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Title:

Comments: A brief comment on a large issue, it focuses on tourism in the Tongass but is really about public safety and durable resilient publicly owned places. While the Tongass landscape is deglaciating and ever changing the tourism industry is ramping up in numbers and duration, it's more on each front. The space between the linear shoreline and slopes, rivers and glacier spaces is narrow and uneven, of smaller scale. A more dispersed approach to cruise ship tourism is needed, developing additional capacity and opportunities to ensure safety and predictable outcomes. To this end, the cruise ship tourism industry needs to be charged a fair rate for access to the US waters of the Tongass and the narrow already occupied spaces that they visit. Many of these port communities already had stressed delivery systems that have been further pressured to accommodate ever growing numbers, without systematically planning for infrastructure or programs to receive cruise growth. To this end, the Forest Service, partnering with other Fed agencies should charge the cruise ships for entry and use of US waters and the Tongass lands, which are really one and the same. These charges would be collected by US Port Custom type authorities on landing/sailing and would fall into a "fees stay here" type of approach already in use for recreational fees collected in the FS. The fees could be programmed with local input/funding to mitigate negative impacts to local places, uses, infrastructure, safety, sanitation etc. and replace in full, or part, the variety of community marine and port passenger fees collected by cities and the State. The city of Juneau and the State have been party to litigation as an outcome of attempting to deliver planned order and infrastructure/public health programs. The cities should not be exposed to such expense or risk of loss, they can not refuse entry to the ships, there is no benefit to the local government in these situations. The appropriate level of governance is federal handling of negative impacts from the fleet of 40+ foreign built, foreign crewed, and foreign flagged vessels. A larger approach would repeal a variety of local level citizen initiatives for negative impact mitigation funding in the region, to be replaced by my suggested Federal government and international cruise line permit or authorization program. While I do not know the fee arrangement with the FS and the special use permit payments, I suspect the amounts to be under valued and in need of third party appraisal, to appropriately fund a program to plan for the scale of the cruise industry, the dynamic landscape, and the already occupied places in linear communities.