

North Fork heli-skiing nixed by forest officials

Posted Dec. 11, 2008 —Officials of the Stillwater and Coal Creek state forests have rejected a proposal by two Whitefish firms to undertake helicopter-skiing operations over the Whitefish Range. The proposed operating area was to include the Coal Creek State Forest, which lies entirely within the North Fork watershed, adjacent to Home Ranch Bottoms private land south of Polebridge, and part of the Stillwater State Forest, which is west of the Whitefish divide, north of Whitefish Lake.

According to a story by Jim Mann in the **Dec. 11 Kalispell Daily Inter Lake**, Brian Manning, manager of the Stillwater and Coal Creek state forests, said that the majority of the 316 comments about the application that were received by his office were opposed to the plan. Mann quoted from a letter Manning wrote to the two firms, Triple-X Helicopter and Valhalla Adventures: “[Concerns] mainly include the noise and effects to winter recreation; the adverse effects to various wildlife species; low-flying aircraft effects to adjacent landowners and the potential for trespass on federal lands.”

Click here to view the scoping letter and accompanying map. Also see Mann’s earlier coverage of this story in the **Sept. 24 Daily Inter Lake**.