

## Julie Cozzi

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**From:** Rob Goldberg [artstudioalaska@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 24, 2011 1:45 PM  
**To:** 'Carolyn Weishahn'; 'Daymond Hoffman'; 'Joanne Waterman'; 'Joe Ordonez'; 'Mayor Jan Hill'; 'Scott Sundberg'; 'Sean Brownell'; 'Sean Gaffney'; Julie Cozzi  
**Cc:** 'Mark Earnest'  
**Subject:** Working Toward Consensus

Hello Everyone,

### Working Toward Consensus

I think that the working group has lost some momentum over the past few weeks as people have been away. Many are back now, and it is time for us to focus on giving the assembly as close to a finished product as we can on Tuesday. In order to do that, we are all going to have to be flexible. I have been emphasizing that no one is going to get everything they want, but everyone is going to get something. I think we all need to focus on what we are getting, and not on what we didn't get. I will have more to say on this later.

I am contributing these recommendations in an effort to help the group reach consensus. Throughout this process I have largely checked my own opinions at the door in an effort to make sure that everyone has had their opinion heard, and that everyone gets at least part of what they wanted coming into this. My goal all along has been to try to facilitate a compromise that is as fair as possible. I hope these recommendations will be accepted in that spirit.

### The Map

Takshanuk Ridge – I think this area, which had been proposed as an addition to the heli-ski area, should be removed because of concern from the residents of Klukwan for their subsistence hunting of goats in the area.

Little Boulder Creek – An area was added for heli-skiing that extends to within a half mile of the road. Residents have expressed their concern about noise, so I think this area should be withdrawn.

Summit Creek – At a previous meeting I recommended withdrawing this newly added area out of concern for the concentration of goats. After further discussion with biologist Kevin White, I think this area can be left in. One of the GPS collared nannies is in this area, and the data shows that she, and presumably her group, are wintering on a south facing slope outside of the heli-skiing boundary. Kevin did caution that the helicopters should avoid flying or landing near this group of goats.

Kicking Horse – An area we added extends down to the river. Recreational users have requested that this area be removed because landings in the valley would disturb cross country skiers. I have personally skied up this valley to the glacier many times, and I know others who do, so I recommend that we remove this area.

Boundary Glacier – This is an area west of Flower Mountain that we have not yet considered. I think it should be added to the heli-skiing area. According to Kevin there are few or no goats in this area, and it would be a logical extension of the existing heli-ski boundary.

Telemark Ridge – This area is used by SEABA as the starting point for most of their heli-skiing trips, but it is also desired by those who like to climb up and ski. Recreational use pre-dates heli-skiing on this ridge. Can we come to some shared use agreement for this small area? Two possibilities are to time-share, such as weekdays for heli-skiers and weekends for recreational skiers, or a courtesy system, where recreational skiers could call

and ask heli-skiers not to go there for a few days. This will require a willingness to share the area, and trust between both sides.

## Access Routes

At the last meeting the question was asked, “How wide will the access routes be?”

The reason for designated access routes is to keep helicopters as far from residents and recreational users as possible. Our map clearly shows private land in white. Since the private land is clustered in a few areas, it should be possible to direct the helicopters away from them.

I don’t think the access routes have to be a strict line on the map, but rather a verbal description of which valleys to fly in, and which places to avoid.

## Suggested Access Routes

From 33 Mile - Use Porcupine Creek, McKinley Creek or Little Salmon to access Porcupine Peak and Flower Mountain areas. Avoid Jarvis Creek, lower Glacier Creek and Klehini River to keep noise away from residences. Use a direct route to Mt. Jonathan Ward area to avoid residences. Use a route directly behind 33 Mile to access Four Winds area.

From 18 Mile - Take off and approach should be down river to avoid residences. Routes to skiing areas should go directly across the Chilkat River and into the mountains. Avoid flying parallel to the Chilkat or Klehini Rivers. When flying to and from the Ferebee Glacier area, avoid Chilkoot Lake and Lutak residents.

From Haines Airport – Fly directly up the Takhin Valley to access areas south of the Takhin and Tsirku Rivers. Fly directly across the Chilkat River and up the slope between Haska Creek and the Kicking Horse River to access areas south of Mt. Emmerich. Avoid Haska Creek and Kicking Horse River. Avoid traversing slopes facing Chilkat Inlet to avoid residences.

Helicopters transiting between heliports should fly on the opposite side of the valleys from residences.

Helicopters may use areas outside the recommended access routes if forced to do so by bad weather conditions or mechanical difficulties.

## Low Impact, No Limit Heli-Skiing Zones

One of the main goals of this heli-skiing plan revision was to find areas of low impact that could have unlimited heli-skiing. Most of the noise impacts occur at the heliports. 33 Mile and 18 Mile have greater impacts because of residences nearby. The Haines airport is acknowledged to have fewer impacts. The Skagway airport has little or no impact on Haines residents.

To be considered for the designation “Low Impact – No Limit” an area has to be accessed from a low impact heliport. The two “Low Impact – No Limit areas we have identified are the area south of the Takhin and upper Tsirku Rivers and west of the Bertha Glacier when accessed from the Haines airport, and the Ferebee Glacier area when accessed from the Skagway airport.

## Skier Days

Keeping the skier day limit at 1200 will keep the impacts from heli-skiing close to current levels. However, the addition of the No Limit zones should allow the heli-ski companies to expand their skier days considerably, and eliminate the need for them to petition the borough for more during the season.

## Permits

Currently we have two permits for heli-skiing and one for filming. I think the permit for filming should be separated from the other two and kept as a special case. There have been varying opinions as to whether the borough should issue a third permit for heli-skiing. I think that at the very least, Alaska Mountain Guides (AMG) could be issued a permit to access the Ferebee Glacier area from Skagway, where they are already operating. The next step up would be to allow AMG to operate out of the airport only and fly to the area south of the Takhin River and west of Bertha Glacier.

## Who Gets What?

Again, if we are going to make this work, I think we all need to focus on what we are getting, rather than on what we are not getting.

### Heli-Ski Companies Get

More Terrain – Heli-skiers will have approximately 135 square miles of NEW area for skiing. This is in addition to the approximately 150 square miles that are already permitted.

Logical Boundaries – The new boundaries do not cut off ski runs in the middle. Skiers will be able to complete runs and be picked up at the bottom.

More Skier Days – The No Limit areas allow heli-ski companies to book as many clients as they need.

### Residents Get

Reporting - GPS verification of skiing within boundaries and bi-weekly accounting of skier days.

Flight routes that keep helicopters as far as possible from residences.

### Recreational Users Get

Places to go that are free from heli-skiing. These include the Takshanuk Range, the Chilkoot Valley and the Ferebee River. Additionally, there are places where, although there is heli-skiing nearby, helicopters have been directed to avoid. These include Jarvis Creek, the Klehini River flats, the Kelsall, Chilkat Lake, Kicking Horse River, Haska Creek and Rainbow Glacier.

### Subsistence Users Get

Goat hunting areas on the Takshanuk and Takhin Ridges that are free from heli-skiing.

### Wildlife Gets

Language in the ordinance that keeps helicopters away from goats and other wildlife. Heli-ski areas that have been drawn to avoid winter goat habitat.

Continuing GPS data that will guide modification of the heli-ski area map.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. I'll see you Tuesday.

-Rob