

Northern BC's Last Frontier Heliskiing Closes 30th Season as Southern BC Operations Struggled

STEWART, BC, CANADA, May 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Last Frontier Heliskiing wrapped its 2026 season on April 8, capping its 30th anniversary winter with exceptional snow conditions at a time when heliskiing and cat skiing operations further south in BC faced repeated weather disruptions for the second consecutive year.



When the first groups arrived at [Bell 2](#) Lodge on January 9, a solid snow base was already in place across the operation's 10,100 square kilometre tenure in Northern BC. What followed built on it considerably.

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By season's end, Bell 2 had logged 568 centimetres of total new snow and a peak snowbase of 395cm at 1,000 metres. Ripley Creek, situated near the Alaska border in the Coast Mountains, peaked at 450cm.

While operations to the south contended with rain events that eroded their snowpack for days at a time, Last Frontier's northern position and cooler temperatures meant weather moved through quickly and snow kept

accumulating. "We'd get a quick rain event to ridge top, but it would only last a few hours," said Cliff Umpleby, Director of Operations and Lead Guide. "A lot of the operations to the south were dealing with that for days at a time, to the point where some had to shut down and wait for more snow."

The deeper snowpack also unlocked terrain that simply isn't accessible in leaner years. "Once the snow really starts to pile up and the ground roughness smooths out, the bushes get buried and your accessible terrain can double," he added.

Mountain Bike Hall of Fame inductee Brett Tippie, who visited Bell 2 Lodge this season, summed up his first step off the helicopter simply: "Poof. Right up to my knees in powder. This is happening, this is really happening."

The biggest week at Bell 2 came March 7 to 13, when guests logged 21,900 vertical metres. Ripley Creek's strongest stretch followed later in the month with 17,665 vertical metres from March 23 to 29. The season finished the way it started. On the last day of operations, Umpleby found himself skiing boot-top blower on the Frank Mackie Icefield. "Middle of April and we were still doing it," he said. The 2026 season also produced one of Last Frontier's highest repeat rebooking rates on record, a reflection of what the mountains delivered from the first week to the last.

Last Frontier is now accepting bookings for the 2027 season at Bell 2 Lodge and Ripley Creek Inn. Groups are limited to four guests per guide.

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