

**The General Aviation Association (GAA) at Fairbanks International Airport (FAI)**  
**FAI-GAA Meeting Minutes October 20, 2015**

Opening: The regular Fall meeting of the GAA was called to order by GAA President Rod Combellick, who then thanked Northland Aviation for sponsoring the meeting.

Approval of the agenda for this meeting was moved & seconded. Hearing no objections, approval was declared by acclaim.

Approval of the minutes from the Spring meeting was moved & seconded. President Rod Combellick suggested minor corrections. Hearing no objections, approval of the minutes as amended was declared by acclaim.

The current GAA officers and past presidents were introduced:

Rod Combellick, President  
Paul Merrifield, Vice President  
Ken Kokjer, Secretary  
Phyllis Tate, Treasurer (absent due to travel)  
Tim Berg, recent past president  
Ron Dearborn, founder and past president (filling in for treasurer Phyllis Tate)

Visitors from National Business Aircraft Association (NBAA) were introduced: Steve Brown, Brian Koester, and Kristi Ivey.

Melissa Osborne, Chief of Operations, FAI, presented an update of various issues with the airport operations.

- No staff cuts are anticipated in the next year.
- Recruiting process for replacement airport manager is ongoing.
- New accounting system, PropWorks, is being worked on. Check your invoices for tie-downs for accuracy when you receive them and call the tie-down office (474-2500) with any questions or corrections.
- Several ideas are being worked on to mitigate the Taxiway B incursions experienced in recent years.
- There will be some security upgrades in 2016. More will be published as that happens.
- Several improvements in main terminal: new bag screening equipment coming, new restaurant.
- In response to the recent vehicle incursion at the ski strip, a Working Group is being formed by GAA to address surface incursion issues in general. Some signage changes have already been proposed.
- The issue of Elodea at the float pond has gotten attention. Pond was inspected on July 8, 2015 and none found. Recommendations are being formulated to help prevent the spread.

- The problem of loose dogs on the East Ramp is being addressed by GAA. New signage has been designed and will be placed by the airport staff.

Joe Reynolds, Tower Chief at FAI, updated the group on several Air Traffic Control (ATC) issues.

- Pilot Reports (PIREPS) are a national focus of concern. Local ATC was recently complimented on Alaska's use of them. A national team came here to see how we are doing so well.
- FAI is a training facility for controllers. At the present there is nearly a 1-1 ratio of trainees and fully qualified controllers (approximately 14 of each). Half of the trainees came here with prior military air traffic experience. Trainees will always have a certified controller with "over key capabilities" plugged in with them in position and a supervising controller behind them. Additionally any newly certified controllers have a supervising controller watching over them for a minimum of 6 months from certification. However, be aware you may be dealing with trainees or newly certified controllers. ATC advice to us is "if in doubt about any instructions or information ask them to clarify!"
- A new radar is expected to be operational in March, 2016. The newest console in use now dates to 1965!! The new system will update all equipment, and include ADS-B and two long range feeds for improved coverage.
- Adoption of the FAA's MAGVAR 19E performance requirement has meant new approach procedures needed to be developed. Joe showed an example with new intersection and reporting point names. When these are approved and published, there will be more information publicized.
- Monthly traffic charts for various kinds of operations were displayed. Fairbanks continues to be a very active airport.

Dustin Hodde (controller), was introduced to give some details on other FAI ATC issues.

- A summary of deviations over the past year was presented, with some discussion on a few. Taxiway U is getting attention as being a problem area. He presented numbers from three classes of problems:
  - Operational incidents: controller error
  - Pilot deviations: pilot error
  - Vehicle/Pedestrian deviation: movements of people and vehicles on controlled surfaces without tower clearance.
- Dustin also discussed the need for PIREPS, and talked a bit about how they are handled.
- A video was played displaying the radar image and radio traffic of a potential mid-air. A plane departed Bradley Field in North Pole, flying NNE, without contacting departure. His path took him across the approach track for Runway 14 at Eielson, with two flights of F-16 pairs inbound. He crossed their path as one flight was passing. Radar image had the audience on edge watching how close they came. All aircraft were operating legally. Pilots help ATC and other flights by being in contact with ATC, even if not required.

Tom George, Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA) presented two areas of concern.

- Two new Military Operations Areas (MOAs) are proposed in the Delta Area. And floors of MOAs are proposed to drop from 5000' to 500' AGL. With the changes proposed for these MOAs, being able to talk with Range Control on 125.3MHz is most important. Tom and others conducted a flight test south of the Alaska Range and found a large area without radio contact to Range Control on that occasion. He also learned from the Air Force that only one of the SUAS relay sites behind Eielson Air Force Base, broadcasts the recorded messages when the ranges are "cold". So that information source is even more restricted. Tom asked pilots to test the area of access to Range Control south of Delta, particularly south of the Alaska Range, and report findings to him.
- Alaska has much lower density of AWOS/ASOS installations than does the Lower 48. We would need as almost 200 more stations to have the same geographic density! Consequently, PIREPS are extremely important here to fill in the blanks. They also help the weather service refine their predictive capabilities by "ground truthing" their forecasts. AOPA has a free course, "SkySpotter," that helps train for this. <http://www.aopa.org/Education/Online-Courses/Pireps-Made-Easy>

Reed Greenwood, civilian with US Army Alaska, gave the feature presentation on the Gray Eagle Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) deployment at Ladd Army Airfield.

- A slide show gave an overview of the UAS and the operational profile. Aircraft will depart Ladd and fly through non-military airspace via an FAA approved corridor to Restricted Area 2205 (R2205) east of Eielson AFB. To meet the 'see and avoid' requirements, a helicopter will escort the UAS through the National Airspace System (NAS) corridor. They are working on obtaining the Certificate Of Authorization (COA) from the FAA. Plans are to start flights in February 2016. A Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) will be published for each operational period, which can include multiple flights. There are nine Gray Eagle aircraft stationed at Ladd, but it is likely that no more than four would be flying at a time.
- Their intent is to extend their range of operation into R2202 by October 2016, including an alternate return route to Ladd across the Tanana flats in case deteriorating weather prevents their return via R2205. This is contingent on obtaining a COA for the route to R2202 and alternate recovery routes back to Ladd.
- Gray Eagle operator training is extensive, and operators have a six year commitment! All operators can staff both pilot and instrumentation chairs. They end their training with the FAA pilot exam.

Kristi Ivey, the NBAA western region representative, gave a few words of greeting and invited folks to attend their meeting the following day.

Ron Dearborn, GAA, had two final comments.

- As acting treasurer, he reported the bank balance to be \$875.05, without the dues paid this evening included.

- He announced the formation of a group working on the Elodea problem, and asked interested folks to contact him.

With no further items or comments from the group, the meeting was adjourned.