

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/11/2021 8:00:00 AM

First name: Anne

Last name: Schaefer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: [External Email]Re: Cordova Guided Heli-Ski Project

Hello,

I just wanted to append to my comments (pasted below), that if these concerns are taken into consideration (overlap between user groups and mountain goat habitat), that I am happy to support the Points North Permit. As I stated below, Points North has been an asset to the community and brings business into our economy during a slow time of the year.

Thank you,

Anne Schaefer

On Thu, Apr 8, 2021 at 7:44 PM Anne Schaefer <annelschaef@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello,

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Assessment for the Cordova Ranger District Guided Helicopter Skiing Project #59615.

I have lived, worked, and played in Cordova and the Chugach National Forest for seven years. I am generally in support of heli-skiing in Cordova. Points North is an asset to our community and benefits our economy during the off-season. And, they have been responsible and respectful towards Cordova's winter recreation community.

However, I do have a few concerns about the Scoping Proposal.

My primary concern is with overlap between user groups. In my opinion, heli-ski operations should not occur anywhere that can be accessed within a day by human power. I am specifically concerned with Analysis Area 12. Queen's Chair appears to be included in this area, which is a very popular spot for backcountry ski-touring by Cordova residents.

I would also like to request that helicopter flight paths avoid high-use areas, such as Mt. Eyak/Crater Lake, Sheridan Glacier, the Scott River, and places with established trails, such as Pipeline Lakes, McKinley Lake, Muskeg Meander, Hay Stack, and Saddlebag Glacier.

As a Cordova resident, I am acutely aware that I am geographically limited in the outdoor areas I'm able to access. I can't simply drive to the next town over to ski/snowshoe in a new spot with less "traffic." The heliskiing operations can get to beautiful, vast areas that only they can access. They are not space-limited. They do not need to spatially overlap with human-powered recreators.

I am also concerned about impacts to wildlife, specifically mountain goats. While goats are likely to be below treeline during the winter, increased activity such as helicopter traffic and noise could impact goat distribution, behavior, and population dynamics.

Finally, the Scoping Proposal says that remote fuel caches will be placed on sites at the beginning of a weather window and removed from the site at the end of the day or at the end of a weather window by fixed-wing or helicopters. Is it really feasible to move fuel drums in and out of the field every day? Weather windows can be short and unpredictable.

Anne Schaefer

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