



Heli Ski US Association Annual Meeting
Snowbird May 4 - 6, 2007

MINUTES

Friday, May 4, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Joe Royer, President of Heli Ski US Association (Heli Ski US or Association).

In Attendance: Rusty Dassing, Joe Royer, Paul Butler, Mark Baumgardner, Mike Overcast, John Humphries, Sigi Vogl. Dean Cummings arrived later on Friday evening.

Operator Summaries

Following general discussions over dinner, each operator presented an operations report of its season:

High Mountain Heli-Skiing:

Because Jon Shick was not available, High Mountain Heli-Skiing' (HMH) 2007 Operations Summary was presented from Jon's email letter:

HMH flew one Bell 407 operated by Helicopter Express (HE) for the 8th season. Old pilot, Ken Johnson, no longer worked for HE and HMH trained a new young pilot to take his place. HMH was pleased with his performance.

Operating season; Dec. 23 to March 24 (last day)

122.6 heli hrs total (includes recon); flew only 40 commercial days (down 27%)

5850 gal. fuel @ \$2.91 per gal

598 skiers (down 30% from last year); 6.65 runs/skier (also down)

Employed 6 guides for the season. Several of the company's senior guides retired but the new team is very professional and working well together.

Only a couple minor knee injuries to report. One customer lost his skis in a small slide. Company will probably look for them this summer.

Dealt with a weak shallow snow pack all season. There were cold temps and no snow in January and guides were scratching to find anything to ski but kept it going. Lots of snow and tough flying conditions in February. Again in March, no snow and unusually warm temperatures. Had some good corn conditions off and on, but basically the word was out and visitors just stopped coming around mid month and the company closed early.

Although our skier numbers were down it was not for lack of demand. We have been keeping track of skiers who either had a reservation and could not fly due to weather or were on a waiting list and did not fly. We turned away 1285 potential skiers. Wish we had a snow cat.

Just received notice of appeal from DOJ yesterday, April 24. HMH will also file an appeal in the next few days. Craig Pattee can fill you in on the details of this. The constant attacks by the greenies have become a huge burden on HMH's business and have caused a great deal of stress that won't end soon. Would not wish that on anyone and hope HMH is around in the years to come.

Wasatch Powder Guides:

Season: Dec 18 – April 14

2 Helicopters

65 operating days

260 hours

1200 guests

175 explosives

Just enough snow to open in December concerned about rocks, snow got weaker, satisfied guests, no one in the backcountry, great finish. Skied low angle.

Used Classic Helicopters as operator - \$1500

Flew a lot of new people who have never skied untracked powder plus established guests. No complaints.

Incidents: one skier propagated a low angle slide, one guide ski cut a slope inadequately, third guest triggered slide and skied out of it. Witnessed backcountry skiers caught in slides and participated in body recoveries.

Ended in a great year. Guests are getting heavier!

Ruby Mountain Heli Skiing:

Let long time pilot go (Quack)

New pilot from Heli Express flew 160 hours including ferry time, pilot would ground helicopter for any reason. Heli would time out, number of issues. Brought Classic in had ferry times again, brought B3, then 407 came back, and then Pilot (Stefan) had to go. Tom Sharp came in to finish out season with a L4 with tail rotor package. Paid a lot of money in ferry time.

50 percent of the snow pack, skiing rated 5 on scale of 10, traveled long horizontals for short runs. In Feb finally able to ski normal terrain, did not cancel anyone. Skied to edge of empire, drove guests hour and a half, great staff of guides that made it work.

950 skiers

Jan 20 – April 4

Full every day

Ran area level III class, Colin Zechariahs out of Canada in January as instructor

A couple of injuries, concerned with less than a meter of facets, changed method of guiding

Good year, good snow

North Cascades Heli-Skiing:

Mid Jan – March 18

South Coast Helicopters as Operator

Maintenance issues

Flew B2, good price, Shamus was the pilot, some maintenance issues

\$1400 an hour dry lease

550 user days

9 days

85 hours

65 days

No major incidents, a lot of return clientele, went smooth, high client satisfaction, good guides.

Several film crews, guests getting in worse physical shape, 50 percent of clients are boarders

Sun Valley Heli Ski:

No representative of Sun Valley Heli Ski was present. From Mark's written report:

Drought once again plagued the Sun Valley area, as well as a major part of the western United States. Considering a 50% of normal snow pack, Sun Valley Heli Ski Guides had a decent season. A new helicopter operator, Silver State Helicopters provided a Bell 407, a new machine for the pilot and guides. It was a scramble, but the helicopter arrived at the SNRA helipad (another new "wrinkle") on December 23, 2006. Commercial operations began on December 28. As is the case in dry years, most of the skiing, 64% percent of operations occurred in the remote terrain. Local powder skiing was limited to Butterfield, Conrad and Goat Creeks. A good spring skiing cycle allowed operations in Lake, Eagle and Trail Creeks. HASTA tours dropped off dramatically, due to marginal local conditions, the added expense flight time required to pick up touring groups when going remote and just the bad luck of poor weather when these tours were scheduled. Good news, use of the Smoky Mountain Lodge increased to 8 tours, 44 guests, 380 runs, and 18 hours flown. New terrain to the west of the Lodge was opened up. Overall, while we flew fewer tours, we had an average of more skiers per tour, skiing more runs and spending more money. The 407 proved to be a very efficient aircraft. As required in the Permit, operations were monitored by the Forest Service. Joe Miczulski flew on March 15th in the Eagle Creek. The 24th of March was the last day of commercial operations due to warm temperatures and waning interest.

Incidents We had no fuel spills, but had a bit of a battle with a new fuel containment for the 2000 gallon fuel truck provide by Silver State and parked at the SNRA helipad. The containment was laid out on a snow covered parking lot and would bunch up when the truck attempted to drive onto it. The application of sand and ice melt under the containment helped alleviate the problem. However, the containment has to be laid out on dry pavement next season. Overall, we felt that the SNRA helipad worked very well and that our impact was minimal, given all the new policies, procedures and fine tuning required literally at the 11th hour. This indeed is the best location for us on the Forest. We are hopeful that something can be worked out with Sun Valley Company for the use of the new Gun Club as a helipad, but do not have a definitive answer at this time. On January 23, a decision was made to improve a landing zone at the top of a run called "Bull Rider", in Pinyon Gulch. "Bull Rider" is low angle, protected terrain which makes it ideal for intermediate skiers, or when avalanche hazard is up or wind has damaged more exposed runs. Usually, a landing zone is built with snow below the top of the run, but the length and tail heavy nature of the Bell 407 made this option unacceptable in the pilot's opinion. Lack of snow and severely limited choices were other factors influencing the decision to take out two trees. Once those trees were removed, it became obvious two more needed to go in order to make the landing zone safe. While small trees have been removed in the past, logging of this nature had never been undertaken before by Sun Valley Heli Ski. The Forest Service was not notified previous to the landing zone improvement, but subsequently became aware of the tree cutting. It was determined that in the

future, if the staff feels similar undertaking is warranted, pictures will be taken, a plan formulated and permission will be sought prior to any action. When the snow melts, the impact to this particular site will be mitigated. The only other incident was a minor knee injury on February 19. Also a snowmobiler managed to get caught in a slide in the Baker Creek area, on March 10th, always a clue to instability. Guide Pete Patterson was instrumental in assisting Life Flight in the rescue. Given the marginal amount of snow cover, warm temperatures, wind impacts, and the associated avalanche hazard, we are proud of the job we did in finding the best and safest backcountry skiing available this year.

Conclusion This season presented us with a number of challenges, and the team stepped up and did a great job. Fortunately, the terrain around Sun Valley can be very forgiving and viable with a limited amount of snow. Unfortunately, when there is low snow throughout the west, interest drops off quickly. We are very lucky to have such a skilled and experienced pilot and guide staff who, not only stick it out under trying circumstances but actually shine when the going gets tough. While there was a learning curve involved using a new machine from a new operator, the lessons learned from all parties should make operations smoother next year. Unanswered questions include a base for the helicopter next season and the status of the 10 year permit renewal. It is our hope that these issues can be resolved well in advance of the winter.

Chugach Powder Guides:

Contracted with Costal Helicopters

Started privates Jan 14 with two machines Feb 3, three heli's, one still working 10th of May 4, 2007.

Rates \$1650

Fly's B1

Use B2 for Kings and Corn

1.5 guarantees for each machine, heli situation remains tight in AK

1357 Girdwood

424 Tordrillos

585 CAT

Total 2700 skier days

Flew 61 DAYS

Challenges with weather, a lot of North wind

40 ferry hours

22 guides, 12 new including Cat guides plus 2 new pilots

No skier triggered slides and no incidents

Hired AMGA guides (started at \$3500 a month) 4 k for leads

Day skiing \$790 for 20k vertical feet

Good year

Telluride Helitrax:

10 Jan – 14 April

548 skier days

Total hours 173

\$995 for 6 runs

Problems with 407 Air Resources Chris Templeton pilot, 4 guests normal. Ran into problem needing to fly 3 and sometimes 2 guests.

Good snow, early season skiing around rocks, February windy flew 44 days out of 90

Two minor knee injuries

Silverton Mountain Ski Area running some heli skiing in their area within BLM

H2O Heli Guides

Operator South Coast B2

1600 hourly rate

2.75 fuel rate

Tons of education with clients

No down days, they are adventure days, exploring glaciers, fishing, ice climbing

660 skier days

ended 29 April

Permit 2 years out from renewal

Permits

The subject then turned to operator permits:

WPG's permit renewal going to appeal. Expects 10 year permit.

Telluride has gotten their 10 year

RMH has a 10 year permit

H2O's USFS Permit is 2 years from renewal

Government Relations

The subject then turned to Government Relations. The following operators have invested with heli skiing (in-kind contributions) this season to Dutko:

RMH 12K

Telluride 6K
CPG – 12 K
CHS – 12 K
SVHS – 12K
HMH ?

Duko Conversation

The group proposed to let Dutko present its report Saturday. It was the sense of the group that it would not be able to continue paying cash to Dutko, trade for skiing – that the relationship needed to be based on in-kind trade by our operators.

Mr. Royer noted that we need to increase the membership if we are going to continue with this organization.

Saturday, May 05, 2007

Present: Joe, Ole, Mike, John, Craig, Rusty, Mark, Paul, Sigi

Government Relations: Presentation by Craig Pattee, Dutko

- Proposed FAA Reauthorization – concern about proposed 70 cent surcharge to private aviation which will effect heli skiing
- Next step, CP to work with operators to work with members of congress to seek expection. Engage with our delegation
- Operators should anticipate significant price increases for fuel.
- Two pieces of legislation for expansion of Wilderness. Pending tracks of road-less terrain deeming closed to motorized travel. We need to watch.
- Dutko watching these two issues
- HMH's case: would be a mistake to open up Wilderness Act
 - FS lost case in Idaho. Poor quality of EIS including ambiguities
 - 70, 60, 40 percent of skier days reduction of 2006
 - Plan two parts. FS and DOJ filed appeal, ninth circuit court. Pushing for new EIS
 - Enforcement of levels back to 1984. If Shick loses terrain there is no other heli ski terrain. Palisades is the only viable heli ski terrain.
 - Plan to get Neil Artz in and get FS to pay for it.

- Joe, what can we do to help Jon? Moral support & needs economic resources.
- 5 other permits pending: CPG, Telluride, NCH, SVHS & WPG
- We need to educate groups as to our issues
- NCHS – changes in FS personnel. Always an issue to turn heli ski terrain into Wilderness.
- Opposition went to 10 year & want to see Forest Plan, Paul just waiting to hear back from the FS.
- SVHS – still in NIMS court, housekeeping to address to check off on a list and have not done anything. Discovered that the District Ranger to extend 5 years to existing 5 year. FS cannot do this type of extension.
- H20 – FS is going to put out a RFP due to low use and high demand.
- WPG – 1999 issued permit that upset both sides. Embraced forest service and asked to work with them. Can FS write a draft that WPG can support. 5 years later and due another EIS and fine tune permit. Local group suing however nuances small. Judge threw it out of court. Briefs filed, going to court due to appeal.
- Telluride – Issued 10 year last year. Lynx study. BLM reviewing terrain usage. Get together with Craig, work with staffers with delegation.
- CPG – Almost complete. FS going to write a CE for a 10 yr. Mike shared his no-fly zone GPS maps.
- RMH – 9 years left on permit.

Financial Report – Rusty Dassing, Treasurer

\$5700 Current Balance

\$1200 owed to Sigi

Small payables due for website hosting

- Best financial position ever

Upon Motion Made and Duly Seconded, it was:

RESOLVED that the Treasurer's report is accepted and approved.

Sponsorship Report – Craig Pattee

Started pitching sponsorship to late for budgeting. Dutko forwent fees counting on bringing dollars.

Successes – learned a lot, people saw the value proposition. People want to wait until we have it built or crawl before we walk.

Still optimistic and will gamble that we can be successful. Timing is during the summer to continue pitch.

- Tier 1:
 - Black Diamond willing to do 10K and interested in joining together with individual operators.
 - Dynastar - question if we should enter into allowing them to sponsor as long as they are not exclusive
 - North Face – good conversations, ended around OR show and lost momentum. Need help!
 - Ortovox – Interested \$2,500 to place it on the Web.
- Potential sponsors waiting until we have a program in place.
- Consider Burton proposal to fund a separate web site specific to boarding. Craig needs help in connecting with Burton

Upon Motion Duly Made by Mike Overcast, and seconded by Joe Royer, it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that the Association shall allow a separate Burton funded Heli-Board US website.

- Paul will help with BCA.
- Ole will help with The North Face.
- Quicksilver – CEO will be coming out to heli ski.
- Jeep interested in running a heli ski event, put this program on ice, not ready for it.

Craig optimistic, goal to get two websites up this summer to raise money to market HSUS and eventually pay CP

Joe – in agreement that money that is generated will go first into our checking account. Until we have enough money to pay for the services.

Discussion on Logos – Resend logo offerings to membership. Looking official, red, white and blue, not too busy.

Sigi to contact Circumerro regarding deliverables: New Branded Portal Site, New Logo, Search Engine

Discussion of relationship with Dutko will continue to do sponsor work, skier days are important and willing to wait until money comes in from sponsorship.

Group in agreement in offering 8 seats to Craig, WPG and H20 will work out deal directly.

Items from the floor:

During open discussions, the members compared operations and safety equipment, including:

- Radios
- Weather Stations
- Emergency Equipment
 - Rusty: Guides packs – first aid & C-collar getting heavy (20 lbs)
 - In aircraft, sked, O2, backboard
 - Mark: take back door off, attack pack, back boards, bean bag, experimented with a hypothermic bag.
 - Jet Lite square shovel recommended by Joe to dig through avalanche debris.

Sunday, May 06, 2007

The meeting re-convened on Sunday morning at 8:00 AM and further discussion was had with respect to 1st aid equipment and emergency evacuation procedures.

- It as noted that as soon as the initial emergency has been dealt with, an operator experiencing an accident should immediately first call WOGA
 - WPG has a sharpie, waiver's, accident report in each helicopter and one guide is assigned as the medical officer
 - CPG instructs guides how to fill out a form.
 - Accident victim must sign forms (lawyer says you cannot make them – best to ask them to sign after interviewing them).
- RMH - Any serious injury and a grey area Joe debriefs intensely so that you are covered in a court of law. Write everything down.
- Good to know as much as possible about your client's medical history

Snowmobile Discussion

- SVHS – bought a new one to carry 55 gal fuel drums. Suggestion to Mark that he needs to buy a snocat to help with fuel issues.
- Fuel caches question: SVHS has 2000 gal at the lodge & NCHS has a fuel cache as well.
- There are some great transfer pumps per RMH 15 gal a min. runs off a car battery
- PTO pump is the way to go up to 40 gal's a min. but need the truck to run.
- NCHS has 500 gal army tank
- Dean used a snowmobile for a blown knee
- Rusty – FS is zoning forest with overlays, semi primitive area with helicopter use only. Need to lobby FS and others so that Heli Skiing is not lumped together with snowmobiles. Insist that heli ski is mechanized and not land mechanized. Being mechanized has less impact on wildlife.
 - Need to convince FS within the hierarchy from the top.
 - Do not alienate snowmobiler's but yet if forest overlay comes in protect mechanized status overlay.

Ski Sponsorship. A discussion regarding ski sponsorship was had. Rossi did not show up for meeting. An indication of their commitment? Comment that corporate is still adjusting and it may get better.

Other Sponsors. Suggestion to contact Visa mileage card for a Heli-Ski US card

New Members

A lengthy discussion was had concerning the need for new members.

- It was noted that the organization needs to maintain high standards.
- Need to respect and trust fellow operator
- If we operate as elite group we may not be able to change how other operators operate.
- Who would we want to invite? Theo, Out of Bounds?
- Website, streamline our standards, editorial, get together with CP setting up events,

- Consider developing associate members, helicopter operators, avi association, reach out to Helicat Canada & US Cat Skiing Association.
- Might be good idea for new start-ups to bring in for next years meeting
- Directive for Sigi to follow up, Erin Brill Silverton get info from John Humphries, Mammoth Heli Ski info from Mark, Aspen start up from Joe. Extend invite to attend next years meeting for a couple of hours to let us know what they are doing. Ole will contact Tioga Pass owners, considering running cat skiing operation. Theo, Out of Bounds
- Circulate operator qualifications to membership for review and update
- Rusty would like Sigi to work with Conway to clean up website. WPG listed incorrectly as located in SLC.
- Develop Affiliate membership and hit list, tourism bureaus, film crews.
- Invite new operators for next year for half a day.
- Contact HeliCat Canada Associaton, contact Wiegele & CMH and inquire what they have gone through in admitting new members.
- Per Paul, find out what the protocol is for accident reporting from HeliCat Canada Association.
- Joe and Sigi will work to invite potential new members to next years meeting.
- Mark will give Sigi contacts and introduction to HeliCat Canada

Election of Officers

Following nominations duly seconded and accepted, the following persons were elected to serve at the positions indicated:

President – Joe Royer
 VP – Jon Shick
 Secretary Treasurer – Rusty

Dues.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that dues for the next year shall be \$2,200 per member (includes \$200 for meals at the meeting)

Next year meeting dates & location:

Next Season location? WPG/ Reno/Tahoe, Seattle? Some place new...

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that the next annual meeting of the Association shall be May 16-18, 2008 at a location to be determined.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Association, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.