



Memorandum

From the Interim Manager

February 26, 2014

To: Mayor and Borough Assembly
From: Julie Cozzi - Interim Borough Manager
Re: Manager's Recommendation
Request for Special Ski Competition Event

On February 18, 2014, I received a request from SEABA and Alaska Heliskiing for a special ski competition event as allowed by HBC 5.18.080(G). In response to my request for clarification and more specificity, amended requests were received on February 21 and February 26. All of these documents are attached.

The applicants believe this contest will provide a marketing boost at a critical time, as the overall lack of snow in Alaska has been making the news and causing clients to look elsewhere. They also suggest that temporarily allowing access to currently closed, but previously open, terrain may generate interest from skiers, photographers, and filmmakers who have visited Haines in the past.

The final amended requests ask for the special event to take place between March 21 and April 21, 2014 within areas 1,2,8,9, and 21 on the 2014 ski tours map. These areas were recommended to be opened by the 2013 Heliskiing Map Committee but were not approved by the assembly for the 2014 season via Resolution 13-07-472. This request asks for temporary additions to the approved Commercial Ski Tour Areas map. Borough code requires the manager to make a written recommendation in response to a request like this, and the assembly may act on that recommendation by resolution. A resolution will come to the assembly as part of the March 11 agenda. On February 25, the assembly assigned this matter to the Commerce Committee for review and recommendation, as well. That meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Recommendation: I recommend the assembly consider allowing the special ski competition event to take place during the time period requested but be limited to areas 1, 2 and 21 of the 2014 Heliski Map. I do not recommend including areas 8 and 9.

If the assembly approves the temporary addition of territory, the map would be amended by designating the additional areas as "temporary" and identifying the dates for which the additional territory is approved. Historically, weather conditions allow for heliskiing activity approximately 50-percent of the time; so at most, the special event activities would likely take place only 15 to 20 calendar days of the requested 30-day event period. Locations and dates are monitored through the required bi-weekly activity reports. Skiing in the temporary areas outside of the event dates would be considered a violation subject to fines and suspension or revocation of permits. We would watch this closely.

I believe this event is worth a try given the overall lack of snow and as a way to attract heliskiing clients back to Haines this year.

Note: the current map that shows the subject areas is available in the assembly's Dropbox and is also on the borough's website: www.hainesalaska.gov/administration/2014-heliskiing-maps.

2/25/14

To: Julie Cozzi, Haines Interim Borough Manager
Re: Proposed Make It Live! Photography Competition

Julie,

Alaska Heliskiing enthusiastically supports the proposed Make It Live! Photography competition proposed by Scott Sundberg and SEABA. Everyone is well aware of the challenges the heliski industry in Haines has faced after the past two seasons, and now we are faced with less-than-ideal weather conditions. Heli operations in other parts of the State, as well as heli operations in Canada continue to grow and refine their marketing skills which is making the overall task of persuading customers to choose Haines more difficult. It would help our own marketing efforts to be able to generate some excitement fueled by the possibility of more varied terrain opened for this proposed contest.

- Referring to the Borough's 2014 Commercial Ski Tour Map, we are interested in opening areas 1,2,8,9,and 21 for the time period of March 21st through April 21st.
- The photo contest would be open to all heliski clients visiting Haines during the proposed time period.
- The judges of the contest would be one representative from SEABA, one representative from Alaska Heliskiing, and a representative from a sponsor company. Potential sponsors include various ski magazines such as Powder or Ski, or a gear/equipment manufacturer such as Smith or Armada.
- Entrants would be separated between professional photographers and recreational photographers.
- Prizes would include gear provided by sponsors and helicopter time donated by AH and SEABA.

The best part of this contest is that it has the potential to become an annual event, bringing the revenue of more guests to our local economy.

Thanks for your consideration,

Ryan Johnson
Alaska Heliskiing GM/co-owner

From: Sunny Sundberg [mailto:sunny@seaba-heli.com]
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 7:16 AM
To: Julie Cozzi; Darsie Culbeck
Subject: special event concept and benefit

More on the Make it Live! competition.

Alaska Heliskiing and SEABA decided together that after the dramatic loss of snow pack in January of 2014, and the horrible exposure that Alaska received on the web concerning Alaska's 3 rd warmest winter on Record,(there were also stories ran in the Washington Post and the New York Times).We had to collectively put something out there that would win the trust, generate inspiration, and fire up the adventure bug in every amateur and professional photographer that we could possibly reach in order to save the season and put Haines back on the map in a positive world light.

Conclusion? Special Event

We are taking it a step further, asking the assembly to open up temporary terrain, for a few reasons.

We are asking for expansion for the following reasons:

1. A special Event with a grand prize generates interest, but for veterans of the Haines heliski and commercial film industry, opening up new terrain, or at least terrain that has not been opened in years, could get some credibility from not only the photographers but from their followers for this effort. This accomplishes a few things for Haines. When ski clients and professional photographers are trying to make a decision of where to go skiing in a "questionable" Alaska, they might choose Haines, over the 6 other destination locations in AK because we have something new to offer them.
2. Not only is the Haines borough offering up a new product so to speak, they are also saying to heliskiers, come to Haines, we want you here, we are open for business. Your saying, "We understand how important our winter industry is to our community, and we are willing to give incentives to help it out, as well as give the clients, the true bread winners of the winter economy, something in return.
3. The January thaw was almost a record, and in some areas of the state between Haines and Girdwood it was. Incredible high temperatures at altitude, nearly 50 degrees at 6,000 feet in the cost range, coupled with extended temperature inversions, and very heavy rainfall, created massive melt throughout the Coast mountains. In Haines, and other coastal communities like Cordova and Valdez, we went from a record December for snowfall to a snow pack that resembles early December. Flight over the terrain likened it to early November on the glaciers around 2500 feet, where extensive crevassing prevents many normal ski runs to be accessible. Outcome; diminished areas of operation that are safe. This included the snow pack in overall. At 2500 feet there is approximately 1.5 meters of snow in protected areas. While this is enough to ski on, it is not enough to bury dangerous features, and create adequate snow bridging in glaciated terrain. It also creates a snow pack that becomes more volatile as it is thin and can create greater temperature gradients

4. Our concern for this season avalanche hazards stem from this scenario. A very hard cold layer that formed after the thaw and very cold temperature plunge in February could not receive new snow very well. Some areas experienced large surface hoar growth, a persistent weak layer in which poor bonding occurs. This layer if not flushed out by cycles of snow, (lots of new snow fall) could persist and lay in wait to be triggered. This is not contiguous across the commercial ski terrain, but could prevent yet another large area to be used by the industry. Our preference for the clients that we do have booked and the clients that may come if word gets out that there is good snow to ski, is to have as many areas to choose from as a safety standard.
5. Another goal of the competition of special event would be to create a more positive and memorable impression on adventure clients that are looking to travel. When you research Haines Heliskiing on Google and other search engines, often times you pull up the fatal accidents from the past few seasons, as well as all the other negativity that is constantly being aired out by the opponents of this industry. We as a community need to fix this impression that reaches all over the world. By having spectacular photographs, short movies, and people sharing experiences being sent over the web and shared with the participants social network, we stand to put a better brighter and more positive face on Haines! We must remember that this is a global market, and at any given point, we can be recognized by the world, it is our choice to make that impression the best!

So I would say it is time to roll out the red carpet, fire up the band and let the world know that we have snow, we are opening terrain to help the industry operate safely and create incentives for clients to choose Haines!

Sunny

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Scott Sundberg
GM /Lead Guide
SEABA LLC
www.seaba-heli.com
907 314 0445

From: S Diggity [mailto:heliskialaska@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 10:06 AM
To: Julie Cozzi
Cc: Sunny Sundberg
Subject: Event

Hello Julie and borough assembly.

Alaska Heliskiing is excited to participate in this event! I have always believed that these areas around 4 winds, talkin and haska creek hold the most amazing ski terrain and the photos and film we used to get in these places hasn't been equalled since.

We are completely in support of opening up some more terrain this season. The lack of snowfall this year and reduction of allowable use area over the years has made the activity less safe because we have lost many of our choices. This condition has resulted in overcrowding the backcountry and created a competitive atmosphere for the available terrain that is left, and that in itself has eroded the quality and safety of the heliskiing experience in Haines. The answer is right before our eyes across an imaginary line of denial and has been a source of sadness and frustration for all of us in the industry for many years.

Please consider and approve this request for a one year access to these previously closed ski areas and I can promise you that Alaska Heliskiing will do everything we can to respect others and we will be forever grateful. Thank you.

In conjunction with both companies, Alaska Heliskiing and SEABA we are going to advertise a special ski competition event in which both amateurs and professional still and motion photographers can use their skills at acquiring the best photo or motion film that highlights Haines Alaska as the best and most scenic place to heliski.

Photos and videos will be judged based on their quality, content, and their exposure to social media platforms. This includes but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google +, and others.

By opening these areas, photographers and cinematographers will be more likely to participate, as these areas have not been available for years, and it would add incentive to developing a great marketing platform for Haines Alaska, its winter industry, and its world wide web exposure.

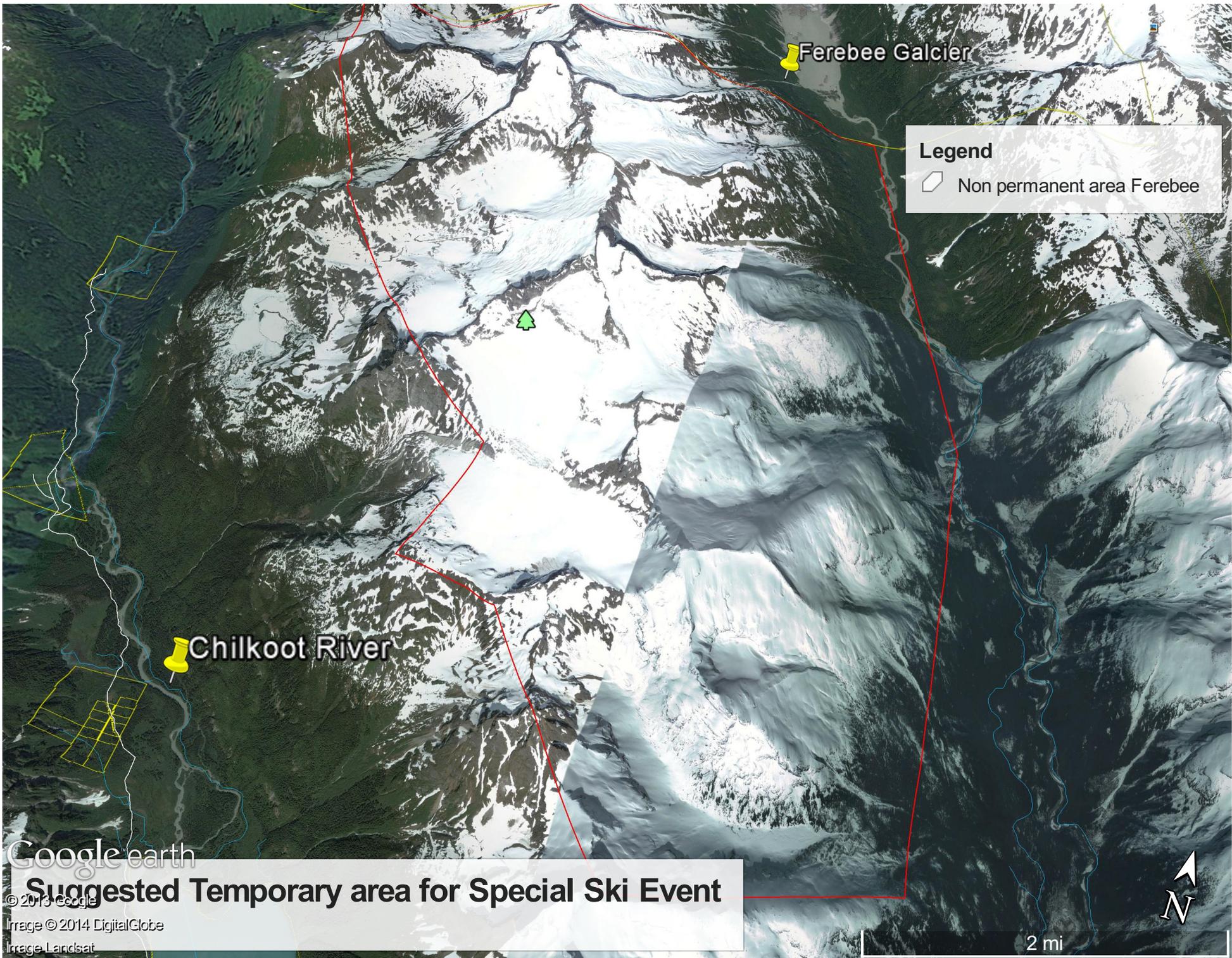
Sean Brownell

From: Sunny Sundberg [mailto:sunny@seaba-heli.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 5:57 PM
To: Michelle Webb
Cc: Julie Cozzi
Subject: Areas to consider for special event.

I want to also add this area. It represents a rural part of the borough and has has very little photography or cinematography produced from this area. It is possible that encouraging skiers to visit this area might promote the use of a very rural part of the Haines borough. It will also give assembly members more options when considering this possible temporary area.

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Scott Sundberg
GM /Lead Guide
SEABA LLC
www.seaba-heli.com
907 314 0445



Ferebee Galcier

Legend

 Non permanent area Ferebee

Chilkoot River

Google earth

Suggested Temporary area for Special Ski Event

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