

# NAAA eNewsletter

## FAA Responds to NAAA's Concerns with New Part 137 UAS Certification Process

On August 2nd, NAAA received a letter from Lawrence Fields, Acting Executive Director, Flight Standards Service, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) responding to concerns expressed by the association regarding the changes to the Part 137 certification process for Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS) applicants outlined in FAA Notice 8900.659. This newsletter previously published a [summary of the Notice](#) as well as [NAAA's concerns expressed to the FAA](#).

In this response letter, the FAA cited the backlog of Part 137 UAS applicants awaiting certification as the driver for the changes and contended that FAA's Flight Standards Service had considered the possible risks and determined this course as the most effective use of Inspector resources in service to the public. They pointed to specific risk mitigations in place such as only allowing Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) operations, requiring UAS to always yield the right-of-way to all crewed aircraft operations, limitations to altitude and the requirement to file Notices to Air Missions. They do not, however, specifically address who was considered in these risk analyses, nor acknowledge Part 137 crewed operators as primary risk bearers of Part 137 UAS operations.

The FAA also did not address NAAA's concerns regarding the potential stratification of Part 137 operations resulting from geographically adjacent operations dealing with different FAA officials/offices. They did note, however, that all Part 137 UAS operators are entered into the Enhanced Flight Standards Automation System, which would enable local FSDOs' engagement if surveillance or other action is required.

The agency's response, while not complete in addressing all NAAA's concerns, shows that the interests of the agricultural aviation industry are being heard and considered by the FAA. This is significant, considering the immense lobbying pressure exerted on them by deep pocketed UAS interests. Quoting the letter: *"The FAA will always monitor the on-going risk and incidents involving these Part 137 UAS (only) operations and will adjust if circumstances warrant it."* View the FAA response letter [here](#).

## NAAA Mourns the Loss of Don Pruett in Fourth Fatality of 2023

Donald L.S. Pruett was fatally injured in an ag aviation accident which occurred July 31, 2023, in Washington County, Illinois. Don was 41 at the time of his passing. The members and staff of NAAA offer their sympathies and condolences to Don's family and friends.

Don was a helicopter pilot for over two decades with a true passion for flying. He was the chief pilot at Kash Helicopter Services and worked as a medical airlift pilot for Air Evac Lifeteam 11 in Mount Vernon, IL.

By all accounts, Don was a fixture in his community. He made long-lasting impressions on those who knew him and was a continuous source of infectious humor. While he loved flying helicopters, his truest love was for his young daughter, Aubrey.

A visitation and funeral service will be held today, August 10 at the Central Christian Church in Mount Vernon, IL and details can be viewed [here](#). The funeral service will also be available via [Zoom](#). Friends and family have created ["In Memory of Capt. Don Pruett,"](#) a Facebook group commemorating his life.

## NAAA Mourns the Loss of Derek "Hooty" DuHoux in Fifth Fatality of 2023

Derek John "Hooty" DuHoux died August 2, 2023, from injuries sustained in an ag aviation accident which occurred July 25, 2023, in Chippewa County, Minnesota. Derek was 34 at the time of his passing. The members and staff of NAAA offer their sympathies and condolences to Derek's family and friends.

A native of Clara City, MN, Derek joined the Army National Guard in 2005 as an infantryman. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautics from the University of North Dakota in 2011, he was commissioned to serve as an AH-64D Apache pilot in the Army. In 2020 he transitioned back to the National Guard, moved back to his home area, and eventually trained to become an aerial applicator.

Derek was an avid fisherman, hunter, gardener and would always unselfishly help those in need. Even in death, he gave others life as an organ and tissue donor.

A visitation and celebration of Derek's life will be held August 10 & 11, 2023 at the Bethany Reformed Church in Clara City, MN; view details [here](#). In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to a charity of your choice in memory of Derek DuHoux. Charities to consider: an aviation scholarship, American Legion, or other military affiliated group such as Ruck Life/23rd Veteran, First Responder organizations, or Lifesource (Donate Life). View a "Small Town Hero" news report on Derek's life [here](#).

## AD Issued for AT-802 Air Tankers

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued an [Airworthiness Directive \(AD\)](#) for Air Tractor AT-802 and AT-802A airplanes with Wipaire, Inc. Wipline 10000 Amphibian Floats installed per Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) # SA01795CH, as well as previously floated aircraft that have been converted back to landplane configuration per the same STC.

During routine maintenance, an Air Tractor Model AT-802 airplane was found with a hairline crack in the flange of the right forward horizontal stabilizer spar. The airplane had the above STC installed and is used in fire-fighting missions, which can propagate crack growth more rapidly. Of the 144 Air Tractor Model AT-802 and AT-802A airplanes that have this STC, 45 have been inspected, and 24 of those inspected had cracks found in at least one forward horizontal stabilizer spar. The cracking is in the forward horizontal stabilizer spar bend radius located at the STC finlet mounting locations.

This AD, effective August 9, 2023, requires inspecting both forward horizontal stabilizer spars for cracks, replacing any which are found to be cracked, and reporting the inspection results to the FAA. [Wipaire, Inc. Service Letter 253, Revision B](#), dated July 27, 2023 specifies inspection procedures and compliance windows. Depending on STC configuration installed, compliance may be required within 3-15 days or 24 hours time-in-service (TIS), whichever occurs later. Re-inspections are required every 200 hours TIS.

The FAA implemented immediate adoption of this AD because cracks in the forward horizontal stabilizer spars could lead to structural failure of the horizontal tail with consequent loss of control of the airplane. Airplanes with the affected STC installed are used in fire-fighting missions and put frequent high repetitive fatigue loads in this area at a high utilization rate. View the AD [here](#).

## Happy 10th Birthday to Disney's Planes

Ten years ago, Disney released [Planes](#) on Aug. 9, 2013 to great fanfare in the aviation industry, particularly agricultural aviation. The movie has grossed \$240.2 million worldwide since it was released. The animated comedy adventure features a cast of colorful aviation characters, including Dusty Crophopper, a big-hearted ag plane with even bigger dreams of competing in a high-flying air race around the world.

*Planes* was great public relations for the industry to highlight aerial applicators and the agricultural aviation industry. Exposing a legion of kids and adults to the skill and sheer "wow factor" aerial applicators display is publicity that would be impossible for NAAA to buy.

The industry and NAAA saw the wow factor after the real-life Dusty Crophopper attended several airshows in North America, including AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wis. Disney hired Texas-based aerial applicator Rusty Lindeman to play the role of Dusty in air show performances. Lindeman customized his Air Tractor to match Dusty's paint scheme. As part of the aerial application industry's 100th anniversary, thanks to a donation arranged by NAAA on behalf of owners Rusty and Lea Lindeman, the real-life replica of Dusty has now become part of the permanent collection of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum.

The sequel, *Planes: Fire & Rescue* was released on July 18, 2014, which has grossed \$147 million worldwide since it was released.

***Rusty Lindeman's Air Tractor 301 Outfitted to be the character of Dusty Crophopper.***

## 2023 NAAA Award Nominations Due Sept. 8

*Use NAAA's online awards form to submit a 2023 Award nomination!*

***Nine recipients received NAAA Awards in 2022. Who will be among this year's awardees? Nominations are due by Sept. 8.***

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**Do you have a rising pilot within your ranks? Do you admire certain** NAAA members for their outstanding service to the industry or their community? The aerial application industry is filled with exceptional people who go above and beyond the call of duty, often with little fanfare. Make someone's day or year by nominating them for a 2023 NAAA Award.

NAAA's online submission form is the fastest and simplest way to nominate someone in just a few clicks, but a printable PDF version of the awards nomination form is also available. The following submission methods are available [here](#).

- [2023 NAAA Awards Nomination Online Submission Form](#) (recommended)
- [2023 Award Nomination Form](#) (print version)

Completed entries using the PDF form may be emailed to NAAA at [information@agaviation.org](mailto:information@agaviation.org).

There are nine NAAA Award categories and one NAAREF Award. The nomination deadline is Sept. 8, but early nominations are encouraged. The longer you wait, the busier you'll get this summer.

## NAAA Award Categories

**Agrinaut Award:** Honors an agricultural aircraft operator, operating organization or allied member company that has made an outstanding contribution in the field of ag aircraft operations. The achievement cited shall have contributed to the "state-of-the-art" for the benefit of the agricultural aircraft industry as a whole.

**Allied Industry Individual Award:** Recognizes an NAAA member or staff and/or an allied industry individual who has significantly contributed their efforts for the benefit of the allied industry and the aerial application industry. (*Presented by the NAAA Allied Industry*)

Committee.)

**Delta Air Lines “Puffer” Award:** Recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the design of agricultural aircraft and/or related equipment.

**Evans-Christopher Operation S.A.F.E. Award:** Recognizes individuals or entities that have made outstanding contributions to the Operation S.A.F.E. program. *(Presented by NAAREF)*

**John Robert Horne Memorial Award:** Honors a pilot with five or fewer years of experience in the agricultural aviation industry who has an exemplary safety record and has contributed to safety in ag aviation. ***This award no longer has carryover nominations from year to year; a new nomination must be submitted every year.***

**Larsen-Miller Community Service Award:** Recognizes outstanding contributions by a member to his or her community.

**Opal and Bill Binnion Memorial Award:** Acknowledges those who contribute to NAAA in its efforts to educate the public about aerial application.

**Richard “Dick” Reade Memorial Award:** Recognizes outstanding contributions by an allied industry member and their company.

**William O. Marsh Safety Award:** Recognizes significant achievements in safety, safety education or an outstanding operational safety program.

**Zoren and Joan O’Brien Memorial Outstanding Service Award:** Awards outstanding service to the commercial agricultural aviation industry or to its association.

The 2023 NAAA Award recipients will be honored at the Excellence in Ag Aviation Banquet Dec. 7 in Palm Springs, California.

## NAAA & NAAREF Board Meetings Oct. 6-7 in Dayton, OH

The October 2023 NAAA & NAAREF Board and Committee meetings will take place in Dayton, Ohio. Click [here](#) to view a schedule. Please note: All board books will now be provided electronically. Board and Committee members will receive a link and directions to download the electronic board book approximately one week before the meetings. The board book can be downloaded to your computer, tablet or you can print your committee items.

All meetings are open to NAAA members. If you are not a board or committee member but you’re interested in attending, please contact [Lauren Henretty](#) for more details.

### Hotel Details

The Marriott at the University of Dayton  
1414 South Patterson Blvd.  
Dayton, OH 45409

**Rate:** \$159/night plus tax

**Reservations:** Book online [here](#) or call 1-888-236-2427 and mention National Agricultural Aviation Association Board Meeting. If you have issues booking a hotel room, please email [Lauren Henretty](#) with your arrival and departure dates.

**Room Block Closes:** **Sept. 12, 2023.** *We cannot guarantee rates and room availability after this date.*

**Dayton, OH Information:** Further information on Dayton can be found online at [www.daytoncvb.com](http://www.daytoncvb.com).

## Frank Prentice of Covington Aircraft, Passes

Frank Prentice, a friend to the ag aviation community and former Vice President of Covington’s Radial Engine Division, passed away on Thursday, July 20, 2023, after a battle with cancer.

He started work at Covington Aircraft in 1974 and retired in 2009. Frank worked the assembly line for the R-985 and R-1340 engines. He eventually worked his way up to shop foreman and then Vice President at the time of his retirement.

Those that knew him remember him as a social person. He enjoyed attending the agriculture trade shows, especially those that included golf tournaments. Not only did he play in many ag show tournaments but upon his retirement much of his time was spent on the golf course. His love of golf was undeniable. He loved visiting with customers, telling jokes, laughing and just having a good time. If Frank was at a show and you needed to find him all you had to do was listen. You would be able to hear him laugh wherever he was.

Frank was preceded in death by his wife Diane. He loved his family and survivors include his son, his daughter, their spouses, a host of grandchildren and great grandchildren. Frank had placed his faith and trust in Jesus and is now with his heavenly Father.

Memorial contributions can be made in Frank’s memory to Oremundo Ministries, 4301 N. Shary Rd, Palmhurst, TX, 78573 or to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital at [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org).

## Turbine Training Funds Available Through Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship; Deadline Aug. 31

Two \$3,000 scholarships are available to eligible NAAA Operator and Pilot members for turbine transition training through the newly created Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship. The new NAAA scholarship program is funded by a generous educational grant from Jim Mills of Turbines Inc., who established the scholarship in memory of Charles Stokes (*pictured at right*). It is administered by NAAA.

The new turbine transition scholarship will be awarded starting this year. Here's what you need to know about the 2023 Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship.

### Key Details

**Purpose:** The Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship was created to provide training funds to agricultural pilots with a minimum of 150 hours of ag time for use at a turbine transition course or program. The scholarship must be used for turbine flight training at a qualified flight school or turbine training facility.

**Amount:** The 2023 Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship Program will award up to two one-year, \$3,000 scholarships to deserving, qualified ag pilots participating in a flight training program focused on turbine transition training. All funds are in U.S. dollars.

**Eligibility:** Applicants must:

- Have a minimum of 150 hours of ag time.
- Be a Pilot, Affiliated Operator or Operator member of NAAA.
- Be sponsored by an NAAA Operator member in the Operator dues category who will write a letter of recommendation on their behalf. (*Operator applicants may not sponsor themselves; another NAAA Operator member would need to sponsor them.*)

**How to Apply:** Applicants must apply using NAAA's online application process. A link to the online application is available [here](#).

**Deadline:** Aug. 31, 2023

**Restrictions:**

- Applicants may only apply for one NAAA pilot-training scholarship a year—*either* the Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship *or* the NAAA "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship, *but not both in the same year*.
- NAAA Operator members may only sponsor one Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship annually. They can sponsor an NAAA "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship applicant in the same year, but the applicants can't be the same person applying for both scholarships.

### Go Deeper

Learn more about the application process for the 2023 Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship [here](#).

## Apply for 'Ag Wings of Tomorrow' Scholarship by Aug. 31

From seeking a mentor to finding the funds for training, the road to becoming an ag pilot is fraught with obstacles, but having \$5,000 in seed money certainly helps. Thanks to the generous support of BASF and Thrush Aircraft, \$20,000 in aid is available through the **2023 NAAA "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship Program** to assist four aspiring ag pilots in their journey.

The goal of NAAA's "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship Program is to strengthen the aerial application industry by helping operator members bring new pilots into the profession and help fund their training. Applicants must be sponsored by an NAAA Operator member. Scholarship recipients may use the proceeds for flight training or aviation or ag-related coursework at a university, college, community college or other institution of higher learning. A stipend for a trainee in an NAAA Operator-sponsored apprentice program is also permissible. The scholarship program is administered by NAAA and funded by educational grants from BASF and Thrush.

This year, NAAA will award up to four scholarships valued at \$5,000 each. Investing in aspiring ag aviators is a win-win for NAAA Operator members and individuals seeking training funds to support their pursuit of becoming a professional ag pilot.

### How to Apply

To be considered for the 2023 scholarship, along with completing the two-part application, every applicant must submit:

- **A letter of recommendation** from the NAAA Operator member sponsoring the applicant.
- **An essay of 250 words or less** explaining why the applicant wants to pursue a career in agricultural aviation and how they would use NAAA's "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship to further their education and training.
- **A one-page résumé or list of activities** detailing all agricultural and aviation experiences, education and training.

Last year NAAA awarded \$5,000 scholarships to Ross Edwards of Sherwood, Arkansas; Tommy Koebel of Geneva, Illinois; Drew Kroeplin of Highmore, South Dakota; and Adam Jacobs of Graymont, Illinois (pictured above with his sponsor, Scott Petersen, at left, of Pontiac Flying LLC). NAAA will announce the recipients of the 2023 “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarships in December at the Ag Aviation Expo in Palm Springs, California.

## Application Process

To learn more about the 2023 NAAA “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship, review the [application instructions and checklist](#).

Applicants must apply using NAAA's [online application](#). The applicant will fill out ALL applicant and sponsor information. The NAAA Operator Sponsor must write a letter of recommendation on behalf of the applicant. Upload all required material noted in the Application Checklist and any additional supporting documentation using the Ag Wings of Tomorrow Scholarship's [online application portal](#).

A link to the scholarship application portal can also be found at [AgAviation.org/scholarship](https://AgAviation.org/scholarship).

Please contact NAAA at (202) 546-5722 or [information@agaviation.org](mailto:information@agaviation.org) for clarification about any of the application requirements.

While the applicant must be sponsored by an NAAA Operator member, NAAA membership is not a prerequisite for applying for the scholarship. Still, becoming an NAAA Associate member is an excellent way for candidates to learn more about the industry and augment their training.

**The deadline to apply for the 2023 “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship is Aug. 31.**

## Restrictions

With the introduction of the new [Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship](#) this year, applicants may only apply for one NAAA pilot-training scholarship per year. They can apply for the NAAA “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship or the Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship, *but not both in the same year*.

NAAA Operator members may only sponsor one NAAA “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship applicant a year. They can also sponsor a Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship applicant in the same year, but the applicants cannot be the same person applying for both scholarships in the same year.

Two \$3,000 scholarships are available for turbine training to eligible NAAA Operator and Pilot members applying for the [2023 Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship](#).

## EPA Releases Proposed Vulnerable Species Pilot Project to Protect Endangered Species

In 2022, EPA launched its Endangered Species Act (ESA) Vulnerable Species Pilot to identify both at-risk species reasonably certain to be adversely affected by non-residential outdoor uses of pesticides and proposed mitigation measures to reduce these impacts on the species and their habitat. On June 22, 2023 EPA published a draft white paper listing the initially identified set of listed species and the proposed mitigation measures. The paper mentions a plan to expand the pilot to other species in the future. The initial pilot focused on 27 federally listed species, including: the American burying beetle, the Wyoming toad, the Attwater's prairie chicken, the rusty patched bumble bee, as well as other listed mussel and plant species. Proposed mitigation measures in the white paper include timing restrictions, runoff and erosion minimization, and spray drift minimization. Areas where the 27 species occur will be identified geographically on EPA's [Bulletins Live! Two \(BLT\)](#) using pesticide use limitation areas (PULAs). Pesticide applicators will be directed by the label to check BLT to determine if they will be applying within or next to a PULA, and if so to follow instructions on a Bulletin also available on BLT. Comments are being accepted for the draft white paper until August 6, 2023, and NAAA is currently drafting comments.

## EPA Publicly Acknowledges Points NAAA Has Repeatedly Made About Aerial Drift Mitigations

Coinciding with the release of the Vulnerable Species Pilot project and Herbicide Strategy drafts (see stories below), EPA also published a [technical document](#) that provides scientific background and justifications for the proposed mitigation measures in the two drafts. The technical document contains several key points about aerial applications and drift mitigation that NAAA has been making to EPA for years, and their inclusion in the technical document is a major victory for aerial applicators. The first is that drift only moves downwind, hence upwind buffer zones are not necessary. While this seems obvious, it is likely that EPA, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service have had reservations that aerial applicators can accurately measure wind direction throughout an application. NAAA has commented numerous times about how onboard smokers or an meteorological measurement systems can accurately measure wind direction.

EPA also acknowledged that a standing crop, over which most aerial applications are made, reduces the amount of drift from aerial application compared to bare ground alone. NAAA has repeatedly informed EPA that performing all registration risk assessments with the assumption that every aerial application is over bare ground is unrealistic. The technical paper also discusses NAAA's proposal to move away from the inaccurate Tier 1 model and its assumptions in AgDRIFT and instead utilize the Tier 3 AgDRIFT model with parameters set



to reflect modern aerial applications. While the technical document still uses Tier 1, it states that EPA “*continues to consider those [NAAA’s] comments and may update its input parameters and spray drift modeling prior to implementing spray drift buffers calculated using AgDRIFT® described in this document.*” NAAA is pleased with these developments and will continue to promote more accurate modeling of aerial applications.

## EPA Releases Proposed Draft Herbicide Strategy to Protect Endangered Species

On July 24th, EPA released a proposed draft strategy outlining the Agency’s plan to protect endangered species as it relates to herbicide applications. This is one of many Endangered Species Act (ESA) related follow-ups from December 2022, when EPA posted for public comment a workplan developed to address the protection of endangered species from pesticides. The proposed herbicide strategy describes early mitigations for more than 900 listed species and designated critical habitats. The proposed measures are intended to reduce pesticide movement through drift, surface water runoff, and erosion. With the strategy EPA hopes to identify and begin mitigation measures for potential effects on listed species before completing ESA consultations. According to the Agency, its traditional chemical-by-chemical, species-by-species approach to meeting ESA obligations is costly and slow. The herbicide strategy focused on agricultural crop uses in the lower 48 states. The draft framework document includes a discussion of both the proposed scope of the herbicide strategy and the proposed decision framework to determine the level of mitigation needed for a particular herbicide, according to EPA. The Agency expects the strategy will lead to a more efficient ESA consultations on herbicides with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the future. Comments are being accepted [here](#) until September 22, 2023. NAAA is reviewing the strategy and will be commenting.

## EPA Publishes Proposed Settlement in the Endangered Species Mega Case

On July 17th, EPA published notice of a proposed settlement agreement in the Center for Biological Diversity v. United States Environmental Protection Agency, often referred to as the Mega Case. This lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in 2011. It looked to invalidate and restrict EPA’s registration of any pesticide product containing one of 382 active ingredients named in the complaint. It alleged EPA violated the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by registering products with the 382 active ingredients without consulting with one of the two agencies assigned ESA review responsibility. The District Court has dismissed portions of the complaint on several occasions. Subsequently the plaintiffs filed a Fourth Amended Complaint that narrowed the scope of products containing one or more of 35 active ingredients. A partial settlement in 2019 resolved many of the claims in this complaint. The most recent proposed settlement would resolve the remaining claims. It sets deadlines for EPA to develop strategies that EPA has already previously committed to in the 2022 ESA workplan. It does not create any new initiatives for EPA. This is the proposed final settlement agreement in this case and, once finalized, will result in a dismissal of the entire case with prejudice.

## NAAA’s Lindsay Barber Becomes the Association’s Director of Communications & Marketing; Hires Association Veteran Lauren Henretty

NAAA has named Lindsay Barber, CMP (*pictured top right*), to serve as the association’s director of communications & marketing and hired Lauren Henretty, CMP, to serve as NAAA’s new associate director of meetings & marketing. Lindsay will be handling oversight of the association’s internal and external communications and marketing and Lauren will handle oversight of the association’s board meetings, Ag Aviation Expo and assist with other marketing initiatives.

The communications department is not an unfamiliar role to Lindsay; she first worked for NAAA from 2004-2008 managing the communications department. Lindsay returned to NAAA in 2013 to manage the association’s meetings and marketing initiatives for NAAA. She continued her communications activity upon her return and has been actively involved in many of the association’s electronic communications mediums, such as social media and the website.

**Lauren Henretty** (*pictured bottom right*) brings 20 years of experience working for associations in education, meetings, and management. She most recently worked as associate director and education program planner for the Pediatric Pharmacy Association. Lauren will use her experience to help in the planning and execution of the Ag Aviation Expo, board meetings, other industry events and NAAA marketing initiatives. Lauren is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and lives with her husband and daughter in southern Maryland. For an updated roster of the NAAA staff click [here](#). Please help us in welcoming Lauren to the NAAA staff and congratulating Lindsay.

## NAAA Continues Farm Bill Advocacy on Senate Side Urging NPDES Permit Relief for Pesticide Applicators and Other Key Regulatory Relief Provisions

Late last week before the Senate’s month long August recess, NAAA continued advocating its policy priorities of NPDES permit relief and state pesticide preemption to staffers of Senators serving on its Agriculture Committee. During the briefings taking place as the committee will be considering a five year reauthorization of farm programs (Farm Bill), Andrew Moore, NAAA CEO discussed the impacts of unnecessary, costly and duplicative NPDES permits on aerial and other pesticide applicators. He highlighted the impacts on both crop protection and vector control, stressing the potential public health impacts on communities. Other farm bill priorities advocated include the role of USDA’s Office of Pesticide Management Policy and the Endangered Species Act Interagency Working Group to develop workable pesticide policy, federal pesticide label preemption, trade, and supporting the use of precision agriculture and adjuvants in farm conservation programs.

**NAAA CEO Andrew Moore briefs U.S. Senate staff on Farm Bill priorities of the aerial application industry.**

## NAAA Ag Aviation Expo Attendee Registration Now Open

We look forward to seeing you at the 2023 NAAA Ag Aviation Expo in Palm Springs, CA, Dec 4-7, a new convention destination for the Ag Aviation Expo. [Attendee registration is now open](#) for the annual convention. Exhibitors can purchase booth space [here](#).

Take a peek at the [floor plan](#) to view the companies that will be represented in Palm Springs. Many additional companies will purchase booth space between now and the start of the Ag Aviation Expo; check back often as the list of exhibitors increases.

In a city that has 350 days of sunshine and winter temperatures averaging in the 70s during the day, you can bet on great weather during the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo. In addition to attending the Ag Aviation Expo, visit the Palm Springs Air Museum, enjoy an off-road or BMW driving experience, play golf, visit museums, or try your luck at a casino close to the convention center. The area offers many hiking trails and top-notch spas.

Whether you are a veteran operator, a fledging ag pilot, or an allied supplier to the ag aviation industry, you won't find a better venue than Palm Springs and the Ag Aviation Expo to help you achieve your professional goals and business objectives.

## Details for the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo

- **Dates:** Dec. 4-7, 2023
- **Location:** Palm Springs Convention Center and Renaissance (the two facilities are attached)
- **Kickoff Breakfast Speaker:** **Burt Rutan**, Aerospace Legend
- **Schedule of Events:** See the current, tentative schedule [here](#).
- **Hotel:** [Details here](#).
- **Attendee Registration:** Open [here](#).
- **Exhibitor Booth Sales:** Booth Sales Open [here](#).
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** View the sponsorships opportunities [here](#). We have sponsorships available for all budget sizes. Please email [Lindsay](#) if you would like to secure a sponsorship from last year or be contacted about 2023 opportunities!
- **Auction Donations:** Thank you to Pratt & Whitney Canada for donating a PT6-34AG to this year's NAAA Live Auction. Please consider [making a donation](#) for the Live and Silent Auction. The earlier you inform us of your auction donation, the more advertising you will receive on the NAAA website and in NAAA publications. Support the aerial application industry by donating an item today. Email [Lauren](#) with your donation details.

## Apply for C-PAASS 2023—Certified-Professional Aerial Applicator Safety Steward

If you've recently participated in a 2022 and/or 2023 Operation S.A.F.E. Fly-In and you're receiving this eNewsletter because you are an NAAA member, you have completed two of four requirements to apply for C-PAASS certification for 2023.

Apply for [C-PAASS certification](#) today, which is offered on an annual basis to individual ag pilots, both operator and non-operator. As the first year for C-PAASS, its requirements are based entirely upon education and professional opportunities already available:

1. **Annual PAASS Attendance for three (3) years**
  - 2020-2021 season, AND
  - 2021-2022 season, AND
  - 2022-2023 season
2. **Biennial Operation S.A.F.E. Participation**
  - 2022 season, AND/OR
  - 2023 season
3. **Annual Membership in NAAA**
  - 2023
4. **Annual Membership in a State/Regional agricultural aviation association**
  - 2023

## To submit a 2023 C-PAASS application:

1. Check your eligibility at [education.agaviation.org/cpaass](https://education.agaviation.org/cpaass).
  - You will need to log in using your NAAA username/password. Contact [information@agaviation.org](mailto:information@agaviation.org) if you need assistance.
2. If eligible, scroll to the bottom of the page and locate the **2023 C-PAASS Application** tile. Hover over it and click the green **Register (Free!)** button.
3. You will be prompted to attest to your completion of each of the requirements and directed to upload documentation of your 2023 membership in a State/Regional agricultural aviation association. NAAA Staff will be automatically notified to review your application once this documentation is submitted.
4. Your application will be reviewed within three (3) business days.
5. If your application is accepted, you will be provided a link to pay the certification fee (currently \$100) and obtain your digital certificate.

Aerial applicators, now more than ever, operate in an environment of competing interests. An ever-increasing demand for timely and effective applications is challenged by factors such as added regulatory burden, rising insurance costs and stiffer pesticide label language, just to name a few. The agricultural aviation industry is rising to these challenges and, in character, has moved to advance education, rather than regulation, as the path forward.

NAAA and NAAREF jointly launched the Certified-Professional Aerial Applicator Safety Steward (C-PAASS) program earlier this year to serve as the industry's flagship certification and as a roadmap for the pursuit of the best educational opportunities currently available. This voluntary program allows those aerial applicators who strive to constantly educate themselves to better their safety and application quality to be recognized for their efforts. Secondly, the certification can signal to customers, regulators and others outside the industry their commitment to professionalism.

**Apply for C-PAASS certification today!** Utilize it to inform regulatory officials and insurance agents and to market to your customers that you have undergone additional training and development to ensure you can provide the highest quality service.

## Has Your Aircraft Been Pattern Tested Yet? There Are Tools to Help

If you have not attended or scheduled an Operation S.A.F.E. Fly-In for this season yet, the time is becoming short in many parts of the country.

NAAREF recommends having your pattern assessed, at minimum, every other year or when major changes are made. This is vitally important to ensuring your aircraft is ready to make effective applications this season. Accordingly, NAAA has included biennial Operation S.A.F.E. participation as a core component of its **C-PAASS** professional aerial applicator certification.

If you are unable to attend one of these events, as an NAAA member, you have alternative options.

Earlier this year, NAAA **announced the release of DropFlight**, an iPhone/iPad app that allows extremely fast scanning and analysis of water-sensitive spray cards, all on your Apple mobile devices. This tool, created in part by an aerial applicator, is targeted specifically for aerial applicators to use in assessing spray pattern uniformity, effective swath width and droplet size across the swath.

### Download DropFlight from the App Store

**Use NAAA member code: NAAA23**

Another option for conducting your own spray pattern testing is to use AccuPatt, the same desktop (Windows/MacOS) software that Operation S.A.F.E. analysts use. Originally developed to run the string testing systems you may have seen at a fly-in, AccuPatt has grown to include spray-card-analysis functionality that can be used independently to perform spray-card-only pattern testing. Now, it is being offered to NAAA members for use in their own operation at no cost. A flatbed scanner is required to digitize the spray cards for analysis.

### Download AccuPatt for Windows/MacOS

Consult the **User Manual** to get up and running

To further reduce friction in getting your spray pattern testing underway, DropFlight is also offering all the needed **testing gear**. Available as a **convenient kit** or by the piece, DropFlight's card mounting system makes it simple to lay out cards uniformly and in the correct orientation to the wind. This testing gear will work with DropFlight and AccuPatt and is the fastest and most convenient way to acquire all the equipment you need to conduct your own pattern testing.

As always, if you consult with a **NAAREF-recognized Operation S.A.F.E. analyst** about your pattern testing data, they can report this to NAAREF as participation in Operation S.A.F.E. NAAA members will receive an official letter of participation and credit toward C-PAASS certification.

## Makeup PAASS Programs Now Available for 2021, 2022 and 2023 – Get C-PAASS Certified Today!

The impact of the PAASS Program on reducing the number of agricultural aviation accidents and drift incidents is proven—26% reductions in both categories since the program first hit the stage. In an effort to present the program's life-saving curriculum to those who may have missed it, the National Agricultural Aviation Research and Education Foundation (NAAREF) has leveraged the NAAA Education Center to host recorded webinars of the PAASS Program from 2021, 2022 and 2023.

If you want to be C-PAASS-certified for the 2023 season but missed one of these three PAASS Programs, this is your opportunity to fulfill that requirement and complete your C-PAASS application. If you missed the 2023 PAASS Program, it is now available for credit for \$850. Starting July 1, its fee will increase to \$1,700. The 2021 and 2022 programs are each now available for credit for \$1,700.

NAAA members also have the option to purchase one year of unlimited access to not-for-credit versions of PAASS for \$120. The not-for-credit versions of the 2021 and 2022 programs are available now, and the 2023 program will be available starting July 1. More than just a review for yourself, educate your ground crew or other stakeholders to impress upon them the importance of safety and environmental professionalism in your operation. The \$120 option will not give you official credit for PAASS attendance and will not count toward C-PAASS.



The best way to experience PAASS is a live program at your state/regional agricultural aviation convention. However, situations occur that may prevent this from happening. By offering these online options to make up PAASS, everyone can benefit from the wealth of information presented and help move the needle in preventing ag aviation accidents.

[Click here](#) to view all archived PAASS Programs.

## Important Call for GPS Data to Protect Manned Ag Aircraft from Drones

In 2022, an FAA advisory committee weighted with drone interests from Amazon, Google and other unmanned corporate interests suggested that the agency promulgate rules that drones operating beyond visual line of sight be permitted to:

- Increase their weight to 1,320 pounds
- Not equip with ADS-B identification technology
- Not give the right of way to manned aircraft when operating in rural, low-altitude airspace because they claimed there are no other users of this airspace.

As an ag aviator, you know these requests to be patently unsafe and based on false premises. As such, we call on you to help us collect information on ag aircraft's use of the low-altitude airspace. NAAA is working with and supports Mississippi State University's (MSU) Raspet Flight Research Laboratory and its continuing research on safe operational distances between low-altitude, manned aircraft and drones. The study's objectives are to:

1. Identify Ag Aircraft Operational Trends
2. Develop Ag Aircraft Operational Model
3. Validate Model through Observation/Collection of Empirical Data
4. Inform/Educate UAS Operators
5. Promote Safety in all Low-Altitude Ag Environments

**Your voluntary participation in this study is critical** to achieving these objectives. NAAA encourages you to donate your GPS flight log data to participate in this timely research. Logs from any year(s) are welcome and will be washed of any identifying information prior to use.

Many of you have previously contributed during the first stage of data collection from 2017 to 2020 when NAAA members donated 49,180 flight logs from 20 states. The second stage of the study began in 2021 and seeks to additionally include aircraft make and model info. These details are important, as the airspace modeling will be impacted by aircraft types differently, such as fixed-wing versus helicopter operations.

More GPS flight log data is needed to continue this study. Because of the diverse growing areas and unique geographical challenges experienced by aerial applicators, it is imperative that as many states and regions as possible are represented. This will ultimately help facilitate the safe integration of unmanned aircraft into these different airspaces.

As a reminder, NAAA and Raspet have agreed that all submitted information will remain confidential, and all GPS flight logs will be stripped of any personally identifying information before any research is conducted using the data.

There are several methods available to submit your data:

1. Request a secure upload link for larger uploads OR email directly to Madison Dixon, Research Director.  
**Email:** [mdixon@raspet.msstate.edu](mailto:mdixon@raspet.msstate.edu)
2. Mail a flash drive or other storage device to the address below. (The device will be immediately mailed back once data is received if a return address is provided):

**Address:**

Attn: Madison Dixon  
Raspet Flight Research Lab – Bldg. 2  
114 Airport Rd.  
Starkville, MS 39759

## NAAA Releases Book of the Century! Buy It Today

NAAA has released the book of the century—a century of agricultural aviation, that is.

One hundred years ago, an aerial crop dusting experiment spawned the birth of the agricultural aviation industry. To commemorate agricultural aviation's 100th anniversary, NAAA is pleased to present ***Agriculture's Air Force: 100 Years of Aerial Application***.

*Agriculture's Air Force* provides a new, updated account of aerial application's history, 35 years after Mabry Anderson's masterpiece, *Low & Slow: An Insider's History of Agricultural Aviation*, was published. NAAA's meticulously sourced book is based on a collective history of the agricultural aviation industry based on material from *Agricultural Aviation* magazine, *AgAir Update*, *Low & Slow* and other resources.

Beginning with ***Agricultural Aviation's Spring 2021 issue***, NAAA published excerpts from *Agriculture's Air Force* and continued to do so through the ***Fall 2021 issue***. Those stories are just a small slice of what's in the 268-page hardback edition, however. The complete book contains so much more.

*Agriculture's Air Force* delves into the intersection of agriculture and aviation. It chronicles the agricultural aviation industry's growth from its infancy in 1921 through the boom times after World War II and on to today's modern era of high-tech aerial application.

The finished hardback book has been years in the making but well worth the effort. "This is a significant piece of work covering not just the industry's history, but its essence," NAAA CEO Andrew Moore said. "We are proud of it and believe it will make a lasting contribution to the industry."

The story of agricultural aviation is much like the broader story of aviation: It is mostly punctuated with interesting smaller moments sandwiched between milestone developments. Aerial application is also the story of technological leaps and bounds.

*Agriculture's Air Force* covers five eras spanning more than 10 decades. In addition, it features 34 Spotlight pieces focused on significant individuals, organizations, trends, technologies and topics related to aerial application.

*Agriculture's Air Force: 100 Years of Aerial Application* may well be NAAA's most enduring 100th anniversary initiative. One thing's for sure: It is no textbook. The commemorative book is written from a fresh perspective that is entertaining and enlightening. Readers will come away with a new appreciation for agricultural aviation as a profession and the dedicated individuals who propel it forward.

## **Order Your Copy of Agriculture's Air Force Today!**

*Agriculture's Air Force* retails for \$45, excluding shipping. Order it from [AgAir Update's Online Store](#).