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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have seen comments online about residents leaving more trash around than tourists. We definitely have some "trashers" here however we also have organized volunteer clean up groups that go to all the beaches and get bags and bags of it. Since there are guided tours I don't think the "normal" trash is an issue. It is more of lack of facilities and their use of our water and inadequate sewage system and even our roads which also took a beating this winter. The big buses do their damage as well especially on already compromised roads. Then there is our overworked hospital staff. I remember going for blood work one summer and there was a line out the door from some outbreak on a cruise ship. I turned around and left to come back on another day. Those are just a few examples of what is lacking to accommodate thousands of cruise ship tourists on a weekly basis. Those are areas we need to address.

Looking at small towns across the globe there is often dismay at how tourism left unchecked has ruined areas. We need to be cautious and have a plan, with a maximum number and a gradual growth to accommodate the visitors since we are so limited in space and facilities. I am all for tourism which benefits the visitors and the town and not just a few companies that take their money out of state and do what they can to avoid actually supporting the town, small businesses and the residents. Let's give the visitors an Alaskan experience instead of a Disneyland like so many other ports!

The pandemic is what hurt and is still hurting the tourist industry. The input of local businesses would be important with their needs as well as other residents taken into consideration as much as the cruise ships input is. Some towns have found having the tourists come by other means, having the visitors who actually stay here for awhile, is economically beneficial to the communities as they don't just buy some trinkets Made in China or a T-shirt and leave. There are other tourists than those on cruise ships although I do admit, they are important as well. I just think we need to consider how many ships we can accommodate and actually benefit from. I have heard a couple years ago as the number increased, the tourists weren't all that happy with some of the tours as they were too crowded and uncomfortable. (That was not first hand information.) I am trying to be honest with you and these are my views as I have been paying attention to the changes for over 30 years.

Having the mega ships is too much. Limiting the size and numbers of ships may be a good start as we increase the needed resources. Just think of how many toilets flush with thousands of visitors per week and where exactly are all those needed toilets?

Thank you for taking the time to see my concerns and I could write much more as I am concerned about many other issues as well. The Four wheelers in town as well as the pollution in Ward Cove, to name a couple more. Ward Lake is an important community center and I hope it is guarded against being taken over by finding loopholes in regulations and restrictions.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Wendt

Retired ADF&G Biologist