

Interrelationships and Interactions Between Helicopter Skiing, Forests and the Forestry Industry in British Columbia, Canada

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Helicopter skiing is intricately intertwined with forested landscapes and the forestry industry. The study objective was to determine, describe and analyze the manners in which helicopter skiing, forests and the forestry industry are related and how helicopter skiing interacts with forests and the forestry industry in British Columbia. This was accomplished by examining the available literature related to the use of Crown land for helicopter skiing and for forestry purposes, by gathering information from stakeholders via telephone interview and questionnaire, as well as by comparing snow profiles from open and forested sites. Helicopter skiing often takes place on land managed by the forestry industry for timber production. Forested slopes are desirable to skiers because they may have beneficial impacts on the quality of the snow pack for skiing. Operators of helicopter skiing businesses depend upon forested terrain to provide stable and therefore safe snow packs with regard to avalanches and to allow for safe air transport during poor visibility. Forested land is used more frequently for helicopter skiing in the coastal region of western British Columbia than in the interior or eastern portion of the province. Some helicopter skiing businesses have engaged in efforts to form multi-use management projects with forestry businesses; however the majority of such projects have been unsuccessful in attaining the needs of both parties. Potential exists for helicopter skiing operators and forestry businesses to effectively work together, although socio-economic influences prevent multi-use management of forested Crown land from taking place.