

Michelle Webb

From: Weishahn [weis@aptalaska.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 05, 2014 3:33 PM
To: Debra Schnabel; Jerry Lapp; Joanne Waterman; Dave Berry; Diana Lapham; George Campbell
Cc: Stephanie Scott; Julie Cozzi; Michelle Webb; weis@aptalaska.net
Subject: Comments re temporary heli-ski map changes

To Assembly Members, Mayor, Interim Clerk, and Interim Manager of the Haines Borough,

As you consider whether to grant the heliski operators' request for more areas, please remember why these areas were not granted during the last heli-map changes. The negative impacts to Haines residents, Klukwan residents, non-motorized skiers, birders, and others who do not want heliskiing on the ranges facing town, on Takhin Ridge and above Mosquito Lake is enough reason to deny the expansion.

Add to that, ADF&G's concern for mt. goat nannies in the third trimester of pregnancy:

(March 4, 2014, Stephanie Sell, Assistant Area Management Biologist)

The department conducted an aerial survey in the Four Winds area (proposed area 21) in September of 2013. A total of 68 mountair goats (55 adults and 13 kids) were observed. Three goats have been equipped with GPS collars again to assist with sightability estimates during surveys and to monitor reproduction and survival. Due to the high number of goats observed in the Four Winds area, and the consideration mentioned above for areas 1 and 2, the department encourages the Assembly to retain the current authorized heli-skiing areas and dates.

Then there is the question of why there is such a dire need for these additional areas when large new areas were recently added to the heli-map. The operators claim they need additional areas due to "loss of snowpack" and yet the same heliski companies are advertising on Facebook is that there is "plenty of snow" and "great powder skiing."

<https://www.facebook.com/SeabaHeli>

Seaba Heli

February 3

Missing out on some snow in the lower 48?

We have plenty of snow to go around but limited seats book your trip today!!

SEABA Heli Skiing Haines Alaska

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Alaska-Heliskiing/114436961964154>

Alaska Heliskiing

March 2

Surface conditions are really good out there! Great powder skiing!

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The next question is, what competition? I was told by the interim manager that she was not given any promotional materials for a competition and that "It is my understanding they will not do any advertising until/unless this gets assembly approval." The proposed competition would begin in a couple weeks but there has been no advertising and is no sponsor for the event. It would seem that the heliski companies are expecting the borough to provide them with "news" for a media blitz to attract clients at the last minute. This is not the intention of a temporary map change in code. (5.18.080(G) Temporary Additions to Approved Commercial Ski Tour Areas.) Bona fide ski competitions are planned and advertised way in advance of the event and don't last 30 days. The Red Bull competition in 2002 only lasted 9 days and involved advance planning with professional photographers, skiers and judges. The borough should not be pressured into opening new areas for this non-existent "competition."

If granted, it is likely we will see annual requests for temporary map changes for other "special ski competition events," thus making a mockery of the more thorough public review process required for permanent map changes. The request for any new areas for a special ski competition event should be denied as it would not be in the public's best interest, and this particular request simply does not rise to the level of a real "special ski competition event."

Thank you for considering my comments,  
Carolyn Weishahn