

From: george figdor <figdor@aptalaska.net>
Date: September 23, 2014 3:08:02 PM AKDT
To: stephanie scott <sscott@aptalaska.net>
Subject: heli ordinance

dear mayor scott,

conservationists and other stakeholder groups have been willing to compromise in the past and have quietly accepted changes to the heli ordinance year after year. i am concerned that yet another change is the works that will further erode any remaining spirit of goodwill surrounding past compromises. i support heli skiing as long as other interests and values are protected at the same time and past compromises have stability over time.

i see four inherent problems with the proposed heli ordinance changes:

1) as i recall, the "out-of-bounds" provision was something stuck into the ordinance after the fact by the industry---to get its foot in the door for skiing off the map. it probably shouldn't be there at all, since it undermines the very purpose of having a map in the first place. it doesn't make sense to open that off-the-map door any more. at some point it will render the whole map process---that so many have worked on for so long---totally useless. i would not encourage any more special events outside the map.

2) it seems that special events really do not need any ordinance tweaking to occur. they can easily be done within the existing ordinance and skier-day allotment by any permit holder. actually, such activities must be done by a permittee under the conditions of the ordinance. one of the intents of the last ordinance change was not to compartmentalize the purpose of the skier--no distinction was made between skiers and photographers. so this would just be another type of skiers under the increased allotment of 2600 skier days. simple.

3) you raise the issues about the comp plan and increased winter tourism. i would suggest that increased winter tourism can take many other forms--- cross country skiing, telemarking, snowshoeing, downhill skiing, etc. and some of these might not be compatible with increased heli-skiing. the borough needs to study all the alternatives for winter tourism before assuming that any one option is the only one.

4) it seems that the proposed ordinance change opens the back door to more skier days and more heli traffic and consequently the concerns of several stakeholder groups are once again ignored. so much for inclusivity.

george figdor