



| 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:   |
| 12/21/12                        | Action Initiative #5 – UAS Course Integration | Amber Koelsch, HAP Alaska-Yukon; Kristen Christensen, TEMSCO Helicopters; Kelli Grummett, Alaska Travel Adventures; Kristen Christensen, TEMSCO Helicopters; Kirby Day, Princess Cruises; Jim Collins, Allen Marine  |
| 12/17/12                        | Monthly Teleconference                        | Jeff Morehouse, Alaska Wilderness League; Jeremy Gieser, Gastineau Guiding; Jeremy Maxand, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council; Kelli Grummett, Alaska Travel Adventures; Kevin McIver, USFS; Kirby Day, Princess Cruises; Lynn Humphrey, USFS; Odin Brudie, Alaska Office of Tourism Development; Theresa Haugh, USFS; Wade Zammit and Clarence Clark, Working Forest Group |
| 12/7/12                         | Action Initiative #1 - Trails                 | Becky Janes, Above & Beyond Alaska and Alaska Boat & Kayak Center; Erik Boraas, Trail Mix; Jeremy Gieser, Gastineau Guiding; Jill Ramiel, Silverbow Inn; Jon Martin, USFS; Ken Leghorn, Pack Creek Outfitters; Linda Kruger, USFS; Milton Fusselman, USFS; Neil Nickerson, Blue Nose Surf; Odin Brudie, Alaska Office of Tourism Development                                   |

| Initiative Activity Update December 17 Teleconference |   |
|---|---|
| Initiative 1:   | <b>Develop Land and Water Trails and Support Facilities</b> |
| Champion:   | Jeremy Gieser, Gastineau Guiding                            |

Southeast Cluster Initiative  
 Monthly Status Report  
 Updated December 2012



- The initiative team convened a group of small business owners and entrepreneurs on 12/7/12 to get input on the opportunities and challenges to bringing a “trails” product/package forward. Two needs emerged that the group will take action on. 1) Barriers to marketing. The small operators are dependent on larger entities to generate information on what is available. They do not have the budget or resources for promotion. The group would like to work with the FS to have the Tongass/Mendenhall Glacier websites provide links to the commercial opportunities available to visit the wilderness – this is a service to the public. The websites could link to all the permitted commercial outfitters and guides, in order not to be preferential. Also commercial links should be available through Seatrails and CVBs. 2) Barriers due to regulation. The group will meet with Marti Marshall and others to explore opportunities, legalities and precedents for infrastructure development along Wilderness boundaries. The group would like to see small infrastructure amenities such as platforms for camping in Tracy Arm, a viewing deck at Pack Creek, and structures to store rental canoes or kayaks at selected sites. The group would like to encourage Sitka and Ketchikan to hold similar meetings.
- Jeremy Gieser, Gastineau Guiding, took over as champion of the initiative. Jill Ramiel will support Jeremy in work related to developing packages, and Linda Kruger and Odin Brudie will support Jeremy in work on a Trails conference.

Initiative 2: **Increase Guided Access to Land**  
 Champion: John McConnochie

- The goal of the group now is to help the Forest Service update the MGRA Master Plan. They would like to seek funding to accelerate the update. No activity since last report.

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

- A decision has not yet come down from the fee board on allocation of funding. Kirby will follow up with Marti Marshall. No activity since last report.

Initiative 5: **Tourism Course Integration with Existing UAS Degree Programs**  
 Champion: Kelli Grummett

- UAS has been very receptive to developing programs that the industry is interested in.
  - UAS and the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center have jointly developed an Environmental Interpretation class. Students in the class will learn to translate aspects of nature and history into stories and experiences and will design an interpretive product related to the Mendenhall Glacier area.
  - UAS added a four-year Bachelors of Liberal Arts Designated Emphasis in Outdoor Adventure Studies degree program. Coursework combines extensive outdoor skills

with a liberal arts curriculum studying human interaction in the natural world.

- The School of Management is considering adding a Tourism Emphasis area to the two-year Associate of Applied Science degree program. The program would run from early October to the end of April, rather than the regular September to May school year, to accommodate work schedules for the summer tourism season. UAS and members of the initiative team have developed a survey to determine the level of interest, which will be given to job applicants this winter and spring. Kelli will ask for the help of all tourism businesses to distribute the survey during their spring recruiting efforts.

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**

- No activity since last report.

### Other Informational items

Working Forest Group: Wade Zammit , Sealaska Timber, introduced Working Forest Group, a non-profit organization with the mission *“to promote and support responsible resource development in Alaska through alignment of industries seeking to achieve sustainability across environmental, social, and economic sectors.”* This is a successor group to the Forest Products CWG with a broader scope to unite and advocate for forest users across all resource user groups, and to address issues of conflict among resource users. The organization is state-wide and is soliciting membership.

Innovation Summit (Feb. 11, 12, 13): The Summit will have a keynote speaker on “Shared Values” - the concept that a company’s competitiveness can be enhanced when its policies and practices also advance the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates. Other plans for the Summit include a Visitor Products cluster meeting. Agenda items will be discussed at the January teleconference. Like last year, the summit will have a question and answer session with Alaska’s legislative delegation through an ACS video link. JEDC would like to provide our delegation, in advance, with questions developed by each CWG. Day three of the Summit is reserved for Action Initiative team meetings. Teams should decide how best they can use that time to advance their work.

Alaska Forward Visitor Industry Survey: The state-wide workforce development team is tabulating the results of their survey of workforce development needs of large and small businesses working in the tourism industry. The Visitor Products Cluster will invite a member of the Alaska Forward team to present the findings at a future meeting.

### Next steps

Southeast Cluster Initiative  
Monthly Status Report  
Updated December 2012



The January Visitor Products call-in will be held on January 17, 2013, from 3:00-4:30PM. You will receive an email before then to get your suggestions on summit agenda items and legislative “asks.” Also we would like to know which teams will meet on day three.

JEDC will host a call to Sitka and Ketchikan, prior to the next call-in, to bring them up to speed on initiatives and to restart work in Ketchikan on their draft initiatives. Kirby and Jeremy will participate.