
From: Mark Battaion [hathbat@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2015 1:17 PM
To: Krista Kielsmeier
Subject: Heli ski request

Dear Assembly Members,

Once again the Freeride Tour has requested areas currently outside their permitted areas. With this request the citizens of the Haines Borough are again being asked to sacrifice sensitive wildlife areas for the sake of heli skiers. ADFG has requested the Borough not issue any permits for these sensitive areas and we agree. We would hope the Assembly sees it this way and denies this request.

Mark Battaion
Kristin Hathhorn

From: [Thom Ely](#)
To: [Julie Cozzi](#)
Cc: [Margaret Friedenauer](#); [Ron Jackson](#); [Diana Lapham](#); [George Campbell](#); [Mike Case](#); [Tresham Gregg](#); [Jan Hill](#); [Chilkat Valley News](#); [KHNS News Jillian Rogers](#); [Lynn Canal Conservation](#)
Subject: Freeride World Tour - Out of Bounds Request
Date: Monday, December 14, 2015 3:36:49 PM

Dear Assembly, Mayor and Manager,

I do not support the request in Resolution 15-12-650 for use of three out of bounds areas for the FWT competition. ADF&G reviewed the three sites and has recommended that the borough not approve these extra areas for the Freeride ski competition. ADF&G research shows that helicopters and skiing in these areas during March could disturb and negatively affect mountain goats, denning brown bears, and denning female wolverines with young.

There is sufficient terrain within the Borough Approved Commercial Ski Area map to hold the competition. Last years event encountered many problems with the proposed use of an out of bounds area, with one guide almost losing his life. For the well being of the competitors, residents and wildlife it is best to hold the competition in a known area that has a history of use.

The three requested out of bounds areas are extremely sensitive and controversial. The village of Klukwan has requested that no heliskiing occur on the Takshanuk Ridge. Manager Sosa made several mistakes in his recommendations, oversight, interpretation of code and enforcement of violations regarding the industry. It's time for the permit holders to work within the boundaries, code and regulations.

Sincerely,

Thom Ely
POB 1014
Haines, AK 99827

From: Katya Kirsch [katyakirsch@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2015 4:07 PM
To: Krista Kielsmeier
Cc: Katya Kirsch
Subject: Freeride World Tour request/ comments for Borough Assembly

Dear Haines Borough Assembly Members and Mayor,

Please deny Freeride World Tour ski competition the temporary addition of three areas to the heliski map for their competition on March 11-25, 2016.

As you might know, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) reviewed the three sites and recommended that the Borough should not approve these three extra areas for the Freeride ski competition. ADF&G research shows that helicopters and skiing in these areas during March could disturb and negatively affect mountain goats, denning brown bears, and denning female wolverines with young. Mountain goats winter in very specific areas in very difficult winter conditions and disturbing them can easily cause severe difficulty leading to death.

Borough Code limits the duration of a competition to seven days. Code should be followed so that the environmental impacts from this event are minimized. Last year's Freeride competition included several days when skiers were transported to the venue, disturbing wildlife even though the event was cancelled due to weather conditions. The concentrated nature of a ski competition is likely to impact mountain goats, denning brown bears and denning wolverines at a time of the year when they are most vulnerable to disturbance.

The current heliski map was approved after very careful consideration by the Haines Borough Assembly with lots of input from the public, other user groups, and agencies. The areas requested by Freeride World Tour would put mountain goats, bears, and wolverines at risk at a critical time of year. Please do not open these three additional areas for this event.

Thank you for your consideration.

Katya Kirsch

From: kate palmer [kateypalmer@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2015 5:39 PM
To: Krista Kielsmeier; Jan Hill; Julie Cozzi; George Campbell; Mike Case; Margaret Friedenauer; Tresham Gregg; Ron Jackson; Diana Lapham
Cc: nicolas@freerideworldtour.com; kateypalmer@yahoo.com
Subject: Resolution 15-12-650

Dear Acting Clerk Krista Kielsmeier

Please forward the following comments to any members of the borough assembly, the mayor, and the acting manager IF the above are incorrect email addresses.

Thanks, Katey Palmer

December 14, 2015

Dear Assembly members, Manager, and Mayor Hill, I apologize for the lateness of my comments. I only just saw this information in the borough assembly agenda for 12/15 in last week's newspaper.

Once again, the heli ski industry is asking to use area outside of the map boundaries, lines which were established over years of with numerous meetings, hearings, and discussions with input from the public, various user groups, the industry, B.L.M., Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game. All parties involved expended lots of time and energy, participating in good faith with the expectation that the boundaries of the final map would be respected. Based on that alone, the boundaries should not be adjusted to satisfy the desires of one user group.

As required by Borough code in 5.18.080 G2, the borough manager must consult with ADFG when areas outside the map boundaries are requested for use. I read the ADFG comments and they clearly oppose opening any additional areas. ADFG states that "approving this proposal...would ignore the important process that led to the creation of the Borough's policy on heli-skiing to the detriment of wildlife populations and other user groups within the Haines Community." In addition, ADFG comments on the impacts that heli-ski activity could have on wildlife in each of the 3 proposed areas. All three are "important winter goat habitat", and 2 areas are known to have denning brown bears. My understanding of the above section of code is that its purpose is to require the manager to solicit and defer to the scientific expertise of ADFG in decision making. Given that Borough manager David Sosa approved the request for a permit to use the 3 areas outside the boundaries, it appears that he did not pay due deference to ADFG's expertise and opinion.

I enjoyed watching the Freeride World Tour competition in Haines online last spring. I was surprised however by the constant helicopter activity and the number of people in the area. Although it might seem like a week long event would create a minor disturbance, in fact it creates a major disturbance in an area. (In no case should the event be allowed to have 9 days instead of the 7 in code.) The amount of traffic and noise would definitely impact any goats and likely any denning bears and wolverines in the area. They don't have the option to simply up and move to equivalent habitat. They have already chosen the best habitat for their purposes and we should leave it to them...peace and quiet.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, Katey Palmer

From: Mardell Gunn [mardiz@icloud.com]
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2015 7:22 PM
To: Krista Kielsmeier
Subject: No new Heliski terrain for Freeride World Tour Event

I am against giving any additional Heliski terrain to Freeride World Tour.

The current heliski map was approved after careful consideration by the assembly with input from the public, other user groups & agencies.

The areas requested by Freeride World Tour would put mountain goats, bears, and wolverines at risk at a critical time of year.

Please let the Borough Assembly know, thank you very much.

Mark Kistler Haines, AK

Sent from my iPad

From: Bruce Baker [bhbaker@gci.net]
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2015 1:45 AM
To: Krista Kielsmeier
Subject: Free Ride World Tour

To Haines Borough Assembly members -

As both an avid skier and conservationist, I strongly suggest that the Haines Borough's decision whether to approve the Free Ride World Tour reflect the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's recommendation regarding avoidance of disturbance to mountain goats, brown bear, and wolverine during a time of year that is extremely critical to their survival.

Bruce Baker (retired Deputy Director of ADF&G Habitat Division)
10738 Horizon Drive
Juneau, AK 99801

From: Derek Poinsette [poinsette.ak@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2015 11:05 AM
To: Krista Kielsmeier; Margaret Friedenauer; George Campbell; Mike Case; Tresham Gregg; Diana Lapham; Ron Jackson; Jan Hill; Julie Cozzi
Cc: Sunny Sundberg; nicolas@freerideworldtour.com
Subject: Comment: Freeride Out-of-Bounds Request

Haines Borough Assembly, Mayor Hill, Acting Manager Cozzi:

It would be extremely irresponsible to open any of these out-of-bounds areas to helicopter skiing. Please read the letter from biologist Carl Koch of ADF&G. The Chunny, Takshanuk, and Caesars sites were set aside after careful consideration of both wildlife studies and public debate. To overturn that history says to your constituency that a one-week ski competition is more important than the survival of a mountain goat herd, more important than the lives of denning brown bears and wolverines, more important than the interests of local hunters and trappers. And it also says that the Borough has no respect for the public process, and that these rules that were painstakingly hammered out by that process can be thrown aside based solely on the whims and personal opinions of a misguided borough assembly and administration.

The fact is that the Freeride Tour already has plenty of places to ski--last year's event was a success; they are simply asking for more because it seems to be in the nature of the heliski industry to always be demanding more. Do any of you believe that the very real prospect of doing long-term, or even permanent damage to our mountain goat populations is really worth this risk? And for what gain, exactly?

These skiers will be here for two weeks. We, your actual constituency, may see reduced hunting opportunities for decades, especially if we start opening these areas to helicopters each and every year.

Please deny the request to hold a ski competition in critical mountain goat habitat. And please keep on denying these incessant and outrageous requests until the heliski industry gets the message that they are expected to follow the rules and act responsibly--just like the rest of us who do business and make a living in this community.

Sincerely,

Derek Poinsette
Mosquito Lake
Box 555
767-5414

December 15, 2015

To: Haines Borough Assembly and Mayor

Re: Freeride World Tour request for three areas outside heli-ski map boundaries

Last spring the Freeride World Tour ski competition transported all equipment and participants to the competition venue by helicopter, including half-ton flooring, heating system and generators. The event was filmed from airborne helicopters and cameras placed strategically on the mountains around the venue.

<http://blogs.adobe.com/premierepro/2015/08/freeride-world-tour-takes-extreme-athletes-to-breathtaking-heights.html>

[excerpts from the article]:

The venue in Alaska posed unique challenges for even the experienced FWT video production staff. Unlike slopes in Europe that are dotted with little ski villages to use as base camp, the venue was accessible only by helicopter. **“We used helicopters to fly competitors, technicians, mountain guides, camera crews, and judges up and down the mountain,”** says producer **David Arnaud**.

The production tent itself involved significant infrastructure, including half-ton flooring, a full heating system, and several generators. With servers, storage, and other delicate equipment in the tent, a small team of technicians camped nearby to make sure that it was kept heated and operational at all times.

In the end, it took **ten days and four aborted tries** for weather and light conditions to align for the competition. “The wait and risk turned out to be completely worth it,” says Arnaud. “We had big powder, clear blue skies, and one of the best days in our entire history of competitive riding. The event was a huge hit with competitors and audiences alike. We’ve already planned to head back for the 2016 tour.”

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To create the stunning video that brings viewers inside the competition, FWT combines footage from **cameras strategically placed on the mountain**, plus the GoPro cameras worn by each athlete.

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Freeride World Tour competitions require significant infrastructure at the venue and crews to maintain it throughout the competition. Last year, the venue stayed in place for 10 days. Skiers

were transported to and from the mountain for several days before the weather allowed the event to actually take place.

Why is this information important when deciding whether or not to allow Freeride World Tour additional areas outside of the heli-ski map boundary? Unlike guided heli-skiing which can easily move clients to another ski run if mountain goats or other wildlife are spotted, Freeride competitions bring large amounts of equipment, support personnel, and competitors to the venue and they stay there for the duration.

The permanent heli-ski map went through a lot of public and agency review before it was adopted. Any areas outside the heli-ski boundary need the same, if not more, scrutiny for high volume competition events such as Freeride.

ADF&G has advised against the three out-of-bounds sites. Collared mountain goat data shows their presence near all three sites. Brown bear dens have been observed near Chunny and Takshanuk areas and wolverine females with young have been documented to den at elevations similar to the three requested sites.

There is plenty of terrain within the heli-ski map boundaries. We should listen to the ADF&G biologists who have studied and documented some of the most vulnerable wildlife near Haines. Please vote to keep the Freeride competition within the permanent heli-ski map boundaries.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Weishahn

CHILKAT INDIAN VILLAGE



"Yee gu.aa yax x'wan."

**An Indian Reorganization Act Village
Under Act of Congress June 15th, 1935**

32 Chilkat Ave. Klukwan, Alaska 99827

HC60 Box 2207 Haines, Alaska 99827

Phone: 907-767-5505

Fax: 907-767-5518

klukwan@chilkat-nsn.gov

Julie Cozzi, Interim Borough Manager
Haines Borough
P. O. Box 1209
Haines, AK 99827
December 15, 2015

Dear Ms. Cozzi,

The Chilkat Indian Village Tribal Council thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the out of bounds permit application submitted for the Freeride World Tour skiing competition taking place March of 2016.

We appreciate the recommendation to continue to recognize the village's request to keep the Takhin Ridge off limits to heliskiing activities, except for the Mt Jonathon Ward area. However, we are concerned by your recommendations to "temporarily" open areas previously not approved by the Assembly via Resolution 15-12-650.

The Chilkat Valley is of significant historic, cultural and scenic value to Klukwan. We request you consider the significant impact on the goat and bear activity that will occur during the time period proposed for the proposed ski event. Bears and goats start to be active that time of year ---with bears leaving their dens, and goats moving to lower elevations. The village considers these areas as critical habitat area of the mountain goat and bear and that helicopters and crowds associated with a ski event will negatively impact these animals. Our ancestors taught us to have respect for the animals and our natural environment as they are crucial to our survival as Tlingits (human beings). The Brown Bear is a significant creature within our oral history, especially with the Kaagwaantaan clan which holds the crest of the brown bear. That cultural connection creates within us an even greater respect for this animal and an increased desire to protect its habitat. The Mt. Goat is also important to us as a subsistence food and for the creation of Chilkat Blankets, an art form that Klukwan is well known for, and is currently experiencing a revival. Goats do not like to be amongst humans and that is why they live in the mountains. A ski competition will likely bring in more skiers, crowds of people who will want to watch the skiers, and television crews who will want to film the event. We believe that all the people and activity associated with a ski competition will create a lot of stress upon the goat population who use those areas and should be avoided.

The village does not believe we should accommodate the heliski industry by opening more areas of the valley for these purposes. Who is going to police their compliance to the restricted areas? The number of violations to the no-fly zones in the past certainly gives us pause in considering a request to open up new areas to heli-skiing.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters.

Sincerely,

Jones P. Hotch, Jr.
President

December 15, 2015

Assembly Members:

My name is Ann Marie Fossman, I have been a resident of Haines for 43 years. My husband Steve is also a long term resident. Steve has been a Big Game Guide in Haines 24 years. Haines Is Our Home. Our Residence is located on the mouth of the Chilkat River. One of the perks of having our home is this location is the abundant wildlife viewing. Quoting from Stan Lang, deceased captain of the Pacific Queen a Cannery Tender for Haines Packing Company for many years. "You never run short in the land of Plenty".

The State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Natural Resources together with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the Haines Borough work closely with each other to insure the wildlife populations in our community.

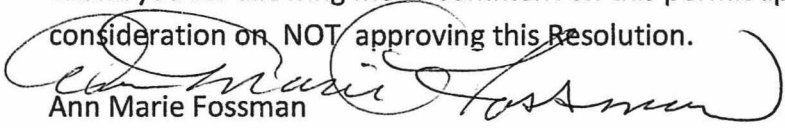
On November 25, 2015 Borough Manager David Sosa received a letter from the Division of Wildlife Conservation Southeast Region -Juneau Assistant Area Biologist Carl Koch. In Mr. Koch's letter he refers the temporary time period addition: Helicopter and skiing activities can disturb and negatively affect mountain goats, denning brown bears and wolverines. He also has GPS collar data from mountain goats that indicate all of the proposed out of bounds sites are likely important winter habitat for mountain goats. His department also conducted an aerial survey on April 30, 2015. ADF&G believes use of the proposed sites has high potential to disturb denning bears. The proposed heli-skiing plan may also disturb denning wolverines.

After consulting with ADF&G regarding the impact of the proposed use on wildlife, Manager Sosa recommends the assembly approve the request to allow the temporary out-of-bounds areas and the March 11-25, 2016 time period. Personally after reading Mr. Koch's letter I am extremely concerned with this recommendation.

I am reiterating Mr. Koch's letter in saying that approving this proposal would ignore the important process that led to the creation of the Borough's policy on heli-skiing to the detriment of wildlife populations and other user groups within the Haines community.

I strongly urge you to protect our resources and say NO to approving the temporary addition of territory to the existing Commercial Ski Tour Area

Thank you for allowing me to comment on this permit application. I greatly appreciate your consideration on NOT approving this Resolution.


Ann Marie Fossman

From: al.gilliam@hotmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2015 9:09 AM
To: Julie Cozzi; Jan Hill; Krista Kielsmeier; Alaska Professional Hunter Association, Inc.; senator.dennis.eagan@akleg.gov; Koch, Carl H DFG; Steve Fossman; representative.sam.kito.111@akleg.gov; pam coulter
Subject: Public comment on Resolution 15-12-650

December 15 2015

Julie Cozzi
Acting Haines Borough Manager

Janice Hill
Haines Borough Mayor

Krista Kielsmeier
Interim Haines Borough Clerk

Members: Haines Borough Assembly

copy: Alaska Professional Hunters Association; Steve Fossman; Carl Koch
ADF&G; Representative Sam Kito; Senator Dennis Egan; Pam Coulter.

Subject:
Approving heli-ski activity to take place in areas not approved by State Wildlife Biologists and outside of the official Haines Borough approved heli-ski map.

I apologize for not having the ability to personally attend this important meeting. However; my following comments point out that the Haines Borough community-at-large, as well as other Statewide individuals, professional enterprises and Boroughs within the State of Alaska could possibly be negatively affected by a decision made here tonight. I respectfully ask that Mayor Janice Hill publicly read this letter to the members of the Borough Assembly and the participating audience at tonight's meeting.

It is my understanding that the Haines Borough Assembly will be considering whether or not to allow heli-ski activities to take place in areas where State of

Alaska Wildlife Biologists have opposed such activity because their research has proven it to be counter to the welfare of wildlife. (Letter from biologist Carl Koch to past Borough Manager, David Sossa, dated November 25, 2015).

I am a long-time supporter of the local heli-ski industry, but I also feel it needs to be properly regulated.

It should be noted that some time ago, the Haines Borough Assembly voted to not allow State Biologists to regulate Borough-permitted heli-ski activities in areas the State identified as sensitive and important wildlife habitat. By taking that action, the Haines Borough Assembly effectively took responsibility for the management of the winter-stressed Mountain Goats, denning Brown Bears and sensitive, secretive Wolverines that inhabit mountainous regions of the Haines Borough.

Because the Haines Borough Assembly has accepted responsibility for managing Alaska's local, publicly owned wildlife resources, they have set a statewide precedence for other Boroughs to do the same. With that said, the issue of the Assembly possibly ignoring the recommendations of State Biologists not only opens the question regarding the consequences of their actions; it also raises the question regarding the need for the Alaska State Legislature to address the situation on a Statewide bases.

As pointed out in the above mentioned letter from State Biologist Carl Koch; the wildlife that would be negatively impacted by the approval of heli-ski activity in areas of the Haines Borough already designated as sensitive by State Biologists, is also wildlife important to sportsmen, subsistence users and established professional hunting guides.

The Haines Borough Assembly should consider that if they ignore the advice of State Biologists and approve heli-ski operations in areas the State has determined to be sensitive wildlife habitat, it could possibly make the Haines Borough legally culpable for any damage caused to wildlife populations, or displacement of that wildlife; relative to sportsman, recreation activities, tourism, subsistence users and the livelihood of established professional hunting guides.

Respectfully

Al Gilliam

Al Gilliam

Alaska Cross Country Guiding

PO Box 731

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