

Tree trimming near Bowman Field to start around Nov. 1

Posted: Oct 17, 2013 5:32 PM EST

Updated: Oct 18, 2013 2:17 PM EST

By Marcus Green - email

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) -- Crews plan to begin removing trees near Bowman Field by early November in an effort to improve nighttime flying conditions at the general aviation airport.

The Louisville Regional Airport Authority this week awarded a \$248,900 contract to the Bob Ray Co., which will take out at least 70 trees and shrubs at Big Spring Country Club and off Cannons Lane east of the airport.

The work is the first in connection with new Federal Aviation Administration safety rules announced two years ago that triggered an evaluation of tree cutting in neighborhoods near the airport, said Skip Miller, the airport authority's executive director.

The project to start in late October or early November will use airport funds. It comes after the FAA canceled instrument approaches to the airport over the summer -- a restriction that "hampers pilots and diminishes Bowman Field's operating capacity," according to a consultant's letter sent to neighbors in August.

Miller told airport authority board members that two trees will be planted for every tree lost during the work.

The broader plan to cut trees in as many as 250 "areas of interest" near the airport's two runways is still being evaluated, Miller said. An environmental assessment will determine how many trees are affected and whether they'll be trimmed or removed, he said.

"We won't start that until the first of the year," Miller said.

Some neighbors have opposed the proposal and its potential effect on the area's tree canopy. A group called Plea for Trees, which supports the "continued safe co-existence of neighborhoods and the airport," has argued that up to 1,000 mature trees could be removed.

In May, an airport consultant told neighbors that the FAA has apparently reduced the size of the area under consideration.

Copyright 2013 WDRB News. All rights reserved.