

**From:** White, Kevin S (DFG) [<mailto:kevin.white@alaska.gov>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 13, 2016 2:10 PM  
**To:** William Seward  
**Cc:** Gregovich, Dave P (DFG); Koch, Carl H (DFG)  
**Subject:** Haines mtn goat research project - update

Hi Bill,

I understand the Borough Assembly will be discussing mountain goat-helicopter skiing issues at this evenings meeting. As such, I wanted to provide you with a brief update regarding our mountain goat research project in hopes that the additional information might be useful during the meeting.

Overall, we initiated a mountain goat research project in the Haines-Skagway area in 2010 in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). One of the primary goals of the project was to attach GPS radio-collars to mountain goat in order to identify critical winter and summer habitat. Acquisition of this information is intended to provide land managers with objective scientific information needed to evaluate and inform helicopter tourism (winter skiing in Haines, summer flightseeing in Skagway) management decisions. Specifically, by mapping mountain goat habitat and then overlaying proposed helicopter tourism areas it is possible to assess the extent of overlap, or potential conflict between mtn goats and helicopter activity. The BLM intends to directly employ this information to evaluate helicopter management on land that they manage in the Haines-Skagway area. It is our understanding that State and Borough land managers are interested in using the same approach on non-BLM lands, as having a consistent management framework would be beneficial for all entities involved.

Conducting research on mountain goats is a very difficult and costly endeavor. Nonetheless, since 2010 we have managed to radio-collar 67 mountain goats in the Haines-Skagway area (currently 30 animals are currently being monitored). Collection and analyses of these data is a technical and time consuming process but we are now at the stage where we feel we have enough data to develop a provisional mountain goat critical habitat delineation analyses by March/April 2017. (The analyses will be considered provision because we will continue to collect data from the remaining 30 marked animals for, at least, the next 3 years). Following completion of the analyses, we would expect to provide the Borough and other land managers with a mtn goat critical habitat map that can be used to objectively evaluate proposed helicopter tourism activities. This product is something that we feel will be useful and, we hope, stem some of the controversy that has historically surrounded this subject.

I would be happy to provide you with more details about our project, and importantly how the information can be used to help with Borough land management efforts. I have been making an effort to give a public presentation about the status of our project activities on an annual basis (most recently in April 2016). Nonetheless, I am happy to provide a presentation or informal discussion as the need arises.

Sincerely,

Kevin

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