

**Commercially Guided Helicopter Skiing Analysis
Draft Alternatives - April 29, 2003**

Utilize Alternatives & Primary Objectives	Description of Use Level & Area	Issue: Wildlife	Issue: Noise Girdwood	Issue: Noise Moose Pass	Issue: Noise Sunrise	Issue: User Conflicts
No Action (Required by NEPA regulations)	No days; no use areas					
Alt 2 Proposed Action: Modified (Submitted by proponent)	1800 core client days 600 exploratory client days All use areas	Utilize design features common to all alternatives	Maintain current permitted # (30 cycles per day) of take-offs/landings in Girdwood	One Staging Area (SA) in Moose Pass (Trail Lake) Allow heli-skiing throughout Moose Creek and Ptarmigan	Utilize design features common to all alternatives	Utilize design features common to all alternatives
Alt 3 (Proponent's proposal with design features to address noise and user conflicts)	1800 core client days 600 exploratory client days No use in Seattle Creek West, Moose Creek West, and Ptarmigan Creek West	Utilize design features common to all alternatives	Maintain current permitted number (30 cycles per day) of take-offs/landings in Girdwood	No SA in Moose Pass No use in Moose Creek West and Ptarmigan West	No use in Seattle Creek West	Utilize design features common to all alternatives Timing restriction (no Fri, Sat, Sun) in Seattle Creek East and Bench Peak West
Alt 4 (Designed to maintain current helicopter activity)	1200 core client days No exploratory days (same as current 1-year permit) No use in Seattle Creek, Ptarmigan, Moose Creek, Mt. Ascension, Snow River	Utilize design features common to all alternatives	Maintain current permitted number (30 cycles per day) of take-offs/landings in Girdwood	No SA in Moose Pass No use in Moose Creek or Ptarmigan units	No use in Seattle Creek units	Utilize design features common to all alternatives Timing restriction on weekends in Bench Peak west
Alt 5 (Designed to minimize noise conflicts)	1800 core client days 600 exploratory client days No use in Seattle Creek West & East, Moose Creek West, Ptarmigan West, & Bench Peak West	Utilize design features common to all alternatives	Maintain current permitted number (30 cycles per day) of take-offs/landings in Girdwood	No SA in Moose Pass No use in Moose Creek West and Ptarmigan West	No use in Seattle Creek West	Utilize design features common to all alternatives No use in Seattle Creek East or Bench Peak West
Alt 6 (Designed to minimize noise and social impacts in Moose Pass)	1800 core days 300 exploratory days No use in Moose Creek, Ptarmigan, Bench Peak West, Seattle Creek West, & Seattle Creek East	Utilize design features common to all alternatives	Reduce the number of take-offs/landings in Girdwood to 20 cycles per day	No SA in Moose Pass No use in Moose Creek and Ptarmigan units	No use in Seattle Creek West	Utilize design features common to all alternatives No use in Seattle Creek East or Bench Peak West

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DESIGN FEATURES COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

Wildlife

- No skiing or other human activity is allowed within 330 feet of known bald eagle nests.
- Helicopter flights will be avoided within ½ mile horizontal or 1,500 ft AGL separation distance of active bald eagle nests. If it is not known whether or not the nest is active, helicopter flights will avoid those nests by a ½ mile horizontal or 1,500 ft AGL distance. *
- Helicopters will maintain a ½ mile horizontal or 1,500 ft AGL separation distance from known active raptor nests. *
- CPG will adhere to No-Fly Zones as shown on the No-Fly Zone Map, which identifies mountain goat concentration areas to be avoided by helicopter flight paths. Zones are based on a separation distance of 1,500 ft from important habitat, and survey data. ADF&G will be consulted before any alterations of zone boundaries to less than 1,500 ft.
- Helicopters shall maintain a 1,500 ft minimum vertical or AGL separation distance from all observed mountain goats and ½ mile horizontal or 1,500 ft AGL distance from all other observed wildlife. *
- Helicopters will not hover, circle, or harass any species of wildlife in any way.
- CPG will provide goat sighting information, and other wildlife information (numbers, locations, dates) to the Forest Service.
- If a brown bear or wolverine den is located CPG will maintain a ½ mile horizontal or 1,500 ft AGL separation distance around the den.

Community/Other National Forest Users

- Helicopters exiting from the Girdwood Airport will stay at very low levels either in Glacier Creek Gorge or just to the west of the creek until near the Four Corners area. Flights toward Turnagain Arm and the southern zones will follow the western fringe of the Girdwood Valley until over the Seward Highway, then will follow the highway or cross Turnagain Arm. Flight departures from the Girdwood Airport to the south over residential areas will only be done as absolutely necessary due to wind direction or other safety factors.
- All helicopter skiing will occur between 8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- All helicopters will maintain a distance of 1/2 mile above all valley floors. **
- All helicopters will maintain a ½ mile horizontal or 1,500 ft AGL separation distance from all observed users. *
- Explosives will not be used for avalanche control.
- The use of AStar Helicopters is encouraged because they carry more passengers and generate less noise than other available helicopters.
- CPG, in coordination with the Forest Service, will develop a system for resolution of complaints from the public. Additionally, CPG will be required to implement a “heli-skiing” hotline, which will announce their planned ski runs for the day.
- All FAA safety requirements will be followed.

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- CPG will prepare a Safety and Operating Plan for Forest Service approval. This plan will include: 1) avalanche safety (addressing client safety, as well as safety of other backcountry users in the area), 2) helicopter safety, 3) emergency rescue, 4) guide requirements, and 5) a system for resolving complaints from the public.
- CPG will provide every two weeks to the Forest Service a copy of their Run Log.
- CPG will not ski onto an avalanche path above any observed backcountry users.
- CPG will provide on a need only basis, an O.A.S. carded pilot and ship and follow Forest Service aviation safety procedures for permit administration by Forest Service employees.
- CPG will ensure that all litter is removed from permit areas. In addition, at the end of the season, CPG shall ensure that all helicopter landing zone improvements are removed off forest. This may require a flight during the summer months after the snow has melted.
- CPG will not fly over Turnagain Pass East.

** Helicopters may fly at less than the minimum required separation distances when safety may be compromised.*

*** Helicopters may fly at less than the minimum required separation distances when:
1) shuttling passengers from the bottom of a run to the top of a run 2) during landing and takeoff, 3) over major highway corridors, and 4) when safety may be compromised.*