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Kathy Regan
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Adirondack Park Agency
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December 5, 2014

Dear Ms. Regan,

Please accept this letter as formal comments regarding possible amendments to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan currently under consideration by your agency. I understand the discussion includes the possibility of restricting motorized vehicles to the state park land, which would include seaplanes.

As president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and an experienced seaplane pilot, I would like to share with you my view of how seaplanes, as compared to other motorized vehicles like boats, ATVs and personal watercraft, have an incredibly smaller “footprint” on state park land and are quite different in their nature and way of operating in and among America’s most valuable natural resources.

AOPA is general aviation’s largest and most influential membership association. AOPA’s mission is to effectively represent the interests of its members as aircraft owners and pilots concerning the economy, safety, utility, and popularity of flight in general aviation aircraft. General aviation (GA) is a quintessentially American industry that comprises all flying outside of military and airline operations, including seaplane operations. Each year, general aviation contributes \$150 billion to the U.S. economy, moves 170 million passengers, and supports 1.2 million jobs.

Seaplanes have far less environmental impact than other motorized recreational vehicles and they are environmentally non-obtrusive. Seaplanes require no roads, trails or infrastructure to support their use. The roads and trails required by other motorized vehicles disturb watersheds and cause erosion. In addition, boats generate wakes that erode shorelines while the underwater propeller stirs up sediments and disturbs underwater sea life. In contrast, the average seaplane leaves only a small, non-destructive wake less than 6 inches in amplitude, and has a much smaller impact on sediments or water life. A seaplane can land, nudge up to a sandy beach, and depart again without leaving any trace of its visit.

Quality of life is an important issue for everyone, including visitors to and residents of the Adirondack Park. In some case, people fear the noise impact of seaplanes to be on

the scale of major airports. In truth, seaplane operations are infrequent and seaplane noise during takeoff usually lasts no longer than 30 seconds. In addition, seaplane pilots work hard to limit the noise they generate by throttling back when possible and reducing the speed of their propellers. The noise seaplanes generate is typically minimal compared to the constant drone of powerboats, personal watercraft, ATVs and other motorized vehicles allowed in parks.

Additionally, seaplane pilots are held to extraordinarily high standards of conduct and training by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). All pilots are required to obtain an absolute minimum of 40 hours (the national average is over 65 hours) of hands-on flight training with a certified instructor, receive extensive ground instruction, and pass a rigorous written, oral, and practical examination given by the FAA. Recurrent training and the endorsement of a certified flight instructor is required biannually. Certification in seaplanes requires additional training, and yet another practical flight examination by an FAA-certified examiner.

Training topics include use of prudent judgment, aircraft control and maneuvering, obstacle avoidance, landing area assessment, sensitivity to community concerns, and aircraft regulations. Many pilots gain additional training through safety seminars and independent instruction on advanced topics. Pilots take pride in their professionalism, and that professionalism is demonstrated in the sound judgment they exercise when at the controls of an airplane.

I respectfully request that the agency consider the significant differences I've pointed out between seaplane operations and other motorized vehicles as you review the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

Please contact me if I can provide additional information or answer questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Baker', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Baker
President, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association