

Comment #12077 - Dean Henderickson



Comment #12102 - Colleen Venner



Comment #12110 - James Grainger



Comment #12120 - David Shiffer



Comment #12123 - Erik Forman





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Comment # 12126 - Kyle Lewis

September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks and Recreation  
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Commission  
523 East Capitol Ave  
Pierre, SD 57501

**TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TO: [Jeff.VanMeeteren@state.sd.us](mailto:Jeff.VanMeeteren@state.sd.us)**

**RE: Custer State Park Airport (3V0) / AOPA Public Comments**

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the world's largest aviation organization, is a strong advocate for safe, efficient, accessible, and sustainable airports. Small community airports support general aviation daily. Flight training, aero-medical, law enforcement, recreation, and business travel are only a few of the uses general aviation airports see every day.

AOPA encourages the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission to maintain the Custer State Airport as a public-use airport. We believe that the airport has a high value to recreational aviation, providing direct access to Custer State Park by general aviation. The airport could also be used as a medical airlift location, given its strategic location within the state park.

AOPA understands the major financial responsibility associated with a runway pavement reconstruction project since the airport is not eligible for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Improvement Plan (AIP) grants. AOPA supports an effort to remove the troubled pavement, create a turf runway, and look at private investment into infrastructure to support the access and sustainability of the airport. The Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF) is a nationally recognized aviation organization that has broad experience in coordinating with private, local, state, and federal agencies on recreational airstrip investment. The RAF has a large network of volunteers and financial investment, through an airfield grant program, to procure and create unique aviation experiences. Custer State Park Airport aligns with the mission and goals of the RAF, and AOPA membership for access to small general aviation airports.

If the commission were to agree to invest in a turf runway for Custer State Park Airport, there would be no loss of utility to the airport, and this would encourage more use by recreational aviators. The maintenance of a turf runway, when compared to the maintenance of a paved runway over time is much less. No crack sealing, no crack mitigation, no seal coating, and no reconstruction or rehabilitation every 15-20 years. With assistance from the RAF, volunteers may be utilized to maintain certain aspects of the airport, and the RAF, along with AOPA, could market

the airport to our members and users. The underutilized airport has the potential to become a better-suited facility for aviators and visitors to Custer State Park.

AOPA is willing to answer any questions, provide more direct feedback, or facilitate any future discussions with our membership.

Submitted Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyle Lewis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kyle Lewis  
Great Lakes Regional Manager • Airports and State Advocacy  
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association  
[kyle.lewis@aopa.org](mailto:kyle.lewis@aopa.org)

cc:

*Jack Dokken, Air, Rail and Transit Program Manager*

*Jon Becker, Aeronautics Planning Engineer*

*Thomas Koch, Airport Inspector*

*Brad Remmich, Airport Construction Specialist*

*Bill McGlynn, President, RAF*

*John McKenna, Chairman, RAF*

*Jeff Russell, Director, RAF*

*Karl Jungclaus, RAF SD State Liaison*



## Comment #12127 - Jeffrey Russell

September 21, 2023

Mr. Jeff VanMeeteren  
Director of Parks and Recreation  
South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks

Dear Mr. VanMeeteren:

The RAF has recently become aware of your agency's intent to close the Custer State Park Airport. This concerns us greatly as the CSP airport is an airport with very high recreational value as it provides access to the premiere state park of South Dakota. A number of our supporters residing in South Dakota have reached out to us with the hope that our organization can help to keep this airport open. I am writing this letter to you to express our interest in setting up a meeting to discuss the future of the airport.

Our organization consists of 12,000 supporters/volunteers in all fifty states. Our mission is to preserve, improve, and create airports for recreational access. We believe the Custer State Park airport is highly aligned with our mission and we are sincerely interested in seeing it remain open to the public.

In our twenty-year history, we have been involved with dozens of recreational airports around the country. This involvement varies from simply volunteering our time with the maintenance of an airport all the way to leasing or owning an airport for public access. Of particular interest to you may be our long-standing relationships with public land management agencies working together on airports. We have agreements in place with the US Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and many state departments of resources. In Michigan, for example, we lease two airstrips from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. In addition to the on-going maintenance at these airports, we have also done a number of capital improvements to increase the amenities at the airstrips. I welcome you to visit our website to learn more about our organization. [www.theraf.org](http://www.theraf.org)

Please let us know when you may be available to meet to discuss the future of Custer State Park Airport.

Thanks for your time and attention.

Jeff Russell  
Director – Recreational Aviation Foundation

cc: John McKenna – RAF Chairman  
Karl Jungclaus – RAF SD State Liaison

Comment #12140 - Noah Hudson

