



Cluster Information	
Cluster:	Visitor Products
Goal:	To create private-public partnerships as a catalyst for job creation and business growth in Southeast Alaska.
Chair:	Kirby Day, Director of Shore Operations, Princess Cruises

Meetings Held Since Last Update		
Date:	Purpose:	Attendees:
1/24/13	Action Initiative #5 –Trails	Jeremy Gieser, Gastineau Guiding; Bob Janes, Gastineau Guiding; Brian Tamling, Alaska Travel Adventure; Marti Marshall, USFS; Lynn Humphry, USFS; Chad Van Ormer, USFS; Eric Grossman, USFS; Mike Dilger, USFS; Kevin Hood, USFS; Eva Bornstein, JEDC
1/17/13	Monthly Teleconference	Hans von Rekowski, USFS; Milton Fusselman, USFS; Oden Brudie, State of Alaska; Jeff Morehouse, Alaska Wilderness League; Jeremy Gieser, Gastineau Guiding; Lindsey Doctorman, UAS; John Blanchard, UAS; Bill Tremblay, USFS; Kirby Day, Princess Tours; Bob Janes, Gastineau Guiding; Marti Marshall, USFS; Shawn Blumenshine, Haa'Aani/Sealaksa; Drew Green, Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; Lynn Humphrey, USFS; Nikki Hinds, USFS; Maryann Ray, Pearsons Pond B&B; Brian Holst, JEDC; Eva Bornstein, JEDC
1/15/13	Action Initiative #5 – UAS Course Integration	Kelli Grummett, Alaska Travel Adventures; Kirby Day, Princess Cruises; Bob Janes, Gastineau Guiding; Linda Kruger, USFS; Caitlyn McLaughlin, Temsco Air; Brenna Asper-Smith, Alaska Coach Tours; Eva Bornstein, JEDC
1/15/13	Ketchikan teleconference	Wendy Chatham, Taquan Air; Kirby Day, Princess Cruises; Jeremy Gieser, Gastineau Guiding; Brian Holst, JEDC; Eva Bornstein, JEDC



Initiative Activity Update

Initiative 1: Develop Land and Water Trails and Support Facilities

Champion: Jeremy Gieser, Gastineau Guiding

- On 1/24/13, members of the initiative team had a question and answer session with a team from the local ranger district on the topic of what infrastructure can be built in and around on the Tongass National Forest for commercial use. The discussion focused on the interests of the commercial operators present at the meeting. Hut to hut options on the Juneau trail system, trail access to the ice field and to temporary huts, and trail improvements for commercial activity were discussed. The Forest Service is open to consideration of projects if they are developed by a consortium of trail users and commercial operators. A next step for the initiative team will be to bring water-based commercial operators together with a FS team for the same type of discussions.

Initiative 2: Increase Guided Access to Land

Champion: John McConnochie

- No significant concerns from the temporary use days were recorded, and the pilot program will be continued in 2013. Still to be addressed with the Forest Service is the timing discrepancy between USFS allocation decisions and private industry commitments to the cruise ship season. The cruise lines need space commitments from operators now in July rather than November. The group will use the Summit in February to work on how to address the bigger picture of increased guided access to areas outside the MGRA.

Initiative 3: Promote Multi-Community and Regional Visitor Packages

Champion: Vacant

- This initiative is on hold.

Initiative 4: Strengthen Accountability for Tongass Recreation Fees

Champion: Bob Janes

- In response to this initiative, the Forest Service has created a new regional recreation fee information web page, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r10/recreation/?cid=stelprdb5402586>. This page contains some background on the recreation fee program, accomplishment reports and links to additional recreation fee information.
- A change has been made as to how enhancement funds from Outfitter/Guide fees are distributed back to the districts. While funds for enhancement were distributed entirely through a competitive process in past years, beginning in 2013, the Fee Board decided to distribute half of the enhancement funds (\$350,000) using a non-competitive formula.

Initiative 5: Tourism Course Integration with Existing UAS Degree Programs

Champion: Kelli Grummett

- The team worked with UAS and JEDC to create an on-line survey that will gauge interest

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among seasonal summer employees in Southeast for staying in Juneau and pursuing a career in tourism, by enrolling in a 2 year associates degree program with a tourism emphasis at UAS. The survey will be offered to applicants applying for summer jobs with tourism businesses located in Southeast. The 2-year Associate of Applied Science degree program, as planned, would be offered after the end of the summer tourism season. Fall semester classes would begin in early October and end before the December holiday break. Spring semester classes would begin in January and finish by the end of April. If you would like to provide a link to the survey on your summer recruiting web page, please contact Eva Bornstein at ebornstein@jedc.org for instructions. A paper version of the survey is also available for distribution.

Draft Initiatives: **#6 Changing Local Perceptions on the Value of Tourism; #7 Marketing the Uniqueness of the Southeast Region; #8 Regional Transportation Packages & Partnerships to Reduce Cost**

- A teleconference was held with Ketchikan to re-energize the stalled draft action initiatives. Ketchikan will get a team together to select one of the three draft initiatives to move forward in 2013. In addition, JEDC will invite the Forest Service and Ketchikan businesses to a teleconference on lessons learned and partnerships formed through the cluster initiative work in Juneau, to use as a model for Ketchikan. One example of a model might be the allocation of temporary commercial use service days where allocations have reached maximum capacity in Ketchikan, as was done in Juneau.

Other Informational items

Marti Marshall informed the group that the Tongass National Forest's main guiding document approved in 2008, the ***Tongass National Forest Land & Resource Management Plan*** (Forest Plan), is up for review and possible modification. This document revision will set the stage for how the Tongass will be managed going into the future, including what areas are available for tourism. The Forest Service has set up public meetings and a website for public input on whether the plan is working or if changes are needed. If you would like to review the 2008 plan in order to make suggestions for changes, here is the link:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tongass/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5402695>

Links on that page will also allow you to learn more about the 5-year project review process, access the 5-year review comment form and join the 5-year review contact list. The public meeting date for Juneau will be **Thursday, Feb. 28, at the Juneau Arts and Culture Center**. If you would like to see a list of all public meeting dates, here is the link:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tongass/home/?cid=stelprdb5367364>



Next steps

The next Visitor Products CWG face-to-face meeting will be on Tuesday, February 12, from 9:00 to 10:45AM during the 2013 Innovation Summit. Dru Garson, Tourism Development Specialist with DCCED, will present the findings from the state-wide tourism workforce development survey conducted this past fall. Registration for the Innovation Summit is at <http://www.jedc.org/innovation>.

Next Visitor Products teleconference will be **Tuesday, March 12, at 9AM.**