

The Manager's Approach



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Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

February 2005

Frequency Change Going Well

Both Columbia and Pine Mountain Airports are now using their new CTAFs. Columbia is 122.975 and PML is 122.9. The change-over process went very smoothly with the exception of the NOTAM filed with the FAA. Apparently changing a local CTAF at a non-towered airport is considered a minor event and only a "Local NOTAM" is issued. This means the original NOTAM was only issued out of the Rancho Marietta Flight Service and was not widely distributed. I talked to one pilot that checked DUATS on the day the frequency at Columbia changed and there was no frequency change NOTAM presented. I also talked to a KingAir pilot that used an online flight planning software program that showed no NOTAM. A quick call to Rancho Marietta voicing my concern that arriving pilots are not getting the frequency change information resulted in the local NOTAM being changed to a NOTAM-D which is much more widely distributed. Now the frequency change NOTAM does appear on DUATS and other online flight planning software.

Airport Markings Change

The Women's Pilot organization known as the 99's will repaint our runway markings at Pine Mountain Lake to reflect the new CTAF of 122.9. The current schedule is for the women to do the work on March 8th. They will provide the templates and the labor and the Airports Department will provide the paint and the rollers.

Anyone wishing to help out can contact my office for further details. You can also just show up see if any additional help is needed.

Final Draft of the Reserved Space Permit Available for Review

The County has been working for quite some time on revising the tie-down and hangar permit to reflect more fairness to the airport tenants and safety for the public facilities. The final draft of the permit is available for review at the Airports Department office and at the PML pilots lounge. Those wishing to provide comments on the new permit must now do so at the Board of Supervisors meeting because the permit has been passed through the Airports Committee. If you would like to make a public comment at the Board meeting, please contact my office and we will notify you of the date the Board will address the Reserved Space Permit and associated Code changes.

PML Master Plan Public Workshop February 23rd

On Wednesday, February 23rd we will conduct our second and final Public Workshop on the Master Plan for Pine Mountain Lake Airport. The workshop will be held at the Groveland Community Hall from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM.

This is the last Public Workshop where the public can review and comment on the plan before the preparation of the final draft document, making it an important step in the overall master planning process.

If you want to have input on the future development of Pine Mountain Lake Airport, please make plans to attend the workshop on the 23rd.

Stupid Pilot Tricks

Good Neighbor Policy

Usually February is a pretty quiet month around our airports. There is not a lot of air traffic due to the limited daylight and inclement weather. Surprisingly however, noise complaints are way up. One individual was so bothered by airplane noise that he even drove over to Columbia Airport and complained in person. It is very important for all pilots to realize that airplanes create a lot of noise that some people find irritating. People on the ground can do little to reduce the noise of an aircraft flying overhead, but pilots can do a lot to reduce the noise they are producing at ground level.

The biggest noise producing component on an airplane is the propeller. This occurs when the tip of the propeller reaches about 0.92 Mach at which time the airflow separates and the noise produced goes up dramatically. Propeller tip speeds less than 0.92 Mach are much quieter both for the aircraft occupants and for the people on the ground. Additionally, pilots should know that the propeller loses efficiency at tip speeds greater than 0.92 Mach. So, the really stupid thing is that pilots operating their propellers at or above 0.92 Mach are really just converting expensive avgas into irritating noise with the added bonus of a loss in aircraft performance.

The table below will quickly let you know if you have a plane that is capable of irritating our airport neighbors. All you have to do is measure the diameter of your propeller and look at the redline on your tachometer. Any plane falling into the bold numbers box is a potential airport office phone ringer.

50 Deg F	Maximum Propeller RPM			
Prop Dia.	2600	2650	2700	2750
82	0.841	0.857	0.873	0.889
84	0.861	0.878	0.895	0.911
86	0.882	0.899	0.916	0.933
88	0.901	0.921	0.937	0.954

If your engine/prop combination doesn't fit this simple table, you can go to the P. Ponk Aviation website and use their Propeller Efficiency Calculator to quickly and accurately determine your propeller tip Mach number. Their web address is:

<http://www.pponk.com/HTML%20PAGES/propcalc.html>

To be very blunt, most of the problem aircraft are those producing 230 to 350 hp with a 2 bladed prop. These aircraft include, but are not limited to C-180, C-185, C-206, C-210, V-35, R-985 powered aircraft, and helicopters. Being even more blunt, the two bladed Cessna 185 is the biggest noise producer of all.

If you own a problematic plane you can and should do one of two things; either pull the prop control back immediately after take off, or install a 3 bladed or shorter prop. It is as simple as that. Certainly flying higher will reduce the noise level on the ground. Flying higher is not possible on take-off, but refraining from high speed low approaches and not pushing your prop control to high pitch until AFTER you have pulled your throttle to a low power setting will go a long way to reducing noise at the airport.

Oh yeah, I must mention the Mach number goes up with a decrease in air temperature. In other words the cooler wintertime temperatures produce higher Mach numbers. Maybe this is one of the reasons the noise complaints are up in February!

Stupid Pilot Tricks is a monthly article that attempts to raise awareness of safety and courtesy issues around our airports.

The Manager's Approach is a monthly publication from the Tuolumne County Airports Director for the purpose of keeping our community informed of local aviation and airport issues. You can contact me at:

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