



# 2021 Heli Ski Season-End Report

Prepared per HBC 5.24.040F  
by Interim Borough Manager Alekka Fullerton

## 1. Permits Issued.

Three operators were permitted for the 2021 season.

Operator	Start Day	End Day
Alaska Heli-skiing	February 26	April 17
Alaska Mountain Guides	March 27	April 3
SEABA	March 8	April 22

## 2. Skier Day Use (Historical data attached)

Total 2600 skier days were available, allotted and used as follows:

Operator	Days allotted	Days Used	Percent used
Alaska Heli-skiing	1000	471	47%
Alaska Mountain Guides	500	32	6%
SEABA	1000	314	31%

## 3. Season Extension: Per HBC 5.24.040(B), I extended the hours of operation as follows:

- a. March 31 – April 9 from 6:30 am to 7:00 pm
- b. April 10- April 29 from 6:00 am to 7:30 pm

## 4. Complaints

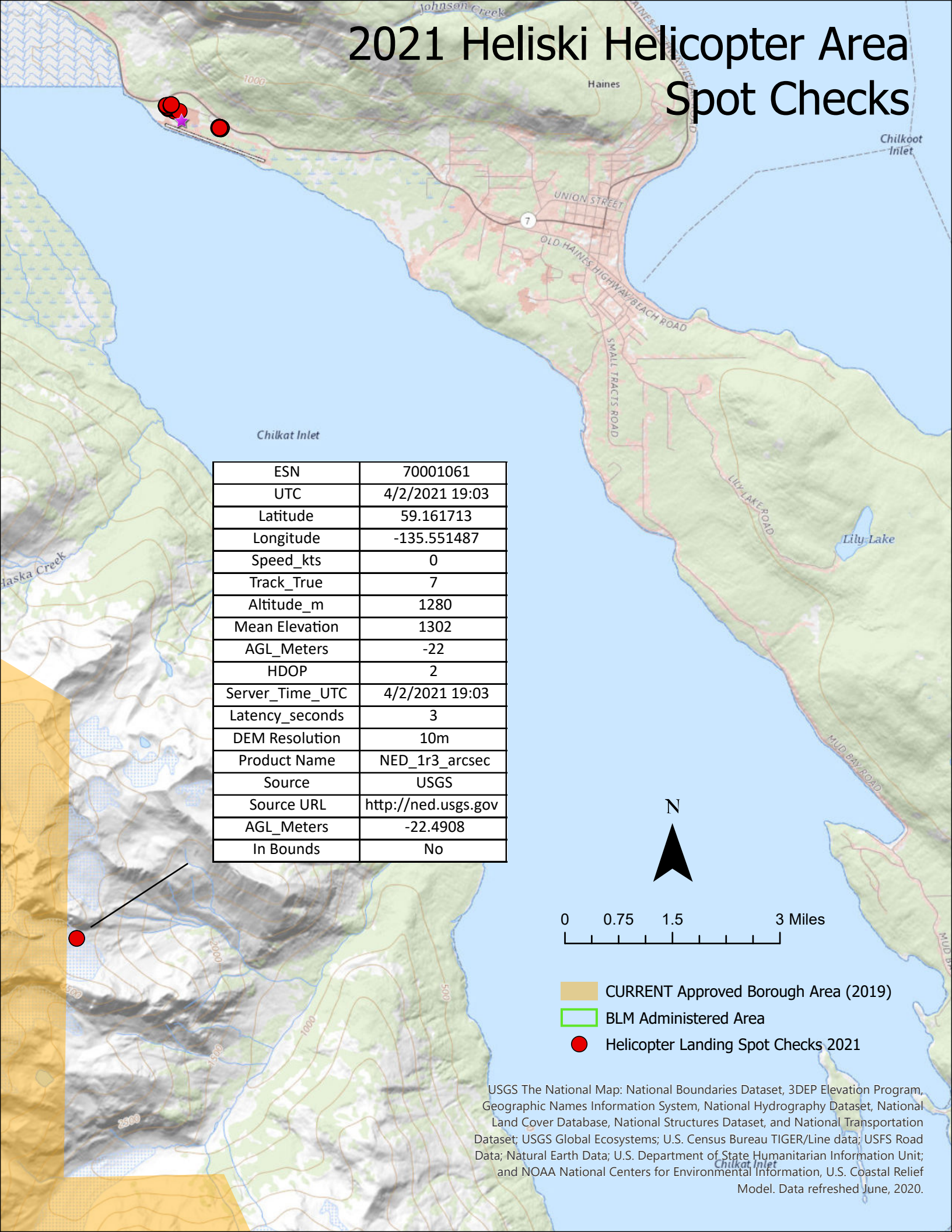
- a. We received a complaint that a helicopter was flying low over town.  
*After investigation, we learned that it was not a heliski operator, it was the geotechnical team working on Beach Road.*
- b. We received a complaint about a helicopter flying low over the Bald Eagle Preserve on April 2. *After investigation, it appears that a SEABA pilot landed out of bounds to wait for a group of skiers.*
- c. We received a non-specific complaint "about heliskiing" with no additional information on April 11. *We added this date to the spot checks to try to see if we could find any abnormalities. None were found.*

## 5. Spot Checks

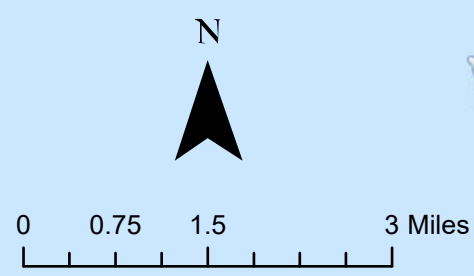
Operator	Date	Results
Alaska Heli-skiing	March 20	No anomaly found
Alaska Heli-skiing	March 28	No anomaly found
Alaska Heli-skiing	April 2	No anomaly found
Alaska Heli-skiing	April 11	No anomaly found
SEABA	March 20	No anomaly found
SEABA	March 28	No anomaly found

SEABA	April 2	Verified Permit Infraction; \$250 fine imposed; Safety related but not disclosed; Correspondence Attached.
SEABA	April 11	No anomaly found
AMG	March 20	Not operating
AMG	March 28	No anomaly found
AMG	April 2	No anomaly found
AMG	April 11	Not operating

# 2021 Heliski Helicopter Area Spot Checks



ESN	70001061
UTC	4/2/2021 19:03
Latitude	59.161713
Longitude	-135.551487
Speed_kts	0
Track_True	7
Altitude_m	1280
Mean Elevation	1302
AGL_Meters	-22
HDOP	2
Server_Time_UTC	4/2/2021 19:03
Latency_seconds	3
DEM Resolution	10m
Product Name	NED_1r3_arcsec
Source	USGS
Source URL	<a href="http://ned.usgs.gov">http://ned.usgs.gov</a>
AGL_Meters	-22.4908
In Bounds	No



- CURRENT Approved Borough Area (2019)
- BLM Administered Area
- Helicopter Landing Spot Checks 2021

USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, 3DEP Elevation Program, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; USGS Global Ecosystems; U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line data; USFS Road Data; Natural Earth Data; U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information Unit; and NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, U.S. Coastal Relief Model. Data refreshed June, 2020.

**From:** [Steven Auch](#)  
**To:** [Alekka Fullerton](#)  
**Subject:** Heli Spot Check Report - FW: 4/2/21  
**Date:** Thursday, August 5, 2021 2:51:33 PM  
**Attachments:** [2021HeliskiHelicopterSpotChecks.pdf](#)

---

Hi Alekka,

For the 2021 Heliski season, the Haines Borough requested the spot check data from all three permit holders for three dates: March 20, 28, and April 11. An additional date was added to the spot checks as we had received complaints for April 2. All operators complied, however Alaska Mountain Guides did not operate on March 20 or April 11, so no data was received for those dates from them.

An analysis of the GPS data was done by the Alaska Map Company, and after review, the attached document shows the only landing in violation of the heli boundary as approved by the Haines Borough Assembly. The infraction was by SEABA on 4/2/2021 at 11:03am AKT, and indicates a landing approximately 370' away from the approved boundary. Their bi-weekly submitted during the season did not indicate this infraction. The email forwarded below is the response from SEABA General Manager Ben Anderson.

I believe a similar infraction last season incurred a \$250 fine. Based on some of the points raised by SEABA below, I feel it would be in all the operators' best interest to hold a pre-season meeting to discuss "Best Practices". I'll work with the operators to see if we can schedule this before next season begins.

Let me know if you have any questions.

## **Steven Auch**

Tourism Director  
[sauch@haines.ak.us](mailto:sauch@haines.ak.us)  
Cell: 907-314-3208  
Office: 907-766-6419  
[www.visithaines.com](http://www.visithaines.com)

---

**From:** Ben Anderson <ben@seaba-heli.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 3, 2021 5:44 AM  
**To:** Steven Auch <sauch@haines.ak.us>  
**Subject:** 4/2/21

**EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not open links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Thanks for your inquiry and opportunity to clarify the landing incident on April 2, 2021. After speaking with SEABA guide staff and pilots, it appears the landing was a necessary safety precaution. Here's what the pilot has stated about the incident:

"Regarding the out of bounds landing on 4/2/21, I landed there for safety reasons including reduced ground reference in blowing snow white out conditions, and I believed it to be inbounds at the time"

Based on my conversations with SEABA staff and the pilot, the guides had an established pickup zone that was inbounds. From experience in the field, there can be a delay in pickup times between different groups. It is likely that one group was not ready to be picked up and the pilot made the decision to land in that out of bounds area until the next group was ready for a pickup. It is the pilot's discretion to make safety calls with the aircraft.

SEABA management makes it extremely clear to guide staff that they must be certain that they are in bounds before they land. In this case it appears the pilot needed to make a safety call, forcing the pilot to make the landing in question. This area is very flat and would provide no extra benefit to SEABA or its guests to land further away from the slope skied.

SEABA had no idea there was an infraction until this data came out. Because the spider tracks data is not real time, or contemporaneous, our guide staff rely on our SEABA GPS on the heli. Additionally, each SEABA guide carries a GPS on their person to ensure we are in compliance. I have been told there was no SEABA guide in the heli when this landing was made. Apparently this situation did not allow for the pilot to check the SEABA GPS to ensure the landing was inbound.

If you or anyone has a better way to ensure we are in compliance, please let us know.

--

Ben Anderson  
Seaba-Heli  
(630)247-3063