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Comments:

Since 2008 we have held a commercial permit to guide mountaineering trips onto the lower sections of Godwin Glacier. Using an R44 helicopter, we have been landing on state land just outside the boundary of the Forest Service and then hiking onto the glacier from the toe. As the glacier recedes it has become increasingly difficult to access the toe of the glacier, requiring a longer and more difficult hike across moraine and rock covered ice. We have requested on several occasions to gain a landing site within the Forest Service Boundary, still close to the toe of the glacier but with better access. Due to the uncertainty of how the new Forest Service Plan was to designate this area we have not been able to obtain a definitive decision on our landing proposals.

Currently the flight path of a dog sledding company flies through the proposed area to land on state land around 4200 ft on the Godwin Icefield. A proposed designation of non motorized access to our suggested landing access would not limit the amount of flying the helicopter currently does to the dog camp, and increase more "trail" access along the moraines as we continue to negotiate the terrain to access the glacier. Giving us landing access would allow instant access to the glacier without the need of trekking through the moraine and debris fields, thus eliminating the creation of access trails by doing so. We are not a high volume company shuttling thousands of tourists up to the glacier. Our trips are private excursions for independent travelers. We limit our groups to one party at a time on the glacier and maintain a modest 2 to 3 trips per day maximum. These restrictions are voluntary to not only increase the seclusion and enjoyment of our clients, but to limit helicopter access to the area and helicopter activity around the town of Seward.

We have been an operator in good standing since obtaining the permit, and have been a community minded business for 12 years in the Seward area. While I do not approve of helicopter skiing access, nor do I approve of unlimited access, I do believe that a company responsibly operating within the perimeters of its permit should be considered for amendments to the original permit. If those amendments are reasonable and help protect the wildness of the area then approving such proposals should be considered.

We ask that the Forest continue to limit overall access to this amazing wilderness area, while allowing current commercial operators recreational access in a small area that is already commercially accessed. Keeping the number of operators limited and the terrain they operate on focused, we can keep the large majority of Forest Service land wild.

Thank you.