

SLT eliminates airport noise monitoring devices

By Lake Tahoe News

Noise complaints associated with aircraft using Lake Tahoe Airport will now be monitored on a case-by-case basis.

In other words, it will be complaint driven.

A 20-year agreement that came out of a lawsuit filed by the League to Save Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency expired in 2012. In the last five years monitoring has been done via devices set on property owned by the California Tahoe Conservancy and U.S. Forest Service.

The agreements with the monitoring companies expired this spring, which gave South Lake Tahoe officials a reason to revisit how it handles noise.

Monitoring at Lake Tahoe Airport is voluntary as far as state and federal laws go.

The bulk of complaints – 72 percent – are because of military aircraft and helicopter tour operators. The military is exempt from the noise rules.

The city averages one complaint a month. In the four months since Mark Gibbs, the current airport manager, has been on staff there has been one complaint.

With so little traffic at the airport on most days, the city is usually able to figure out which aircraft caused the noise via information provided by the complaining party. Once the pilot is identified, a bit of education will be the first course of action so ideally it's not a recurring situation. Noise complaints can be filed via the city's website.