



# EPIQUEST

## GOING DEEPER

by [Mike Overcast](#)

The [TML experience](#) is securing another level of service for guests to get you deeper into the Tordrillos. This year guests will have the opportunity to explore more of the range than ever before. In partnership with Sportsman's Air Service, TML will have a resident a DH-3 Beaver and Piper Super Cub based at the lodge.

So much of the range remains unexplored, and doing recon with the helicopter is just too cost prohibitive. Our strategy will be to utilize the Super Cub to scout conditions and new runs, while pioneering landing strips way up the major glaciers of the range. These cub strips will then be marked off on GPS, visibility stakes will be placed along the edge, and the strips will be packed out where necessary. We will then make the landings with the Beaver and make sure we can get in and out safely with a load of fuel or guests. Ski plane landings are nothing new in Alaska, but utilizing them as a tool to augment a heliski operation to extend range is unique.

During the fifties, pioneering pilots of South Central Alaska flew their Cessna's and Super Cubs during the winter months supplying trappers with dry-goods and addressing emergency needs for folks living in the bush. The intrepid Don Sheldon, in fact, made the first ski plane landing in the Tordrillos. He was assisting Mountain climbers in their pursuit to be the first to climb the soaring peaks of the range. The Susitna Valley and the Alaska range have developed a rich history in ski plane flying. For decades pilots have been accessing their personal properties, transporting climbers into Denali, and even flying into the mountains to land their plane and go ski touring. Most of this type of activity has been centered around Talkeetna, our closest village to TML. More recently, Joe Shuster of Lake Hood has taken to the Tordrillos and the Chakachamna area, assisting climbers and our operation with fuel hauls and guest transport to the lodge and into the field.





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So, in a series of small serendipities, we were linked with Shuster and his team of accomplished pilots. We have cautiously started to utilize the planes to move in and out of the field and develop fuel caches for the the helicopter to operate remotely. “Remotely”, to our team, is starting your ski day 30 miles from the lodge by air. What we have realized, is much of the once untouchable is within our reach. This season I predict, will turn up some unbelievable terrain that few humans have ever laid eyes on, let alone ski. I for one, have been blessed to ski more of the range than most, will certainly have a few areas that I will want to focus on. Years of recon on hunting and flying excursions into the Tordrillos have left indelible memories of areas with sexy skiing potential that until now were out of reach.

Just as important as these planes and strips are to this new pursuit, are the Guides and Helicopter pilot that will take you there. I am pleased to say that Glen Summa will be back for his fourth season in the Tordrillos. His piloting skills have been paramount to the exploration of the range. Glens’ willingness to work logistics and give things a try have secured his position on our team. As for



the guides, you will see all the same faces at TML that you have seen in the past. [Myself](#) and [Harms](#) will be leading the show with the assistance of all the regulars like [Moe](#), [Nobis](#), [Hunt](#), [Dyer](#), [Tone](#) and [Munter](#). I am especially proud of the guide team, some of which I have guided along side for more then a decade. These are guides whom I have a level of trust and respect for that gives me inspiration to take to the mountains with the goal of skiing the un-skied, with guests in tow. It is no easy task to turn new corners and evaluate a new run or area with just a few passes with the helicopter. It takes a uniquely qualified, highly skilled person that has a level of confidence to make the decisions needed for solid route finding. Simply put, CPG’s guides are the best. No Alaskan helicopter outfit has pioneered more terrain then CPG. Not even close.



I had the intention to display a map of some of the potential areas that we will surely explore this coming season with the ski plane/heli mobilization. I have since changed my mind. You will have to come join us and participate in making the marks on the maps and then leaving the tracks. This is truly the most exciting part of heli skiing and guiding. Come Join us in going Deeper.

We still have availability.

Yours Truly,  
Mike Overcast