

Sophia Cassam

From: Michael Johnson <mdjishere@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 5:45 PM
To: Vacation Rental Comments
Subject: Vacation rental cap

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My name is Michael Johnson. I'm a 30 year county resident, and homeowner from Orcas Island.

I wholeheartedly support the 21 findings included within the Feb. 17, 2022 Vacation Rental Working Group's letter signed by Anne Marie Shanks. I support setting the cap on STVRs at the originally agreed to limit of 413.

I maintain that you cannot properly manage tourism while continuing to over promote the islands, and, at the same time, not limit lodging. Orcas, and San Juan Island has already reached overtourism during the peak months, and the visitors bureau is currently promoting for more low value, high volume, day-trippers from Seattle during our buffer seasons.

The road to overtourism is a "policy" that is already degrading both the tourists experience, as well as the quality of life for everybody- tourists, local businesses, as well as the local citizenry.

It's time to show real leadership and change the direction that we're going.

Respectfully, Michael "MJ" Johnson

Tourism and visitor management in the San Juan Released January 2020 | Part IV: Conclusions and recommendations

4. Are the San Juan Islands approaching visitor capacity?

"Very few residents think the islands "can handle more tourists" (6%), and 94% report the islands are at capacity (52%) or over capacity (42%) during the peak summer months. Similarly, few businesses (20%) say the islands can handle more tourists, and 79% report the islands are at (54%) or over (25%) capacity."

"Researchers have described stages in a tourism life cycle to illustrate how increasing use and development may change a destination (Butler, 1980). Earlier stages of exploration, development, and consolidation often lead to later stages of stagnation and decline. Avoiding these later stages requires recognition that uncontrolled growth can "love a place to death," and making sure that use and development are in balance with infrastructure and the destination's intended types of experiences. The recipe for success is not necessarily more infrastructure to handle higher use (such as ever-growing accommodation or transportation systems), but rather defining quality and managing use and impacts so they do not exceed acceptable levels. The San Juan Islands have an opportunity to manage use before it substantially detracts from the quality of visitor experiences or quality of residents' life."

San Juan Islands National Monument
Annual Manager's Report — Fiscal Year 2016

"Visitation in the San Juan Islands is estimated to be 1,000,000, occurring primarily in the months of May through September."

Conclusions from the 2000 Aspen/Nantucket Report--
STAFF REPORT DATE: May 25, 2000 TO: San Juan County Board of Commissioners FROM: Pat Mann, Senior
Planner RE: Study of Socioeconomic Impacts of Growth Pressure in Selected Seasonal/Resort Communities.

Conclusions - Staff's expectation from this analysis was that the consultant might find some characteristic of the San Juan Islands that differentiated it from the situations in these communities that have transitioned to a dual market in which long-term residents and local workers are squeezed into narrower choices and disrupted lives. The report does not provide such hope for the San Juans. On the contrary, the similarities in size, scale, access, environment, and trends make us look very much like these communities as they were 20 to 30 years ago. The San Juans appear to be headed the direction of Aspen and Nantucket.