

**ALASKA REGION OUTFITTER/GUIDE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

**Annual Evaluation 2005 season (winter of 2004/2005)**

Name of Holder: Chugach Adventure Guides, LLC dba Chugach Powder Guides

Districts: Glacier and Seward Ranger Districts Type of Operation: Helicopter Skiing

Evaluator: Teresa Paquet Date Evaluated: 10/20/2005

Inspectors: Tim Charnon, Josh Milligan Dates Inspected: 2/28, 3/1, & 4/11/05 (see pp 5-8)

**Evaluation:**

**A - Acceptable; UN - Unacceptable; NI - Needs Improvement; NC - Not Checked; NA - Not Applicable**

<b>A. Site:</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>NI</b>	<b>NC</b>	<b>NA</b>
1. All improvements are authorized by permit, location and development as authorized.	X				
2. Clean up and sanitation in accordance with permit.	X				

Comments:

A. 2. See comments under *Prior Performance A.2.*

<b>B. Permit Compliance:</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>NI</b>	<b>NC</b>	<b>NA</b>
1. Compliance with terms of permit and operating plan.	X				
2. Insurance submitted on time and complete.	X				
3. Signed permit submitted on time and complete.	X				
4. Payments received by due date.	X				
5. Holder submitted/dated/corrected operating plan.	X				
6. Actual use reports completed and submitted on time.	X				
7. Compliance with Federal, State, Borough, laws and regulations	X				
8. Compliance with Title VI, Nondiscrimination (Clause B-1)	X				
9. Holders advertising refers to use on National Forest lands (Clause X-30)	X				

Comments:

B.1. See comments under *Comments and/or Corrective Action Needed.*

<b>C. Public Service</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>NI</b>	<b>NC</b>	<b>NA</b>
1. Number and qualifications of employees meets permit specifications.	X				
2. Clients provided with health and safety standards as provided in the approved operating plan/safety plan.	X				
3. Equipment provided meets health and safety standards as required in the approved operating plan.	X				
4. Rates, services, and/or accommodations provided as submitted in the approved operating plan.	X				

Comments:

C. 2 & 3. See comments under *Comments and/or Corrective Action Needed.*

Tally of comments received from clients/Public: 1 Positive comments 1 Negative Comments

Negative: A letter was received from an individual regarding his and another skier's experience on 4/01/05 in the Bench Peak area. He stated that it felt "like we got caught in the crossfire of CPG trying to conserve gas and get another run in for their clients." He also noted that he spoke with Chris Owens and Mike Overcast who were both friendly and helpful in helping him understand CPG's perspective and operational issues.

Positive: A phone call was received from a resident of Girdwood on 2/15/05 regarding CPG's flight route along Glacier Creek; he was pleased that CPG was using the Glacier Creek route.

Prior Performance (if applicable):

Are items from last performance evaluation corrected? Yes X No     

**Prior Performance -**

Note: The 2005 season includes 2004/2005 ski season and the 2004 season includes the 2003/2005 ski season)

**Comments and/or Corrective Action Needed for 2005 season (as identified by 2004 evaluation) and 2005 Performance Evaluation results:**

**1. 2004 evaluation item B.1. Compliance with terms of the permit and operating plan- GPS results.**

In 2004, based on the GPS helicopter flight path data, CPG received a "needs improvement" to avoid no fly zone incursions. In addition, CPG and the FS recognized the need to mutually establish appropriate procedures for submitting the GPS data and ensuring timely evaluation of the collected data. Accordingly, the FS worked collaboratively with CPG on the GPS monitoring procedure for the 2005 season. After a month of operations it was determined that the GPS monitoring protocol needed to be furthered clarified. On March 18, 2005 a letter was sent to CPG providing an explanation of changes in the data collection and evaluation process.

- *From March 19 thru April 20 CPG flew 22 out of 34 days available within this time frame. They collected or attempted to collect data on 21 days and during 13 of those days the unit or process was not functioning or the accuracy was questionable.*
- *Incursions occurred on 6 days due to pilot and guide location errors: zone 14 on 3/18, zone 15 on 3/20, zones 12 & 15 on 4/1, zone 8 on 4/2, zones 9, 22, & 24 on 4/13, and zone 7 on 4/16*
- *The intent is for CPG to avoid the no fly zones, except when a situation arises where safety would be compromised.*

**2. 2004 evaluation item B.8. Compliance with Title VI.**

To ensure compliance with Title VI. And Clause E.4.of the permit, in 2005 the FS furnished CPG with copies of the Title VI poster to display in a conspicuous area. CPG posted the poster in their office which is open to their customers and to the general public.

**3. 2004 evaluation item A.2. Clean Up and Sanitation**

To comply with this evaluation item, CPG is required to ensure visibility stakes and other debris are removed from the landing and pickup zones. For 2005, CPG developed and maintained a log of visibility stakes placed in the field by date and location, with a method for tracking when the stakes are removed from the field. This facilitates any lost stakes to be tracked and removed after the snow melts in the summer. Additionally CPG performed three days of helicopter flights during which they recovered approximately 65 landing stakes used in 2005 and in previous years (buried under snow.)

**Comments And/Or Corrective Action Needed for 2006 Season:****1. A.2. Clean Up and Sanitation** (also covered under Permit Stipulation - General Operation, 3)

The Glacier and Seward District appreciate the effort CPG expended to ensure they cleaned up their landing sites and pickup zones of visibility stakes.

**2. B.1. Compliance with terms of permit and operating plan**Permit #GLA341 Appendix B – Required Stipulations

a) Permit stipulation *Wildlife 4*: CPG shall provide mountain goat, Dall's sheep, and other wildlife sightings to Glacier District. The sightings are required to be reported to permit administrator during the next business day. On 11/8/05 CPG submitted two reports of goat observations during the 2005 season. It required several reminders from the FS to CPG to submit the reports. To receive a fully acceptable on this item in future seasons, CPG shall make every effort to ensure all wildlife observations are submitted on time; goat and sheep sightings at the end of the season in April and unique wildlife sightings during the next business day.

b) Permit stipulation *Community/Other National Forest users 6*: The stipulation identifies several routes in the Girdwood Valley when departing and arriving at the Girdwood Airstrip. One of the routes was Glacier Creek. The stipulation reads: "When flying south, CPG shall also test and evaluate a flight path over the western fringe of Girdwood by flying low over Glacier Creek and then veering east halfway out the valley where there are no residential areas. Based on public's comments or complaints, if any, this route could be used exclusively." One favorable comment was received regarding the Glacier Creek route. The FS didn't receive any other comments. Please convey any comments/complaints received during the 2005 operating season.

c) Permit stipulation *Monitoring 2*: CPG is required to give Glacier and Seward Districts advanced notice of their operations in Mount Ascension and East Moose Creek units. CPG did extremely well at contacting both Districts prior to operations.

d) Permit stipulation *Monitoring 3*: CPG is required to give GRD a copy of their run logs every two weeks. The run logs received were from 2/12 thru 2/24. Due to mutual efforts focused on utilizing GPS information the run log information did not play an important role in actively monitoring as in passed years. However for the 2006 operating season, CPG will be required to submit the run logs as identified in the amended permit.

e) Permit stipulation *Monitoring 4*: CPG shall use GPS technology to track flights and submit data on a weekly basis in accordance to the *Chugach National Forest GPS Permit Protocol, 10/13/05*. Thresholds will be established to help achieve success during the 2006 operating season. Additionally, thresholds will give the FS a tool to better evaluate when incursions are identified as needing improvement.

f) A wording error was found on CPG's web site which incorrectly advertised CPG as having an exclusive use permit area. CPG immediately corrected the error. We appreciate the immediate attention CPG gave to this matter; it is CPG's responsibility to ensure all advertising that references CPG's use of National Forest land is accurate.

**3. C. Public Service C.2 & 3.** Two inspections were conducted. The first inspection involved an emergency evacuation of an injured FS employee who was involved in the inspection. The inspector's documentation of the evacuation showed a successful implementation of CPG's Operations Plan, specifically their first aid response and emergency evacuation procedures.



## Inspection of Operations - Chugach Powder Guides

**2005 Season**

District: Glacier and Seward Ranger Districts Type of Operation: Guided Helicopter Skiing

Date Inspected: February 28 and March 1, 2005 Inspector(s): Tim Charnon & Connie Hubbard

Holder Representative Present: Yes - Virgil Hughes, guide and Mike Overcast, owner

**Evaluation:**

**A - Acceptable; UN - Unacceptable; NI - Needs Improvement; NC - Not Checked; NA - Not Applicable**

Safety & Operating Plan Requirements	A	UN	NI	NC	NA
1. Snow Log posted at hanger and maintained. (snowpit data, shear test information, daily snow stability assessment.)	X				
2. Weather log maintained. (forecasts retained daily, precip., wind, temperature)	X				
3. Snow Profile Field Book maintained. (snowpit analysis, shear test data, Rutschblock tests)	X				
4. Avalanche log maintained. (recorded on days observed)	X				
5. Safety rules signed by clients	X				
6. Record of emergencies. (appropriate agencies notified)	X				
7. Helicopter operations log	X				
8. Guide packs	X				
9. Emergency rescue equipment: survival gear, crevasse kit, rescue sleds	X				
10. First Aid gear on board the ship: Trauma kit, oxygen	X				
11. Rescue plan	X				
12. Run tracking Log submitted to District biweekly	X				
13. Wildlife observation logs	X				
14. Radio/event log	X				
15. Heliski hotline announces planned areas of use for the day	X				
16. Fuel spill prevention, containment, cleanup materials on hand at all fueling sites	X				
17. Nondiscrimination poster(s) "And Justice For All" posted in a highly visible location(s)	X				
18. Visibility stakes log	X				
19. Operational GPS data logger (or similar) during flight	X				
20. Flight paths data submitted to Glacier District for processing					X
21. Glacier Creek flight route (when was it used and results)					X

**Comments**

A.21: CPG will provide the information at the end of the season.

**Comments:**

From Tim Charnon, Recreation Officer & inspector

A permit inspection of CPG's helicopter ski operation occurred on Tuesday, March, 2005. I attended the guide's briefing at CPG's hanger in Girdwood. On the previous day, I attended the guest's safety briefing at the Alyeska Hotel. An inspection of the helicopter and operating records occurred at CPG's hanger in Girdwood. Results of these inspections are documented on the inspection form.

An in-field inspection also occurred to monitor adherence to no-fly zones and other operational requirements identified in CPG's operating and monitoring plan. The in-field inspection was conducted by Connie Hubbard, helicopter manager, and myself. Our lead guide was Mike Overcast. We were flown to the Glacier/Winner Creek Zone 1 at approximately 10:20 a.m. The nearest no-fly zone was zone 3, located NE of Glacier Creek. We landed in a saddle above a run called "High 5" (T11N, R3E section 20, NE1/4 SE1/4). Before skiing, Overcast dug a snow pit, assessed conditions, and discussed the assessment with other guides. An assessment of "fair" snow stability was made. Overcast ski cut the run and gave instructions on where to ski. Two clients, and myself, skied down to Overcast. Connie Hubbard fell about six turns into this first ski run, approximately 10:45 A.M. She was unable to get up or continue skiing due to pain in her knee. She was administered first aid by one of the other ski guides, Virgil Hughes. Virgil assessed Hubbard's condition as a possible knee injury. Overcast initiated their emergency rescue plan. A rescue sled (Cascade) was ordered through CPG's dispatch. The sled arrived on scene, at which time the leg was splinted and Hubbard was transported via the sled to the Helicopter. We were transported back to CPG's hanger at approximately 11:45 a.m.

In addition to the procedure implemented in their first aid response and emergency evacuation, I also noted the following successful field operations as identified in the operating and monitoring plan:

- Flight manifesting occurred
- Flight following through CPG and FS dispatch occurred.
- Safety briefing to guests was given in the field.
- Snow stability assessment was conducted.
- No incursion into no fly zone 3 was observed.
- No wildlife was observed.
- Landing zones were marked per operation plan.
- Flight path along Glacier Creek back into Girdwood was used when the emergency rescue transported Hubbard back to CPG's hanger. This route was used because the flight path from Winner Creek was not accessible due to fog.

## Inspection of Operations - Chugach Powder Guides

**2005 Season**

District: Glacier and Seward Ranger Districts Type of Operation: Guided Helicopter Skiing

Date Inspected: 4/11/05 Inspector(s): Joshua Milligan & Ray Koleser

Holder Representative Present: Yes

**Evaluation:**

**A - Acceptable; UN - Unacceptable; NI - Needs Improvement; NC - Not Checked; NA - Not Applicable**

Safety & Operating Plan Requirements	A	UN	NI	NC	NA
1 Snow Log posted at hanger and maintained. (snowpit data, shear test information, daily snow stability assessment.)	X				
2. Weather log maintained. (forecasts retained daily, precip., wind, temperature)	X				
3. Snow Profile Field Book maintained. (snowpit analysis, shear test data, Rutschblock tests)	X				
4. Avalanche log maintained. (recorded on days observed)	X				
5. Safety rules signed by clients	X				
6. Record of emergencies. (appropriate agencies notified)	X				
7. Helicopter operations log	X				
8. Guide packs	X				
9. Emergency rescue equipment: survival gear, crevasse kit, rescue sleds	X				
10. First aid & rescue packs.	X				
11. First Aid gear on board the ship: Trauma kit, oxygen	X				
12. Rescue plan	X				
13. Run tracking Log submitted to District biweekly	X				
14. Wildlife observation logs	X				
15. Radio log	X				
16. Heliski hotline announces planned areas of use for the day	X				
17. Fuel spill prevention, containment, cleanup materials on hand at all fueling sites	X				
18. Nondiscrimination poster(s) "And Justice For All" posted in a highly visible location(s)	X				
19. Visibility stakes log	X				
20. Operational GPS data logger (or similar) during flight	X				
21. Flight paths data submitted to Glacier District for processing	X				

**Comments:****From Josh Milligan, Seward Ranger District permit inspector**

The CPG inspection began with a safety briefing at 7:30 am on April 11, 2005. The topics covered in the safety briefing included: (1) avalanche awareness; (2) avalanche rescue procedures; (3) helicopter entry and exit procedures; (4) guide and client responsibilities; (5) proper helicopter skiing procedures; (6) contents of the backpack clients would be required to carry (contents included probe and shovel). This briefing was conducted by the guide with relevant material placed on a flip chart for reference. The briefing lasted approximately 45 minutes. Two clients were present at the briefing. The briefing was held by Virgil Hughes. Clients were instructed to sign a waiver and an acknowledgement of duties and responsibilities.

Following the briefing, at 8:30 am on April 11, 2005 conducted an orientation to avalanche rescue using an avalanche beacon. Each client was given an avalanche beacon and was instructed on how operate the beacon in the event of an avalanche burial. The guide then placed an avalanche beacon out of sight, simulating a victim, and the clients were instructed to use their avalanche beacon to find the victim. This exercise lasted approximately 30 minutes. Two clients were present for this exercise. This exercise was conducted by Fred Scriver.

After the orientation, clients were instructed to gather their ski equipment and proceed to the helicopter for transport into the National Forest. Guides inspect the client's equipment to ensure they are in working order and will not malfunction. The helicopter left the Girdwood Airstrip at approximately 10:30 am.

The helicopter skiing procedures used on April 11, 2005 consisted of supporting 3 groups of clients. Each group of clients was accompanied by two guides. One guide skis in front of the clients and one guide skis to the rear of the clients. This procedure is used to effectively manage avalanche danger and to account for all clients during skiing. When uncertain of avalanche danger on a particular slope, a guide was harnessed to the other guide and an avalanche pit is created. The field avalanche test consists of digging a pit to roughly 5-6 foot depth and conducting three tests. The first test is a shovel tilt test, the second test is a compression test, and the third test is an additional compression test to validate the second compression test. All of these avalanche tests are used in assessing avalanche danger.

While helicopter skiing, the guides use a "ski and stop" method. The lead guide skis in front of the group and radios the rear guide when he is at an island of safety (safe spot from avalanches). The rear guide then instructs the skiers to follow to the left or right of the lead guide's tracks and stop when they reach the guide. Skiers are spaced anywhere from 15 to 20 turns apart and are instructed not to ski above one another. This procedure is used to mitigate avalanche risks. After regrouping, this procedure is repeated and used as many times as necessary to ski to the helicopter landing zone. At the landing zone, clients and guides organize their gear and prepare for the helicopter to arrive to take clients up for helicopter skiing.

CPG operated exclusively in the North Bench Peak zone on April 11, 2005. Three groups of clients and one helicopter were used. Each group was accompanied by two guides. No wildlife was sighted; therefore a wildlife report was not created for submission to the Forest Service. In addition to conducting helicopter skiing activities, at roughly 4:00 pm the helicopter flew to several sites in the North Bench Peak zone to remove helicopter landing indicators (colored stakes). All gear and emergency equipment appeared to be functional.

The guides present on April 11, 2005 included Mike Overcast, Virgil Hughes, Fred Scriver, Dave Hamre, and Clark Fyans. The GPS unit with the no-fly zone boundaries superimposed functioned intermittently throughout the day. However, GPS data was collected for the entire day to report to the Glacier Ranger District. The helicopter currently operates with an avalanche beacon to aid in the rescue of avalanche victims.