



County Administrator's Office

Craig L. Pedro
County Administrator

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November 13, 2009

TO: Aircraft Owners, FBO's and PML Airpark Residents
FROM: Craig L. Pedro, County Administrator
SUBJECT: Noise Sensitive Areas

I would like to start by thanking each of you for your contributions to the health, safety and economic vitality of the Columbia and PML Airports. Both airports are important assets to our community and it takes all of us working together to ensure their continuation as the recreational, commercial and public safety hubs they are today.

The purpose of this memorandum is to remind you of the importance of being good neighbors to the communities surrounding the airports. One of the biggest issues that can lead to conflict between airports and the communities that surround them is that of excessive noise caused by aircraft. This issue has proven significant enough throughout the country that the FAA has issued Advisory Circulars on this topic. Please see the most recent of such circulars, AC No. 91-36D and the voluntary flight practices aimed at reducing noise related concerns near airports and other noise sensitive areas. Why should pilots care and follow such practices? I believe the following sentence found in the attached circular sums this up well:

"Adherence to these practices is a practical indication of pilot concern for the environment, which will build support for aviation and alleviate the need for any additional statutory or regulatory actions."

Consistent with this circular, the County of Tuolumne has established noise sensitive areas in the vicinity of both of the Columbia and PML Airports. Please see the attached noise sensitive area maps for both airports. It is the County's request that you familiarize yourself with these noise sensitive areas and attempt to avoid them altogether as well as exercise good noise mitigation flight practices in general.

Thanks again for your contributions to our airports and your cooperation in being good neighbors to the communities surrounding them. By doing so, you will be helping to *build support for aviation* in our County.

Questions and/or clarifications with respect to the County's noise sensitive areas and noise mitigation best practices should be directed to Airport Manager Jim Thomas at 533-5685.

...serving the Board of Supervisors, departments, and the community as good stewards of the County's fiscal and human resources through collaborative, professional and ethical leadership.



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Aviation
Administration

ADVISORY CIRCULAR

Subject: VISUAL FLIGHT RULES (VFR) FLIGHT NEAR NOISE-SENSITIVE AREAS **Date: September 17, 2004** **AC No: 91-36D**

Initiated by: ATO-R

- 1. PURPOSE.** This Advisory Circular (AC) encourages pilots making VFR flights near noise-sensitive areas to fly at altitudes higher than the minimum permitted by regulation and on flight paths that will reduce aircraft noise in such areas.
- 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This advisory circular is effective on September 17, 2004.
- 3. CANCELLATION.** Advisory Circular 91-36C, Visual Flight Rules (VFR) Flight Near Noise Sensitive Areas, dated October 19, 1984, is cancelled.
- 4. AUTHORITY.** The FAA has authority to formulate policy regarding use of the navigable airspace (Title 49 United States Code, Section 40103).
- 5. EXPLANATION OF CHANGES.** This AC has been updated to include a definition of "noise-sensitive" area and add references to Public Law 100-91; the FAA Noise Policy for Management of Airspace Over Federally Managed Lands, dated November 1996; and the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000, with other minor wording changes.
- 6. BACKGROUND.**
 - a. Excessive aircraft noise can result in annoyance, inconvenience, or interference with the uses and enjoyment of property, and can adversely affect wildlife. It is particularly undesirable in areas where it interferes with normal activities associated with the area's use, including residential, educational, health, and religious structures and sites, and parks, recreational areas (including areas with wilderness characteristics), wildlife refuges, and cultural and historical sites where a quiet setting is a generally recognized feature or attribute. Moreover, the FAA recognizes that there are locations in National Parks and other federally managed areas that have unique noise-sensitive values. The Noise Policy for Management of Airspace Over Federally Managed Areas, issued November 8, 1996, states that it is the policy of the FAA in its management of the navigable airspace over these locations to exercise leadership in achieving an appropriate balance between efficiency, technological practicability, and environmental concerns, while maintaining the highest level of safety.
 - b. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) receives complaints concerning low flying aircraft over noise sensitive areas such as National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, Waterfowl Production Areas and Wilderness Areas. Congress addressed aircraft flights over Grand Canyon National Park in Public Law 100-91 and commercial air tour operations over other units of the National Park System (and tribal lands within or abutting such units) in the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000.
 - c. Increased emphasis on improving the quality of the environment requires a continuing effort to provide relief and protection from low flying aircraft noise.
 - d. Potential noise impacts to noise-sensitive areas from low altitude aircraft flights can also be addressed

through application of the voluntary practices set forth in this AC. Adherence to these practices is a practical indication of pilot concern for the environment, which will build support for aviation and alleviate the need for any additional statutory or regulatory actions.

7. DEFINITION. For the purposes of this AC, an area is “noise-sensitive” if noise interferes with normal activities associated with the area’s use. Examples of noise-sensitive areas include residential, educational, health, and religious structures and sites, and parks, recreational areas (including areas with wilderness characteristics), wildlife refuges, and cultural and historical sites where a quiet setting is a generally recognized feature or attribute.

8. VOLUNTARY PRACTICES.

a. Avoidance of noise-sensitive areas, if practical, is preferable to overflight at relatively low altitudes.

b. Pilots operating noise producing aircraft (fixed-wing, rotary-wing and hot air balloons) over noise-sensitive areas should make every effort to fly not less than 2,000 feet above ground level (AGL), weather permitting. For the purpose of this AC, the ground level of noise-sensitive areas is defined to include the highest terrain within 2,000 feet AGL laterally of the route of flight, or the uppermost rim of a canyon or valley. The intent of the 2,000 feet AGL recommendation is to reduce potential interference with wildlife and complaints of noise disturbances caused by low flying aircraft over noise-sensitive areas.

c. Departure from or arrival to an airport, climb after take-off, and descent for landing should be made so as to avoid prolonged flight at low altitudes near noise-sensitive areas.

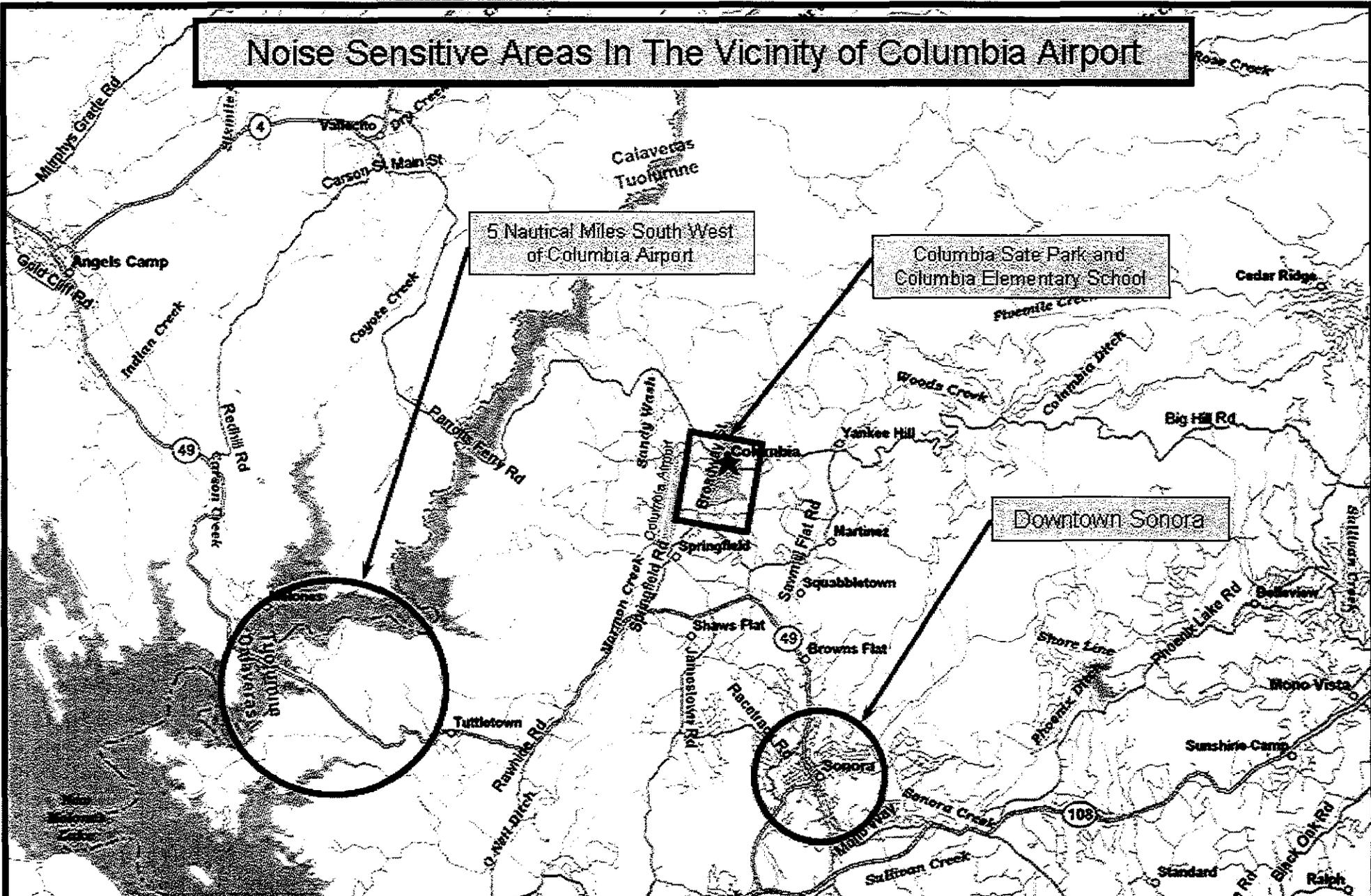
d. This advisory does not apply where it would conflict with Federal Aviation Regulations, air traffic control clearances or instructions, or where an altitude of less than 2,000 feet AGL is considered necessary by a pilot to operate safely.

9. COOPERATIVE ACTIONS. Aircraft operators, aviation associations, airport managers, and others are asked to assist in voluntary compliance with this AC by publicizing it and distributing information regarding known noise-sensitive areas.

Signed

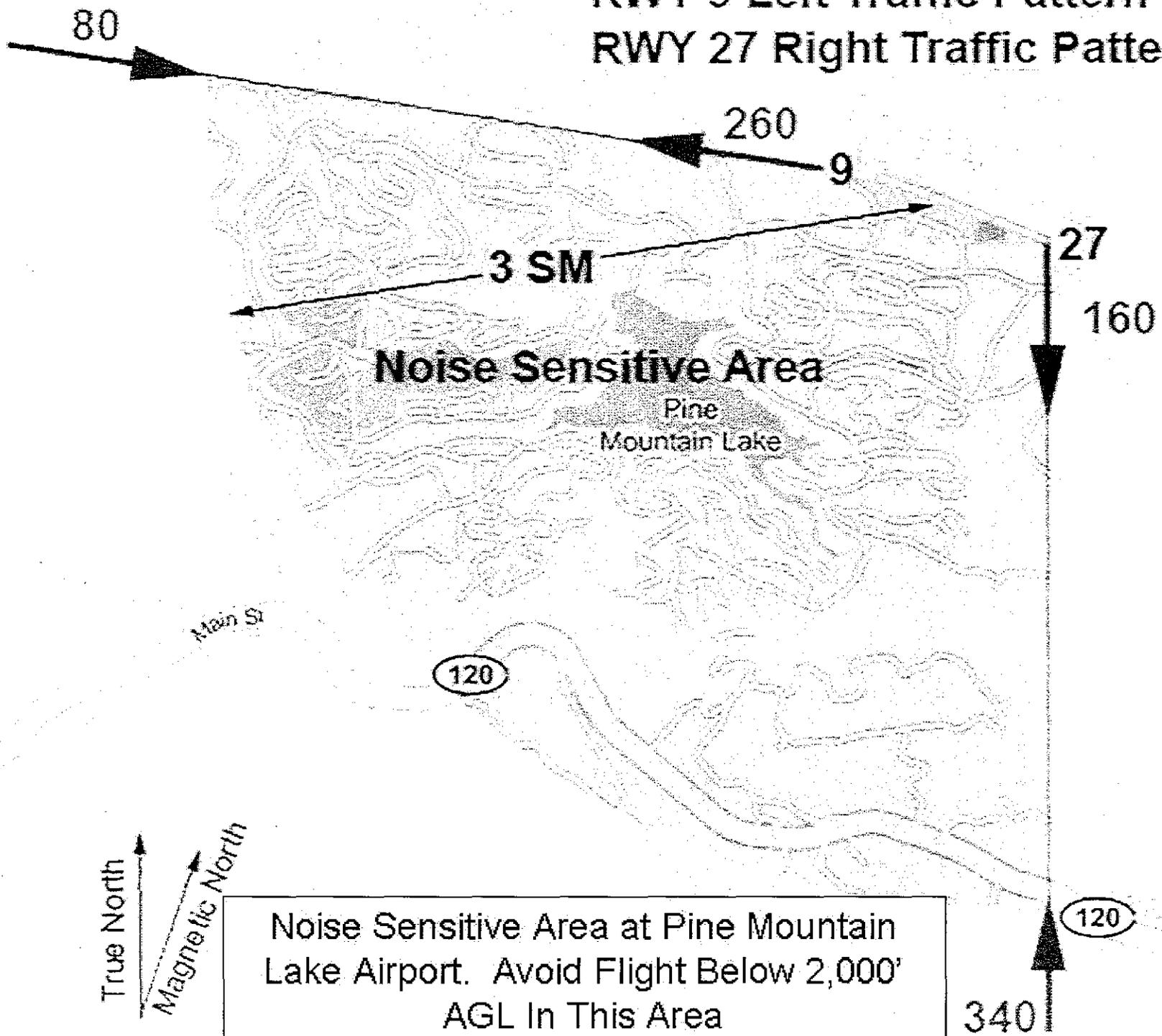
Sabra W. Kaulia
Director of System Operations & Safety

Noise Sensitive Areas In The Vicinity of Columbia Airport



Pilots should avoid flights over Downtown Sonora, Columbia State Park NE of Airport and the Highway 49 Bridge 5 nautical Miles SW of the Airport, and its vicinity.

RWY 9 Left Traffic Pattern
RWY 27 Right Traffic Pattern



Noise Sensitive Area

Pine
Mountain Lake

Main St

120

120

True North
Magnetic North

Noise Sensitive Area at Pine Mountain
Lake Airport. Avoid Flight Below 2,000'
AGL In This Area

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