

**Meeting Minutes  
Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism of Island County  
September 1, 2022  
Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce**

**Quorum:** x=members present

Mayor Scott Chaplin X	Com. Melanie Bacon	Jackie Henderson X
Alannah Johansen X	Gregg Lanza X	OH Lodging- Vacant
Maggie Bailey X	Max Lindsay-Thorsen X	Tom Felvey X
Janae Cameron/Christina Swan X	Jessica McCreedy X	Chet Ross X
Vicki Graham X	Inge Morascini X	Sharon Sappington, EDC X
Lynda Eccles X	Robyn Myers X	Jim Woessner

*In addition to the above members, guests also in attendance were:*

Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism PR & Marketing Manager, Film Liaison  
 Jack Penland Whidbey and Camano Islands digital projects  
 Laura Hilton, Whidbey and Camano Islands special projects  
 Dianne Binder, Contract Treasurer  
 Magi Aguilar, incoming Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce Director  
 David Price, Community Member

Meeting called to order at 11:10am by Vice Chair, Chet Ross.

1. **Adoption of Agenda** – Jackie, and Vickie seconded to accept the agenda. Approved with no objections.
2. **Approval of August 2022 Minutes** -Vickie motioned, Lynda seconded to approve the minutes. Approved with no objections.
3. **Treasurer's Report and Invoice review** – Dianne presented the latest revenue numbers and budget spend through August. All invoices were approved at the management committee meeting. There were no objections to the invoices presented.
4. **Old Business:**
  - a. **None**
5. **New Business:**
  - a. **Management Committee Report-** everything discussed is on the agenda.
  - b. **Bylaw Amendment & Interlocal Agreement-**
    - i. Executive session was called at 11:25 and returned at 11:48.
    - ii. Vicki moves to set aside no than \$15,000 to seek professional advice to review the current bylaws and interlocal agreement, so we are able to come into compliance with WA State DMO requirements for the appropriate non-profit corporate structure. Maggie seconds. Passed unanimously.
    - iii. Jackie moves to establish a committee to work with the Vice chair on the review the work of the appropriate non-profit corporate

structure, by laws and interlocal agreement. Alannah seconded the motion.

**c. Cultural Heritage Project – Sherrye Wyatt**

- i. New project, similar to the Trail Field Guide with a cultural focus.
- ii. Jackie motioned and Vickie seconded that we pursue the grant with Washington state Tourism to pursue the cultural guide and video. If we do not get the grant we would also move forward with pursuing the cultural guide and video. The motion passed unanimously without objection.

**d. PR Media Report:** Below is the team’s monthly report.

**MONTHLY TOURISM REPORT  
AUGUST 29, 2022**

**SHERRYE WYATT PUBLIC RELATIONS &  
WRITING**

**Upcoming Schedule for Regenerative Places  
Program 2022**

High priority for Sherrye Wyatt and Laura Hilton for the remainder of the year is to continue driving the work with the Transformational Travel Council and Steering Committee to complete the Regenerative Places Program and strategic planning process for tourism. Here’s a list of upcoming meetings scheduled so far and activity related to this:

- August 31 – Regenerative Places working meeting on Survey (virtual)
- September 7 – Regenerative Places working meeting on Destinations Report (virtual)
- September 14 – Regenerative Places Community Survey goes live online (tentative)
- September 14 – Regenerative Places working meeting on Destinations Report (virtual)
- September 15 – Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce luncheon presentation (in person)
- September 15 – State of Washington Tourism grant deadline
- September 21-24 – TTC Regenerative Places Workshop on Caman Island (in person)
- September 26-October 2 – VIS2022 Virtual Islands Global Summit (virtual)
- September 27-28 – Center for Responsible Travel Global World Tourism Forum (virtual)
- October 9-12 – Transcend: TTC Global Summit in Slovenia (virtual)



- October 12 – State of Washington Tourism Summit in Seattle (in person)
- November 2 – Regenerative Places Steering Committee Session (virtual)
- December 7 – Regenerative Places Steering Committee Session (virtual)

## **OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **Monthly Overview**

PR efforts this month focused on wrap up and follow up from our joint announcement with the Transformational Travel Council, which included international outreach and newswire distribution. We also proactively secured, vetted and curated a roster of late summer media visits that will yield strategic story placement in the coming months. Outlets represented range from targeted travel blogs to regional and national level publications like Seattle Magazine and Travel + Leisure.

### **Project Management**

- Secured and developed itineraries for three upcoming media visits, including Seattle Magazine, Travel + Leisure, NW Travel and more (see details below).

### **Instagram Engagement**

- Reposted influencer and local business content, and managed the community with likes, comments and interaction on the @GoWhidbeyCamano Instagram page. Maintained goal of 2-3 posts per week, with stories posting on an ongoing basis.
- Follower count grew from 2369 on July 27 to 2404, a growth rate of 1.48%.

### **Media Visits**

- **Leslie Kelly, August 24-26** writer for Forbes is planning to visit to explore culinary news and developments; confirmed stay for one night at Captain Whidbey with dinner on 8/24 and a second night at the Whidbey Treehouse, with dinner at Orchard Kitchen 8/25.
- **Allen Cox, August 17-19**, editor for Northwest Travel Magazine visited Whidbey Island to cover the Island Shakespeare Fest including activities to do in Langley and positioned as a preview for the 2023 season.
- **Lisa Morales, September 3-6**, IFWTWA travel writer is visiting to research pet-friendly and food, wine focused travel ideas. Staying at Coupeville Inn for three nights.
- **Natalie Compagno, September 7-8** is a freelancer for Seattle Magazine and will be visiting to potentially cover Fort Casey Inn in upcoming travel pieces in Food, Wine and Travel Magazine and the NATJA national publication as well as a guest post on “Adventures of a Carry-On”.
- **Bob Cooper, Oct 4-6, freelance travel writer Bob Cooper** has confirmed an assignment to do a story on "high-end" accommodations in Washington's island destinations for [\*WATERWAYS\*](#), a luxury lifestyle magazine in Greater Austin, TX with readership of 40,000. The story that will appear in spring 2023 issue will feature Bainbridge, San Juan and Whidbey Islands. (coordinated with Washington State Tourism)

- **Sara Franklin, October 30-November 2, freelance writer with *Travel + Leisure*** to cover the food and drinks, culinary culture of Whidbey Island. Lodging is confirmed at Captain Whidbey (10/30-9/1) and Inn at Langley (9/1- 9 /2).

### **Pending Press**

- **Country Magazine, story pending** - Scenic Drives for the November issue by Leslie Forsberg (visited in July)
- **National Geographic**, writer Kristen Pope interviewed Chef Vincent Nattress on a piece regarding how to harvest and prepare kelp.
- **Food + Travel Magazine:** Whidbey feature story anticipated following visit from Megan Hill in May.
- **AAA Magazine** is featuring Whidbey as one of the great destinations to visit year-round in an upcoming fall story.
- **Seattle Magazine** will potentially cover Fort Casey Inn and the Treehouse Whidbey in an upcoming travel piece, TBD.

**Press Highlights** include 18 pieces of coverage with an estimated 185 million impressions. To view the coverage in full go [here](#).

## **COMPUTERPIX**

### **September 2022 Digital Report**

#### **Executive Summary**

The pilot study for the Regenerative Tourism survey was completed and coded this month. Next steps included revising the questionnaire and creating an electronic version of the questionnaire. Next, members of the committee will be determining how it will be distributed to Island County constituents. Additionally, Book Direct has submitted the second quarter report with data that shows visitors who stay on Island County. Work continues on the Digital Asset management system, adding keywords and locations to about 30,000 images to make them searchable online.

#### **Island County Lodging Booked Through the Website**

Book Direct is the company we work with that allows visitors to our website the option of booking a place to stay. Included are their reports from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters and what follows is an explanation of how to read the reports.

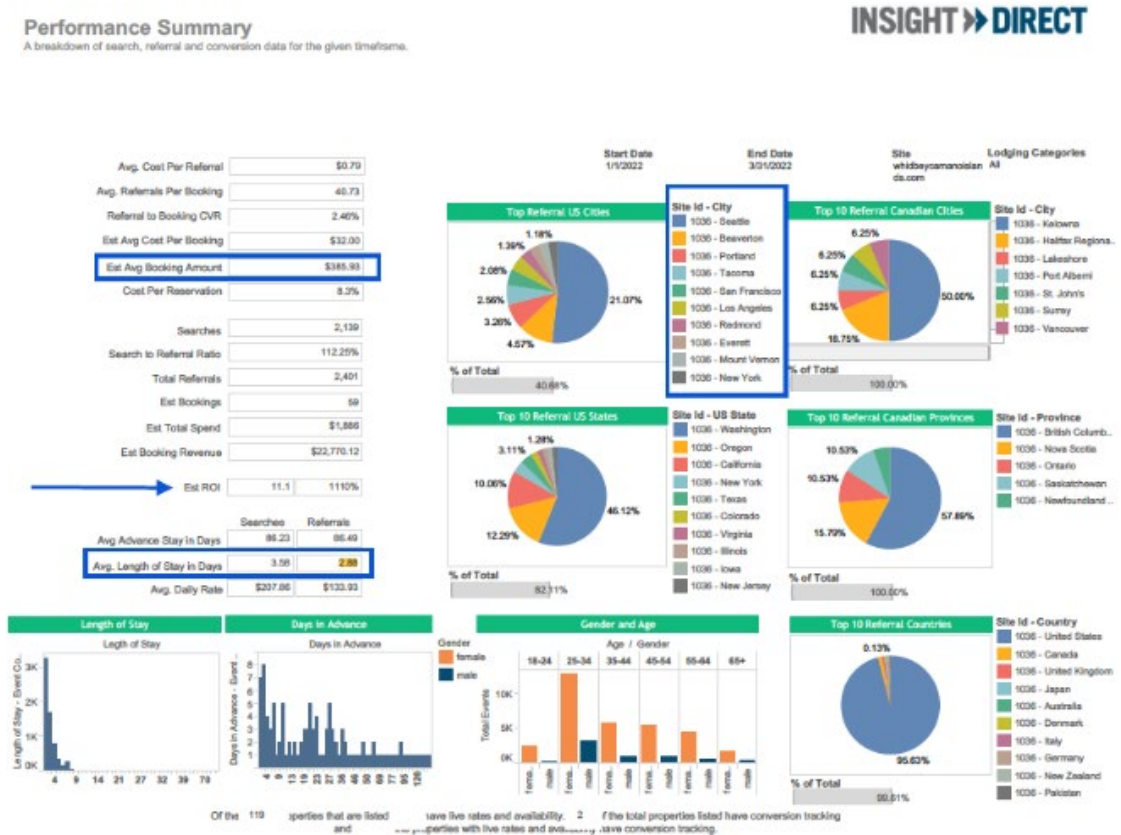
Book Direct uses algorithms from shared information from lodgings to determine averages that can be used to determine approximate numbers for their reports. Some of the data are actual data and some are approximations based on these algorithms. As you review the findings, be aware that any number with “Est.” means this is an estimated number based on these algorithms.

In order to better understand how Book Direct works, I’m providing an example from the Q2 report. Book Direct is paid \$7650/year for their services. Quarterly, this translates to \$1912.50 (7650 ÷ 4 = 1912.50). There were approximately 2,769 referrals in Q2 (April –

June 2022) that becomes \$0.69 per referral. From the referrals, there were approximately 60 actual bookings at an estimated average booking amount of \$500.67 which, in turn, generated approximately \$30,040.00 in booking revenue for proprietors ( $500.67 \times 60 = 30040.20$ ).

### Island County Lodging Two Quarters Comparison

As reported in the April Digital Report, the first quarter report from Book Direct shows January through March 2022. It shows 2,401 referrals from WhidbeyCamanoIslands.com to Island County lodgings. The estimated average booking amount is \$385.93 for the first quarter of 2022. The average length of stay hovers at just under 3 days at 2.88.

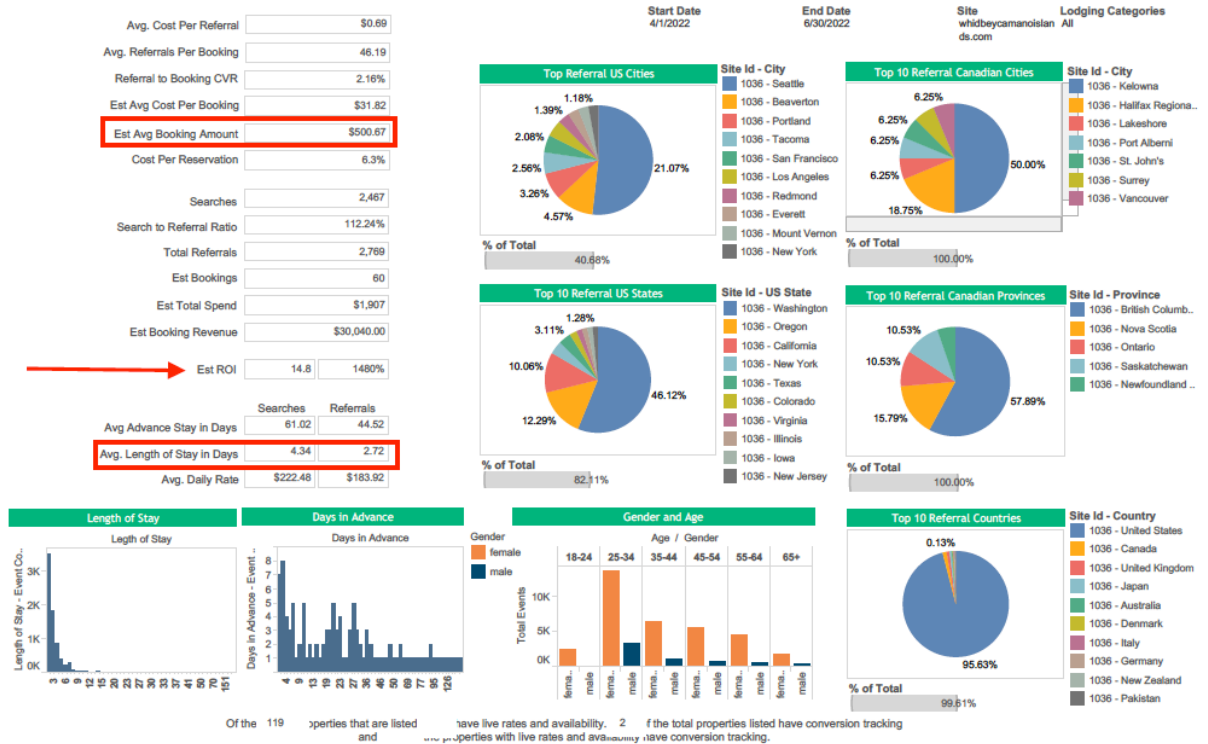


### Book Direct Quarter 1 Report

The second quarter report from Book Direct shows April through June 2022. It shows 2,769 referrals from WhidbeyCamanoIslands.com to Island County lodgings, an estimated average increase of 14%. The estimated average booking amount is \$500.67 for the second quarter of 2022, an estimated average increase of \$114.74 or 23%. The average length of stay hovers at just under 3 days at 2.72, a decrease of 0.16 average length of stay days from Q1, or 6%.

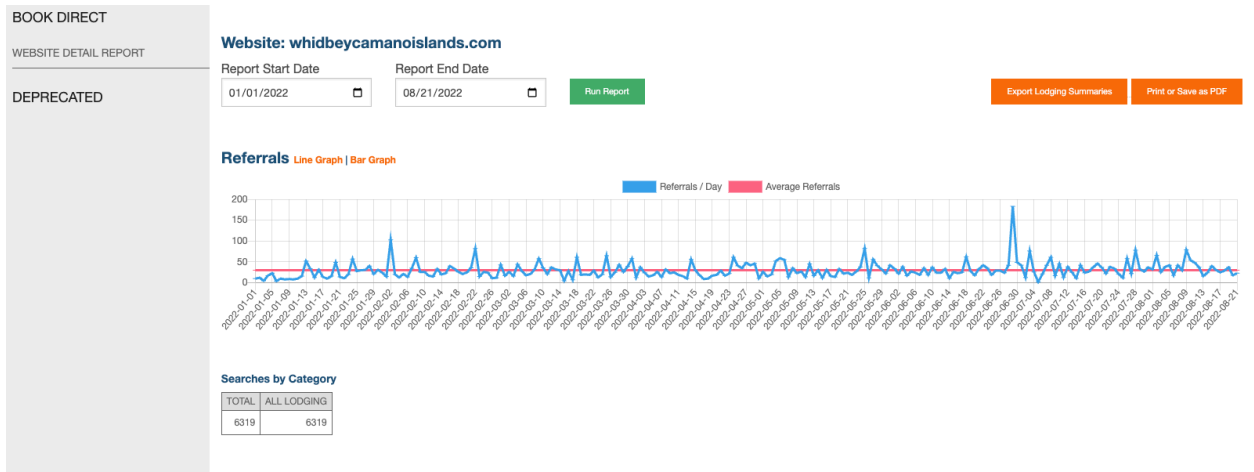
## Performance Summary

A breakdown of search, referral and conversion data for the given timeframe.



## Book Direct Quarter 2 Report

Book Direct also provides a graph that shows the average referrals per date. This graph shows all referrals for 2022 year to date (as of 8/21/2022). The daily average number of referrals is 30 (red line) and the actual referrals per day is indicated by the blue line.



## **Email Newsletter**

Here are links to our August and September email newsletters.

September (Published August 23, 2022) <http://eepurl.com/h9qTHL>

August (Published July 25, 2022) <http://eepurl.com/h7oBmP>

For September, 27.2% of the recipients opened the newsletter and 1.6% clicked on a link and for August, 27.1% of the recipients opened the newsletter and 1.9% clicked on a link. These numbers are down a bit from earlier in the year but are about the same as prior years.

## **6. Chamber Round Table:**

- a. Clinton – No report as Christina had to leave early.
- b. Langley - Harvest Festival will be cancelled due to the labor shortage.
- c. Freeland - Octoberfest is coming up at Mutiny Bay Blues Blueberry Farm.
- d. Oak Harbor – Oak Harbor Music Festival this weekend. Military Appreciation coming up and September 15 Sherrye will be presenting at the OH Chamber luncheon. Vicki is announcing her last meeting with us. Veteran’s program is on November 11 and the New Year’s Fireworks are planned. Buskers on the corner has been a popular event with the Main Street Association in downtown Oak Harbor.
- e. Coupeville – The golf tournament with OH Chamber was fantastic. Over 70 artists participated in Plein Aire. Final plans for all and winter events are active. Fort Casey State Park has astronomy and living history events this weekend.
- f. Camano –Busy time as they have 6 events between now and February. Had a successful summer despite staffing shortages. Cama Beach is hosting future night sky activities, fall and winter events are all in the plans.
- g. Island County EDC: submitting a large grant to work more closely with Skagit EDC and will assist businesses that are in tourism.

## **7. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 12:43 pm.

Next regular meeting is Thursday, October 6, location Zoom.

Meeting minutes recorded by Robyn Myers and reviewed by Jessica McCready