meeting focuses on the Draft Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) for Canyon De Chelly National Monument.
- We invite you to share your feedback on this Draft ATMP.
- Specific instructions will be provided throughout this meeting on how to submit your questions.
- This meeting is held pursuant to the National Parks Air Tour Management Act (NPATMA) and its implementing regulations.



Presenters

- **Eric Elmore** – FAA, Senior Policy Advisor
- **Vicki Ward** – NPS, Overflights Program Manager
- **Lyn Carranza** – NPS, Superintendent
- **Keith Lyons** – NPS, Integrated Resources Manager



Asking Questions

- Throughout the meeting, we invite you to share your questions. Please submit questions using the Google form posted by the FAA in the chat.
- Questions will be addressed at the end of the presentations as part of the Q&A portion as time will allow.
- The purpose of today's meeting is to provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions and clarify information so that you can submit official comments.



Submitting Official Comments

- All written official comments for the record must be submitted via the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) site or sent to the mailing addresses listed on the Canyon De Chelly National Monument PEPC site.
- These written comments become part of the official record.
- Please note that written comments must be submitted on or before **May 3, 2024, at 11:59 PM MDT.**



Format of Meeting

- This meeting will be 90 minutes long.
- We will adjourn at 7:30 PM Mountain Daylight Time.
- In the event all questions are addressed before this end time, we will continue to hold the meeting until this identified end time to allow for any additional questions that might come in.



National Parks Air Tour Management Program



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**Overview of the
National Parks Air
Tour Management
Act and Air Tour
Management Plans**

April 17, 2024



NPATMA Overview

- Requires the FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, to develop an Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) for those parks where operators have applied to conduct commercial air tours.
- An ATMP applies to commercial air tours:
 - Within ½-mile of a park; and
 - Below 5,000 feet altitude above ground level (AGL).
- Does not apply to general aviation, commercial airline, or military flights.
- Commercial air tour operators apply for FAA Interim Operating Authority (IOA) in order to operate over National Park System units.



Air Tour Management Plans

The objective of this ATMP is to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations on the Park's resources and values.



Air Tour Management Plans

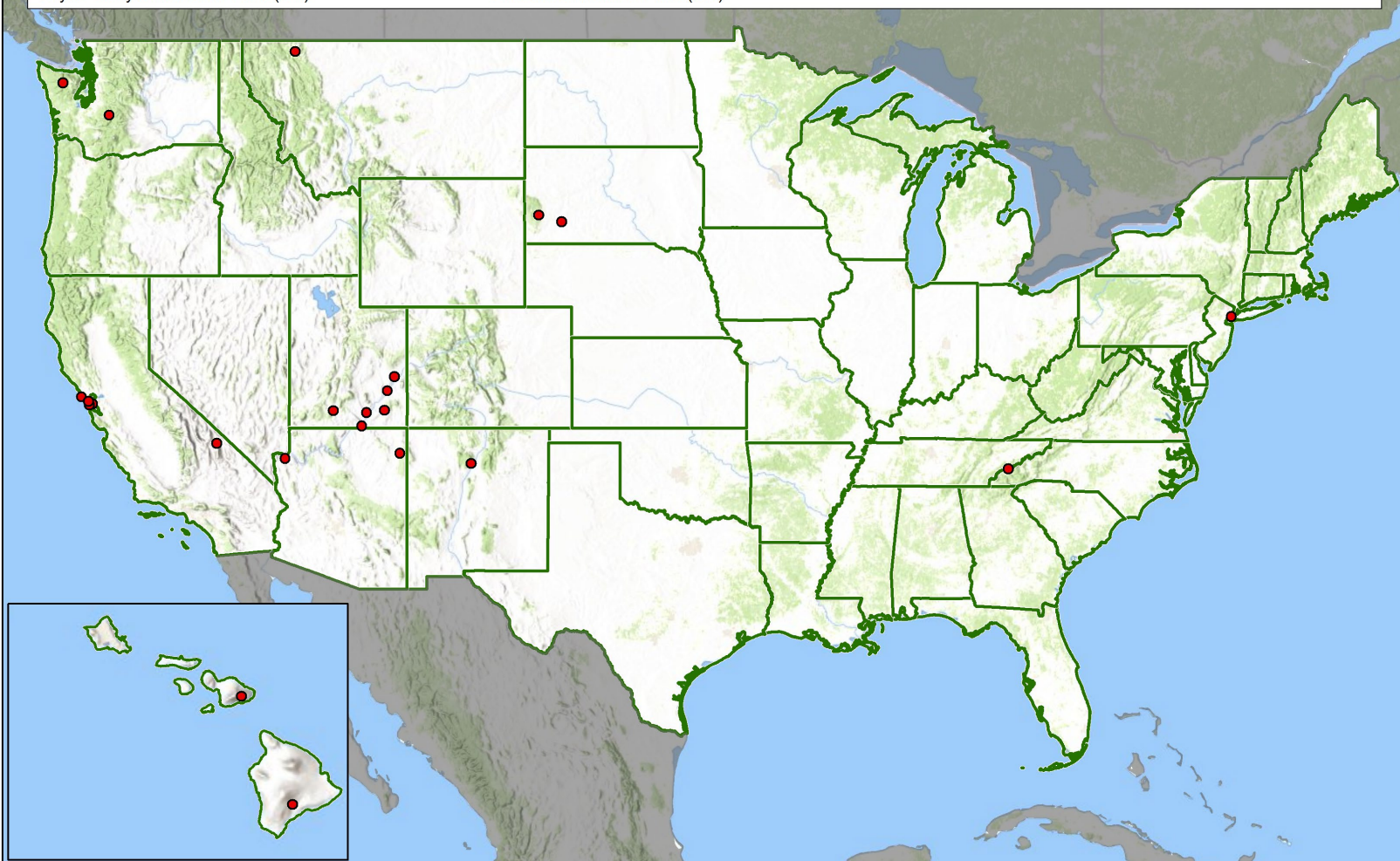
An ATMP:

- May prohibit commercial air tour operations in whole or in part;
- May establish conditions for the conduct of air tour operations including routes, altitudes, time-of-day restrictions, restrictions for particular events, maximum number of flights, etc.;
- Shall apply to all commercial air tour operations within ½-mile outside the boundary of a national park;
- Shall include incentives for the adoption of quiet aircraft technology;
- Shall provide for the allocation of opportunities to conduct air tours when the ATMP limits the number of operations; and
- Shall justify and document the need for measures taken pursuant to items above and include such justifications in the record of decision.



23 Parks

- Mount Rainier National Park (WA)
- Olympic National Park (WA)
- Point Reyes National Seashore (CA)
- San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (CA)
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area (CA)
- Muir Woods National Monument (CA)
- Death Valley National Park (CA/NV)
- Glacier National Park (MT)
- Bryce Canyon National Park (UT)
- Canyonlands National Park (UT)
- Rainbow Bridge National Monument (UT)
- Natural Bridges National Monument (UT)
- Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (UT)
- Arches National Park (UT)
- Canyon de Chelly National Monument (AZ)
- Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NV/AZ)
- Bandelier National Monument (NM)
- Mount Rushmore National Memorial (SD)
- Badlands National Park (SD)
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park (NC/TN)
- National Parks of New York Harbor (NY)
- Haleakalā National Park (HI)
- Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HI)



ATMP Updates

Completed ATMPs

- Arches National Park (UT)
- Badlands National Park (SD)
- Bandelier National Monument (NM)
- Bryce Canyon National Park (UT)
- Canyonlands National Park (UT)
- Death Valley National Park (CA/NV)
- Glacier National Park (MT)
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area (CA)
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park (NC/TN)
- Haleakalā National Park (HI)
- Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HI)
- Mount Rainier National Park (WA)
- Mount Rushmore National Memorial (SD)
- Muir Woods National Monument (CA)
- Natural Bridges National Monument (UT)
- Olympic National Park (WA)
- Point Reyes National Seashore (CA)
- San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (CA)

Ongoing ATMPs

- Canyon de Chelly National Monument (AZ)

Completed Voluntary Agreements (VAs)

- Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (UT) /
- Rainbow Bridge National Monument (UT)
- National Parks of New York Harbor (NY)

Ongoing Voluntary Agreement

- Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NV/AZ)



ATMP Development

- For each ATMP, the agencies:
 - Publish proposed ATMPs in the Federal Register;
 - Hold at least one public meeting; and
 - Comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other legal requirements.
- During today's meeting we will review the components of the Draft ATMP for Canyon de Chelly National Monument.



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**Draft Air Tour
Management Plan for:**

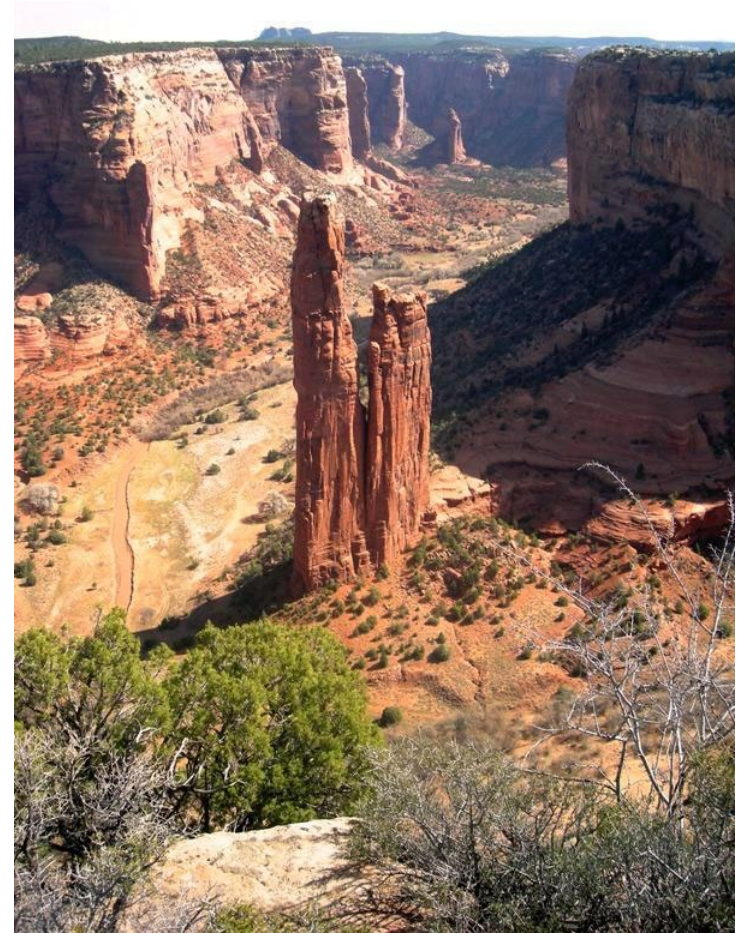
**Canyon de Chelly
National
Monument**

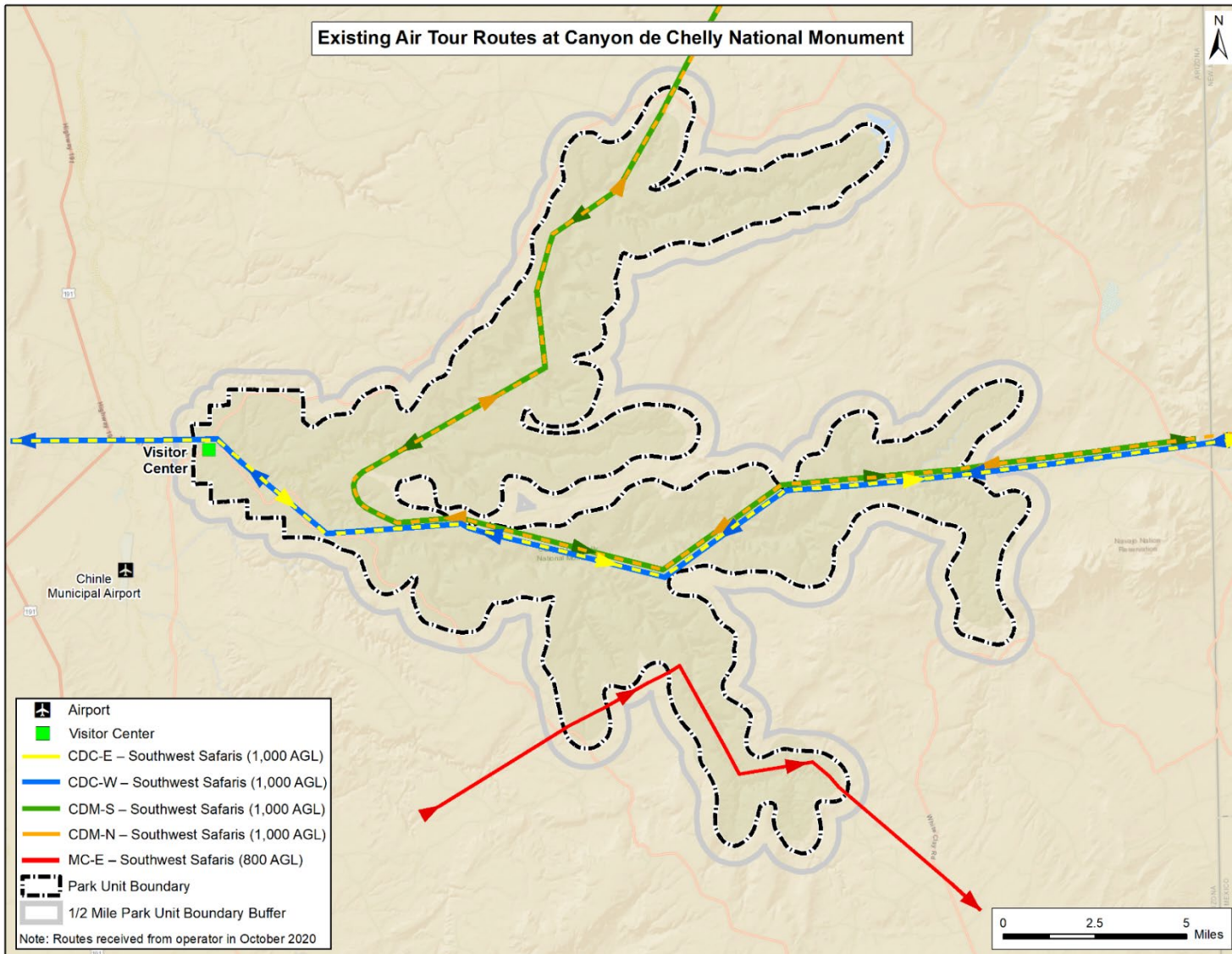
April 17, 2024



Park Overview

- The Park encompasses approximately 84,000 acres in northeastern Arizona within the Defiance Plateau on Tribal lands held by the United States in trust for the Navajo Nation. Approximately 80 Navajo families live in and around the Park.
- Specific places and natural features (e.g., Spider Rock, Fortress Rock, and celestial features) are physical expressions of the defining stories and events in the history of the Navajo people and retain profound spiritual and sacred significance.
- Canyon de Chelly is a physical and spiritual home that sustains the families who live in the canyons as well as a sacred place connecting all Navajo to their cultural heritage and beliefs.





Existing Air Tour Conditions

- Four commercial air tour operators currently hold Interim Operating Authority (IOA) for a total of 175 flights per year over the Park.
- Only one air tour operator reported data from 2017-2019 with an average of 43 total flights per year.
- Annual number of commercial air tours at the Park is limited by the IOA.
- IOA includes only an annual cap on the number of commercial air tours that may be conducted by an operator but does not designate the routes, time-of-day, altitudes, or other conditions for such tours.



Park Resources

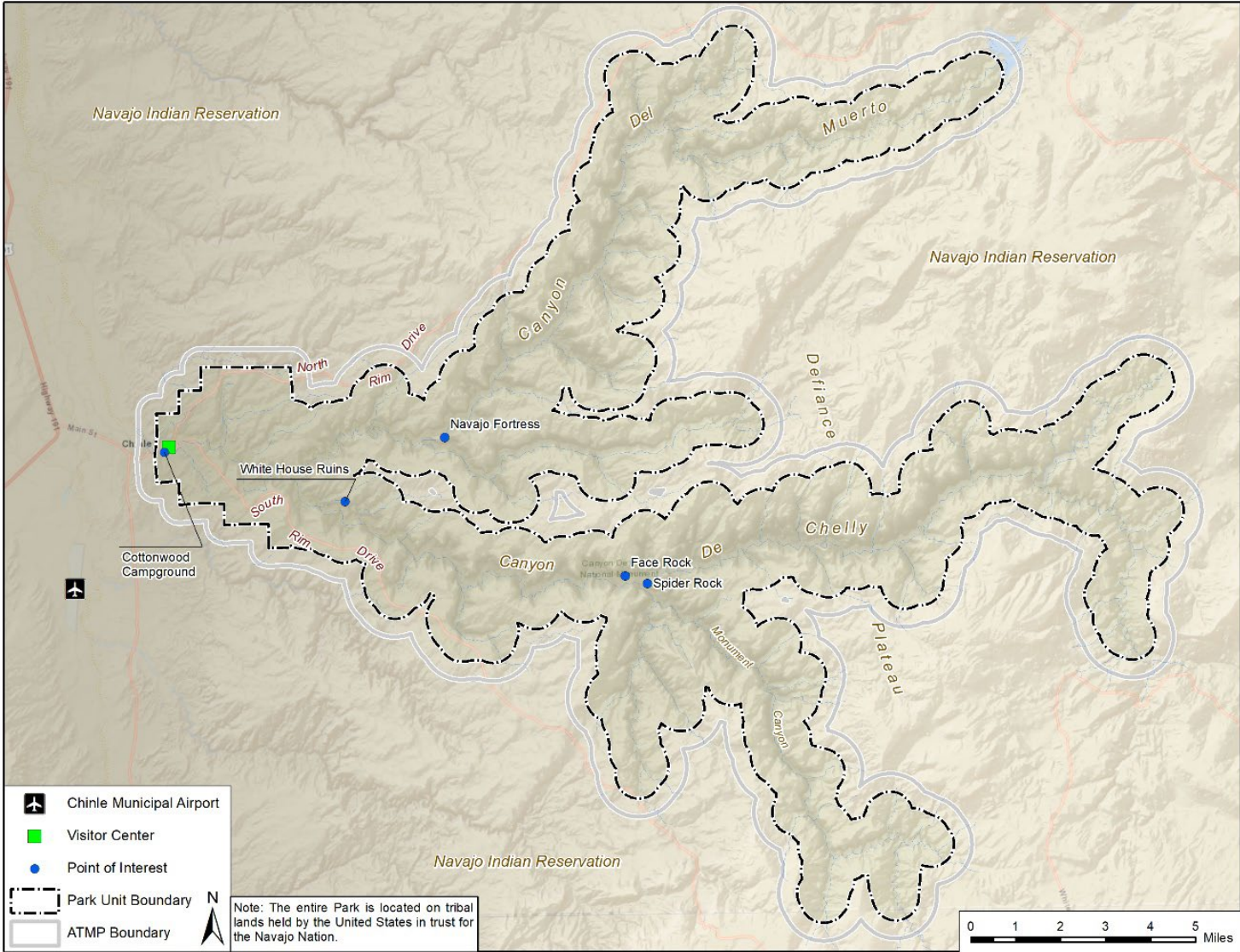
- The Park contains several thousand archeological sites, cliff dwellings, prehistoric/historic structures, ethnographic resources and sacred sites:
 - White House Ruins
 - Spider Rock
 - Fortress Rock
- Canyon de Chelly National Monument has a range of habitats for wildlife, including:
 - Yellow-billed cuckoo, southwestern willow flycatcher, peregrine falcon, bald eagle, golden eagle, American dipper, and Mexican spotted owl
 - Mule deer, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, gray fox, and American black bear



Draft ATMP for the Park

Attribute	Existing Air Tour Conditions	Draft ATMP
Number of Air Tours Authorized Per Year	IOA: 175 flights per year 3-Yr. Average (2017-2019): 43	0 flights per year The establishment of the ATMP would result in the termination of IOA for the operator.
Routes and Altitudes	No mandatory routes or no-fly zones	No air tours would be allowed within the ATMP boundary. Operators could fly routes outside the ATMP boundary, in unrestricted airspace, similar to existing flight paths, or routes could vary greatly from those currently flown and would depend on operator preference and weather conditions at the time of the tour, or above the ATMP boundary (at or above 5,000 ft. AGL).
Time-of-Day Restrictions	No restrictions, may occur at any time.	Commercial air tours would not be permitted within the ATMP boundary.
Day-of-Week Restrictions	No restrictions, may occur on any day of the week.	Commercial air tours would not be permitted within the ATMP boundary.
Restrictions for Particular Events	No restrictions, may occur on any day of the year.	Commercial air tours would not be permitted within the ATMP boundary.





Justification for Measures Taken

- The provisions and conditions in this ATMP are designed to protect the Park's cultural resources which necessarily include resources that are culturally and spiritually significant to the Navajo Nation because the Park is located entirely on Tribal trust lands.
- The provisions and conditions in the ATMP
 - protect the confidentiality of sacred sites in the Park which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in its entirety and contains many traditional cultural properties and other cultural resources that are sacred to the Navajo Nation;
 - respect the spiritual significance of the Park to the Navajo people;
 - maintain cultural connections to the Park;
 - respect privacy for Navajo people during traditional uses and ceremonies;
 - respect the privacy of the Navajo people living within the ATMP boundary; and
 - prioritize the voices and values of the people of the Navajo Nation, especially those that live within or adjacent to the Park.



Justification for Measures Taken

- Allowing commercial air tours within the ATMP boundary is inconsistent with the Park's purpose and values, which include perpetuating traditional Tribal cultural connections to the Park's landscapes.
- Since commercial air tours would negatively impact the privacy of the Navajo families living within the ATMP boundary and are inconsistent with the Park's purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values, the agencies have decided to prohibit commercial air tours within the ATMP boundary.



NEPA

- The FAA and the NPS are complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in development of the Draft ATMP.
- NEPA requires that the agencies:
 - Consider the human and natural environment that could be affected by their action (ATMP).
 - Determine the appropriate level of NEPA review.
 - Prepare associated environmental review documents.



Section 106 / NHPA

- The FAA and the NPS are complying with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in development of the Draft ATMP and Draft EA.
- Section 106 includes the requirement that the agencies:
 - Define the Undertaking and Identify Consulting Parties;
 - Determine the Area of Potential Effects and Identify Historic Properties;
 - Assess Effects to Historic Properties; and
 - Resolve Adverse Effects, if Any, to Historic Properties.
- The FAA and the NPS have consulted with the Navajo Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), Pueblo of Jemez THPO, Native American Tribes, and other Consulting Parties.
- The FAA proposed a Finding of No Adverse Effect to historic properties in a letter that was sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer and all Consulting Parties.



Section 7 / ESA

- The FAA and the NPS are complying with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in development of the Draft ATMP and Draft EA.
- Section 7 includes the requirement that the agencies:
 - Ensure their actions do not jeopardize the existence of any species listed under ESA or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat.
- The agencies completed the Section 7 analysis for federally listed species and anticipate the Preferred Alternative would have no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat.



Public Review of the Draft ATMP and Draft EA

- The FAA and the NPS invite official comments from the public, agencies, Native Tribes, and other interested parties on the Draft ATMP and Draft EA.
- Official comments must be received on or before **May 3, 2024**, at **11:59 PM MDT**.
- Submit your official comments:
 - Online:
[ParkPlanning - Canyon de Chelly National Monument Air Tour Management Plan \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/parkplanning/canyon-de-chelly-national-monument-air-tour-management-plan)
 - Via Mail:
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
Kaitlyn Rimol, V-326
Attn: Canyon de Chelly National Monument
220 Binney Street
Cambridge, MA 02142



Next Steps

- Following the end of the public comment period, the FAA and the NPS will:
 - Review the comments and use them to inform a final ATMP.
 - Complete Section 106 and any other necessary consultations and compliance.
 - Conclude the NEPA process and sign a decision document.
- Upon the completion of the public comment period, consultations, and NEPA process, the ATMP will be finalized. A final ATMP will be available on the FAA and the NPS websites.
- Operations specifications for the operator will be rescinded or amended by the FAA to incorporate the operating parameters set forth in the ATMP within 180 days after the effective date of the ATMP.



Questions and Comments

- **During the meeting**, please submit **questions** using the Google Form posted by the FAA in the chat.
- Please submit your **official comments** for the record on or before **May 3, 2024**, at **11:59 PM MDT**:
 - Online:
[ParkPlanning - Canyon de Chelly National Monument Air Tour Management Plan \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/parkplanning/canyon-de-chelly-national-monument-air-tour-management-plan)
 - Via Mail:
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
Kaitlyn Rimol, V-326
Attn: Canyon de Chelly National Monument ATMP
220 Binney Street
Cambridge, MA 02142

Protecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

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.

