Volume 5 *Issue 4*

# CalAERO

DIVISION OF AERONAUTICS
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Fall 2013

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## New and Updated California Airports and Heliports

Note: Architect's drawing from Harbor-UCLA.org website

The Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Torrance was issued a State Heliport Permit for a new Hospital Heliport, with an effective date of July 25, 2013. The design helicopter for the new heliport is a Sikorsky H-3. The facility was designed for a helicopter rotor diameter of 62 feet, an overall length of 73 feet, and a maximum gross take-off weight of 21,000 pounds, and is lighted for night operations. The new heliport replaces both the original ground heliport, which has been removed, and the Interim Heliport located in the southwest area of the hospital campus.

Note: Picture from Dignity Health website

The Mercy Hospital of Folsom was issued a State Heliport Permit for a new Hospital Heliport on August 22, 2013. The design helicopter for this heliport is a Eurocopter BK-117. The facility was designed for a helicopter rotor diameter of 36 feet, an overall length of 43 feet, and a maximum gross takeoff weight of 15,000 pounds, and is lighted for night operations.

For more information on these facilities, see the Hospital Heliport Dataplates on the Division of Aeronautics website.

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# TRIM TABS

***By* Colette Armao**

California has a rich history of aviation firsts and continues to be a global leader in flight related innovation. This is due in large part to many unsung heroes' efforts to promote aviation at all levels. We would like to acknowledge these aviation advocates' contributions in a new feature series called Trim Tabs. Why Trim Tabs? Trim Tabs are small control devices on an airplane's wings that give pilots the ability to fine tune the way a plane flies to get the most lift and efficiency out of the wing as possible, making it glide effortlessly through the air. Like this small device, Trim Tab articles will be about people who have helped aviation flourish in California through their efforts to promote its benefits to the Golden State.

Our inaugural Trim Tab features well known and respected aviation advocate, **John Pfeifer**.

John's interest in aviation began at age 12 when he entered and won an airplane model building contest sponsored by Southwest Airlines at the Stockton Airport. His prize was a trophy and a ride in a Southwest airplane with Miss Stockton. John's career started with a Bachelors Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley and a commission in the Naval Civil Engineer Corps, where he was assigned to the White House as the Public Works Officer for Camp David, under President Nixon.

One of John's most challenging naval assignments came one Easter morning as the Nixons left for church. The President whispered to the Camp Commander that he always gave his wife and two daughters each a two-pound box of Russell Stover chocolates on Easter morning, and could the Commander see to it that the chocolate were delivered by the time they returned from church. With stores closed on Sundays and the closest town 30 miles away, the staff went into high alert. As luck would have it, one of the enlisted sailors stationed at the Camp was dating a girl, whose father owned a candy store in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The girl was called, and an intensely negotiated agreement (and $200) produced the desired chocolates at the Camp before the Nixons returned from church.

John worked briefly for the Soil Conservation Service after leaving the Navy, before hiring on with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) at the San Francisco Airways Facilities Branch. During his career with the FAA, John worked as an airport engineer, planner, Par 139 airport inspector, and aviation noise expert, and was instrumental in the first Part 150 noise study for the San Francisco International Airport.

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Since retiring from the FAA, John continues to work in aviation as the Regional Manager for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Western Pacific Region. As AOPA's spokesperson, he represents the aviation interests of four western states on a diverse range of issues such as land use compatibility, landing fees, pilot certification flight safety, and other state and local issues as they emerge. One of his first assignments with AOPA was writing the nation's first and only Nuclear Temporary Flight Restriction.

John has received significant awards for his many contributions to aviation. Among these, in 2001, he received both AOPA's Joe Crotti Award for General Aviation Advocacy in California and the International Air Transport Association's Reno Award for the Most Significant Contribution to Aviation Safety and Efficiency in the Western United States. The Crotti Award recognized John for the rebuilding and design of several General Aviation airports including Byron, Rio Vista, Coalinga, and Oroville. In 2012, John was again the recipient of two awards: the Southwest Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives Wanamaker Award (for the second time) and the Association of California Airports annual Michael A. Shutt Award. Both awards recognized John's contributions for furthering aviation in the State and western United States.

On a personal level, John married his high school sweetheart, and they celebrated their forty-sixth wedding anniversary in June. They have two adult children, a son living in Anchorage, Alaska and a daughter living in Maryland. He joked that he and his wife wanted to live half way between them, and they are roughly about 3,000 miles from each of them, if you count the apex of the triangle as the half way point.

Recently, John participated in AOPA's National Summit. A highlight of the four-day program included a special portion composed of eight youth-oriented activities. Boy Scouts attending the Summit were awarded their Aviation Merit Badges for completing all eight sections. John shared that this meeting was AOPA's last National Summit and that future events would be regional to better focus on local and regional issues.

Looking to the future, John hopes his accomplishments will be an inspiration to the next generation of aviation professionals. He continues to promote aviation whenever and wherever he can and was instrumental in creating the first annual California Aviation Awareness Day. Held at the Capitol on April 24 this year, the event's goals were to inform the legislators, their staff, and the general public about the importance of aviation to the California economy and the many benefits aviation provides to all Californians.

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## The Capital Improvement Plan for the California Aviation System

***By* Patrick Kyo**

Thanks to all the airport sponsors who participated in updating the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) by sending us their Airport Capital Improvement Projects. On August 6, 2013, the updated CIP was adopted by the California Transportation Commission. The CIP is a planning document encompassing capital improvement projects and other needs for public-use airports statewide. Every two years, the CIP is updated per the California Public Utility Code, section 21704.

Now the 2013 CIP is ready to be used for Airport Improvement Project (AIP) matching funds and the 2014 Aeronautics Program. Under the California Code of Regulations, section 4062.1, a federally funded AIP project must be included in the most recently adopted CIP to be eligible for AIP matching funds.

The California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics (Division), will also use the CIP to select Acquisition and Development (A&D) projects for the upcoming 2014 funding program. Selections will be based on priority matrix and fund availability.

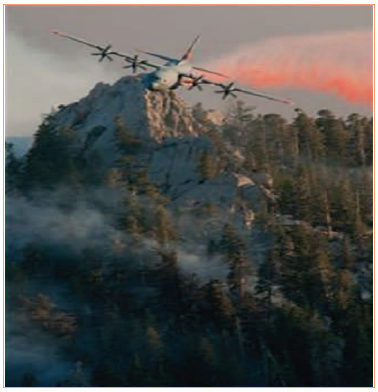
Requests to airport sponsors for updates will take place in 2014. As always, we strongly encourage airport sponsors to participate in updating the CIP to qualify for AIP State matching grants and A&D grants. This participation also reflects the overall health and needs for safety and security improvements in the California General Aviation system of public-use airports for the next ten years.

The 2013 CIP is available through the Division website at the following link:
**http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/planning/aeronaut/documents/casp/casp_2013_cip2014-2023.pdf**

## Wildfire Air Support in California

***By* Lee Provost**

The summer of 2013 was a high fire season in California, especially in the mountainous regions of the Sierra Nevada. For example, on August 19, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) reported that within a 24-hour period alone, over 25,400 lightning strikes occurred in California, resulting in 100 confirmed fires burning over 5,000 acres. So far this year, the number of fires and acres burned from January to mid-September is 4,176 fires burning 145,806 acres. Strong winds, dry conditions, and lightning strikes caused so many wildfires that additional air support was needed.



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## Wildfire Air Support in California

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Air Tanker CFPA August 2013 Newsletter
http://airtanker.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CFPA-Aug-2013.pdf

McClellan Airfield in northern California, located near Sacramento, aided CAL FIRE ground crews by providing firefighting air tankers this past August and September. CAL FIRE has 23 air tankers, 11 helicopters, and 14 air tactical planes. On average, they respond to over 5,600 wildfires in a year and are responsible for over 31 million acres in the State. Numerous air tankers, including C-130s and DC-10s, the largest aircraft in the fire suppression fleet, refueled at McClellan's "Reload Base" and headed out to drop fire retardant on the Rim Fire in Yosemite as well as other hot spots.

CAL FIRE and the California Air National Guard have crews on the ground to fill these aircraft with fire retardant. According to CALFIRE, the planes can be loaded within 30 minutes, and when all the planes are flying, they land and take off from McClellan Airfield every 5–10 minutes. Extra vigilance is required by other general aviation and commercial aircraft in the area, including those operating in the vicinity of the Sacramento Executive and Sacramento International Airports. It takes approximately 2 minutes to release 95,000 pounds of fire retardant to slow the combustion of a fire. Retardant contains ammonium phosphate, gum thickener, and a chemical coloring agent mixed with water.

Firefighters on the ground cannot be replaced by air tankers, but they help the ground crews to buy time. These critical, life saving, aviation services demonstrate the utility general aviation airports provide to both local and distant communities alike.

Photo by Steve Whitby, August 2013
CFPA News: www.calfirepilots.com
http://airtanker.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CFPA-Aug-2013.pdf

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## Nut Tree Airport Obstruction Removal

***By* Danny Uppal**

Nut Tree Airport is a county owned, public-use, general aviation airport located in Vacaville, California. It lies midway between two metropolitan regions, San Francisco and Sacramento, in Solano County, at an altitude of 117 feet above mean sea level. The airport is near the junction of Interstate Highways 80 and 505.

Nut Tree Airport
Vacaville,
California

Single Runway 2/20 is 4,700 feet long and 75 feet wide and accommodates light aircraft to corporate jets. Airport operations, maintenance, hangar and office rentals, along with tie-down services are handled by the airport's Administration Office.

Funded by an Acquisition and Development grant from the State, the Nut Tree Airport has started an obstruction removal project. The purpose of the project is to remove 700 large eucalyptus trees and a 125-foot-tall light pole on the west side of the runway known as "West Grove." The construction window is short (from September 1 to October 15) due to environmental constraints and compliance restrictions. Construction is in progress, and the project is expected to be completed on time and within budget.

**Project Before Construction**

**Project During Construction**

Project costs are estimated to be $77,778 with a State matching maximum participation grant of $70,001.

The removal of these trees will enhance operational safety and provide compliance with the State's minimum standards for permitted airports.

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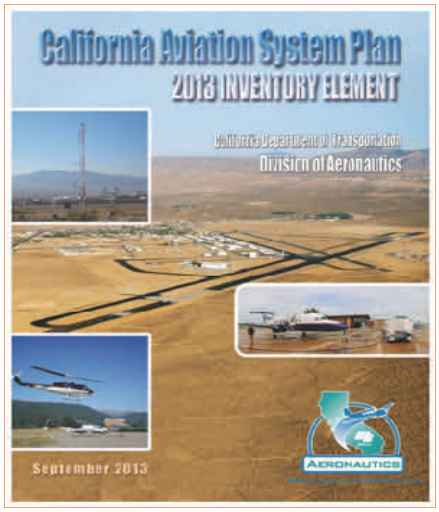
## California Aviation System Plan Updates: 2013 Inventory Elements and 2013 General Aviation System Needs Assessment

***By* Kevin Ryan**

The California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics (Division), announces the release of the updates for the 2013 California Aviation System Plan (CASP) Inventory Elements and the General Aviation System Needs Assessment (GASNA), Appendix 4. This iteration process began in January 2013, and the final 2013 GASNA Appendix 4 and the Inventory Element each is posted on the home page of the Division's website.




The Inventory Elements layout includes air facility information for public-use airports and hospital heliports, automated weather systems, and airport land use commissions, as well as based aircraft and aircraft operations data, similar to the 1998 version. Since this is a living document that expresses the current, but ever changing, statewide aviation system environment, we invite you to use it and to be prepared to share with us anything you feel is in need of correction with respect to your facility.

The 2010 GASNA focused on a funding approach to direct increasingly limited airport improvement dollars. Subsequently, the Division annually requests airport sponsors to review Appendix 4 for accuracy and to provide any information relating to their airports' completed or planned capital improvements. Appendix 4 lists a select number of airport improvement projects and their estimated costs.

It is our hope to update these CASP Elements concurrently with the Capital Improvement Plan every odd year, so the next update is expected to be 2015. Any questions regarding the updates can be directed to Kevin Ryan at Kevin.Ryan@dot.ca.gov or by calling the Division's main phone line at (916) 654-4959. We look forward to hearing from you.

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## Update to "Monitoring Your Airport's Airspace"

In the April 2013 Division of Aeronautics (Division) Newsletter, we had an article titled "Monitoring Your Airport's Airspace." The purpose of the article was to outline the process of how construction near airports, and potential obstructions to navigable airspace, are reviewed and the importance of participation in that process, including the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Obstruction Evaluation and Airport Airspace Analysis (OE/AAA) system. One of the examples provided in the article was a proposed wind turbine farm near the Lompoc Airport. Here's an update to that case.

The quick background is that a sponsor had filed the appropriate FAA Form 7460-1, Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration, submissions for a 24-turbine farm. In the course of the ensuing Airspace Studies, the FAA had circularized the Airspace Cases for 18 of the proposed wind turbines, asking for public comment. Although the individual impact varied by turbine height and location, the greatest effects would have required raising the Instrument Approach Minimums by almost 1,000 feet (more than doubling the Minimum Descent Altitude in the worst case from 780 feet MSL to 1,700 feet MSL), making an approach step down fix "not applicable," requiring a new minimum climb requirement, and penetrating the Obstacle Clearance Surface to make the Visual Approach Slope Indicator unusable.

In July of this year, the FAA issued the Airspace Determinations for these cases, and 12 of the proposed turbines received a Determination of Hazard to Air Navigation. Comments submitted by the Division and by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association were cited in the FAA Determinations of the adverse impacts of those turbines on the airspace system. While the local community may want to, as always, monitor events in their area, attempts to construct these turbines would likely result in liability and legal issues, including protections in the State Public Utilities Code, specifically section 21659, which addresses hazards near airports. This case is a good example of the system working to help preserve airports and airspace and prevent potential negative impacts to safety and capacity.

## Upcoming Events

SWAAAE Short Course Conference
Monterey, California
January 24–30, 2014

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Do you have something noteworthy to suggest for future issues of the CalAERO Newsletter?
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