

City of Valdez
Application for Conditional Use Permit

Name of Applicant: Pulseline Adventure

Address of Applicant:

[REDACTED]

Contact Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Legal Owners:

Gabe Monroe
Geoff Perusse

[REDACTED]

Geographic Location:

Located approx. 350 feet south of the Richardson Highway at milepost 11.5 off the gravel pit access road leading into Material Site #71-1-040-5, approx. 14 miles southeast of Valdez.

There are no residences within 500 feet of the proposed site or proposed flight paths.

Latitude:

61.06101° N Longitude: 145.9617° W Datum: NAD83

Legal Description:

SW1/4NW1/4 Section 28, Township 9 South, Range 4 West, Copper River Meridian

Other Land Information:

- Municipality: City of Valdez
- Regional Corporation: Chugach Alaska Corp.
- Special Use Areas: Thompson Pass Special Use Area

Planning & Classification:

1988 Prince William Sound Area Plan, Management Unit 21: City of Valdez, Subunit 21I: Robe

Lake. Primary Surface Uses: Forestry, Habitat & Harvest, Public Recreation. Prohibited Surface Use: Land Offerings Land Classifications: Forest Land, Wildlife Habitat Land, Public Recreation Land.

Unit 21 states that "uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits that are not specifically prohibited, may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement, management guidelines of this unit, and relevant management guidelines in Chapter 2"

(Pg 3-172).

The Recreation, Tourism, Cultural and Scenic Resources section of Chapter 2 of the area plan states that "private recreation facilities may be authorized if the facility meets the management intent and guidelines outlined in Chapter 3, it fulfills the conditions outlined in this guideline and it is in the public interest as determined through a written finding by the land manager or a management plan prepared in accordance with AS 41.21.302(c)" (2-27).

The site also falls within the 1994 Thompson Pass Special Use Area (TPSUA) serialized as ADL 226446, which is designated as special use lands for recreational purposes. The plan states that the special use area will not affect public access, nor will it preclude any future land management action deemed to be in the public interest.

After review, the proposed use of state lands for creating a temporary staging area for day-use purposes on a short-term and as-needed basis is consistent with the applicable guidelines and management intent of the PWSAP and TPSUA.

Third Party Interests:

The proposed site is located off an access road that leads into the state-owned Material Site MS 71-0-004-2 (ADL 419633) with material site authorizations issued to the State Pipeline Coordinator's Section (SPCO) (ADL 230853) and the Department of Transportation (DOT&PF) (ADL 201005). A land use permit for material storage (LAS 33573) has also been issued to Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (APSC) by SPCO.

How will the proposed use conform to the present and future development of the area? What will be its effect on present and future development?

The State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources issued Pulseline Adventure a 5-year Commercial Recreation Permit (LAS 34927) under AS 38.05.850, permitting a staging area for helicopter landing and re-fueling, and for loading/unloading passengers on an occasional basis, in support of a commercial heli-skiing operation at the 12-mile State Gravel Pit access site.

The issuance of the permit followed a 14-day agency review period that began on March 22, 2024 and concluded on April 5th, 2024. The review was sent to the DNR Office of History & Archaeology, DNR Land Sales and Development, DNR Realty Services, DNR State Parks

Permitting, DNR Division of Oil & Gas, DNR Statewide Abatement of Impaired Lands section, Department of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), DOT&PF, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, DNR-DMLW Realty Services Section, ***the City of Valdez (note: no comments or concerns were received)***, DNR-DMLW Resources Access & Development Section, and SPCO. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reviewed the request post-agency review.

Additionally, the 14-day public notice period began on March 22, 2024 and concluded on April 5th, 2024. The public notice was sent to Chugach Alaska Corp., Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (Alyeska), property owners within the nearby Alpine Woods subdivision, the two closest post offices, and was posted to the State of Alaska online public notice webpage. Several public comments were received, in which their substantive issues are summarized and discussed below. These included concerns about proximity to residential neighborhoods, potential noise pollution, potential impacts on recreation in the area, potential environmental and wildlife impacts, and whether alternative locations were considered.

Finally, there was no appeal to the decision by DNR to issue the permit.

Currently there is no planned development of the area that we are aware of or have observed, and the proposed use as a short-term, seasonal landing zone/staging area to support our heli-skiing operations should not have any effect on present and/or future development; the site area is only about one-third of an acre, in close proximity to Richardson Highway, and our operations at the site would be completely mobile with no permanent structures or equipment. We don't foresee any future development, since the specific site is only utilized by Alyeska Pipeline and Alaska State DOT primarily during non winter months after the conclusion of the heli-skiing season.

Furthermore, as noted by DNR, the adjudication of each permit request for use of state lands carefully considers the applicable regulations, policies, and management intent of the area plan. Each request is reviewed individually, and issuance does not establish a precedent that will apply to future permit applications. Additionally, the requested activity is allowable per the PWSAP and TPSUA, and is aligned with the mission of the Division and the Department.

Why is there a need in the area for the Conditional Use requested? Wherever possible, substantiate this statement with factual data.

Pulseline has a need for a limited-use staging area (day use only) in this location to support and streamline our heli-skiing operations during March and April annually. This is an ideal location to support Pulseline's operations on certain days and during specific circumstances. *Pulseline does not intend to utilize this site daily.* There are only several days per season (approximately 5-10 days out of our eight-week season) when we may use the site to support our operations. Typically, these are days when weather conditions prevent us from accessing other terrain and/or utilized other staging areas. For example, this location is often wind-sheltered during

occasional periods of northerly outflow whereas other areas would be too windy for helicopters to operate. Also, our permitted tenure with Alaska State DNR and the Bureau of Land Management includes areas directly to the south, and east of this site, and at times the snow and/or weather conditions in these proximate areas are the best in our tenure. As discussed in further detail below, when conditions dictate, this site would be highly beneficial for our operations. Additionally, this site would offer an additional emergency response resource for fellow heli-skiing operations and recreational users as we would be able to use this as a staging area for responding to emergencies when possible.

Why is this site especially suited to the Conditional Use proposed?

The site is currently undeveloped and not used by Alyeska Pipeline or the State of Alaska DOT during our annual season of operations (March and April).

There are no residences within 500 feet of the proposed site or the proposed flight paths.

As mentioned, Pulseline will not use this site every day during our season. We expect to use it up to approximately 10 days out of our standard eight-week heli-skiing season during March and April. Our primary base of operations is the Valdez airport. Our other primary permitted staging area is located at Blueberry Lake near Thompson Pass. So, most days we're operating in other areas throughout our permitted tenure in the Chugach National Forest, Bureau of Land Management and State of Alaska DNR lands.

But on a handful of days per season, this site would be beneficial for our operations. Occasionally, the best weather and snow conditions are located to the south and east of this site. During these times, it would benefit our operations to be able to fuel our helicopters from this site, so that we would not need to fly back to the airport or to Blueberry Lake to fuel.

This would streamline our operations on the limited number of days that we would utilize this site by decreasing our flight times and using less fuel. By decreasing our flight times to ferry guests in and out of the field and reducing fuel runs, our guests will potentially be able to get more ski runs, providing them with a better experience and higher value while also reducing costs for our business.

Furthermore, and importantly, Conditional Use at this site would make our operation safer, since the helicopter would be operating closer to a fuel source and to the safety and rescue equipment that we keep with our remote fuel truck. In an emergency situation — when minutes matter — having fuel and safety equipment staged at this site would be crucial. This would also benefit other heliskiing operations and recreational users, since we would be ready and able to help respond if needed more quickly and efficiently from this site.

Thus Conditional Use at this site would be a major benefit for our operations and help us potentially respond more efficiently to any emergencies either related or not related to our operations.

Also note that we have a Alaska State DNR permitted high-power radio repeater located just to the north of the site on Hogback Mountain that greatly augments our radio communications capabilities for general operations and emergency situations; and we have a close relationship with the Valdez Fire Department (we have started an annual emergency response training program with VFD).

Pulseline is able and willing to respond to emergencies in the mountains including recreational users who are not our clients. For example, in late April 2022, Pulseline responded to an avalanche incident near Thompson Pass that involved three people who were out touring on their own (not part of our operation); they triggered and got caught in an avalanche, and were partially buried and injured. Working closely with Alaska State Troopers, our helicopter and guides flew to the incident location and provided medical care on site before extracting the injured victims to the hospital.

Why would the Conditional Use have no detrimental effects on surrounding property and uses?

Proximity to residential neighborhoods and noise pollution

There are no properties located within 500 feet of the proposed heli pad site or proposed flight paths, so public notice is not required. The nearest residence to the site is about 2,000 feet to the northeast across Richardson Highway, and the subdivision is more than a mile west of the site with thick forest in between the site and the residences.

Pulseline helicopters will utilize flight paths that approach and depart the site generally from the south and east where there are no residences in the flight paths.

The heli-skiing terrain that we would access from this site is also located primarily to the south and east of the site — in the opposite direction from residences. Pulseline intends to utilize this site only occasionally during our annual eight-week season generally from early March to late April. On the vast majority of days that we fly, we are flying out of the airport or from our permitted staging area at Blueberry. As noted, it's only during a handful of days during our eight-week season that we will utilize the 12-mile site — when we are skiing select terrain to the south and east.

Concerns on impacting recreational trails and blocking public access

The issuance of Conditional Use permit will not have any adverse impacts on recreational use or block public access at the site given the relatively small area that we require to land and fuel a helicopter and the proximity to Richardson Highway. On our visits to the 12-mile site during the winter, no apparent tracks of any kind were visible at the site that we desire for Conditional Use. It does not appear that this particular site is utilized for heavy recreational use.

Concern of potential fuel spills and risk to local ecosystems

The permit issued to Pulseline Adventure by State of Alaska DNR requires that secondary fuel containment shall be utilized during the use or handling of any fuel or hazardous substances, and that drip pans and materials such as sorbent pads must be on hand to contain and clean up spills from any transfer or handling of fuel. Pulseline carries a full fuel-spill response kit that includes pads, booms, absorbents, shovels, trash cans, and a duck pond containment.

Pulseline operates under a comprehensive Safety and Operations plan that includes fuel spill prevention protocols and fuel spill response protocols. We train annually with our helicopter provider to ensure proper fueling procedures to prevent fuel spills. All Pulseline personnel who operate our fueling equipment and fuel helicopters are trained and capable. We've successfully operated remote helicopter fueling for many years at our Blueberry Lake and other staging areas with no fuel spills in our history of operations.

Impacts to local wildlife that may use the area

We do not believe that our use of the site will have any adverse effect on wildlife; If we observe wildlife at this site we will avoid landing at that time when possible (based on any safety concerns). This is a very small area that is located just a few hundred feet south of Richardson Highway.

Per our permits with the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Alaska State Parks, and State of Alaska DNR, we're committed to avoiding the disturbance of wildlife throughout all of our permitted terrain.

Furthermore, landing a helicopter on state lands is considered a generally allowed use (11 AAC 96.020(a)(1)(F)) provided the use is conducted in a manner that minimizes disturbance of fish and wildlife resources (11 AAC 96.025(3)(C)). Pulseline will maintain an elevation of at least 1,500 feet from observed wildlife when it is safe to do so, which will be included in the permit as an advisory.

Concerns about zoning regulations

As noted by the State of Alaska DNR, The City of Valdez was included on the DNR agency review for this activity and no comments or concerns were received from the city. The DNR permit stipulates that the permittee shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances directly or indirectly related to this authorization.

Attach or include any other information you feel is relevant to this application

Regarding Valdez Municipal Code 17.80.130 Helipads, Pulseline Adventure in collaboration with its FAA Part 135 licensed helicopter providers (Coastal Helicopters, Alpine Air Alaska, etc.) will conform to the following stipulations:

- A. Helipads must demonstrate conformance with current FAA requirements for heliport and helipad design including touchdown and lift areas, final approach and takeoff areas, safety areas, and design for the weight and size of the helicopter
- B. The helipad must not create noise or winds that negatively impact pedestrians
- C. Parcels with helipads shall not exceed permitted noise limits in Title 8
- D. Helicopter landing hours may be restricted as a condition of a conditional use permit depending on the location of the helipad in relation to other uses
- E. The number of landings may be restricted as a condition of a conditional use permit depending on the location of the helipad in relation to other uses
- F. Additional public notice is required to be provided to properties within five hundred feet of the proposed helipad and requested flight paths (note that the nearest residence is about 2,000 feet from the proposed helipad)

Pulseline would be happy to connect you with representatives from our two primary aircraft providers Coastal Helicopters and Alpine Air Alaska to confirm our compliance with the above stipulations and verification of our excellent operational safety record with these and other aircraft providers in our heliskiing operations.

Compliance with VMC 17.80.130(A)

Pulseline operates with AS350 B2/B3 (Class A - small) helicopters that require a minimum 40' x 40' helipad with a clear area of 30' x 30' - the proposed site area exceeds the minimum helipad and clear area requirements for this aircraft.

Pulseline Adventure ground personnel prepare appropriate touchdown areas on the snowpack for AS350 B2/B3 aircraft that are level, smooth, and compacted to safely support the weight of the aircraft. Additionally, the helipad and surrounding areas are free of debris, obstacles and obstructions. Helipads are marked with visual references for pilots with alder wands tied with biodegradable ribbon.

The lift area exceeds the minimum of 100' x 100' required for Class A aircraft and exceeds the minimum width of 100' for the approach and departure paths.

Operations will only be conducted during the day under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) conditions).

Pulseline provides all required safety equipment including fire extinguishers and a comprehensive fuel-spill response kit located on our fuel truck and/or fuel trailer.

Please note that Pulseline Adventure's guide team has many decades of combined experience in helicopter operations including building remote Landing Zones and Pickup Zones on snow in the Chugach Mountains. Our guides and ground crew personnel undergo annual training alongside pilots on all aspects of helicopter operations.

We are focused on safety and are proud of our impeccable safety record. Pulseline operates with reputable FAA 14 CFR Part 135 certified operators including Alaska-based Alpine Air Alaska, Coastal Helicopters, and Vertical Solutions.

Note that Pulseline Adventure guides and staff have operated remotely at Blueberry State Recreation Site under permits through the State of Alaska DNR Division of Parks and Recreation safely and effectively for approximately 20 years. This includes preparing proper helipads for safe operations with AS350 B2/B3 aircraft with an excellent safety record (no accidents) and no fuel spills.

Furthermore, Pulseline Adventure has permits in good standing with the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service (Chugach National Forest), and the State of Alaska DNR Division of Mining, Land, and Water.

This includes Permit LAS34927 issued for the purpose of authorizing the following at the 12-mile gravel pit access road site:

The temporary establishment of a 0.3-acre staging area for helicopter landing and re-fueling, and for loading/unloading passengers on an occasional basis in support of a commercial heli-skiing operation for day-use purposes between the months of March and April or as winter conditions allow. The permit authorizes the site for day-use purposes and no equipment may remain overnight. The permit includes the plowing and snow removal of site. Vehicles include: (1) Work Truck, (1) Fuel Trailer carrying 950 gallons of jet fuel (20,000 lbs), (1-3) Passenger Vans, (1) Front-End Loader (22,000 lbs)
Aircraft: A-Star AS350 B3e Helicopter

Contact Information for LAS34927:

John Forbes
Natural Resource Specialist
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Mining, Land & Water
Southcentral Region - Permitting Unit
[REDACTED]

Compliance with VMC 17.80.130(A)

Approval Criteria

1. Criterion 1: Site Suitability. The subject site shall be suitable to support the proposed conditional use and its associated structure(s) and site improvements. The planning and zoning commission shall consider topography, slope and soil stability, geophysical hazards, surface and subsurface drainage, and water quality conditions on and around the subject site and the probable effects of the proposed conditional use upon these factors.

Pulseline Response: we believe the subject site is suitable to support the proposed conditional use (seasonal limited support of heli-skiing operations as described above). There will be no structures or site improvements. Our conditional use will have no adverse environmental effects.

2. Criterion 2: Utility, Sanitation, and Public Service Needs. The conditional use and the associated site improvements shall be adequately served by utilities, emergency responders, and a sanitation facility to ensure long-term safety for its occupants and surrounding populations. The planning and zoning commission shall consider whether adequate sewer/sanitation, storm drainage, potable water, fire protection, public safety, access, and electrical power exists to serve the proposed use and associated structures/site improvements.

Pulseline Response: our conditional use of this site requires no structures or site improvements including utilities, sewer/sanitation, or potable water. As noted above, we desire to utilize this site as a day-use helicopter staging area during March and April annually on approximately 5-10 days out of eight weeks per season.

3. Criterion 3: Zoning District Standards. With the exception of planned unit developments (PUDs), the proposed conditional use and its associated site improvement(s) shall comply with the dimensional standards of the zone it which it is. Notwithstanding, those zoning standards may be adjusted pursuant to a separate variance and/or administrative adjustment application.

Pulseline Response: we do not believe that this criterion is relevant to our proposed conditional use of this site.

4. Criterion 4: Specific Use Standards. The proposed conditional use and its associated site improvement(s) shall comply with the applicable specific use standards pursuant to Chapter 17.80.

Pulseline Response: the proposed conditional use will comply with the applicable specific use standards pursuant to Chapter 17.80. Specifically please note that no properties are located within 500 feet of the proposed heli pad site.

5. Criterion 5: Comprehensive Plan Consistency. The proposed conditional use and its associated site improvement(s) shall be consistent with the comprehensive plan's goals, policies, and maps in terms of land uses, development character, and scale.

Pulseline Response: we believe that our proposed conditional use adheres to Valdez Municipal Code 17.12.090. Please note that our conditional use does not require any site improvements.

The Valdez Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 24-09, passed April 16, 2024.

6. Criterion 6: Nuisance Mitigation. The proposed conditional use and its associated site improvement(s) shall provide mitigation measures to address potential nuisances relating to excessive noise, lighting, vibration, traffic, debris and litter, and outdoor material storage.

Pulseline Response: as outlined above, we believe that our proposed use will not have detrimental effects (State of Alaska DNR issued Pulseline a permit for this site after a thorough review that included public feedback). Due to its location, there will not be excessive noise, lightning, vibration, or traffic; there will be no debris or litter or material storage (we will utilize a fuel trailer daily that will not remain overnight).

7. Criterion 7: Access and Circulation. The proposed conditional use and its associated site improvement(s) shall provide adequate site access for motor vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. Applications shall not be approved where the proposed use would create undue traffic congestion or pose a safety hazard to motorists, pedestrians, and/or cyclists.

Pulseline Response: this criterion is not relevant for our conditional use which will not create undue traffic congestion or pose a safety hazard to motorists, pedestrians, and/or cyclists.

Plan Set: Our conditional use of this site requires no new buildings or site improvements.

Site Plan: site access is to the south from Richardson Highway on the gravel pit access road; Pulseline will plow just enough road to provide safe access for the fuel truck and fuel trailer, modeling how we prepare our staging area at our permitted Blueberry Lake State Recreation site at 23.5 Mile off Richardson Highway; Pulseline will likely not need to plow additional area for the helicopter Landing Zone - the LZ will be built appropriately on top of the snowpack similarly to how Pulseline prepares LZs during heliskiing operations in the mountains.

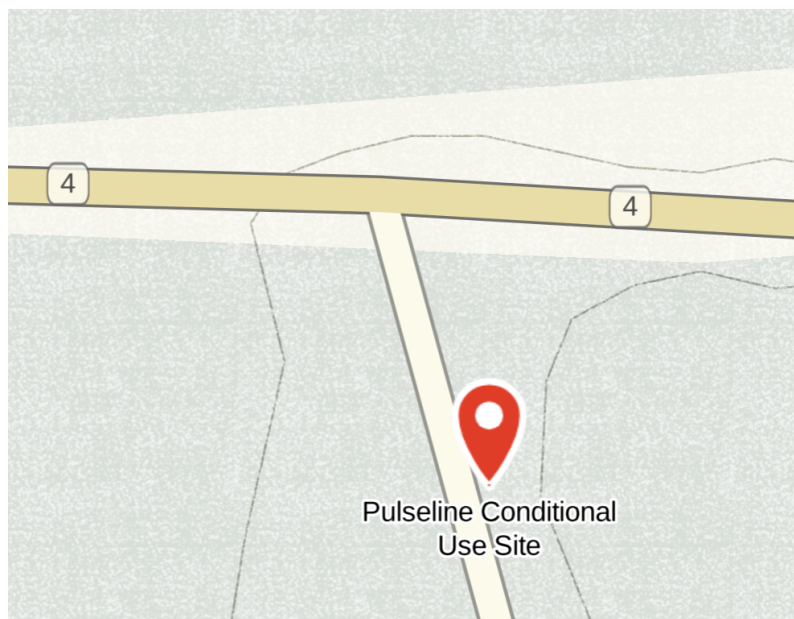


Photo of the site location in the winter:



The site area/gravel pit access road above (unplowed) as seen from Richardson Highway, looking south. The exact site area depends on seasonal snow depths. Pulseline would likely utilize Bill Connell/Clear Vision Maintenance to plow the access road from the highway to create adequate access for the Pulseline fuel truck and trailer and potentially a Pulseline van on an occasional basis for guest transport.

Additional Information

Pulseline Adventure is dedicated to fostering good relationships with the community. We provide employment opportunities for locals in Valdez and contribute significantly to the local economy by contracting locals for our food programs (Maggie Nylund, Chef Matt Kress, and Paul Langley, owner of Growler Bay Brewing Company), lodging our guests at local hotels (Totem Hotel and Best Western) and Airbnbs, and purchasing significant amounts of fuel at Crowley and local gas stations for our helicopters and ground vehicles.

Pulseline Adventure also greatly contributes to promoting Valdez on a global scale through numerous major film production projects that positively feature the area's vast recreational opportunities. This includes our partnerships with Natural Selection Tour, Teton Gravity Research, The North Face, Burton, and other top film production companies and athletes.

During March 2026, Natural Selection Tour will return to Valdez with Pulseline, generating substantial revenue for the local economy and positive global marketing for the Valdez recreation and tourism industry.

Pulseline is committed to developing a symbiotic relationship with the community, as we believe that our success can directly contribute to its prosperity. Our ability to utilize the 12-mile site empowers us to enhance our services, ultimately yielding a net positive effect on the community.

Our team comprises highly skilled mountain guides, each equipped with extensive medical training, positioning us as a local medical and rescue asset for the public. We are proud to be a heliskiing operator with an established working relationship with local emergency response services; our 2025 season saw us collaborate with the Valdez Fire Department in a rescue scenario, with annual training sessions planned to ensure our readiness. It is worth noting that conditional use of this site would further bolster our ability to provide potential emergency response to the public, including helicopter staging and fuel support, thereby fortifying our commitment to the Valdez community's safety and well-being.

We appreciate your time and consideration.