

Soar Truckee, Inc.

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Kevin Smith
General Manager
Truckee-Tahoe Airport District
Truckee, CA

Kevin

You asked for background on Soar Truckee, Inc. (STI) decision to forego using the four-bladed propeller on our tow planes.

In 2005, TTAD offered to reduce our hangar rent by the equivalent of \$4,000 (one-time, maximum) as a contribution towards a four bladed propeller. STI paid the balance of the \$8,000 propeller, plus installation. The thought was that the new prop would be quieter and that everything else would be "neutral".

In a ground handling accident at the start of 2008 the propeller was damaged (a golf cart ran into the blade) and we reinstalled an older two bladed propeller. STI had in the meantime purchased (2007) another four bladed Hoffman propeller for the second tow plane.

Our tow pilots, and glider pilots on tow, noticed a significant difference in climb performance between the two tow planes, one with the Hoffman four bladed propeller and the second with the two bladed propeller. Note: the ship with the 4-blade had less time on the engine than the 2-blade ship. Our higher weight-gliders (2 place with water) and some of our tow pilots were reluctant to accept a tow from the four-blade Tow plane (one tow pilot flat out refused to fly it, stating safety concerns). We subsequently took the STI-purchased four-blade prop off the second ship and reverted to the two-blade one in 2010.

We understand that there has been no increase in noise complaints since we reverted to the two-blade propellers. We also have not seen any fact-based, non self-serving, information that a four-blade propeller is appreciably less noisy than a two-blade propeller. Our tow pilots are 100% in agreement that there was a performance degradation with the four-blade propeller during climb, which is when we are at our most vulnerable position.

Our intent has always been to be a good neighbor both to TTAD and the community. We cannot, however, put our pilots at risk over a perceived lower decibel level.

Our intent is to sell the Hoffman 4-blade propellers and maintain the two-blade ones. Your thoughts will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Richard Pearl
President, STI