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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing in support of the Forest Service granting Points North Heli (PNH) an expansion to their existing heli-skiing permit for the following reasons:

1. Safety of the guests and crew: The Chugach is vast, and it may seem like PNH should have square miles to spare. However, the combination of varied, unusable terrain, negative weather forecasts (often for multiple consecutive days), along with wind blown and avalanche prone geography, actually leaves a much smaller area for the operation to safely access with their pilots, guides and guests. Based on geography, location and aspect, the proposed expansion gives PNH the option to access another area with a potential for safe skiing when flying and skiing in the currently permitted terrain is not possible.

2. Greater financial stability for PNH: The weather in the Chugach range is notoriously unpredictable. A successful week often means having only one or two good days to ski. Frequently, there are weeks when skiing isn't possible, making it unlikely guests will return. The competition in Alaska is steep and the client base small. Insuring a good guest experience is the best way for PNH to have a stable, financially sound operation. The season is short and the opportunity to ski is critical for everyone's success.

3. Introducing the world to the incredible town of Cordova: Skiers come from all over the world to ski these mountains. They leave in awe of the wild, pristine place they've just skied, and rave about the town and surrounding area back home. When not skiing, guests are introduced to, and experience the Sheridan and Sherman glaciers in an up close and personal way. PNH makes an effort to educate everyone about the unique local environment, and practices leave no trace ethics as well. While in Cordova, a guest of PNH might get to hike the Haystack or Copper River Delta, or may be lucky enough to ski the one of a kind Eyak ski area.

4. Providing a financial boost to the town in the offseason: The guests at PNH eat at local restaurants, drink at the local bars, shop at the local stores, and with good fortune they discover Pete's Sweets, possibly the best chocolate in the world (I just finished a box, having had Pete send some to my home).

5. Track record: PNH, their employees and guests, have a proven record of being a good stewards of the mountains and surrounding area. They love to serve as ambassadors to the town of Cordova as well.

Points North Heli sits in a unique place in the industry. With an impeccable safety record, they are truly interested in providing access to the Chugach range to everyone, not just extreme, high octane or professional skiers. On a recent trip (my second with PNH) the group I skied with ranged from age 10 to 80! We were able to experience the mountains, and the special town of Cordova in a way I never knew was possible. I will definitely be back and I'm counting on PNH for more one of a kind experiences. This permit will provide the stability and safety necessary for PNH to continue for another 20 years and beyond. I urge you to approve the expanded permit for Points North Heli.

Sincerely,

Karl Krekow