

Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses



AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION

COLUMBIA AND PINE MOUNTAIN LAKE AIRPORTS

BEV SHANE, AICP  
Secretary

48 W. Yaney, Sonora  
Mailing: 2 S. Green Street  
Sonora, CA 95370  
(209) 533-5633  
(209) 533-5616 (fax)

October 7, 2005

Mr. C.H. Freeman  
Coalition for Better Government in Tuolumne County  
P.O. Box 5133  
Sonora, CA 95370

RE: Aircraft Overflights

Dear Cleo:

In response to your letter concerning aircraft overflights, I concur that the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) does not have authority over such activities. However, Chapter 3 of the Airport Land Use Planning Handbook published by the California Division of Aeronautics lists aircraft overflights as one of the four concerns that must be addressed by ALUC's in formulating their compatibility plans for the development of land influenced by an airport. As required, Tuolumne County's Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan does address aircraft overflights in Chapter 2.4.4. That chapter identifies the area of overflight concerns as coinciding with the boundary of the airport influence area meaning that all areas within the influence boundary may be subject to noise and safety issues related to aircraft overflights. This area reflects the traffic patterns established by the Board of Supervisors in Title 18 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code as you noted in your letter.

The issue concerning overflights that was raised at recent meetings of the ALUC was focused on a private organization's posting signs advising pilots not to fly over the lake in the center of the Pine Mountain Lake Subdivision. The ALUC's discussion was simply that there are no regulations that restrict a pilot from flying over the lake and that the signs were, therefore, misleading and should be removed. There was no discussion about regulating the overflights; the discussion was simply an acknowledgement that overflights are allowed throughout the airport influence area.

The conclusion of the ALUC's discussion concerning this matter was to accept Airports Director Jim Thomas' offer to present the issue at the next meeting of the Pine Mountain Lake Airports Association and to post information concerning overflights on the airport's website. I did not send a letter to the Association as had been mentioned by Commissioner Dick Collier in his opening remarks concerning this matter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any other questions concerning this matter or if I can be of further assistance to you.

Respectfully,

Bev Shane, AICP  
ALUC Secretary

cc: Brent Wallace, County Administrator  
Gregory Oliver, County Counsel

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

## Letter I-19, Continued

## Comments

## Responses

Thomas and Ingrid Ritz  
 P. O. Box 326  
 Columbia, CA 95310  
 Telephone: (209) 536-1572  
 (Residence Address: 20730 Jackass Hill Rd., Sonora, CA 95370)

received  
 REF 911 1000

Hand-delivered  
 to Cindy at  
 Headquarters at  
 12:25 pm 12/30/08  
 By: Brooks to return  
 Mon, 01/05/09

December 30, 2008

Ms. Peggi Brooks, Resource Manager New Melones Lake  
 New Melones Resources Branch  
 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
 6850 Studhorse Flat Road  
 Sonora, CA 95370

**RE: New Melones Lake Project Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS)—Comments in Support of Alternative Actions TA13C (Conservation) and TA13B Topic: Adverse Aircraft Overflight Activities.**

Dear Ms. Brooks:

In accordance with our December 5, 2008 discussion at your facility, this follow-up letter is to strongly urge adoption by your Agency of RMP/EIS Table 2-2 (page 2-22), Topic: Aircraft, Alternative C, Action TA 13C, to include Alternative B, Action TA 13B. Implementation of strategy to address extremely adverse and dangerous overflight activities to include specific proactive communication with appropriate Tuolumne County personnel: The County has only one inexperienced employee in authority for 2 County airports, Jim Thomas, Airports Director/Manager, also Tuolumne County Administrator, Craig Pedro AND to include communication with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to request that the FAA restrict airspace (for all general aviation flights only in the designated restricted airspace, thereby not affecting commercial airlines-interstate commerce-which does NOT originate anywhere in Tuolumne County or surrounding counties) over New Melones Lake Area to protect public safety and critical infrastructure, to include Alternative C, Action TA 13C to enforce designated no-fly zones near critical infrastructure for all aircraft (again, restrict only all general aviation aircraft in the designated no-fly zones) and restrict access to New Melones Lake for seaplane activities.

Adverse aircraft overflight activity of New Melones Lake critical infrastructure is primarily caused by the general aviation aircraft using Columbia Airport, a popular non-towered general aviation airport having very limited, ineffectual, inexperienced airport manager on-premises only 4 weekdays per week, 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., not every week of the year. During peak use times, weekends and holidays, there is absolutely no airport manager or any County employee with authority at Columbia Airport. No County employee is ever there after 4 p.m. any day. Columbia Airport is open 24/7, 52 weeks per year, has self-serve fuel facility, and locked perimeter fence restricting public access & scrutiny and, as stated, very questionable and limited airport management when on premises. Pilots are in charge. Columbia Airport has tenants (FBOs) who offer uncontrolled pilot training and biplane barnstorming and aerobatic rides for hire. Columbia Airport is owned and operated by Tuolumne County, a government agency proprietor, and therefore, is governed by State of California rules & regulations which are knowingly ignored by Tuolumne County officials—this includes continuing to misdirect its incoming & outgoing air traffic to the Highway 49 bridge & vicinity, thus causing daily dangerous mid-air collision environment over New Melones Lake, most specifically over New Melones critical infrastructure and over adjacent residential Jackass Hill in Tuolumne County, where our home, overlooking New Melones Lake & Dam, is located. All terrain surrounding New Melones

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infrastructure is “aircraft unfriendly”: No flat areas for aircraft emergency landing in the wildfire prone hillsides & canyons exists in this area being routinely and wrongly overflown.

Seaplane activity co-mingles with Columbia Airport’s mismanaged and mis-directed uncontrolled general aviation air traffic, both flying to AND departing from Columbia Airport as well as Columbia’s air traffic randomly flying around for sightseeing and dangerous aerobatic activities, none of it controlled or authorized in the New Melones Lake area. We observe this air activity daily from our home.

Documented Columbia Airport air traffic departure patterns and FAA designated departing IFR pattern (Columbia Airport is not equipped for instrument [IFR] landing, but aircraft routinely “scud-run” to land when there is no visibility over New Melones Lake and canyon areas) and FAA designated GPS patterns and FAA Visual Flight Rules (VFR) approach flight paths DO NOT cross over New Melones Lake, yet the vast majority of Columbia’s air traffic routinely and continually overflies Tuttleground Campgrounds, New Melones Headquarters/Visitors Center Complex, Glory Hole Marina and Campgrounds, New Melones Dam and Power Plant, and continually overflies, in opposing directions, our home and other homes on Jackass Hill, the hill adjacent to New Melones Lake critical infrastructures, thereby compromising public safety and welfare to a highly dangerous degree for all of us, including New Melones Lake critical infrastructure.

For several years, we have attempted to work with high level Tuolumne County government officials to have them properly re-direct Columbia Airport’s air traffic away from our home on Jackass Hill and away from New Melones Lake critical infrastructure, back to Columbia Airport’s proper and legal designated, documented official air traffic patterns located in-line with Columbia Airport’s main runway, south of New Melones Lake, patterns which are being consistently ignored; instead, by failing to monitor Columbia’s air traffic and turning a blind eye to the problem, County Airport Management continues to unlawfully “encourage” pilots to overfly our home and immediate area (Jackass Hill), the Highway 49-Stevenot Bridge, and, consequently, also overfly all of New Melones Lake critical infrastructure, on mid-air collision courses, flying directly into the sun (East to West), thus blinding at least one pilot in the mix.

Finally, in the second half of 2008, our efforts did result in the Tuolumne County Airport Manager reluctantly requesting publication of a notice in the *FAA Airport/Facility Directory* for pilots using Columbia Airport to “Avoid flights over...Highway 49 bridge 5 NM southwest of arpt and vicinity” (copy attached). HOWEVER, this *FAA Directory* notice is being systematically IGNORED both by Tuolumne County Airport Management and the vast majority of pilots using Columbia Airport, including local pilots based at Columbia Airport who continue to routinely overfly the New Melones infrastructure areas. Despite our written requests, Tuolumne County has consistently refused to post any notices that pilots might actually SEE at Columbia Airport to avoid overflights of New Melones Lake critical infrastructure and Jackass Hill and the Highway 49 bridge (to coincide with the *FAA Directory Notice* to Pilots). We personally know from conversations with the County Airports Director/Manager Jim Thomas that, as a local private pilot himself, he wrongly believes pilots using Columbia Airport should be flying over the Highway 49 bridge and the surrounding area and he remains oblivious of documented, safe Columbia Airport patterns. He is dead wrong and is failing to disseminate effective information to coincide with his own *FAA Airport Directory* notice.

It is quite obvious to us that Tuolumne County is not willing to and will not take its airport proprietor responsibilities seriously, despite its legal responsibility and major liability relative to overflights, and, to date, remains unconcerned about aircraft using Columbia Airport actively creating an

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ongoing public safety hazard and serious negative environmental impact to New Melones Lake and its critical infrastructure and to our Tuolumne County residential area immediately adjacent to New Melones Lake and that infrastructure.

Attached is a copy of our October 29, 2007 letter to your Agency commenting on adverse aircraft overflights of New Melones Lake and its critical infrastructure and New Melones Dam. Pilots using Columbia Airport do not file flight plans, no one keeps records of who flies in and out of that airport, overflights continue at all hours day and night, unsupervised and unobserved. In our opinion, this non-towered general aviation is a serious risk to public safety and national security in many ways. Columbia Airport is vital only because it is an important CalFIRE Air Attack Base. CalFIRE Air Attack is critical to firefighting efforts on Jackass Hill and surrounding area because Tuolumne County has absolutely no firefighting infrastructure or piped water system, no fire hydrants, and no nearby ground crews able to combat frequent uncontrolled wildfires in this area during many months of wildfire season without CalFIRE air tankers & helicopters. In July 2008, another fire threatened this immediate area, including our home. For us, this event again highlighted the major disaster that will occur to New Melones Lake critical infrastructure and to our home when an aircraft using Columbia Airport crashes in our extreme wildfire prone, inaccessible, rugged terrain. Hundreds of cross-traffic, unregulated overflights, at varying altitudes, take place over New Melones Lake critical infrastructure weekly. It is just a matter of time before a serious air disaster occurs which can easily destroy your Agency's critical infrastructure, homes on Jackass Hill, including ours, and result in death, entrapment, and serious injury to persons on the ground.

Because CalFIRE aircraft during fire emergencies do not come under any State or Federal flight regulations, their activities at Columbia Airport cannot be used by Tuolumne County to justify or condone the "cowboy airport" reputation that Columbia Airport currently has because of lack of any County control of private pilots using its airport, including ignoring its documented airport traffic patterns. Pilots consider Columbia Airport an "anything goes" airport and the mid-air collision public safety danger to our shared New Melones Lake/Jackass Hill area has already been put on record by the FAA in 1994, as discussed in our October 29, 2007 letter to your Agency commenting on the RMP/EIS.

We already know that "Above Ground Level (AGL) altitude recommendations" to general aviation pilots using a non-towered airport are worthless to solve adverse overflight activities of New Melones infrastructure because: 1.) Due to the highly irregular terrain, many general aviation (often novice) pilots have no idea what altitude they are flying from one second to the next; 2.) altitude recommendations are ignored by pilots because no one is around to monitor what altitude they're flying 5 and 6 air miles from the airport; 3.) altitude recommendations have nothing to do with the fact pilots depart and approach Columbia Airport over unsafe terrain and from the wrong direction, flying non-existent extended patterns to which that Airport is not legally entitled, while avoiding the safe, documented air traffic patterns and FAA Visual Flight Rules approach procedures; 4.) mid-air collisions and aircraft malfunctions occur at any altitude. The only viable solution is to designate a restricted no-fly zone, which cannot be ignored, to protect New Melones critical infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Ritz and Ingrid Ritz

- Enclosures: 1.) FAA Airport/Facility Directory-Columbia Airport-20 Nov. 2008 to 15 Jan. 2009.  
2.) Our Oct. 29, 2007 RMP/EIS Comment Letter to Elizabeth Vasquez, US Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Office.

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FAA Airport/Facility Directory (online)

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

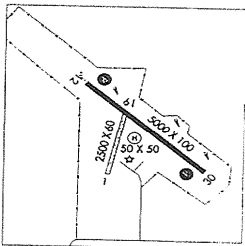
86 CALIFORNIA

**NEW COALINGA MUNI (C88) 3 E UTS-8(-7DT) N36°09.79'W120°17.83'** SAN FRANCISCO H-4G, L-3C

622 B FUEL 100LL TPA-1622(1000)  
 RWY 12-30: H5000X100 (ASPH) S-30 MIRL  
 RWY 12: REIL. PAPI(P2L)—GA 3.0° TCH 40'.  
 RWY 30: REIL. PAPI(P2L)—GA 3.0° TCH 40'. Rgt tfc.  
 RWY 01-19: 2500X60 (ASPH-GRVL) S-12.5  
 RWY 19: Rgt tfc.

**AIRPORT REMARKS:** Attended irregularly. Rwy 01-19 avbl for daytime use only. Rwy 01-19 restricted by arpt management to acct under 6000 lbs single wheel. Rwy 01-19 surface oil treated. Rwy 01-19 is in poor condition, asphalt-gravel cracked in places with small potholes, rocks and loose gravel. ACTIVATE MIRL Rwy 12-30, Perimeter lgts Rwy H1, PAPI Rwy 12 and Rwy 30, REIL Rwy 12 and Rwy 30 on dusk -0800Z after 0800Z—CTAF.

**WEATHER DATA SOURCES:** AWOS-3 119.275 (559) 935-5960.  
**COMMUNICATIONS:** CTAF/UNICOM 122.7  
**RANCHO MURRIETA FSS (RIU) TF 1-800-WX-BRIEF, NOTAM FILE RIU.**  
**RADIO AIDS TO NAVIGATION:** NOTAM FILE GAK.  
**PASO ROBLES (U) VORTACW 114.3 PRS Chan 90**  
 N35°40.35'W120°37.60' O13° 33.6 NM to fld. 820/16E.  
 HIWAS



.....  
 HELIPAD H1: H5000X100 (ASPH)  
 HELIPORT REMARKS: Helipad H1 perimeter lgts.

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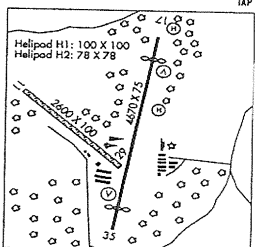
**COLUMBIA (022) 1 SW UTC-8(-7DT) N38°01.63'W120°24.87'** SAN FRANCISCO L-3B IAP

2118 B S4 FUEL 100LL, JET A OX 2.4 TPA-3118(1000)  
 RWY 17-35: H4670X75 (ASPH) S-30 MIRL 1.0% up N  
 RWY 17: REIL. VASI(V2L)—GA 4.55° TCH 55'. Tnid dspcd 595'.  
 Ground. Rgt tfc.  
 RWY 35: REIL. VASI(V2L)—GA 4.0° TCH 41'. Tnid dspcd 589'.  
 Trees.  
 RWY 11-29: 2600X100 (TURF)  
 RWY 11: Trees. Rgt tfc. RWY 29: Trees.

**AIRPORT REMARKS:** Attended 1600-0100Z. CAUTION: Deer on and in/vol arpt. Rwy 11 departures prohibited due to conflict with main rwy. Varying wind direction and velocity may be encountered at mid point of Rwy 17-35 due to terrain features and wind flow patterns. Rwy 29 not recommended for use during winter months Nov through Mar. Dirt twy north side of Rwy 11-29 not recommended for use Nov-Mar. Ultralight activity on arpt, southwest tlc pattern altitude 500' below standard arpt tlc pattern to Rwy 29. Ultralights to opr west of Rwy 35. All Jet and high performance acct equipped with 250 horsepower engines and more are requested to land Rwy 35 and depart Rwy 17 wind and weather permitting. Arpt has two rotating beacons, one on the arpt and one 6500' SE threshold Rwy 35. Forestry Air Tanker ops from arpt during summer fire season. Ldg fee for all commercial operators regardless of size and corporate acct over 12,500 pounds gross ldg weight. Avoid flights over Columbia State Park NE of arpt, and Highway 49 bridge 5 NM southwest of arpt and vicinity. Helicopter parking area 300' by 120' (3 positions). Rwy 35 VASI unusable by 5' left and 5' right of rwy centerline. ACTIVATE MIRL Rwy 17-35 and REIL Rwy 17 and Rwy 35—CTAF. VASI Rwy 17 and Rwy 35 opr continuously.

**WEATHER DATA SOURCES:** AWOS-3 124.65 (209) 536-9384.  
**COMMUNICATIONS:** CTAF/UNICOM 122.975  
**RANCHO MURRIETA FSS (RIU) TF 1-800-WX-BRIEF, NOTAM FILE RIU.**  
**NORCAL APP/DEP CDM 123.7 (North) 125.1 (West)**  
**OKLAND CENTER APP/DEP CDM 126.85 (East)**  
**RADIO AIDS TO NAVIGATION:** NOTAM FILE RIU.  
**LINDEK (H) VORTAC 114.8 LIN Chan 95 N38°04.48' W121°00.23' 078° 28.1 NM to fld. 260/17E.**

.....  
 HELIPAD H1: H5000X100 (ASPH)  
 HELIPAD H2: H78X78 (ASPH)



SW, 20 NOVEMBER 2008 to 15 JANUARY 2009

**Letter I-19, Continued**

**Comments**

**Responses**

**Thomas and Ingrid Ruiz**  
 P. O. Box 326  
 Columbia, CA 95310  
 Telephone: (209) 536-1572  
 (Residence Address: 20730 Jackass Hill Rd., Sonora, CA 95370)

October 29, 2007

*2 copies - hand delivered*

Ms. Elizabeth Vasquez  
 Central California Area Office  
 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
 7794 Folsom Dam Road  
 Folsom, California 95630

**received**  
 OCT 29 2007  
*at US Bureau of Reclamation  
 Headquarters: New Melones Lake  
 given to Jeff Laird and  
 Peggy Brooks, U.S.*

RE: *New Melones Lake Project Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS)*--Follow-up to our discussion with New Melones Lake Chief Ranger Jeff Laird regarding correspondence between your office and Tuolumne County; easily preventable significant and hazardous negative environmental impacts to Reclamation's facilities (and to our home) being caused by private aircraft using Columbia Airport, a general aviation airport owned and operated by Tuolumne County.

Dear Ms. Vasquez:

We are writing to you at the request of Jeff Laird, New Melones Lake Chief Ranger, with whom we met on the afternoon of Tuesday, October 16, 2007 at Reclamation's New Melones Lake Headquarters. Several days earlier, we had learned of the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors Oct. 16, 2007 agenda item to approve a letter advising you that Tuolumne County wishes to become a cooperative agency to your New Melones Lake Project RMP/EIS process. We obtained a copy of the Board's agenda item package and were surprised to see Tuolumne County's February 13, 2007 scoping comments letter for your RMP/EIS in which the County makes a number of demands of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

By way of introduction, with the exception of the home located on the same road as Reclamation's New Melones Lake Headquarters complex, we are the closest neighbors to your Headquarters. Our home on Jackass Hill is just over the hilltop immediately east of your Headquarters. (See attached satellite photo.) Being about 500 feet above your Headquarters and Visitors Center and above Highway 49, from our 3-story home, we have an unobstructed 6-mile view of New Melones Lake stretching from about 2 miles south of New Melones Dam past the Spillway to the edge of Glory Hole Marina, including your Tuttle town Campgrounds directly in front of us. (See attached photo taken from our 3<sup>rd</sup> floor deck.)

Because of our location, we are able to observe and hear the same Columbia Airport unregulated opposing inbound and outbound private aircraft overflights of New Melones Lake, your recreational campgrounds, and your Headquarters complex at the Stevenot Bridge that fly in opposing directions directly over and around our home too. Based upon our daily observations and professional measurements made at our home, we estimate about 95% of Columbia Airport's inbound and outbound repetitive air traffic, starting as early as 5:30 a.m. and occurring as late as 3:00 a.m., most intense on summer weekends when attendance is greatest at your recreational facilities and our area's wildfire danger is at its peak, causes severe negative environmental impacts at our home and at Reclamation's facilities. None of this hazardous and exceedingly loud overflight cross-traffic existed in this entire area prior to September 1992; it should not be in our location now because Columbia Airport has documented air traffic patterns which County administration and pilots are choosing to ignore. (We purchased our property in March 1986 and had our home built in 1990-91. We were very aware of Columbia Airport's traffic patterns and its activities at the time because we had flown into Columbia Airport many times.) Beginning in September 1992 and escalating through early 1993, in violation of State and Federal laws

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## Letter I-19, Continued

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governing airports and without benefit of required environmental CEQA review, and without any NEPA review because federal U.S. Bureau of Reclamation lands were also suddenly significantly negatively impacted by Columbia Airport's inbound and outbound aircraft overflights which had not previously routinely overflown the area, many local and visiting pilots using Columbia Airport (well-organized in local and State pilot organizations), soon supported by Tuolumne County officials, started to overfly our home and the Stevenot Bridge at the base of our hill to approach and depart Columbia Airport **instead** of continuing to fly Columbia Airport's normal, usual, documented VFR (observing visual flight rules) air traffic patterns which extend over the Rawhide Road region south of New Melones Lake into the Jamestown Mine area near Hwy. 108, the area in direct line with the runway (also the location of FAA mandated extended instrument [IFR] and GPS flight patterns). A single County mis-handled biplane complaint made by us, in early September 1992, started this disaster for us—and for your facilities. Since September 1992, every inbound and outbound overflight of our home, over your recreational facilities, over the Stevenot Bridge, over your Headquarters complex, and over the canyons surrounding Jackass Hill, fills every room of our home with loud aircraft noise of long duration. To make matters worse, our home is in an “acoustic hot spot” formed by the terrain which collects, amplifies, lengthens, and distorts overhead aircraft noise. We hired a State certified acoustic engineer to document the daily overflight noise disturbances inside and outside our home. Each exceedingly loud and disruptive “overflight noise event” at our home, in our otherwise extremely quiet environment, is heard for 4 minutes (a health hazard); the acoustic engineer prepared official reports documenting 100+ cross-traffic overflight “noise events” at our home per day. (*See attached copy of graph documenting early morning overflight noise levels.*) We have driven down to Reclamation's Tuttle town Campground to observe and listen to the same early morning aircraft overflights: The long-duration piercing overflight noise was ear-shattering at your campground as well. We have boated on New Melones Lake and once attended an outdoor lecture at Glory Hole Campground. Loud aircraft overflight noise intruded into those activities too.

As another direct result of Columbia Airport's mis-directed air traffic, at home we are subject to the daily dangerous health and safety hazards associated with frequent cross-traffic aircraft overflights which include mid-air collision and single plane emergency crash landing in our “extreme wildfire hazard” classified area on an unprotected hilltop. The same negative environmental health and safety impacts affect Reclamation's recreational facilities, including your Headquarters complex. For this very reason, to keep such severe adverse environmental and safety hazards away from negatively impacting outlying areas, State Aeronautics Law governing airports requires routine repetitive severe aircraft noise and air safety hazards to be contained inside the legislated boundaries of the County's “Columbia Airport Influence Area,” and close to the airport runways, as documented in its State mandated “Tuolumne County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.” For your information, none of Reclamation's New Melones waters and lands is located inside the boundaries of the “Columbia Airport Influence Area” and neither is any part of Jackass Hill, where we live, or the surrounding area. (*See Reclamation's New Melones Area Map with superimposed Columbia Airport data.*) The FAA has testified that our area is much too far away from Columbia Airport to be included in any airport pattern. Currently, Tuolumne County's airport related plans and documents, including County ordinances, are inconsistent with one another in violation of State law. County Counsel Gregory Oliver is aware of this. Nothing has been done to correct that situation either.

Many of the pilots who overfly our shared area are inexperienced novices. Some are stunt pilots. Some, based at Columbia Airport, give rides for hire over us and New Melones Lake, despite having been told by the FAA long ago to avoid this rugged area. There are no flat areas anywhere around us for emergency landing. The FAA has testified on our behalf that cross-traffic inbound and outbound overflights of our area, far away from Columbia Airport (5 air miles)—an area which is too far away to be part of any Columbia Airport traffic pattern and an area which is not necessary to overfly to use

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Columbia Airport, create a mid-air collision environment over us. A mid-air collision over your recreational facilities, over our home, or anywhere over Jackass Hill or surrounding canyons will cause flaming aircraft parts to scatter over a wide area igniting spot fires over your facilities, your Headquarters complex and all over Jackass Hill including our home. The illegal aerial activities which your personnel (and we) have also observed create additional safety and catastrophic wildfire hazards. Contrary to popular assumption, including what you may have been told by Tuolumne County, these overflights, even the low-flying unlawful flights, are not problems the FAA can correct in our area. *(Please see attached August 16, 1996 letter written to us by Thomas C. Accardi, FAA Director of Flight Standards Service in Washington, D.C., especially the last sentence of his letter which states solution of the problem in our area rests with Tuolumne County establishing airport operating procedures to alleviate the problems in our area.)*

Only Tuolumne County has the legal obligation, the responsibility, and the ability, as county airport proprietor and operator, to keep pilots from routinely overflying our area and to enforce in every way available to the County (there are many things the County can do) the continual proper use by pilots of the County's accurate traffic patterns in such way that pilots using the Airport will obey County directives. County Counsel agrees that a County enforcement ordinance exists and that Tuolumne County has liability for damages caused by aircraft using Columbia Airport. By definition, this includes catastrophic wildfires caused by aircraft that would not be in the general area except to use Columbia Airport. We have told Tuolumne County Administrators that if our home is damaged or destroyed or personal harm comes to us as a result of aircraft crash into our home or wildfire caused by aircraft crash in our immediate area, we will hold Tuolumne County fully responsible and liable because of its negligent and poor airport management of Columbia Airport and repeated failure to correct the dangerous and unnecessary overflight hazards caused by Columbia Airport air traffic at our home and nearby surrounding area.

Almost 10 years ago, we were in contact with Keith Davis (now retired), your New Melones Lake Park Manager, who, for several years from 1995 through 1998, was in contact with the FAA and Tuolumne County attempting to correct the dangerous situation the County had created and encouraged over your recreational facilities, including alleviation of loud noise from continual daily frequent overflights. *(One of his letters dated January 26, 1996 is attached.)* Mr. Davis told us about problems including various illegal aircraft maneuvers such as aircraft flying under the Stevenot Bridge and other low-flying maneuvers threatening public safety and welfare at your facilities. Mr. Davis was also aware of the cross-traffic mid-air collision potential over Reclamation's recreational facilities. Those conditions still exist today despite Tuolumne County supposedly having disseminated various notices to pilots to avoid overflights of this area (at Mr. Davis's request and ours, including recent requests we've made beginning again in mid-2005). Despite what current County Administrative Officer Craig Pedro told us prior to this year's 2007 Columbia Airport Fathers Day Fly-In about the purported massive effort to alert pilots to avoid overflight of our home and area, we were deluged by continual overflights of every conceivable type of aircraft, many flying very dangerously and interacting with one another over us and your facilities. Obviously, somehow, pilots are getting a mixed or different message. From what Jeff Laird told us on October 16<sup>th</sup> (and what we observe from our home), Reclamation's New Melones Lake recreational facilities, including the lake, are once again victim of hazardous aircraft overflights which Reclamation has reported to the FAA on various occasions without resolution. Mr. Laird told us that Reclamation has problems with low-flying aircraft over its facilities and that aerobatic activities have also been observed over the lake. *(See 2 attached Union Democrat articles related to Columbia Airport's Fathers Day Fly-Ins: Friday, June 16, 2006 and Monday, June 18, 2007.)* These articles point out just two examples of the dangerous and illegal flying associated with pilots using Columbia Airport, including during County sponsored airport events which are becoming increasingly dangerous to our

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## Letter I-19, Continued

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## Responses

outlying area. We were mercilessly terrorized in our home by Fly-In “participants,” including many P-51 and “warbird” illegal, dangerous overflights. The same type of plane—possibly the same one—that clipped the power line at Lake Tulloch raced down to the surface of New Melones Lake, past us just above treetop level, and flew back and forth over the lake at about treetop level. Any of these planes could have started a catastrophic wildfire destroying public and private property and killing visitors and residents.

Even now, Tuolumne County continues to ignore its legal obligation to correct the dangerous Columbia Airport overflight conditions and consequent severe negative environmental impacts it is causing in our area and continues to ignore its own County documents dating back to 1979 which depict Columbia Airport’s official traffic patterns. (See attached Tuolumne County Ordinance #1285 dated August 30, 1983: “Exhibit A” shows Columbia Airport’s “Traffic Patterns” and intended Flight Path directions, none of which extend over Reclamation’s New Melones Lake.) As early as 1979, because of terrain features around Columbia Airport and with an eye toward avoiding Columbia Airport’s air traffic from significantly impacting the federal government’s planned New Melones Lake project, its new Dam and hydro-electric facility, and planned recreational facilities and Headquarters, Tuolumne County, as required by law, legislated its Columbia Airport Traffic Pattern to be different from an available FAA generic sample pattern. That official Columbia Airport traffic pattern, which was approved by the FAA, cannot be changed without legitimate cause (like building a new runway in a different direction), which requires comprehensive documentation and massive CEQA environmental review--and NEPA review when U.S. Bureau of Reclamation lands are to be routinely overflown and impacted, as they are now. Such mandated environmental review to change or add traffic patterns has never been done by Tuolumne County despite re-directing air traffic over us beginning in late 1992. (Please see two attached letters each with Map depicting Columbia Airport “Traffic Patterns:” 1. To us dated August 4, 1995 from Clifford D. Gibbons, FAA Supervisory Aviation Safety Inspector; 2. to Coalition for Better Government in Tuolumne County dated October 7, 2005 from Bev Shane, County ALUC Secretary who is also Tuolumne County’s Director of its Community Development Department.)

With disregard for the law and its official FAA-approved documented air traffic patterns (including flight path directions), Tuolumne County is once again, under its current Airports Manager/Director, persistently misrepresenting Columbia Airport’s official pattern and misdirecting inbound and outbound Columbia Airport air traffic to the Stevenot Bridge, over the canyon immediately north of Jackass Hill, over Jackass Hill and our home (which is once again being targeted for overflight), and over your New Melones Lake recreational facilities and your Headquarters complex to the extreme West-Southwest of Columbia Airport. All of this terrain is unforgiving, rugged terrain that, by its nature, amplifies, distorts, and prolongs aircraft overflight noise and is extremely hazardous to routinely overfly, especially in opposing directions. Conflicting vague directives to “avoid overflights of this area” (rarely disseminated) have been enacted and subsequently withdrawn while simultaneous instructions to continue to fly in this area, wrongly citing the Stevenot Bridge as a “reporting point,” are given to pilots. Pilots continue to routinely overfly this area, including our home. Instead of taking appropriate action to correct and eliminate the dangerous routine cross-traffic overflights of our area, which should not exist here, Tuolumne County officials have given all kinds of excuses including wrongly stating that only the FAA has jurisdiction over aircraft in flight in contradiction to the FAA’s official position regarding public agencies which own and operate public airports and in contradiction to the Attorney General’s Opinion, Volume 53, p. 80, which states:

*“...There exists one generally recognized exception to federal preemption [of aircraft in flight]—the power of the airport proprietor. Without violation of either the commerce or the supremacy clause, the owner of an airport has the right as landowner to decide who is to use his airport and under what conditions (holding county as airport proprietor liable for damages caused by overflights).”*

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

## Letter I-19, Continued

## Comments

## Responses

When we read Tuolumne County's February 13<sup>th</sup> scoping letter, we were completely dismayed by the County's 4<sup>th</sup> item for your consideration: "*Fire; Vegetation and fuels must be managed to reduce or eliminate catastrophic wildfire. Access to areas to fight fire managed by Reclamation must also be examined.*" It appears to us that Tuolumne County, while ignoring its own fire-related responsibility to us and other residents in our immediate area and to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation New Melones Lake, is attempting to transfer to Reclamation its legal liability as well as responsibility for fire prevention mitigation measures while refusing to mitigate a major potential cause of catastrophic wildfires on Reclamation lands and our adjacent area on Jackass Hill, which is under the County's jurisdiction: The unnecessary continual daily presence of aircraft routinely overflying Reclamation's lands and Jackass Hill and immediately surrounding canyons in opposing directions at potentially the same altitudes to approach and depart Columbia Airport. The unnecessary overflights of this area can be easily eliminated with absolutely no negative impact to Columbia Airport. Doing so will put the County in compliance with State laws governing airports and greatly improve airport safety as well. Thus far, however, the County has made no meaningful effort to correct and mitigate the severe environmental impacts it has wrongly created on Reclamation's lands and over our home in adjacent County jurisdiction.

We sincerely hope that Reclamation, during this RMP/EIS process, will include a reciprocal demand from Tuolumne County to address and adequately and effectively correct the unnecessary continued severe negative overflight noise impacts and serious safety hazards Tuolumne County is needlessly causing by continuing to allow and condone mis-direction of Columbia Airport air traffic over Reclamation's facilities and over Jackass Hill and its surrounding canyons (inbound, outbound, including random circling and sightseeing by local pilots based at Columbia Airport who give rides for hire). Catastrophic wildfire destroying property and resulting in human fatality could easily result on Jackass Hill as a result of mid-air collision or other aircraft problems over the area, yet Tuolumne County has done none of the wildfire mitigation it suggests Reclamation do on its lands while, at the same time, Tuolumne County is daily putting Reclamation's facilities, personnel, and visitors at catastrophic risk.

The only effective mitigation measure to address and eliminate the routine overflights of the area must be enacted by Tuolumne County. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation cannot do it. The FAA cannot do it. Tuolumne County must re-educate local and other pilots of its long-established 1979/1983 documented air traffic patterns. The County must publish those patterns and hand them out to pilots at its two airports. It must re-direct Columbia Airport's air traffic back to its appropriate documented area away from Reclamation's New Melones Lake recreational areas and Headquarters complex. It must direct pilots back to the Rawhide Road area, far away from the Stevenot Bridge which the County is once again wrongly recommending as the appropriate Columbia Airport "5-mile reporting point." In fact, pilots announcing "a 45 from the 49er bridge" was a 1992-93 pilot/County airport management invention intended to "justify" overflights that targeted our home because of our September 1992 complaint and our subsequent filing of a lawsuit, after the County directed inbound and outbound Columbia Airport traffic over and around our home, during which an FAA Fresno official testified on our behalf. (*Copy of some pertinent excerpts of FAA official's Nov. 17, 1994 testimony are attached.*)

As part of a County mitigation measure to correct the overflights' significant environmental impacts to this area, the County must publish and enforce, using every means available to the County, an "overflight avoidance notice" that pilots, especially local pilots, will understand and obey. Tuolumne County's efforts at such notices in the past have been routinely ignored and subverted, including by airport management. It should be noted that Columbia Airport is a non-towered recreational general aviation airport at which no FAA personnel are present to enforce or regulate air traffic. No County airport

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

## Letter I-19, Continued

## Comments

## Responses

manager having authority over airport operations is at Columbia Airport on weekends and holidays, day or night, when airport use is heaviest. No County airport manager is there after working hours Monday through Friday. At about 6:00 p.m. Columbia Airport's gates are locked to the public, all except pilots who can use the runway 24/7. Basically, most pilots know that no one is in charge most of the time at Columbia Airport and they are free to come and go as they please, flying wherever they like without being held accountable. Tuolumne County hires only one County Airport Manager (also called "Airports Director," a County Department Head) who is the sole person in authority at 2 County owned airports. The current Airport Manager is himself only a local pilot who lives in Groveland at the County's Pine Mountain Lake Airport and has never before managed a public airport. Tuolumne County administration, including the Board of Supervisors, appears to be unaware of the full scope and importance of its airport proprietor legal obligations, responsibilities, and liabilities. For airport information, Tuolumne County relies on local pilots, who have personal agendas and know little about laws and regulations governing county airport proprietors and public airport operations. Despite our rugged steep terrain, which includes adjacent canyons and vast amounts of natural fire fuel, Tuolumne County has permitted rural residential development on Jackass Hill but fails to provide any fire suppression related public services and infrastructure in the form of a public water system and fire hydrants, reasonably close responding fire stations, and adequate well-maintained through-roads on Jackass Hill. Jackass Hill Road is a mile long dead-end road which is poorly maintained by Tuolumne County. The County has made no catastrophic wildfire mitigation demands of BLM which has left cut dry brush all over Jackass Hill. Ironically, despite our having many times over past years appealed to Tuolumne County officials to correct the unnecessary continual overflight problem above our home and over Reclamation's recreational areas and Headquarters complex pointing out the obvious catastrophic wildfire dangers, not just the horrible loud noise that daily fills our home, County officials have turned a deaf ear to *our* pleas.

Homeland Security issue: It should also be noted that some of Columbia Airport's departing traffic flies out to our home on Jackass Hill first and then, mysteriously, veers back to overfly New Melones Dam. U.S. Department of Homeland Security through FAA directives requires avoidance of routine overflights of federal dams, including New Melones Dam. Due to Columbia Airport's proximity to New Melones Dam, Tuolumne County has an added responsibility to ensure that its approaching and departing air traffic does not overfly New Melones Dam and its vicinity. We do observe such overflights from our home. During a telephone conversation earlier this year with Steve Boyack, Tuolumne County Resources Analyst, he informed us Tuolumne County prepared a Tuolumne County Homeland Security document under grant from Homeland Security. We brought up concern about overflights of New Melones Dam. Mr. Boyack stated he did not think that was an issue of concern for Tuolumne County. Personally, we find that distressing from the point of view of national security. General aviation was strongly implicated in the 9/11 disaster: The FAA grounded all general aviation flights for about a week. Tuolumne County has no idea who might be flying into or out of Columbia Airport over the Dam at any time, day or night. Perhaps Reclamation might want to address this issue also with Tuolumne County.

CLOSING STATEMENT: We believe, at this time, given Tuolumne County's demands in its scoping letter, that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is in a position to make the necessary and proper counter-demands of Tuolumne County to correct, once and for all, the daily very significant negative environmental impacts caused by the County's mismanagement of Columbia Airport resulting in the unnecessary continual cross-traffic hazardous overflights of this area (Reclamation's New Melones Lake facilities and adjacent Jackass Hill and immediately surrounding canyons) by the vast majority of private general aviation aircraft using that airport, both to approach and depart. As part of your NEPA review, it is imperative to demand that Tuolumne County keep Columbia Airport's air traffic away from the area

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

## Letter I-19, Continued

## Comments

## Responses

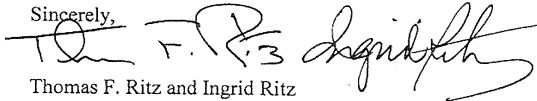
of New Melones Lake for the health and safety of your employees and visitors and to protect your recreational areas, wildlife refuge areas, and cultural/historical sites where a safe recreational and working environment is required.

NEW TUOLUMNE COUNTY INFORMATION ABOUT FUTURE MINING OPERATIONS WHICH MAY NEGATIVELY IMPACT U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION NEW MELONES LAKE LANDS AND HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX:

For your added information, we have just learned (because we are affected and recently received Tuolumne County property owner notification) that Tuolumne County is in the process of implementing its 1998-99 criteria to identify and preserve, by means of attaching a County General Plan "MPZ Overlay" zone on only 1/3rd of the area in Tuolumne County which the State mapped as having significant mineral deposit lands. Theoretically, the County included in its "MPZ Overlay" only parcels which are undeveloped land compatible with future commercial pit mining operations. We have some serious concerns about the process and the County's criteria, which included most of Jackass Hill, including all homes on residentially zoned parcels on Jackass Hill, in its "MPZ Overlay" with the idea that people's homes, regardless of personal investment and market value, are "less valuable" than some future commercial pit mine to extract gold ore. If the County's proposed "MPZ Overlay" zone is implemented as currently proposed, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation lands surrounding New Melones Lake in our vicinity (Jackass Hill) will not be protected by an equivalent 1,000 foot buffer from future commercial mines which the County applied to other jurisdictions, including the City of Sonora and the County's Columbia Township. The County has provided only a 1,000 ft. buffer from future commercial pit mines beginning at New Melones Lake "high water mark" as identified by Tuolumne County in order to prevent potential "water pollution" from commercial mining operations. Because the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation does not have a reciprocal agreement with the State of California relative to the State's 1975 Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA), it would seem Tuolumne County's 1,000 buffer zone should begin from the outer boundary of Reclamation's lands surrounding New Melones Lake, not from the water's edge. Also, no consideration was given for the potential of New Melones Lake pollution by future commercial mining operations on Jackass Hill from documented runoff drainage ditches on Jackass Hill which feed into New Melones Lake, including ones located on our residential parcel. For your NEPA environmental review, this future commercial mining issue and potential significant environmental impacts to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation New Melones Lake lands including recreational facilities and your Headquarters complex at the base of Jackass Hill might be something you would like to address with Tuolumne County. It is our belief, based upon what we have thus far learned, that Jackass Hill, like our neighboring hills, should also not have been included by the County in its "MPZ Overlay" zone because County data was arbitrarily manipulated to include homes on Jackass Hill and to include the Mark Twain Cabin, a dedicated State historic landmark located on Jackass Hill.

We have a large volume of documentation in our possession to support everything we have written in this letter. If you would like to contact us for additional information or added documentation, please feel free to do so. We are retired and can be reached at home most of the time.

Sincerely,



Thomas F. Ritz and Ingrid Ritz

Copy with attachments to: Jeff Laird, Chief Ranger, New Melones Lake, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
(Complete Attachment List on next page.)

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

**Letter I-19, Continued**

**Comments**

**Responses**

Attachments:

1. Satellite photo: Our home in relation to Reclamation's New Melones Lake Headquarters complex.
2. Photo: View of New Melones Lake from our home on Jackass Hill.
3. Professional Measurement Graph: Ritz Home Airplane Flyover Sound Level 5:50 a.m. to 6:28a.m.
4. Reclamation's New Melones Reservoir Map with superimposed Columbia Airport data.
5. 08-16-96 letter to Ritz from Thomas C. Accardi, FAA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.
6. 01-26-96 letter to Tuolumne County Supervisors from Keith E. Davis, Park Manager, New Melones
7. 2 *Union Democrat* articles re: Fathers Day Fly-In (06-16-06 and 06-18-07).
8. Tuolumne County Ordinance #1285 dated 08-30-83 + Exhibit A & B (4 pages).
9. 08-04-95 letter to Ritz from Clifford D. Gibbons, FAA FSDO, Fresno CA
10. 10-07-05 letter to CFBG in TC from Bev Shane, CDD Director, Tuolumne County
11. 11-17-94 FAA Testimony (Excerpts): Larry DeCosta, FAA FSDO, Fresno CA

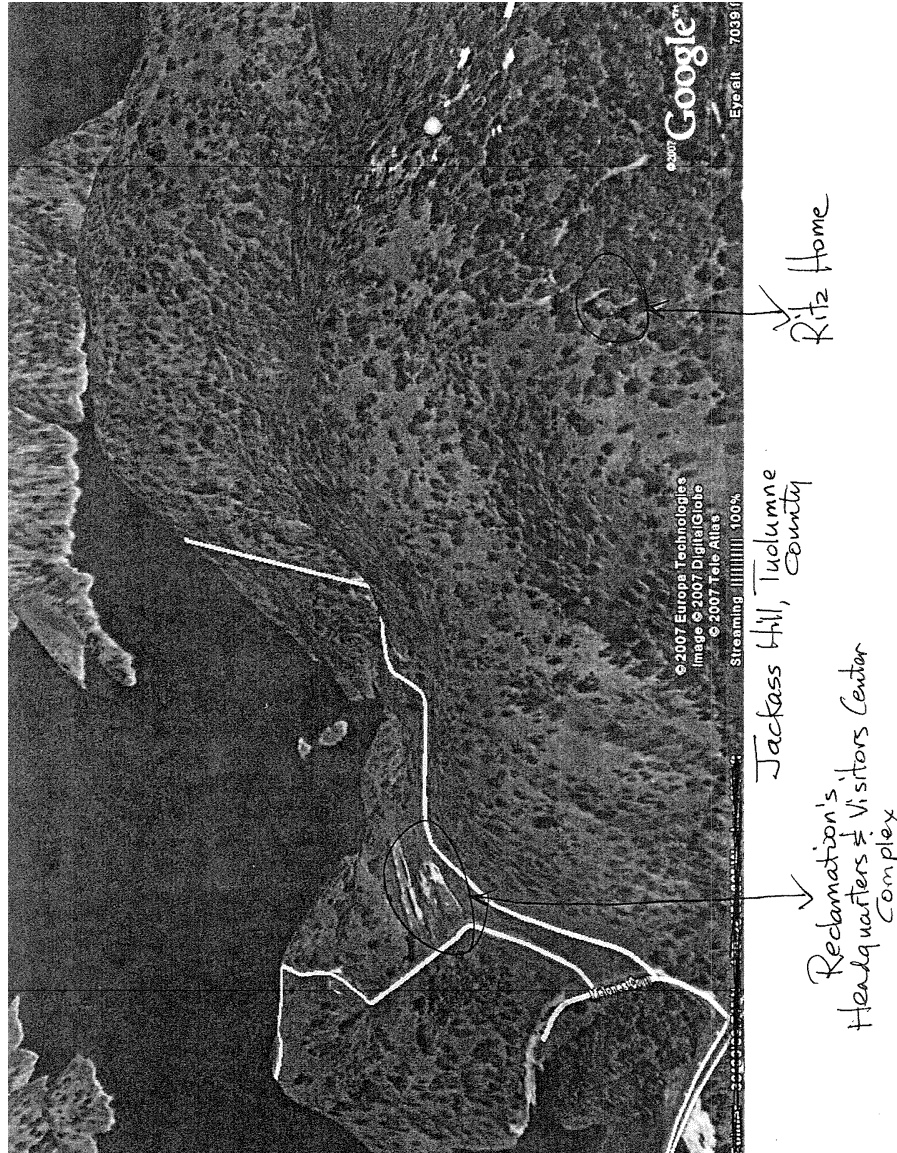
\* \* \*

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses



Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

**Letter I-19, Continued**

**Comments**

**Responses**

Ritz:  
View of New Melones Lake from our 3rd Floor deck on Jackass Hill, Tuolumne County.



Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses

Ritz Home: Airplane Flyover Sound Level  
DECEMBER 13, 1993: MORNING AIRCRAFT

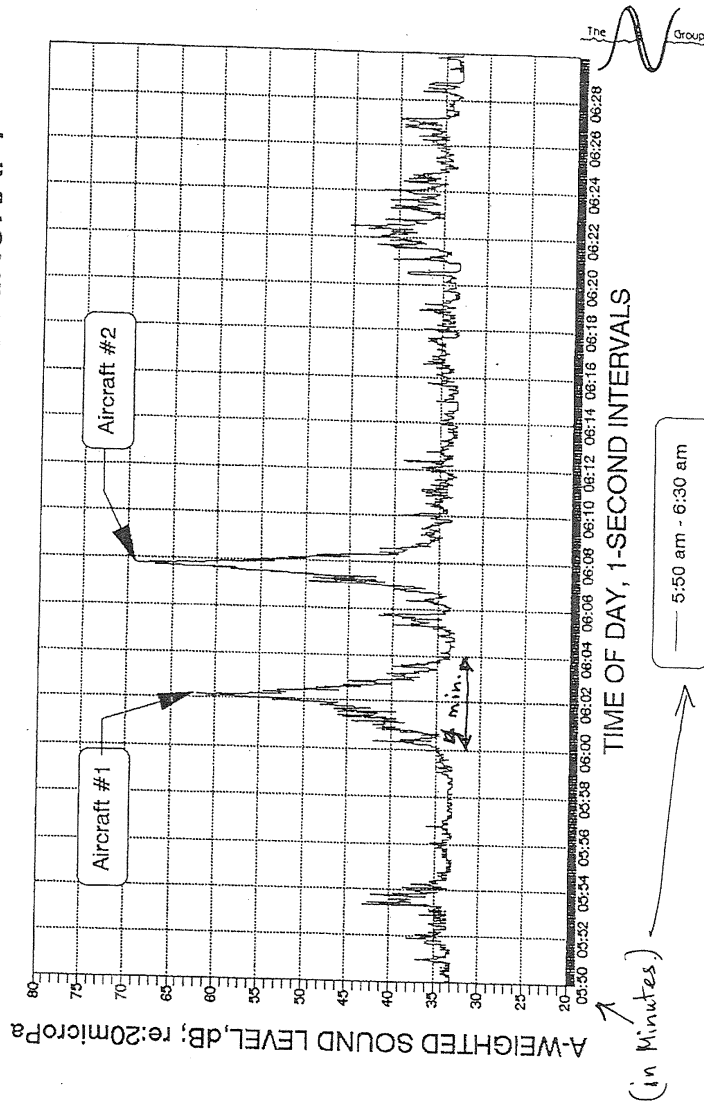


Figure 3. Average Sound Level Measured on the Top Deck on December 13, 1993 Before and After Two Aircraft Flyovers.

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.



Letter I-19, Continued

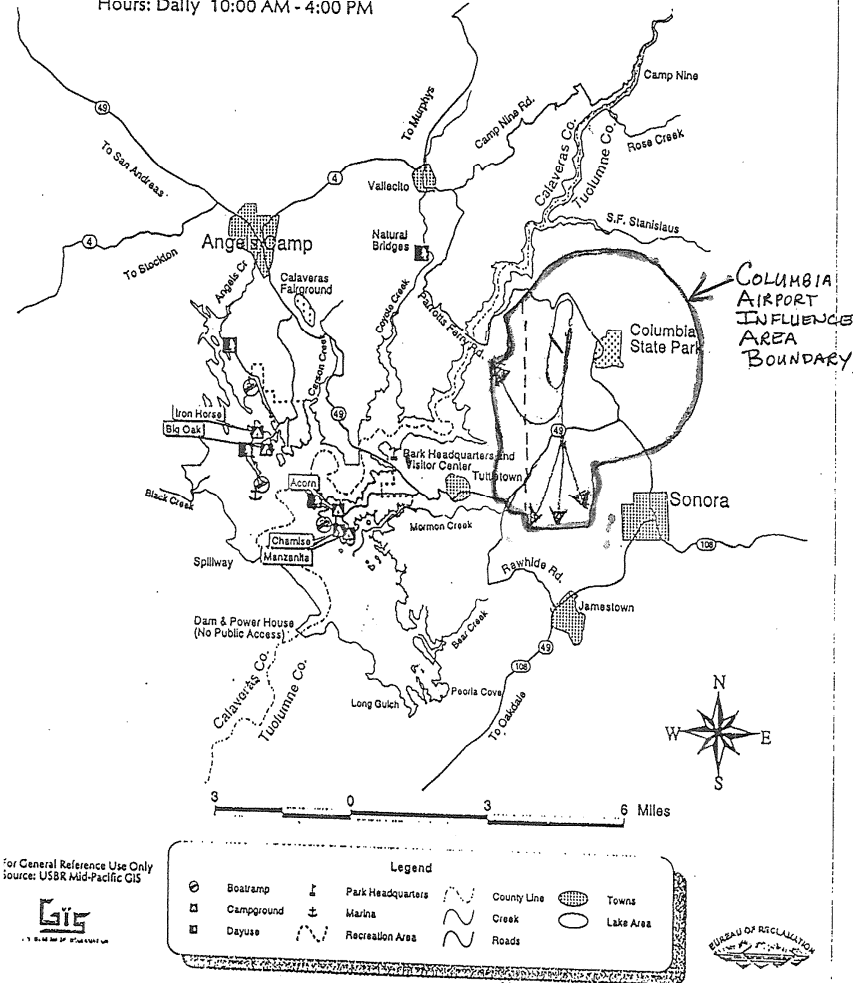
Comments

Responses

# New Melones Reservoir

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
(209)536-9094

Visitor Center  
(Located at Park Headquarters)  
Hours: Daily 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM



Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

## Letter I-19, Continued

## Comments

## Responses



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Aviation  
Administration

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

AUG 16 1996

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Ritz  
20730 Jackass Hill Road  
Sonora, CA 95370

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Ritz:

Thank you for your letter to Administrator Hinson regarding low-flying aircraft in the vicinity of your home in Sonora, California.

Local, regional, and national Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Flight Standards inspectors knowledgeable of investigative procedures in similar cases have reviewed the documentation you submitted. These inspectors and the FAA's Assistant Chief Counsel's Office have also reviewed the videotape you provided.

Although the evidence you submitted indicates aircraft in the vicinity of your home, there is no discernible way of identifying these aircraft. Your commentary during the videotape indicates the aircraft are at specific locations and altitudes; however, the administrative law judge will require more definitive and physical evidence of the exact locations and altitudes of the aircraft in question. The registration numbers on the aircraft are not visible, and we cannot establish a direct connection between the radio transmissions heard on the videotape and the exact routes and altitudes of the alleged violators. A review of statements made by Keith E. Davis, Park Manager, New Melones Lake, indicate that he believed the aircraft to be 300 feet or higher over the lake, but he also stated he was not a good judge of aircraft altitude.

It is the opinion of the FAA that the submitted evidence does not substantiate initiating enforcement action. It is also our opinion that the submitted evidence would not be viewed by the administrative courts as being sufficient to prosecute.

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

**Letter I-19, Continued**

**Comments**

**Responses**

The FAA urges you to work with the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors to establish additional airport operating procedures to help alleviate the noise problems in your area.

Sincerely,



Thomas C. Accardi  
Director, Flight Standards Service

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

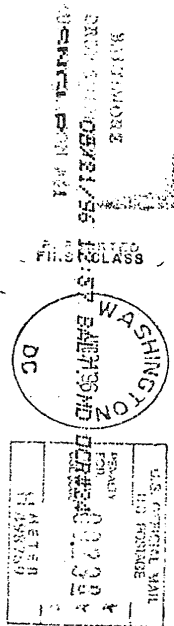
Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

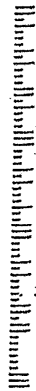
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591  
Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use \$300



MR AND MRS THOMAS F RITZ  
20730 JACKASS HILL ROAD  
SONORA CA 95370

WA Form 1360-12 (2-92)

95370-9409 04



## Letter I-19, Continued

## Comments

## Responses



## United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
 North-Central California Area Office  
 7794 Folsom Dam Road  
 Folsom, California 95630

IN REPLY REFER TO: Park Manager, New Melones Lake, 6850 Studhorse Flat Rd, Sonora, CA 95370  
 CC-260  
 LND-8.00

January 26, 1996

Ken Marks, Chairman  
 Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors  
 2 South Green Street  
 Sonora, CA 95370

Subject: Noise Levels at Recreational Areas

Dear Ken,

Thank you for the response to my letter of October 16, 1995 concerning noise levels created by overflights from aircraft to and from Columbia Airport. Your letter, in closing, indicated that you wished to be advised if the "situation deteriorates from the current level." As I stated in my letter, it is the current level of overflights of our recreation areas that I am concerned about; and from which I am seeking relief.

Your letter also refers to "FAA approved prescribed patterns". It is my understanding that each airport committee/board, under the auspice's of the Board of Supervisors, prepares such recommended traffic patterns, and that the FAA does not prescribe patterns nor approve them.

Would it be possible that the airport board/committee, with the Board's approval consider a proposal that New Melones Lake recreation areas be afforded protection from overflights of aircraft to and from Columbia Airport in the same manner as that which the Pine Mountain Lake area now enjoys from flights to and from Pine Mountain Airport? Such an action would provide welcome relief from noise levels created by aircraft to a great many visitors, (numbering over 650,000 last calendar year), to Tuolumne County who frequent our campgrounds, day use areas, and the lake surface.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

KEITH E. DAVIS  
 Park Manager  
 New Melones Lake

cc: L. Rotelli, J. Rountree, M. DeBernardi, W. Holman

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

# A wing, a prayer and a P-51 Mustang



**Chris Bateman**

HERE'S HOW desperate organizers of this weekend's Fathers Day Fly-In are for publicity: They invited me to take a ride in a restored P-51 Mustang that goes 450 mph, climbs like rocket, rolls like a hooker and, during World War II, shot Nazi Messerschmitts out of the sky like they were video game targets.

Pilot Jim Martinelli and his girlfriend, Fly-In planner Lorraine Jaemer, figured that a first-person account of a Mustang ride would help lure more P-51s will be flying Saturday and Sunday. What they didn't know was that their chosen guinea pig gets the jitters boarding 737s, closes his eyes on takeoffs of bad food and had serious Antrak to avoid cross-country flights.

**BUT CHICKEN out?** Going down in flames, I figured I'd be unable to breathe being perceived as a chicken. So when Martinelli tried explaining to me why he had a parachute and I didn't, I just faked the macho shrug of a guy who lives life without a

"You're probably not going to hear me once we get in the air," Jim cautioned, explaining that noise from the Reaper's 12-cylinder, 1,695-horsepower Rolls-Royce Merlin engine was likely to drown out our conversation. "But just don't touch that thing."

He pointed below the cockpit's rear seat at a floor-could be used by standing pilots. I yanked my feet back like it was rigged in hot coals.

planes in the skies over Germany. More than 60 years later I was struggling to zero in on the horizon.

Then I caught the glint of a fin roof from the cockpit's glass canopy and recognized signs of a P-51. He nudged the P-51 back toward the house.

"It was incredible," said my wife, who ran out the front door to have a look. "It was incredible. It was a grown man arching his back to a treemap level, it looked huge."

**I NEVER SAW Suzy** Instead, while twisting to get a look, my foot hit the forbidden sky hook, and the Mustang stuck bouncing, and the Jim gave me a dirty look and I sunk deep into the seat, hoping he didn't have an ejection button.

In minutes, we were over Cold Springs, returning to Columbia. I kept telling us to that errant stick back. Life ended.

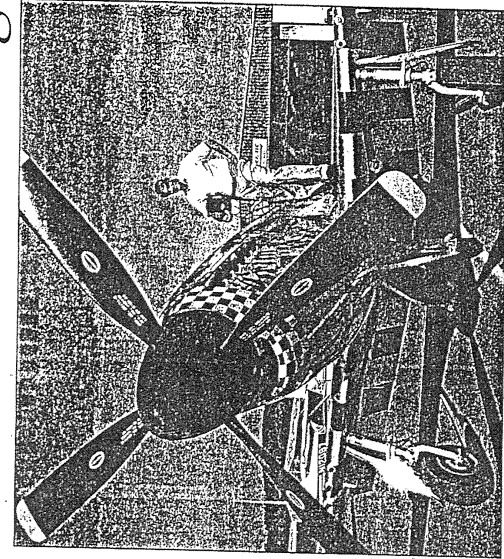
Then panic took over: We were approaching the runway way too fast. My blood raced as we sped toward the runway at Chuck Yeager speed. I was grinding for a broadside with some unlucky RV on Horseshoe Bend Road when we shot into the wild blue like a buzz bomb on steroids.

"Which could do that?"

"You can," Jim answered. "Just not as fast."

**HAVILDE FLAT** was then below us. I checked and waved from yards as I regained equilibrium, thankful I had passed on that chili dog at lunch.

Then, diving again, we were over New Orleans. But not over by much. Our dust foot above



**HELMET IN HAND** Union Democrat columnist Chris Bateman proves, by standing aboard the Mustang's wing before takeoff, that he's no match for Tom Cruise.

Shown here: photo by Benjamin Hicks

around islands and threaded through countless times.

**AFTER WE** climbed from the cockpit Jim shook my hand. Like I had done something big.

Martinelli is the guy that Bay Area airplane collector, the veteran pilot and mechanic has overhauled, reconditioned and repainted the Reaper to gleaming historical accuracy. North American Aviation built more than 15,000 of these fighters during the war and in the late 1940s surplus Mustangs were going for

the Reaper is among only 151 P-51s still flying.

"From a coolness standpoint, it's off the charts," said Jim, who has put in more than 300 hours in its cockpit.

Amazingly, but it's a piece of American history. It's a place of honor. Martinelli and the other Mustang pilots, for a price, will be offering rides at this weekend's Fly-In. And I have a favor to ask of anyone going up there: Please refrain from finishing off these Mustangs out at Twittetown?

Contact Chris Bateman at [chbateman@intocolumn.com](mailto:chbateman@intocolumn.com).

## Responses

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

## Letter I-19, Continued

## Comments

## Responses

A8 — Monday, June 18, 2007

The Union Democrat

## Airplane clips power lines near Tulloch campground

An airplane clipped some power lines on the south shore of Tulloch Reservoir near the Cabana Campground on Sunday, knocking them into the water.

The Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office received a report at 2:24 p.m. that a plane flying low over the lake snagged the line, wobbled, then recovered, said Lt. Daniel Bressler, spokesman for the office. The plane was described as a blue and white North American T6 Texan World War II trainer with "Navy" written on the side of it. PG&E shut off power to the line

at about 5:13 p.m., resulting in a power outage for area residents. PG&E officials did not return phone calls this morning.

Calaveras County Boat Patrol requested Tuolumne County's assistance in closing off the area to boaters, Bressler said. They were on scene until about 7:53 p.m.

Authorities reported the incident to the Federal Aviation Administration. The pilot has been contacted, but his name was not available as of this morning.

The plane was among those participating in the Father's Day Fly-In in Columbia.

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses

~~Aug 30, 1985~~  
ROBERT W. ANDRE  
County Clerk  
By [Signature]  
Deputy

ORDINANCE NO. 1285

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 18.24.030  
OF THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY ORDINANCE CODE TO  
REDEFINE THE REFERRAL AREAS THEREIN  
ESTABLISHED

- oOo -

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Tuolumne do  
ordain as follows:

SECTION 1: Section 18.24.030 of the Tuolumne County  
Ordinance Code is hereby amended by replacing Exhibits "A"  
and "B" thereof with Exhibits "A" and "B" hereof.

SECTION 2: This Ordinance shall take effect thirty  
(30) days after its adoption. The Clerk of the Board of  
Supervisors is hereby authorized and directed to cause this  
Ordinance to be published once in the Union Democrat, a  
newspaper of general circulation printed and published in  
the County of Tuolumne, State of California, prior to fifteen  
(15) days after its passage.

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake  
Area Draft RMP/EIS.



Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses

The foregoing Ordinance introduced on the 23rd day of August, 1983, and passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Tuolumne, State of California, on this 30th day of August, 1983, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: Mildred Culicesti  
[Signature]  
Jerry Beuch  
John W. May  
William Davidson  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: None

William Davidson  
WILLIAM C. DAVIDSON, Chairman,  
Board of Supervisors, County of  
Tuolumne, State of California

ATTEST: ROBERT W. ANDRE',  
County Clerk and ex-officio  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By Ludya Stewart (SEAL)  
Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

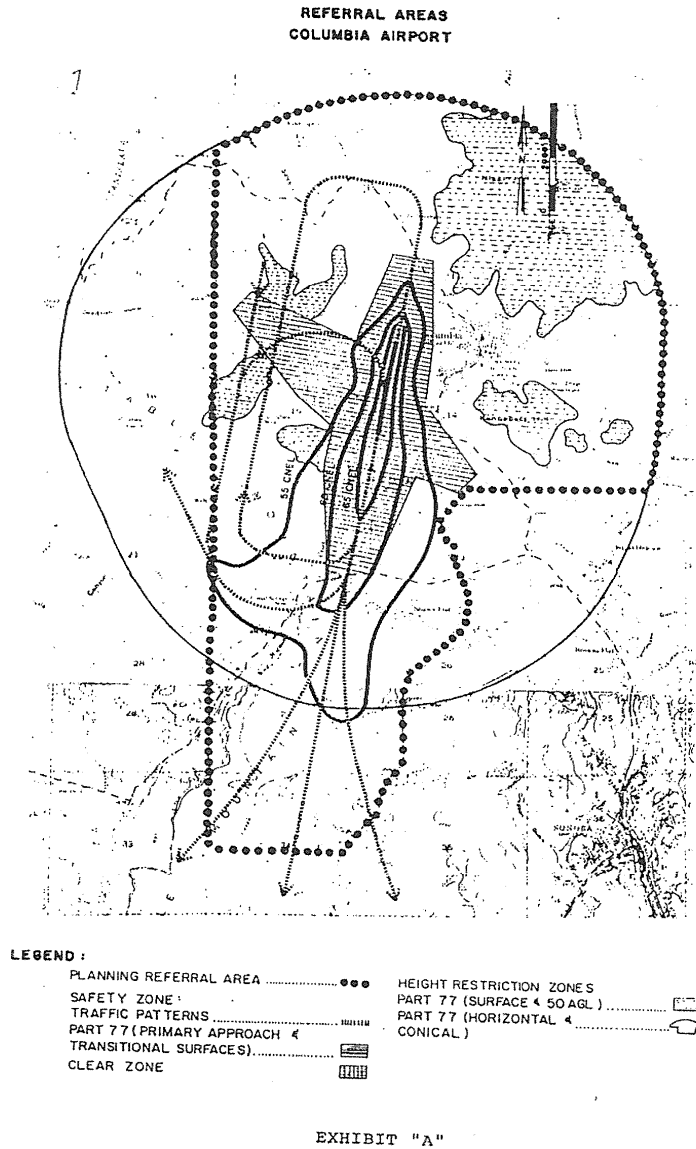
[Signature]  
STEPHEN DIETRICH, JR.  
County Counsel

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses

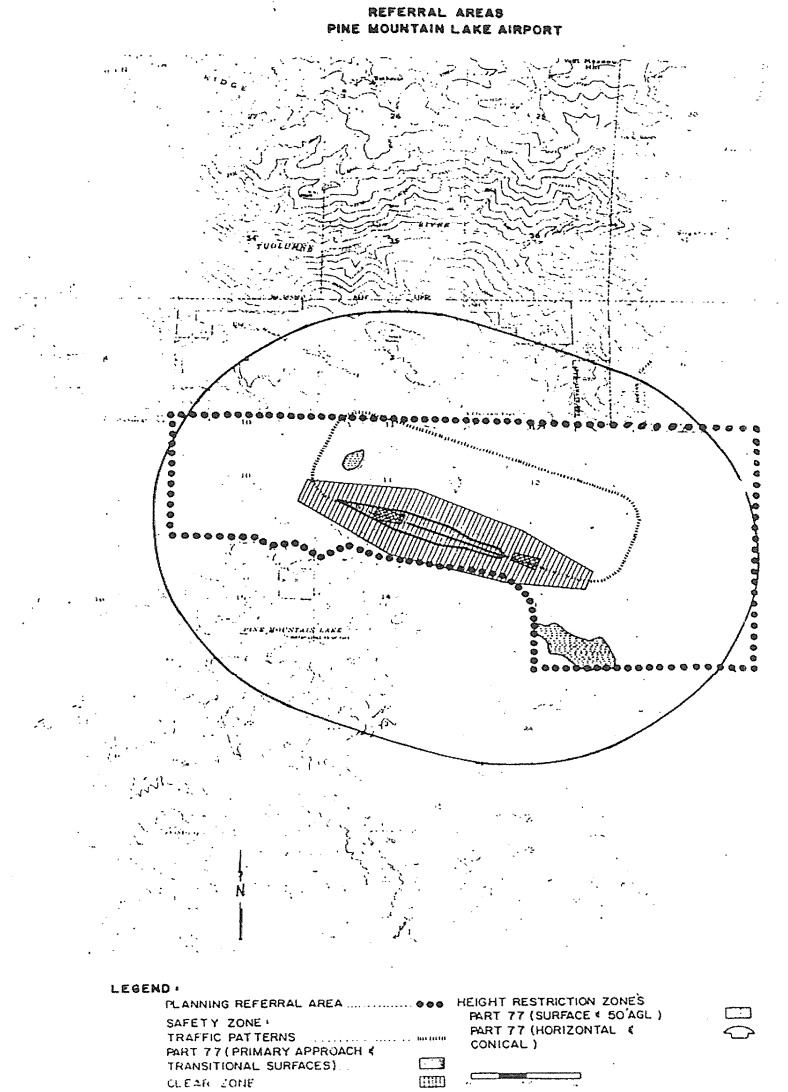


Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses



Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Aviation  
Administration

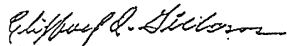
Flight Standards District Office  
4955 E. Anderson, Suite 110  
Fresno, CA 93727-1573

August 4, 1995

This office received your letter dated July 26, 1995. In your letter you enclosed the Airport Land Use Policy Plan for Tuolumne County Airport Use and several charts indicating the traffic flow of airplanes arriving and departing the Columbia Airport. As we have advised you, each airport commission has the overall responsibility of preparing recommended traffic patterns to be utilized at their airports. Normally these traffic patterns are similar to those depicted in the Federal Aviation Administration Airman's Information Manual on page 4-3-3. However, due to factors such as terrain or congested areas, the airport commission could establish patterns or procedures different than the recommended pattern as long as it assured the safety of flight. At the Columbia Airport this responsibility lies with the Tuolumne County Airport Commission. You will note that they have indicated the traffic pattern and planned departure routes on the referral area chart of their plan.

If you have any questions about traffic patterns to be utilized by inbound or outbound airplanes at the Columbia Airport, you will need to contact the Tuolumne County Airport Commission.

Sincerely,

  
CLIFFORD D. GIBBONS  
Supervisory Aviation Safety Inspector

NOTE: When Mr. Gibbons refers to the "Tuolumne County Airport Commission", he is referring to the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors.

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

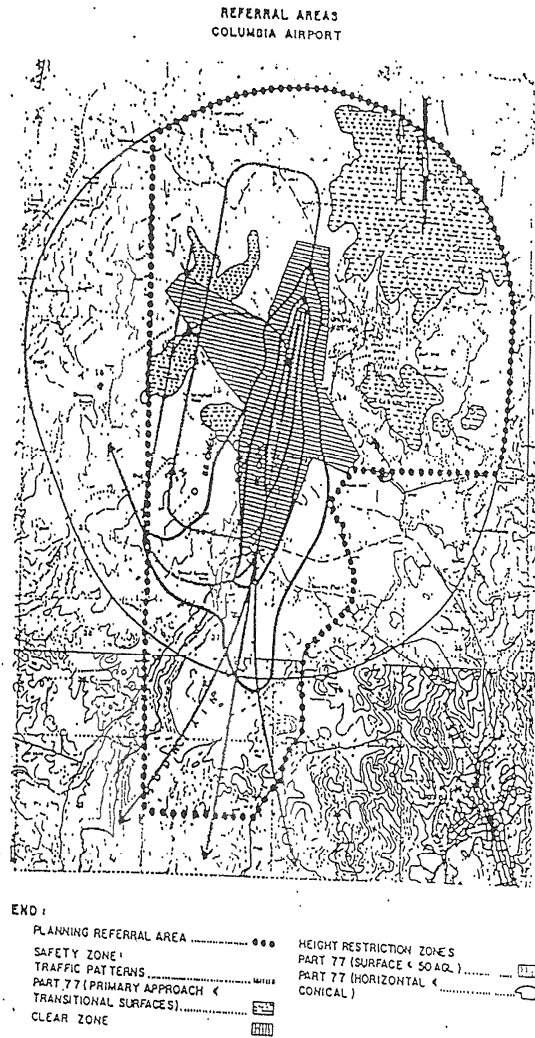
Letter I-19, Continued

Comments

Responses

1100 ORANGE 1200

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.



## Letter I-19, Continued

## Comments

## Responses



## AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION

BEV SHANE, AICP  
Secretary

COLUMBIA AND PINE MOUNTAIN LAKE AIRPORTS

October 7, 2005

48 W. Yarny, Sonora  
Mailing: 2 S. Green Street  
Sonora, CA 95370  
(209) 533-5633  
(209) 533-5616 (fax)Mr. C.H. Freeman  
Coalition for Better Government in Tuolumne County  
P.O. Box 5133  
Sonora, CA 95370

RE: Aircraft Overflights

Dear Cleo:

In response to your letter concerning aircraft overflights, I concur that the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) does not have authority over such activities. However, Chapter 3 of the Airport Land Use Planning Handbook published by the California Division of Aeronautics lists aircraft overflights as one of the four concerns that must be addressed by ALUC's in formulating their compatibility plans for the development of land influenced by an airport. As required, Tuolumne County's Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan does address aircraft overflights in Chapter 2.4.4. That chapter identifies the area of overflight concerns as coinciding with the boundary of the airport influence area meaning that all areas within the influence boundary may be subject to noise and safety issues related to aircraft overflights. This area reflects the traffic patterns established by the Board of Supervisors in Title 18 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code as you noted in your letter.

The issue concerning overflights that was raised at recent meetings of the ALUC was focused on a private organization's posting signs advising pilots not to fly over the lake in the center of the Pine Mountain Lake Subdivision. The ALUC's discussion was simply that there are no regulations that restrict a pilot from flying over the lake and that the signs were, therefore, misleading and should be removed. There was no discussion about regulating the overflights; the discussion was simply an acknowledgement that overflights are allowed throughout the airport influence area.

The conclusion of the ALUC's discussion concerning this matter was to accept Airports Director Jim Thomas' offer to present the issue at the next meeting of the Pine Mountain Lake Airports Association and to post information concerning overflights on the airport's website. I did not send a letter to the Association as had been mentioned by Commissioner Dick Collier in his opening remarks concerning this matter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any other questions concerning this matter or if I can be of further assistance to you.

Respectfully,

Bev Shane, AICP  
ALUC Secretarycc: Brent Wallace, County Administrator  
Gregory Oliver, County Counsel

Attachment to Letter I-19. Not a comment letter on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS.

**Letter I-20**

**Comments**

**Responses**

**From:** Dave Olson [dodog@goldrush.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 22, 2009 12:06 PM  
**To:** Brockman, Melissa A  
**Subject:** recreation/cooperation

Ms Brockman-Vignau. I read with interest and dismay the article about the bureau's lack of cooperation with several factions on the subject of a road and Marina in the Copperopolis area on the Melones Impoundment.

I-20-1

We were in the county during the deliberations between those of us who appreciated the River and the various government folks who, as it turns out grossly underestimated "facts" when needed and overestimated other "facts" went convenient as well. No need to go into to much discussion on the subject except to say that those of us who where not 5th generation locals, and who were more educated, liberal, and used to the government activities and the resulting impacts, did not fall for the rhetoric. Indeed, much of what was said by the agencies either (1) never happened and (2) the agencies broke promises of grand ideas they seemed to espouse.

I have been involved with projects up here in the ensuing 35 years, some of which entailed starting from scratch and involving more than one public entity. We would have given our eye teeth to have the situation you now seem to be turning a deaf ear to, which is the full cooperation and financing by someone other than your agency, to bring a good and promising recreational project into reality, i.e. a property owner who will be willing to dedicate an ingress and egress through his land, and someone who will pay for building that infrastructure; a very large thing indeed..and you to be sitting on your hands.

I-20-2

I suppose the problem with the project is that it makes sense, and that it has a REAL benefit to many people. People who, back in the 70's, your agency promised to serve. In fact that is something that the government should do: facilitate, and benefit. You have an opportunity to make some of those promises come true, and I am afraid that you will continue to stay your course, which is to turn a deaf ear. It is difficult for me to even get the concept of the Federal Government having any jurisdiction over resources that belong to the people of the State of California, let alone giving them no input or respect when it comes to uses of those resources.

It has always been *your* game there at the impoundment, and I fear it will remain so. It is just frustrating to see what you have done, what you have failed to do (promises) and the fact you are willing to ignore someone else trying to help you fulfill some of those promises. I know I personally cannot take my family down to launch our kayaks or canoes, in the quieter area of the impoundment, because there is a steel gate there. A former recreation asset/opportunity removed/diminished by your agency or those associated with it. Is that the philosophy here? build it and keep them away? I wish I could figure out just what your priorities are, or maybe you don't know either?

David Olson

I-20-1: Certain facilities planned in the 1976 Master Plan are no longer feasible, as explained in Section 1.9 (page 1-16 through 1-18) and on page 2-27 of the Draft RMP/EIS.

I-20-2: The RMP/EIS will allow for the possibility of a road to access the management areas on the west side of New Melones Lake, such as the Westside, Bowie Flat, and Greenhorn Creek Management Areas. Further, it would not eliminate the possibility for development of a marina on the west side of New Melones Lake.

**Letter I-21**

**Comments**

**Responses**

Janet Cuslidge  
 P.O. Box 651  
 Altaville, CA 95221

December 22, 2009

Mrs. Melissa Vignau  
 c/o Central California Area Office  
 U.S. Department of the Interior  
 Bureau of Reclamation  
 7794 Folsom Dam Road  
 Folsom, CA 95630-6610

Dear Mrs. Vignau,

I-21-1

I have read that you are considering restricting the size of houseboats at New Melones Reservoir. I believe that this would be a big mistake. In Calaveras County, our local economy is reliant on tourism and as such we strive to offer the best recreational opportunities we can.

I use the houseboats on New Melones Reservoir for my business and summer vacation trips as well as for family gatherings. When choosing a rental, I always go with the largest available; the larger houseboats offer much more luxury for the money and make our trips so memorable.

Our 2.4 million acre foot lake is so large that I've never had a problem with congestion or traffic. Additionally, I am a woman and have never hesitated to drive a larger 16' wide by 70' long houseboat.

The freedom to rent larger houseboats for use on New Melones Reservoir benefits both local residents and visitors alike. I sincerely hope you won't penalize us and do damage to our local economy by restricting houseboat size in Calaveras County.

Sincerely,



Janet Cuslidge

I-21-1: Comment noted. Houseboat size limits have been in effect since 1986. The preferred alternative would continue to implement the same size limitation. The current size limitation of 15' x 65' is based on many factors, including but not limited to entrance road size limitations, marina facilities and capacity studies. The 2002 Visitor Use Study established a capacity of 106 houseboats, in part based on current size limits. Increasing the maximum size of houseboats may have an impact on the overall capacity and range of recreation opportunities and visitor experiences on the lake. The preferred alternative seeks to maintain or enhance the existing capacity and range of recreation opportunities provided.



**Letter I-22**

**Comments**

**Responses**

Firman Brown  
 P.O. Box 651  
 Altaville, CA 95221

December 22, 2009

Mrs. Melissa Vignau  
 c/o Central California Area Office  
 U.S. Department of the Interior  
 Bureau of Reclamation  
 7794 Folsom Dam Road  
 Folsom, CA 95630-6610

Dear Mrs. Vignau,

I-22-1

I have read that you are considering restricting the size of houseboats at New Melones Reservoir. I believe that this would be a big mistake. In Calaveras County, our local economy is reliant on tourism and as such we strive to offer the best recreational opportunities we can.

I use the houseboats on New Melones Reservoir for my business and summer vacation trips as well as for family gatherings. When choosing a rental, I always go with the largest available; the larger houseboats offer much more luxury for the money and make our trips so memorable.

Our 2.4 million acre foot lake is so large that I've never had a problem with congestion or traffic. I am fully capable of driving the larger 16' wide by 70' long houseboats on New Melones Reservoir.

The freedom to rent larger houseboats for use on New Melones Reservoir benefits both local residents and visitors alike. I sincerely hope you won't penalize us and do damage to our local economy by restricting houseboat size in Calaveras County.

Sincerely,



Firman Brown

I-22-1: Comment noted. Houseboat size limits have been in effect since 1986. The preferred alternative would continue to implement the same size limitation. The current size limitation of 15' x 65' is based on many factors, including but not limited to entrance road size limitations, marina facilities and capacity studies. The 2002 Visitor Use Study established a capacity of 106 houseboats, in part based on current size limits. Increasing the maximum size of houseboats may have an impact on the overall capacity and range of recreation opportunities and visitor experiences on the lake. The preferred alternative seeks to maintain or enhance the existing capacity and range of recreation opportunities provided.

**Letter I-23**

**Comments**

**Responses**

**From:** Jennifer Jennings [mailto:jennifer\_jennings@att.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 29, 2009 12:42 PM  
**To:** Brockman, Melissa A  
**Subject:** Access Road from Copperopolis to New Melones

I-23-1

As residents of Copperopolis, we would like to state that we support the access road from Copperopolis to New Melones. Lake Tulloch is over utilized and its very difficult to get to New Melones either through Sonora or Angels Camp while pulling a boat which is a 45 minute trip. Its amazing that Copperopolis is only about 4 – 5 miles away from New Melones, but it takes that long to get there due lack of access. Since New Melones is under-utilized, this is a win- win situation for additional tax revenue and business.

James and Militza Jennings  
Copperopolis, CA

I-23-1: Comment noted.

**Letter I-24**

**Comments**

**Responses**

**From:** Ken & Janet Johnson [kenjanet@sbcglobal.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 29, 2009 4:52 PM  
**To:** Brockman, Melissa A  
**Subject:** New Melones Access thru Copperopolis

Hi Melissa,

Have been watching the discussion on this proposed access road through the Calaveras Enterprise newspaper. Not sure if my comments are "count-able" in email, but we bought a ranch in the Salt Spring Valley about 8 years ago. One of the great hopes was that there would be an access road to the New Melones Reservoir in the future as that would make it a straight shot from our place to both Lake Tulloch and New Melones reservoirs.

The trip to New Melones from the West County is a long one as you know, as we need to go up Highway 4 to Angels and all the way thru Angels Camp to the New Melones access that is currently in place.

I-24-1

I do think the number of visitors to the New Melones reservoir would greatly increase, especially SF Bay area visitors, if there was a way to get there through Copperopolis. The trip for many all the way thru Angels camp is just too long. Would just like to have it included as one of the Bureau's options in the new multi year use plan currently being considered.

Anyway, thanks for listening.

Ken & Janet Johnson

Lost City Ranch

10780 Walker Trail Road

Valley Springs CA

I-24-1: The RMP/EIS will allow for the possibility of a road to access the management areas on the west side of New Melones Lake, such as the Westside, Bowie Flat, and Greenhorn Creek Management Areas.

**Letter I-25**

**Comments**

**Responses**

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**From:** Julie Eggert [j8a1e2@caltel.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 31, 2009 2:11 PM  
**To:** Brockman, Melissa A; Russ Thomas  
**Cc:** Julie Eggert  
**Subject:** Copper to New Melones

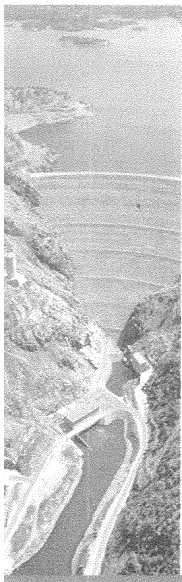
I-25-1 | Hi,  
I saw the article in the paper about the proposed road from Copperopolis to New Melones.  
I am enthusiastically in favor of it.  
Our Lake Tulloch is often stressed to the limit with watercraft.  
New Melones is much larger and our full time and part time and vacationing residents should have easy access to the much larger reservoir.  
Julie Eggert

I-25-1: Comment noted.

Letter I-26

Comments

Responses



# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

**Comment Sheet for the New Melones Draft RMP/EIS**

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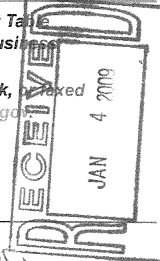
Comments may also be mailed to the address on the back, faxed to 916-989-7109, or e-mailed to mbrockman@usbr.gov. Thank you.

(Please print clearly)

Name Greg Wakefield

Organization and Address 508 Cormorant Dr.  
Modesto, CA 95354

Phone (916) 521-4214 FAX ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail greg.wakefield@sneglobal.net



I-26-1: Comment noted.

Comment here: 12/31/2009  
Date

I-26-1

You may wish to consider improvements to campsite areas. Full hook-ups has always been a problem for many of us at New Melones for years. Better boat launch area parking and security. If one of your goals is to bring in more revenue which would mean more people to that area which would mean revenue for Angels Camp area and surrounding towns then this would be one consideration to achieve that goal. Bass fishermen who have to charge the batteries in their boats everytime they go out. This group alone would be enormous. However more revenue means more people and other expenses may occur for the agency.

*All comments become part of the public record.*

**Letter I-27**

**Comments**

**Responses**

JAN 4 2009

Attention: Melissa Brockman-Vignau

January 4, 2010

- I-27-1 | Providing it does not increase lake fees I support Alternative "D". If this proposal would increase lake fees I would support Alternative "A". I use the lake often and frequented the Stanislaus River prior to New Melones. I believe free or inexpensive access to the recreation area should be the priority.
- I-27-2 | For little expense you could make the shoreline accessible to people with disabilities by opening the public access at the end of Glory Hole Point. The rangers already patrol up to the cable. At many lake levels you can drive almost to the lake shore. A couple signs to warn the public the road ends in the lake would be the primary cost. There is currently no access for people with disabilities. With the state budget in a huge deficit I believe the Copperopolis access road should be shelved at this time. It would be expensive and hurt business already existing on the Glory Hole and Tuttle town side of the lake.
- I-27-3 | Access to Parrots Ferry Road should be reopened without any fees. The only service being a dumpster and a side "road is not maintained and ends in the reservoir. Proceed at own risk." One purpose of the lake is recreation of which you should support.
- I-27-4 | If the lake level is below Rose Creek you should encourage rafting companies to run a river/reservoir trip. There are incentives that would cost little, such as free houseboat mooring which might make it financially feasible to try to recreate what was once one of the biggest industries in Tuolumne and Calaveras counties. O.A.R.S., Inc. is located directly across from Glory Hole Sports. The general manager, Tyler Wendt, has expanded the company and may be interested. His phone number is 209-736-4677. Ext. #732. Bob Ferguson at Zephyr Whitewater Rafting in Columbia is 209-532-6249, and he might come up with ideas as well if he felt you wanted to re-introduce rafting.

Thank You,

Scott Stevens  
Vallecito, Ca.  
209-736-6734



- I-27-1: Comment noted.
- I-27-2: Comment noted. We are currently working throughout the New Melones project to comply with the Americans with Disability Act.
- I-27-3: Comment noted.
- I-27-4: Comment noted. Currently, Parrotts Ferry access area is available for hand launching and recreation use with no fees.
- I-27-5: Comment noted.

**Letter I-28**

**Comments**

**Responses**

**From:** Jim Thomas [mypa12@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 04, 2010 8:01 PM  
**To:** Brockman, Melissa A  
**Subject:** New Melones Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS)

I wanted to provide some brief comments on the New Melones Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS).

I am a pilot and an aircraft owner. One of the pilot's ratings I possess is that of Single Engine Sea (float plane rating). I am also the Airports Director for Tuolumne County and responsible for the day to day operation of Columbia Airport. However, my response is on my personal behalf and not as the Tuolumne County Airports Director.

I-28-1

My hope is that the New Melones Resource is continued to be managed in the current manner with respect to aircraft and seaplane operations. The reservoir is an excellent place for seaplanes to practice and for pilots to work on their float plane proficiency skills. This is something that cannot be done on land and there are few local lakes available that are suitable for float plane operation. The reservoir should be kept available for a variety of recreational uses and seaplane training and use is certainly a compatible use, in my opinion. In fact, it would seem to me that training that is safety related, such as sea plane instruction and practice, should be highly encouraged. Pilots landing on the reservoir have not been drinking, are not distracted by passengers in their aircraft, and are very focused on their control of their aircraft.

I-28-2

I also would like to comment on the strategy to restrict the airspace over New Melones reservoir. The airspace over the Unites States is controlled by the FAA and not by the BLM, Tuolumne County or Columbia Airport . Pilots must adhere to the Federal Aviation Regulations. The plan of restricting flights over areas of the reservoir, specifically those identified in Figure 3-1 is not well founded. The reservoir lies between Columbia Airport and the Bay Area and there are aircraft flying over the reservoir on a regular basis. Attempting to restrict over flight is going to be difficult to accomplish and even more difficult, if not impossible to enforce.

I-28-3

On page 4-29 under Sea Plane Implementation Strategies, it states that the purpose of restricting the airspace of the New Melones Lake Area is to protect public safety and critical infrastructure. Aircraft over flights, in my opinion, do not pose any risk to public safety. This is a sparsely populated area, boats are a tiny dot on the reservoir, the campgrounds and visitor centers are small consolidated areas. With literally thousands of unoccupied acres of land and water, the chances of an aircraft crashing in the populated area or into a boat is miniscule. In fact, in my 34 years of flying I have never heard of an airplane hitting a boat.

I-28-1: Comment noted.

I-28-2: Comment noted.

I-28-3: Comment noted.

**Letter I-28, Continued**

**Comments**

**Responses**

I-28-3  
(Continued)

A typical general aviation aircraft that operates in and out of the local airports does not have the capability of damaging the dam, spillway, or either of the bridges across the reservoir. My guess would be that the majority of the aircraft that fly over New Melones Reservoir have a gross weight of less than 3,000 pounds. I think I would be safe to say that all medium and full sized pick up trucks weigh more than that. The bridges themselves are designed to carry fully loaded semi trucks. If an small plane were to hit a bridge, it would barely put a scratch in it. Besides, why would a pilot want to crash his plane into a bridge, much less a dam, or spillway? If your concern is terrorism, then please consider what the Homeland Security Department feels are the perceived threats and methods. I think you will find it is not a light plane flying over the New Melones Reservoir.

I would like to see the New Melones Reservoir kept open to sea plane operations, including training, and I feel restricting over flights is unwise, unjustified, and unenforcable.

Thank you for allowing me to comment on the proposed plan.

Sincerely,

Jim Thomas

20964 Woodside Way

Groveland, CA 95321-9410

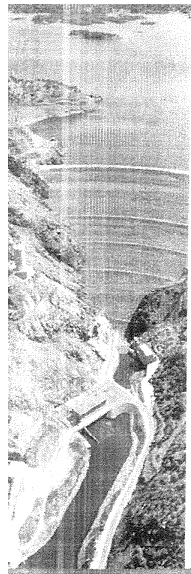
I-28-3: Comment noted.



**Letter I-29**

**Comments**

**Responses**



# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

**Comment Sheet for the New Melones Draft RMP/EIS**

*Written comments may be submitted at the Comment Table or are due to the Bureau of Reclamation by close of business Monday, January 4, 2010.*

*Comments may also be mailed to the address on the back, or faxed to 916-989-7109, or e-mailed to mbrockman@usbr.gov. Thank you.*

(Please print clearly)

Name Walton Ferris

Organization and Address \_\_\_\_\_  
12 Partridge Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94901

Phone (415) 250-8822 FAX ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail walton-ferris@comcast.net

Comment here: December 20, 2009  
Date

I-29-1

As a user of Bureau of Reclamation Recreational Resources, I would like to comment that I support continued seaplane access to New Melones Reservoir. Of the alternatives in the Draft RMP/EIS I prefer Alternative B and strongly oppose Alternative C. Seaplanes have safely used the waters of the BOR, where permitted, throughout the west for as long as the BOR has managed them. At New Melones, western seaplane pilots have long enjoyed access without conflict with the local boating community and are a popular attraction for the local tourism industry.

I-29-2

The operation of a seaplane school on New Melones would bring additional benefits to the local business community with minimal impact to the environment. Seaplanes do not use Reservoir waters for engine cooling, do not stir sediments with their propellers, do not carry invasive species in their bilges or bait buckets and produce far less noise than any ski or bass boat at full throttle. The local seaplane community is tightly knit and organized, ready to work closely with the local Resource Managers to address and mitigate any issues arising from seaplane operations on New Melones, or any other BOR resource in the West! Thank you for your consideration and acceptance of these comments.

*All comments become part of the public record*

I-29-1: Comment noted. Management actions within the RMP must be consistent with Reclamation's goals and objectives. Reclamation must consider resource use, resource protection, and public safety in managing the New Melones Lake Area. Reclamation's preferred alternative would continue to implement the current policy for non-commercial seaplane use of New Melones Lake.

I-29-2: Comment noted. Operation of a seaplane school is included under Alternative B (Action R 31B).

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