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From: Lynda Guernsey
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2022 8:30 AM
To: Vacation Rental Comments
Subject: FW: San Juan County and overtourism

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From: Michael Johnson <mdjishere@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 9:57 PM
To: Cindy Wolf <cindyw@sanjuanco.com>
Cc: Jamie Stephens <jamies@sanjuanco.com>; Christine Minney <christinem@sanjuanco.com>; Ingrid Gabriel <ingridg@sanjuanco.com>; Lynda Guernsey <LyndaG@sanjuanco.com>
Subject: San Juan County and overtourism

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Dear Council,

For those of you who do not believe that the San Juans have already reached a stage of overtourism I ask that you please review this, and see the parallels that have existed here for quite some time. As your own Visitor's Survey states, there are many residents and business owners alike who would disagree with you.

I ask you to use the Three P's approach to analyze this--
Is it Possible?
Is it Probable?
Is there Proof?

The answer is "Yes" to all three.

Respectfully, Michael Johnson- Orcas Island

Confluence Research and Consulting (Dough Whittaker / Bo Shelby)

"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."

Responsible Travel

"What is overtourism? In short, overtourism occurs when there are too many visitors to a particular destination. "Too many" is a subjective term, of course, but it is defined in each destination by local residents, hosts, business owners and tourists. When rent prices push out local tenants to make way for vacation rentals, that is overtourism. When narrow roads become jammed with tourist vehicles, that is overtourism. When wildlife is scared away, when tourists cannot view landmarks because of the crowds, when fragile environments become degraded – these are all signs of overtourism."

<https://www.responsiblevacation.com/copy/what-is-overtourism>

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Terms such as 'overtourism' or 'tourismphobia' have made headlines in recent times. They reflect challenges of managing growing tourism flows into urban destinations and the impact of tourism on cities and its residents. Over half of the world's population lives in urban areas and it is estimated that, by 2050, this proportion will reach 70%. In addition, the growing number of urban tourists increases the use of natural resources, causes sociocultural impacts, and exerts pressure on infrastructure, mobility and other facilities. Adequately managing tourism to the benefit of visitors and residents alike has always been a fundamental issue for the sector.

Long before the emergence of buzzwords such as 'overtourism', UNWTO defined tourism's carrying capacity as "the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic and sociocultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction". Tourism will only be sustainable if developed and managed considering both visitors and local communities. This can be achieved through community engagement, congestion management, reduction of seasonality, careful planning that respects the limits of capacity and the specificities of each destination, and product diversification.

<https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284420070>

The Skift Report

The trendline is crystal clear: Destinations that are to remain competitive and attractive to visitors for years to come will have to start protecting their communities and cultural capital now. This shift in approach requires reimagining the way that destination marketing and management intersect — as well as incorporating the concerns of local stakeholders into the tourism boards' strategic planning.

MAXIMUM CAPACITY

A decade on, what today feels something of a taboo in the tourism world — openly admitting that there is actually an upper limit to the amount of tourists who can visit a destination — will likely be a baseline assumption of a sustainable destination. As Vranken said, that will depend on having the appropriate data and metrics.

"The answer is absolutely yes, there is a carrying capacity, but in order to measure it we have to establish a body with the authority and funding to measure it," he said.

This future will also likely depend on governments prioritizing sustainable tourism management as a policy priority. In the U.S., destination marketing organizations like Visit Florida are still more likely to be fighting for their lives than planning how residents might feel about tourists 10 years out. It's difficult for these organizations to come up with nuanced plans if their concerns can hardly go past the next funding cycle.

In order to truly invest in protecting a destination's future — for the enjoyment of tourists and residents alike — tourism officials and governments are starting to work in cohesion, rather than at odds.

The time to start doing this was yesterday.

<https://skift.com/2020/02/03/travel-megatrends-2020-tourisms-new-competitive-advantage-is-protecting-destinations/>

Crest (Center for Responsible Travel) The Case for Responsible Travel: Trends & Statistics 2018

KEY TERMS DEFINITION

Overtourism Tourism that has moved beyond the limits of acceptable change in a destination due to quantity of visitors, resulting in degradation of the environment and infrastructure, diminished travel experience, wear and tear on built heritage, and/or negative impacts on residents.

Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC): A land management philosophy that identifies specific indicators of environmental quality and tourism impacts, and defines thresholds within which the conservation goals of a protected area are met. Increasingly, this concept is also applied to social impacts and moves beyond the quantitative benchmarks of carrying capacity to considering qualitative benchmarks.

Tourism Carrying Capacity The maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction

https://www.responsibletravel.org/docs/The_Case_for_Responsible_Travel_2018_FINAL_FOR_WEB.pdf