

October 31, 2016

To: Heli-ski Map Committee and Borough Manager

Re: Proposed heli-ski areas

Hello Map Committee Members and Manager,

My concerns with the heli-ski map have always centered around three main areas: impacts to residents, impacts to non-motorized backcountry recreation, and impacts to wildlife. The borough has heli-ski regulations because these impacts can be significant.

The heli-ski map already includes large areas from seaside to the Canadian Border so there should be no additions to the map. When ADF&G issues the goat habitat model, there will be a review of the heli-ski map to consider changes in light of the new information.

One proposal asks that an area near Davidson Glacier, **area S1**, be added to the borough map. BLM doesn't care what areas the borough keeps on our map. BLM will continue to manage heli-skiing on these state-selected lands until they are transferred to state management regardless of whether or not they are on the borough map.

Why isn't **area S1** on the borough map? The area above Davidson Glacier was left off the map because the borough's first heli-ski map was based on the Department of Natural Resources Special Use Designation map of 2002. According to BLM's 5-6-05 map, "Mountain Goat Observations, Survey Transects, Winter Ranges," the area above Davidson Glacier is labeled in "Special Flight Restriction Areas" as "No helicopter landing and min. 5000 ft." This area was identified as goat habitat and should remain off the borough map.

Another proposal asks to take the BLM land off the map entirely. This is not necessary and in fact, leaving it on is useful because it makes clear which areas are managed by BLM and which areas are managed by the borough.

One of Alaska Heliskiing's proposals would have an unacceptable impact on where I live and recreate at 39-40 Mile, Haines Hwy. While **AH2** looks like a small addition, the strip running from near the U.S./Canadian border to Flower Mountain would allow helicopter landings **on all the ridges across from our home**. These ridges are just across the Klehini River, in our view and soundscape. After the last map change, there was a 150 acre addition on one ridge across from our home. Use of this area has shown how intrusive the helicopter landings are, so don't increase areas on these ridges. In fact, this 150 acre area should be taken off the map. Whatever reasons the heli-ski companies give for adding this area, none of them justify allowing landings on the ranges directly across from our neighborhood. One of the reasons the borough manages heli-ski tours is to protect residents from helicopter noise.

Last winter, when Ryan Johnson (co-owner of Alaska Heliskiing) spoke with my husband and me, he said he wanted to be a “good neighbor.” Landing on these ridges across from our home is not being a “good neighbor.” Do not recommend the addition of AH2 to the heli-ski map.

Also, I would like the borough to take the CIV Provisional Areas off the map. These are a holdover from the last map review. The areas were not approved and should no longer be on the map.

I fully support ADF&G’s suggestions that protect mountain goat, bear, and wolverine habitat.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Weishahn, 39-40 Mile, Haines Highway resident