



Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association

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May 28, 2006

Gary E. Slagel
Monument Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument
P.O. Box 1160
Lewistown, MT 59457-1160

RE: COMMENT ON YOUR CALL CONCERNING SEAPLANE ACCESS
UPPER MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Dear Mr. Slagel:

This note is a follow-up to our telephone conversation on Thursday May 25, 2006 concerning seaplane access to the Missouri River in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

You had asked whether it was true that once a seaplane touches the water it becomes a boat. I responded that this is not correct, because under FAA rules a seaplane remains an airplane under flight rules from the start of the takeoff until the end of the landing.

The FAA makes a distinction between whether the operation of an airplane is “for the purpose of flight” or not. Thus, for example, Federal Aviation Regulations Section 1.1 defines “Flight time” to mean “time that commences when an aircraft moves under its own power for the purpose of flight and ends when the aircraft comes to rest after landing.”

After an aircraft comes to rest after a landing is the period when the seaplane formally becomes a “boat” which then places it under the same regulations as for boats. I must further note that at that point if the seaplane is under power from the engine it is subject to the same rules as for power boats. However since Seaplanes have no reverse and are quite wide for docking they always carry paddles for maneuvering in tight places. Thus a Seaplane can function as a catamaran canoe where power boats are restricted.

It continues to be our understanding that there are no specific rules prohibiting seaplanes from using the Missouri River for purposes of flight. Please let us know if there is further information you require or if you believe this issue needs further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Aron Faegre, President
Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association