



Helicopter Noise Relief

Update – October 2014

Presented by:
Bob Anderson, President
Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition
LAHelicopterNoise.org

What Is LAAHNC?

- ◆ **An ad hoc voluntary coalition of residents brought together in late 2012 by former Congressman Berman**
 - **Our board members have been working to reduce helicopter noise for many years across various areas of Los Angeles County**
 - **Requested by Congressmen Berman then Schiff to represent the community and work with the FAA and helicopter pilots/operators**
- ◆ **Our mission is to recover and improve the quality of life throughout Los Angeles County by reducing helicopter noise in our communities, without compromising safety**
- ◆ **We are committed to partnering with local neighborhoods and working with appropriate government agencies, helicopter pilots and operators, and other entities to enhance the environmental quality of our neighborhoods today and for future generations**

Who Is LAAHNC?

- ◆ **George Abrahams**
 - Member, Beachwood Canyon Neighborhood Association
- ◆ **Bob Anderson, President**
 - Board Member, Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association
- ◆ **John Bailey**
 - President, SE Torrance Homeowners Association, and Member, LAX Community Noise Roundtable
- ◆ **David Garfinkle, Treasurer**
 - President, Tarzana Property Owners Association
- ◆ **Gerry Hans**
 - President, Friends of Griffith Park
- ◆ **David Rankell**
 - Member, Van Nuys Airport Citizens Advisory Council
- ◆ **Richard Root, Vice President**
 - Founder, Citizens for Quiet Helicopters (HelicopterNoise.com)
- ◆ **Mike Savidan**
 - Mayor, City of Lomita
- ◆ **Donna Sievers**
 - Vice President, Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association (Long Beach)
- ◆ **Gerald Silver**
 - President, Homeowners of Encino
- ◆ **Rudy Whitcomb**
 - Resident, Rolling Hills Estates
- ◆ **Wayne Williams**
 - Member, Van Nuys Airport Citizens Advisory Council

LA County – Most Complex Airspace in U.S.

72 miles



- ◆ 4,083 square miles
- ◆ 9.8 million population – more than 42 states
- ◆ 88 incorporated cities – one is 3.8-million Los Angeles
- ◆ Many unincorporated areas
- ◆ Good weather
- ◆ 70 miles of coastline
- ◆ Unique terrain
- ◆ Multiple mountain ranges
- ◆ 0 to 10,000 feet elevations
- ◆ Largest civil helicopter manufacturer
- ◆ Very complex airspace
- ◆ 5 major airports
- ◆ 5 military airports
- ◆ 16 general aviation airports

LA County Has a Helicopter Noise Problem

- ◆ **Helicopter noise is a serious problem**
 - **Electronic news gathering, tours, paparazzi, test flights, oil rig flights, routine operations of emergency helicopters, ...**
- ◆ **Low-altitude operation and hovering are very noisy**
 - **Helicopters often operate at 500 feet above ground level, or less**
 - **FAA AC 91-36D recommends 2,000 feet AGL for noise abatement**
 - **HAI recommends 1,000 feet AGL for small helicopters**
- ◆ **Both residential and public areas are disrupted**
 - **Communities, Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood Sign, Griffith Park, schools, parks, businesses, shorelines, ...**
- ◆ **Helicopter noise is one of the top complaints received by elected officials and community groups**
 - **Two Senators, 7 Congress members, CA Legislature, LA County, LA City, and 13 cities support Federal helicopter noise legislation**

Critical Helicopter Noise Problems

- ◆ **No data on numbers of flights or flight paths**
 - WebTrak systems help, but identification very limited
- ◆ **No centralized countywide complaint system**
 - Complaints are mostly anecdotal and not integrated
- ◆ **No environmental or noise impact studies performed**
 - To establish helicopter routes, heliport siting, ...
- ◆ **No acceptable standard on noise level for residents**
- ◆ **No studies on helicopter versus other aircraft noise**
 - ACRP Problem Statement 14-02-21 underway soon
- ◆ **No database of helicopter pilots and owners**
- ◆ **No central system for feedback to pilots/operators**

Helicopter Noise Events and Actions

Jul 2011	Carmageddon I (Mulholland Bridge demolition)
Dec 2011	Los Angeles Helicopter Noise Relief Act of 2011 (Berman and Feinstein)
Aug 2012	Congressman Berman's initial helicopter noise hearing
Sep 2012	Carmageddon II (Mulholland Bridge demolition)
Dec 2012	LAAHNC first meeting with FAA
Jan 2013	Los Angeles Helicopter Noise Relief Act of 2013 (Schiff and Feinstein)
Feb 2013	First LAAHNC-Pilots-FAA meeting
May 2013	FAA Report on the Los Angeles Helicopter Noise Initiative
May 2013	Congressman Schiff's public safety helicopter meeting
Jun 2013	Congressman Schiff's helicopter noise field hearing
Sep 2013	Second LAAHNC-Pilots-FAA meeting
Dec 2013	Third LAAHNC-Pilots-FAA meeting
Jan 2014	Helicopter noise rider in Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014
Mar 2014	Fourth LAAHNC-Pilots-FAA meeting
May 2014	First detailed FAA flight track analysis – Cahuenga Pass
Jun 2014	Fifth LAAHNC-Pilots-FAA meeting
Jul 2014	LAAHNC initiation of Tri-Party Agreement efforts
Sep 2014	FAA implementation of new radar identification codes for helicopters
Sep 2014	FAA funding announcement for helicopter noise complaint system

FAA Recommendations in May 2013 Report

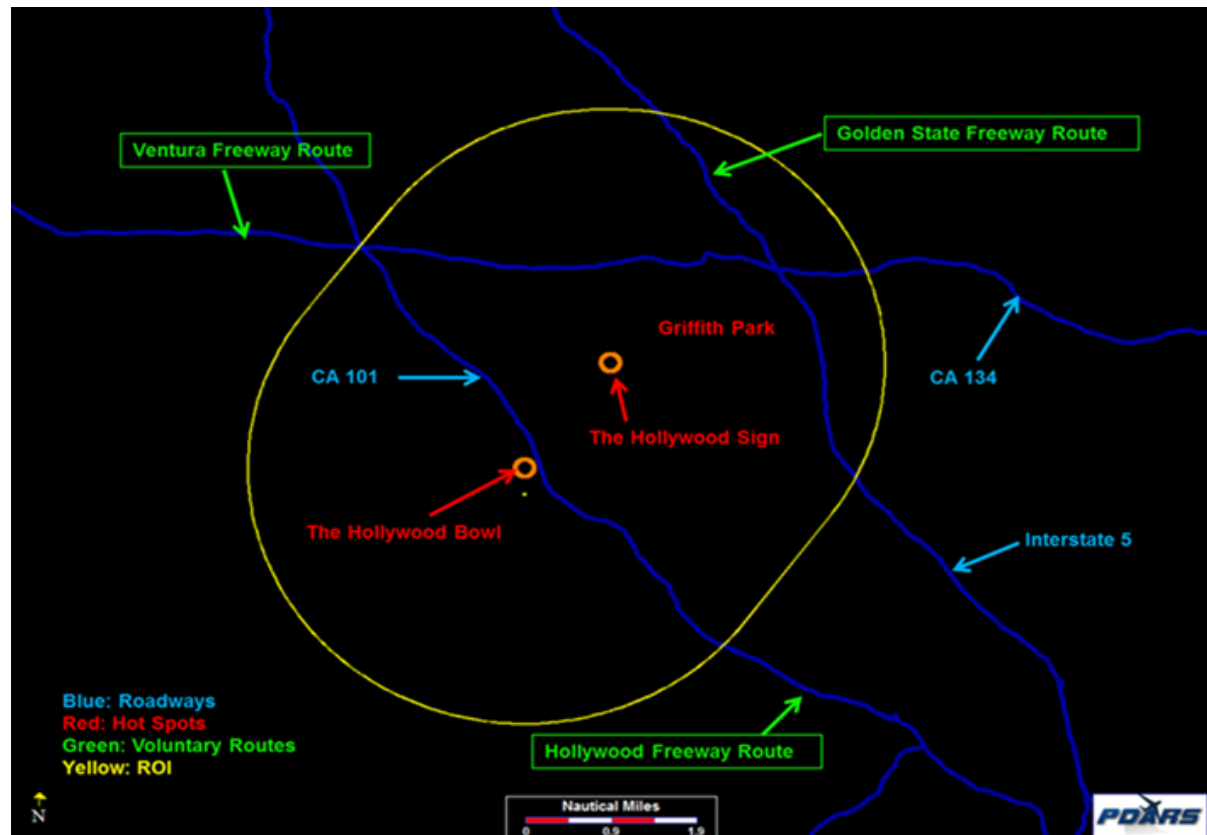
- ◆ **Explore a more comprehensive noise complaint system**
- ◆ **Evaluate existing helicopter routes to identify feasible modifications that could lessen impacts on residential areas and noise-sensitive landmarks**
- ◆ **Analyze whether helicopters could safely fly at higher altitudes in certain areas along helicopter routes and at specific identified areas of concern**
- ◆ **Develop and promote best practices for helicopter hovering and electronic news gathering**
- ◆ **Conduct outreach to helicopter pilots to increase awareness of noise-sensitive areas and events**
- ◆ **Continue the collaborative engagement between community representatives and helicopter operators, with interaction with the FAA**

FAA Flight Track Analysis

- ◆ **In May 2014, the FAA completed an initial, extensive flight track analysis of the Cahuenga Pass area**
 - **Once thought impossible, the FAA worked to develop special mathematical techniques to isolate and analyze helicopter traffic in specific areas (up to about 50 square miles each)**
 - **FAA analysts stated they were “amazed” at the amount of helicopter traffic in the Cahuenga Pass**
- ◆ **Cahuenga Pass analysis now updated multiple times**
 - **Critical to understand traffic and identify potential improvements**
- ◆ **South Bay analysis now underway**
- ◆ **Analyses will follow for other critical areas in LA County**
 - **Long Beach is next**
 - **LAAHNC recommending others**

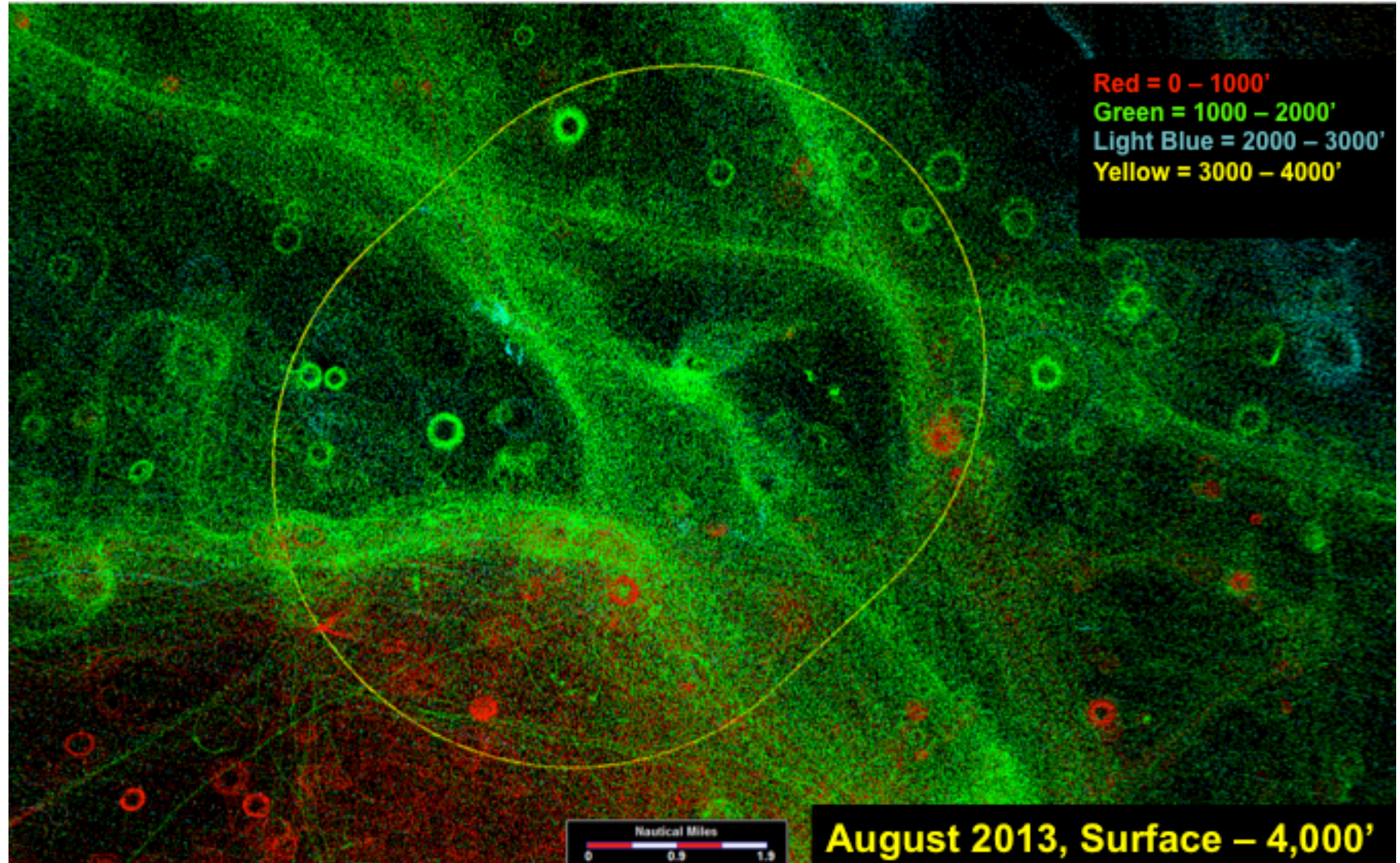
Cahuenga Pass Flight Track Study Area

- ◆ Oval around Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood Sign, and Griffith Park from surface to 4,000 feet mean sea level
 - 52 square miles
 - Includes portion of voluntary Hollywood Freeway helicopter route
 - Month of August 2013
- ◆ 3,300 helicopter tracks identified
 - 1,600 general aviation helicopters
 - 978 law enforcement helicopters
 - 273 TV helicopters
 - 76 medical helicopters



Cahuenga Pass Flight Track Study Results

- ◆ ~42 percent of total traffic is helicopters (~3,300 tracks)



Tri-Party Agreement on Voluntary Practices

- ◆ **LAAHNC, pilots, and FAA agreed that written Tri-Party Agreement was needed by end of 2014, including:**
 - **Purpose**
 - **Scope**
 - **Responsibilities**
 - **Voluntary practices**
 - **Enforcement/adherence**
 - **Commitment to continuing collaboration**
- ◆ **Voluntary practices being developed in six Working Groups established in 2013**
 - **Three with countywide focus and three with local focus**
- ◆ **LAAHNC is leading this effort with good cooperation from the FAA**
 - **Pilots have been slow in providing inputs for the agreement**

Noise Complaint System Working Group

- ◆ **Met four times**
- ◆ **Unanimously agreed that countywide helicopter noise complaint system was necessary to understand the noise problem and identify countywide noise hot spots**
- ◆ **Unanimously agreed that identification of specific helicopters was eventually necessary for enforcement and correction of problems**
- ◆ **Looked for, but unable to obtain, funding for system**
 - **LA County, LA City, ...**
 - **LAAHNC rejected notion that homeowner groups should fund system – they did not create the noise**
- ◆ **LAAHNC feels system should be government funded**
 - **FAA agreed to fund in September 2014; system ready early 2015**

Best Practices Working Group

- ◆ **Met five times**
- ◆ **Reached consensus on limiting night commercial flights**
- ◆ **Developing practices to minimize noise impacts on sensitive areas including residences, schools, religious institutions, and entertainment venues**
 - **Altitude, hovering, multiple helicopters in same vicinity, hours of operation, ...**
- ◆ **Distinguishing between first responders involved in active events and other flights such as tours, news reporting, commuting, and other commercial activity**
- ◆ **Deferred minimum flight altitude practice pending detailed analysis of flight restrictions in complex LA airspace**

Pilot Outreach Working Group

- ◆ **Met six times**
 - Representatives from helicopter pilot/operators, FAA, LA Sheriff, Long Beach Police, Long Beach Airport, and five neighborhood associations
- ◆ **Consensus on seven practices and strategies to communicate and train all pilots using the LA airspace**
 - FAA conducts safety seminars
 - Industry organizations use brochures, publications, and outreach
 - Certified Flight Instructors incorporate procedures to reduce noise into all new pilot training and bi-annual flight reviews
- ◆ **Concerns about helicopter industry policing itself and transient pilots who may not be aware of in-place voluntary noise agreements**

Cahuenga Pass-Griffith Park Routes WG

- ◆ **Met four times**
- ◆ **Tour helicopters near popular venues in Griffith Park cause unacceptable noise in hillside neighborhoods**
 - **Short-cuts over residential areas, rather than following the Hollywood Freeway flight route, also a problem**
- ◆ **Successful in forwarding voluntary practices for tour helicopters seeking views of the Hollywood Sign and Griffith Observatory, as a temporary measure to attenuate ground noise**
- ◆ **Proposal to change the Santa Monica Airport approach path being considered by FAA, which warns it may be expensive to implement**
 - **Change is only way to truly allow helicopters to safely fly high enough to reduce noise to acceptable levels in Cahuenga Pass**

South Bay Routes Working Group

- ◆ **Met nine times**
- ◆ **LAAHNC members identified ten areas for discussion, including seeking voluntary practices for:**
 - **Acceptable fly neighborly noise goal measured in decibels**
 - **Altitude helicopters should fly to meet the noise goal**
 - **Spreading flights to/from Torrance Airport over more routes**
 - **Establishing offshore routes along the coastline**
- ◆ **Eight of the ten topic areas have been discussed**
 - **No agreement yet on any voluntary practices**
 - **LAAHNC has proposed pilots fly farther offshore**
 - **Pilots want to fly on or just beyond the surf-line**

Long Beach Routes Working Group

- ◆ **Met nine times**
 - **Representatives from Long Beach City Council, pilots/operators, law enforcement, airport, and five neighborhood associations**
- ◆ **Practices include alternative to Redondo Avenue route to ocean, dual departure and arrival routes making Redondo Avenue a one-way route, direct route to ocean with no corner-cutting or routes over schools and neighborhoods, and higher standard operating altitudes**
- ◆ **Long Beach Airport soon collecting additional noise monitoring data on helicopters**
- ◆ **Residents concerned about frequency (15 per day) and low altitude of helicopters using Redondo Avenue route**
 - **Especially over Horace Mann Elementary School**

Radar Identification Codes for Helicopters

- ◆ **All aircraft not under tower control emit a coded signal when tracked by radar**
 - Airplanes and helicopters used the same 1200 beacon code
 - So, FAA radar data could not distinguish between them
- ◆ **On September 1, 2014, FAA established three distinct beacon codes for LA County**
 - Code 1200 – Airplanes (fixed-wing)
 - Code 1205 – General-use helicopters (tours, news, paparazzi, ...)
 - Code 1206 – Public-use helicopters (police, fire, medical, ...)
- ◆ **New codes let FAA track helicopters versus airplanes**
 - And general-use helicopters versus public use helicopters
- ◆ **Helps better understand helicopter traffic patterns**
 - And develop effective noise-reduction practices

FAA Noise Complaint System

- ◆ **On September 19, 2014, the FAA announced:**
“The FAA has approved funding and is moving forward to establish a Noise Complaint System for LA County regarding helicopter operations. We plan to take approximately three months to complete the contracting, and intend for the system to be up and running shortly after the first of the year. Thank you again for all of your participation.”
- ◆ **The system will provide an easy way – probably a toll-free number and/or webform – for anyone countywide to log a helicopter noise complaint**
- ◆ **The system will log and map the complaint to identify noise “hot spots”**
- ◆ **LAAHNC is working with the FAA and pilots on tracking and reconciling the complaints**

What Can You Do To Help?

- ◆ **Watch our LAHelicopterNoise.org web site**
 - Join our mailing list
- ◆ **Contact key sponsors and register your support**
 - Senators Feinstein and Boxer
 - Congressman Schiff
- ◆ **Contact your Congress members**
 - Sherman, Waxman, Cardenas, Bass, Hahn, Lowenthal, ...
- ◆ **Weigh in on the FAA's upcoming report to Congress**
 - Toward end of 2014 (we will notify our mail list)
- ◆ **Help publicize the Helicopter Noise Complaint System**
 - Widespread usage is critical to validate helicopter noise problems in LA County, highlight hot spots, identify specific pilots who violate voluntary practices, and enforce noise agreements

Thank You!

***If you would like a copy of this presentation,
please contact Bob Anderson at
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