



Whidbey & Camano Islands Tourism Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2023
Virtual Via Zoom

Members Present:

Management Team: Chair: Jackie Henderson, Vice Chair, Inge Morascini, Treasurer: Mayor Scott Chaplin, Secretary: Lynda Eccles

Directors: Jessica McCready, Gregg Lanza, Holly Grayson, Alannah Johansen, Aly Willis, Commissioner Melanie Bacon, Chet Ross, Katie Grindon

Contract Team: Sherrye Wyatt, Jack Penland, Scott Rosenkrantz, Laura Hilton, Vicki Graham

Open Positions: Oak Harbor Lodging Representative

Call to Order

- Chair Jackie Henderson called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

Introduce Guests, establish a quorum – roll call

- Jackie Henderson opened the meeting established that we had a quorum.

Public Comment (3 minutes limit)

- There were no public comments.

Adoption of Agenda

- Agenda was approved with no additions.

Approval July, 2023 Meeting Minutes

- Meeting minutes were approved by Scott Chaplin and seconded by Inge Morascini with no changes.

Approval July 24 Invoices

- Motion to approve the July 24 Invoices was made by Inge Morascini and seconded by Jessica McCready. Board approved and motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

- Mayor Chaplin reported that there was no report this month.

Auditor's Report

- Jackie Henderson reported that the Auditor's report will be ready for the September meeting on Camano Island and the State Auditor will be there either in person or virtually via Zoom.

Creative Team Report (included in August Board Packet)

- Sherry requested approval to appoint Marie Shimada as the first Pillar Ambassador for Bridge Building. Eventually the goal is to secure a total of eight Pillar Ambassadors (four from Whidbey and four from Camano) two ambassadors for each of the four pillars: Bridge Building, Access, Healthy Nature and Transformational Mindset. Commissioner Bacon made a motion to approve the appointment of Marie Shimada. Jessica MacCready seconded. There were no objections, and the Board approved the motion.
- Inge Morascini asked if we had written criteria as to what is expected from the Ambassadors as she felt there should be a process moving forward. Sharon Sappington from Economic Development Council of Island County agreed that it is important to have a process in place. Jackie Henderson said this would be reviewed at the next Management Team meeting.

Creative Team Updates (included in August Board Packet)


Next Meeting - September 7th at Camano County Office.

There being no further discussion, the meeting closed at 12.06 pm.

Minutes submitted by
Lynda Eccles,
Secretary, Board of Directors

Attachments

- Approved Invoices
- Creative Team Report

	Vendor	Date	Invoice#	Amount	2023 Bills Invoices on 7-24-23
	AvantStay Pacific West/Tara Vacation Rentals	6-22-23	J36R0	\$1,213.83	Lodging for Jean Chen Smith USA Today on Whidbey Island 9/26-28, 2023 (Port of Seattle Grant)
	AvantStay Pacific West/Tara Vacation Rentals	6-22-23	SHLW8	\$1,167.97	Lodging for Jean Chen Smith USA Today on Whidbey Island 9/28-30, 2023 (Port of Seattle Grant)
	Camano Island Chamber of Commerce	7-23-23	5193B565-0004	\$1,000.00	Advertising partner with the Chili Chowder Cook Off
5007381	ComputerPIX LLC	7-16-23	23-14	\$658.25	Platforms, Subscriptions for Digital Marketing and Management of Content
5007381	ComputerPIX LLC	7-16-23	23-13	\$8,909.73	Analytics, Content Creation, Newsletter, Research, Website Maintenance, Video, Calendar, Social Media
	Hemlock Printing	7-21-23	Q141409R 2	\$51,809.47	Printing Trails Guide with Embrace Branding and Updates
	Ivy House Media Limited/Global Heroes	7-17-23	GHM-0823-023	\$4,300.00	Print/Digital/Social Advertorial Sponsored Content Advertising Package with Wall Street Journal Travel Special Section (CA print subscribers)
	Kristoferson Farm	7-13-23	000044	\$230.40	Wholesale Lavender (44 Bundles) and Event Space Fee for TTC Workshop
5007383	Laura Hilton	7-17-23	2307	\$6,000.00	Research, Film Requests, Writing, Regenerative Places Support, Photography
5007383	Laura Hilton	7-17-23	0723	\$1,136.48	Expenses & Mileage
	Osborne Northwest PR	7-7-23	2541	\$4,500.00	Monthly Contract for Media Relations
	Osborne Northwest PR	7-7-23	2542A	\$1,500.00	Monthly Contract for Instagram
	Port of Seattle	7-5-23	CM-5718	\$1,032.34	Leasehold Excise Tax for SEA Airport Spotlight Advertising Displays July, Aug, Sept
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	7-21-23	3228	\$2,600.00	Monthly Contract for Design Services
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	7-21-23	3229	\$4,875.00	Regenerative Guide Project Coordination Payment 4 of 4
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	7-21-23	3230	\$298.68	Expenses & Mileage
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	7-21-23	3231	\$3,000.00	Map Redesign
5005663	Sherrye Wyatt Public Relations & Writing	7-15-23	71523	\$9,000.00	Monthly Contract for Consulting Services

5005663	Sherrye Wyatt Public Relations & Writing	7-23-23	72323	\$1,443.89	Expenses & Mileage
	State Auditor's Office	7-13-23	L155971	\$7,493.85	Accountability Audit
	Vicki Graham	7-23-23	0002	\$2,800.00	Monthly Contract for Regenerative Support Services
	Whidbey Health Foundation	7-19-23	71923	\$1,000.00	Tour de Whidbey Advertising
	Whidbey Weekly	7-13-23	16689	\$855.00	Advertising for TTC Workshops
	TOTAL			116,824.89	

CREATIVE TEAM TOURISM REPORT

AUGUST 3, 2023

SHERRYE WYATT PUBLIC RELATIONS & WRITING

Regenerative Places Program

This month focused a lot on organizing the final in-person three-hour workshops with the Transformational Travel Council. Workshops on Camano and Whidbey were well-attended and very successful and we're now working to pull together all of the notes and suggestions from the breakout sessions. Our final weekly virtual meeting with the Transformational Travel Council is July 26. Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands work in this area was part of "the buzz" at last week's Destinations International meeting.

Beginning Monday, July 24, Vicki and I are offering the community "Virtual After Hours" to go over projects and flesh out ideas. Feel free to share the following links with people throughout the community. A few quick "calls to action" by August 15, 2023:

1. **Estimate your Level of Participation.** Please review the various roles and place your name where you see yourself participating in this process [MORE HERE](#)
2. **Apply to be a Pillar Ambassador.** We are seeking one Pillar Ambassador from each island for each pillar. (8 Total Pillar Ambassadors). This is a 12-month commitment, and because of the significance of this volunteer role, it requires the completion of a brief application. The final selection will be made by the Embrace Board of Directors. [MORE HERE](#)
3. **Suggest a Project for Consideration of Co-Creation.** We are collecting suggested regenerative tourism-related projects for the Embrace board of directors to consider and prioritize for implementation over the next 3-5 years. Take a moment to share the objective, description, stakeholders, timeline, and which pillar it falls under. These will help as we develop a long-range plan. [MORE HERE](#).
4. **Want to talk about a project?** Sherrye Wyatt, our Public Relations and Marketing Manager, and Vicki Graham, our Regenerative Support member of the creative team, will hold Zoom office hours each Monday, July 24 - August 14. Hours will be from 5 pm to 6 pm. ZOOM LINK: <https://zoom.us/j/98673757764>
5. **Share Your Thoughts.** We'd like to hear from you as we continue on this path. If you have comments and recommendations, please direct them to Vicki Graham, our Regenerative Support member of the creative team. Her email is linked [HERE](#)

Misc.

Sherrye and Jackie Henderson are presenting at the City of Oak Harbor Council's next workshop (July 26) to request they return to at least contributing 1% (rather than a flat rate of \$20,000) of the 2% which was assessed in order to be dedicated to a countywide marketing effort. Sherrye continues to work with the State Auditor. Jackie and Sherrye met with the Whidbey Health Foundation to create a partnership to advertise local lodging and island activities to the Tour de

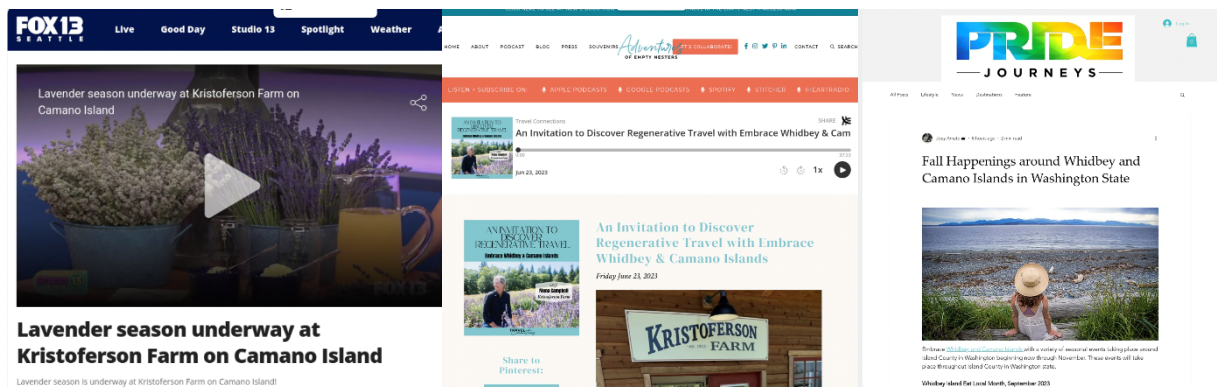
Whidbey riders. Sherrye worked with all members of the Creative Team on their projects, who meet monthly as a team.

OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

Monthly Overview

It's been an exciting month, rolling out the story lines and news to support Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands. Story pitches and content all focus on regenerative themes, with topics focused on stewardship, sustainable and responsible tourism. The concept has been very well received, with stories both placed, and in development, with regional and national outlets including *Forbes*, *USA Today*, *Seattle Times*, *Outdoors* and more. Looking ahead, our team will be highly focused on continued story pitching, message development and research/listening to continue to share authentic and impactful stories within key media outlets.

Press Highlights include 11 pieces of coverage with an audience of 8.49 million people. To view the coverage in full go [here](#).



Project Management

- Secured new interest in collaborative storytelling, secured new opportunities and managed existing partnerships with several partners, outlined below.
 - Facilitated an interview call with Chuck Pettis at Earth Sanctuary and Carrie Honaker for a featured piece in SilverKris, Singapore Airlines Magazine.
 - Secured and attended Q13 Studio Live to discuss regenerative tourism topics and share DIY lavender crafts to promote u-pick season at Kristoferson Farm.
 - Facilitated a feature segment on the podcast, Exploring Washington State, on regenerative tourism and related island travel ideas with Krista Loercher.
 - Connected with key writers for FAM tours to support future stories in key outlets including:
 - Leslie Kelly, a writer for Spokesman Review and Forbes
 - Jean Chen Smith, on assignment with USA Today's syndicate, covering regenerative tourism for families
 - Suanne Mueller, of Welcome Aboard Magazine, a German publication focused on cruising.
- Assisted with purchasing images from the Learners and Makers, Suzanne Stavert to support new content for the library of images.

Recent and Upcoming Media Visits and Collaborations:

- *Spokesman Review*, *Forbes*; writer Leslie Kelly visited Coupeville and is exploring regenerative tourism topics with a stay on July 6-7.

- **Sip Magazine;** developing a travel itinerary and content library to promote a sippable fall getaway focused on local producers as a social media takeover and online article, slated mid-August.
- **Welcome Magazine** (German Cruising Publication), writer Susanne Mueller staying on Whidbey Island August 29-30 as part of a Port of Seattle arranged media tour.
- **CIDERCRAFT Magazine;** planning a social media takeover and corresponding cider story following Camano Cider Fest (Sept 2).
- **Seattle Times,** Lora Shinn, freelance travel writer, is very intrigued by the new regenerative direction and interested in exploring an itinerary to support the themes for visitors.

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 2,724 on June 13 to 2758 on July 13, a growth rate of 1.25%.

Pending Press

- **1889, The Washington Magazine,** Cornet Bay and Be Ure Islands, and surrounding areas, are slated to be featured in a story about “Where to Cool off in Washington.”
- **‘Explore Washington,’** a podcast interview with Krista Loercher will focus on regenerative tourism topics.
- **Travel + Leisure,** feature story slated for the 2023 editorial calendar (print) pending Sara Franklin’s visit in Fall 2022.
- **‘Travel Connections,’** one of three segments is still pending for late July in three-part series featuring Island County tourism personalities discussing regenerative tourism.
- **Learners and Makers,** a travel blog focused on family and accessibility, visited to document the island experience from an accessibility angle; content slated for August to promote shoulder season travel.
- **Outdoors,** Kristen Pope, who attended a FAM tour in 2021, is writing a lighthouse roundup in honor of National Lighthouse Day and will include Admiralty Head’s event. Digital story is slated for early August.

COMPUTERPIX

Events

There has been an explosive growth in events held in the county. In an attempt to be as comprehensive as possible, I’ve spent more time on the calendar than in previous years. Not only do we post events that are submitted, we also scour the newspapers and other online sources for events. We, of course, also look at previous year’s events and research if they’re returning for this year.

We give emphasis to the county’s larger events, attempting to post them as far in advance as possible, often posting next year’s dates, if available, immediately after the completion of this year’s event.

We are making progress toward automating some of this entering of events. We are now able to automatically pull in events from the Camano Island Chamber of Commerce, Coupeville Chamber of Commerce, Camano Arts, Whidbey Arts, Sound Water Stewards, Whidbey Island Grown. We are working on adding Freeland and Langley. Oak Harbor and WICA currently use a system that is not compatible.

Because we are pulling in from so many outside sources, in order to prevent duplicates and ensure that we list only tourism-centric events, we don't automatically republish the events, but manually review them prior to publishing.

Analytics

We have signed a contract with AirDNA to supply us with additional short-term rental data from AirBNB and VRBO.. As of this writing, AirDNA was still setting up our dashboard. When finished, we should be able to supply additional information about trends, not only at a zip-code level, but at city, island, and county levels, as well.

The Seattle Times recently reported that there was data available to show that downtown Seattle was, indeed, becoming more lively.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/new-data-shows-why-seattles-downtown-feels-more-lively/>

So, we decided to see how the downtown areas on our islands were faring.

But, instead of just looking at overall numbers, we wanted to see how much of the traffic was coming from those of us who live just in Island County.

Perimeters were set as 0 – 15 miles for residents who live close to the downtowns in comparison to 5 – 1,000 miles for Island County residents who might live further away and/or travel to other downtowns with the county. Data were gathered from 2/2018 through 6/2023. Here are the outcomes broken down by Downtown areas (identified as the zip code that includes each downtown). Camano Island was created in its own entity. When viewing the graphs, please note that the labels (number of visitors) will vary depending on the individual downtown and the numbers involved (for example, Clinton's Monthly Volume by Visitor Days shows 8K for 0 – 15 miles as the highest number on the graph but shows 15K as the highest number for the 5 – 1,000 miles graph).

Findings

Camano Island

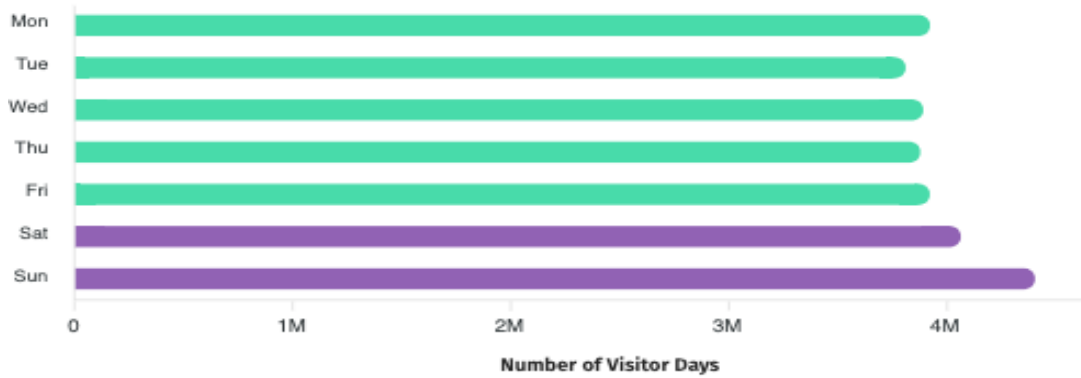
- At 0 – 15 miles,
 - Residents of Camano Island visited the most on Camano Island (this should not be a surprise). Note the high number of visitors – 2022 had a very high local monthly volume by visitor days. This is likely a data glitch. We'll update when Datafy offers an explanation.

Top Cities

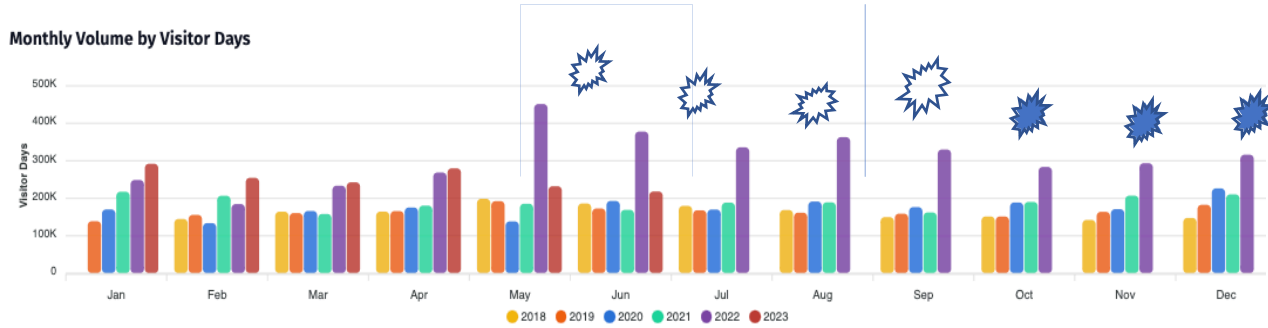
City	Trips
Camano Island, WA	13,295,965
Oak Harbor, WA	137,189
Langley, WA	67,534
Coupeville, WA	60,808
Greenbank, WA	16,683
Freeland, WA	13,379

- The weekends were the busiest times, but not significantly busier than weekdays.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- 2023 has higher visitors (from residents) in January through April than previous years. 2022 has a disproportionate number of visitors compared to other years. I am checking to see if the data is accurate. If it is, it would be interesting to see if reasons for this can be discovered.



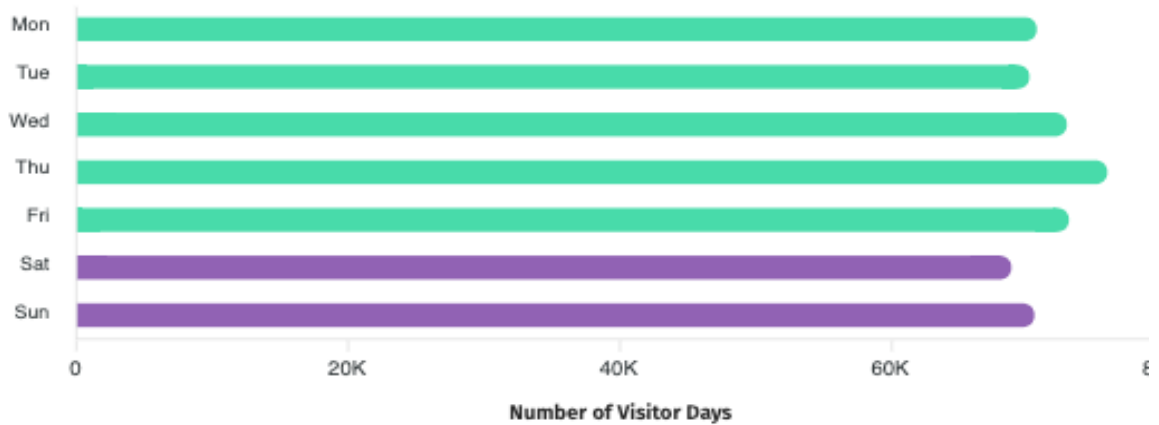
- At 5 – 1,000 miles,
 - Residents of Camano Island were those who visited the most on Camano Island.

Top Cities

City	Trips
Camano Island, WA	13,295,965
Oak Harbor, WA	137,189
Langley, WA	67,534
Coupeville, WA	60,808
Greenbank, WA	16,683
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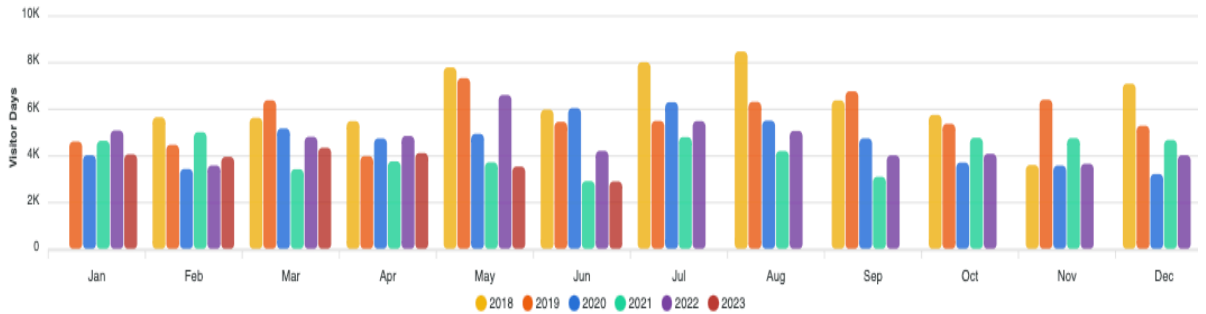
- Weekdays were busier than weekends.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- 2023 lagged behind previous years in most months with May and June experiencing a decline in local visitors.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



Clinton

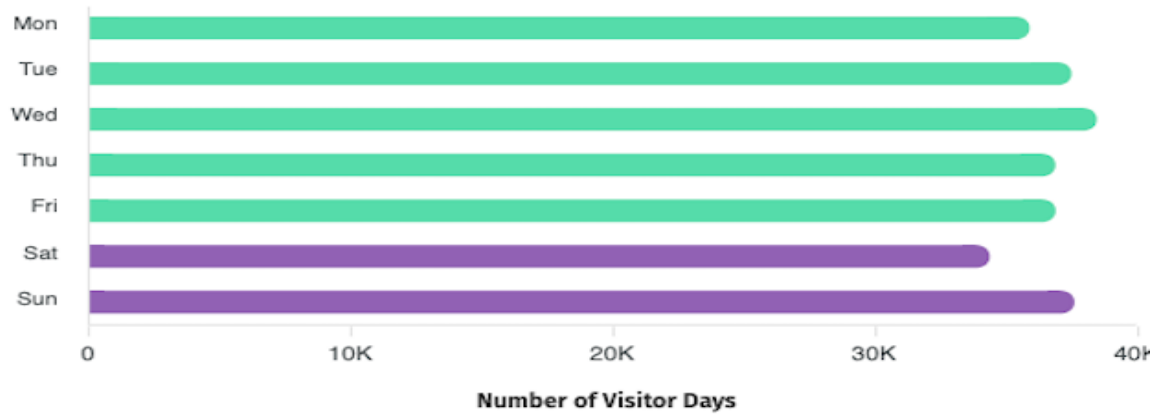
- At 0 – 15 miles,
 - Residents of Langley visited most frequently in Clinton.

Top Cities

City	Trips
Langley, WA	101,605
Freeland, WA	37,396
Oak Harbor, WA	29,898
Coupeville, WA	23,618
Greenbank, WA	6,903
Camano Island, WA	1,977

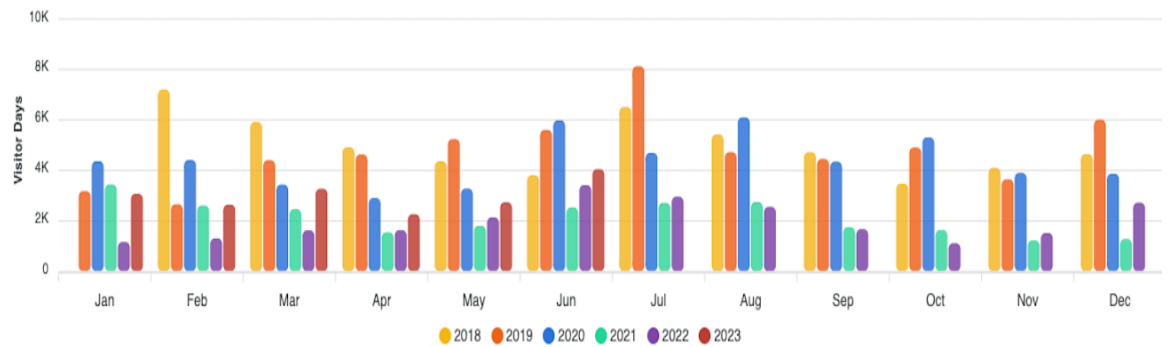
- Wednesday is the busiest day for residents of Island County to be in Clinton followed by Sunday and Tuesday respectively.

Weekday vs. Weekend



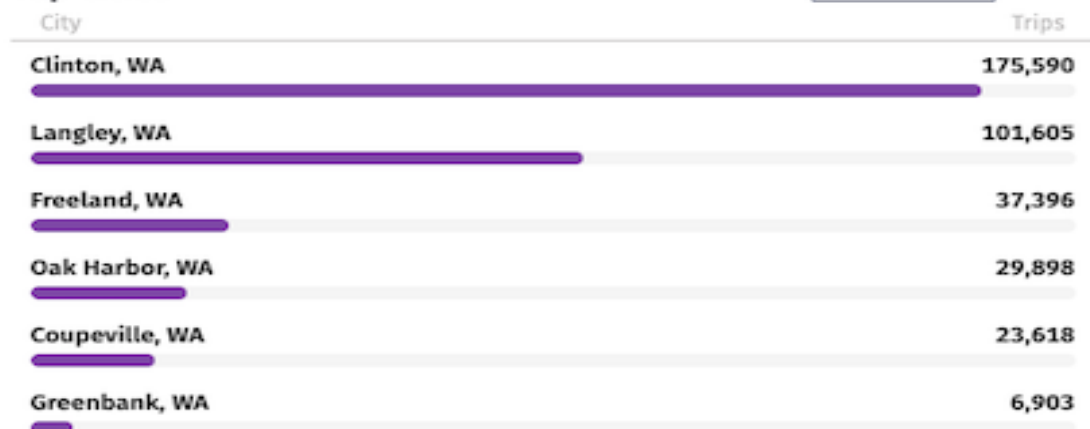
- 2023 has higher visitation rates in all months than 2022 and most of 2021.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



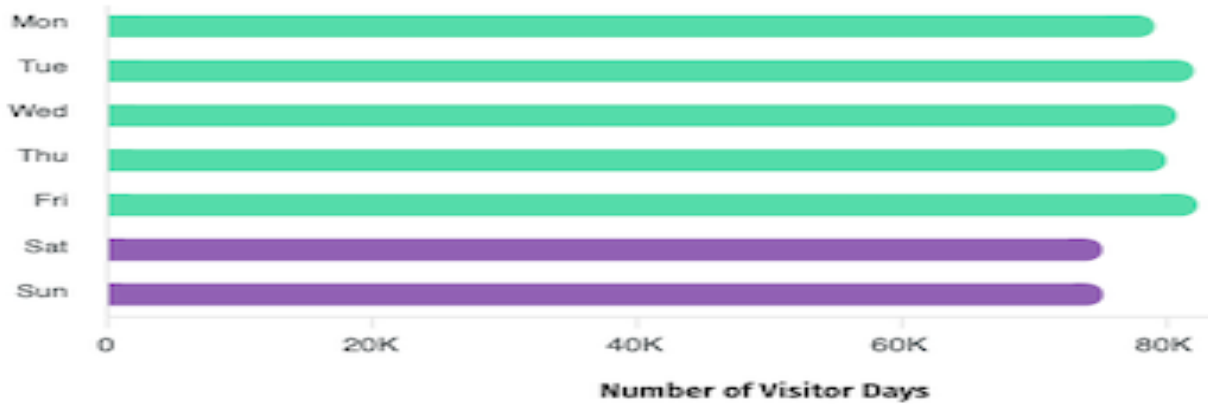
- At 5 – 1,000 miles,
 - Residents of Clinton (zip code) visited the most in Clinton.

Top Cities



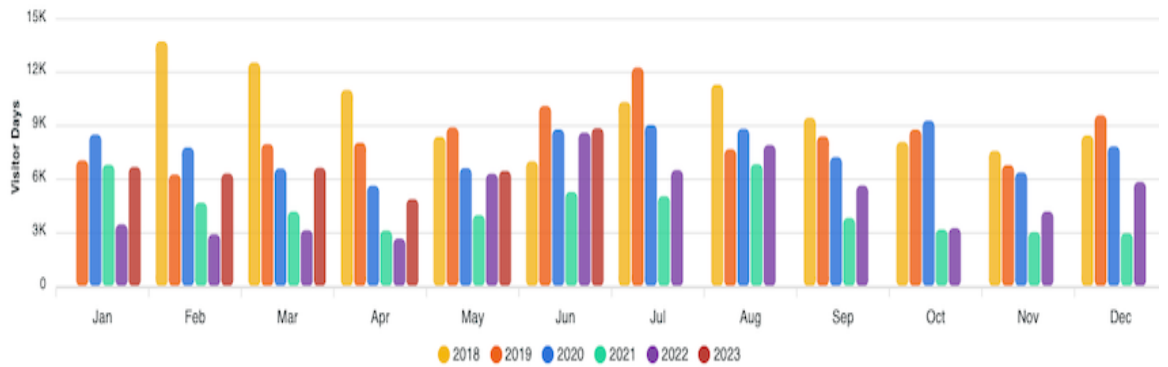
- Weekdays are busier than weekends (Island County residents going through Clinton on the way to the ferry, perhaps?).

Weekday vs. Weekend



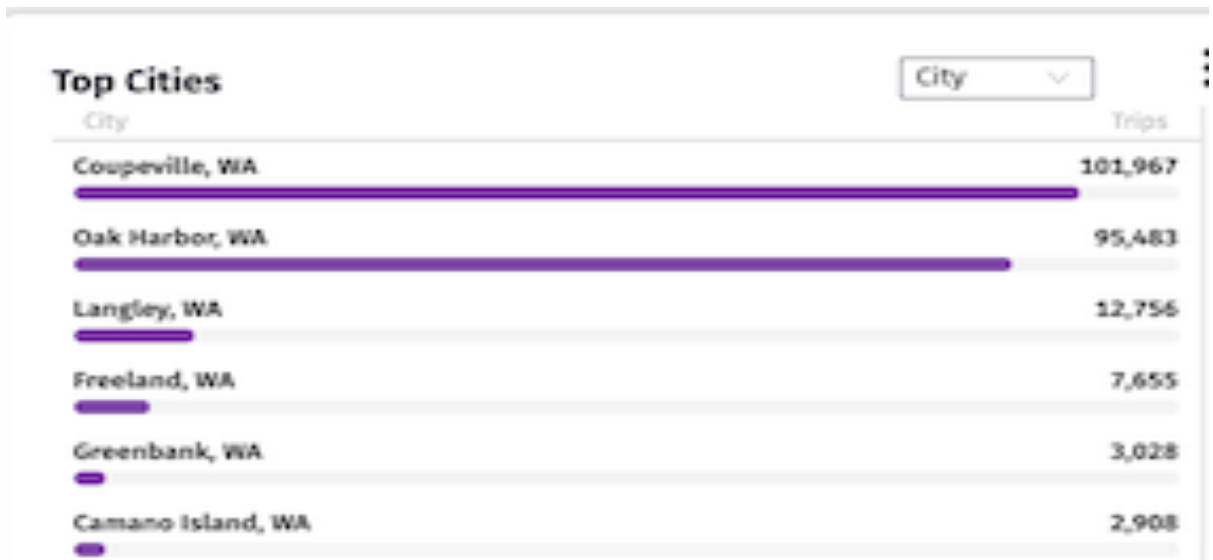
- 2023 shows some nice growth in monthly volume by visitor days with all months equal to or greater than 2022 and 2021.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



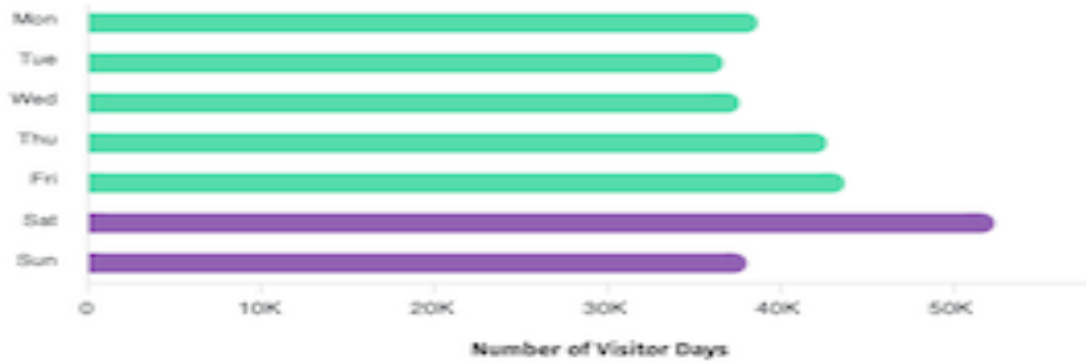
Coupeville

- At 0 – 15 miles,
 - Residents of Coupeville visit Coupeville the most followed closely by those who live in Oak Harbor.



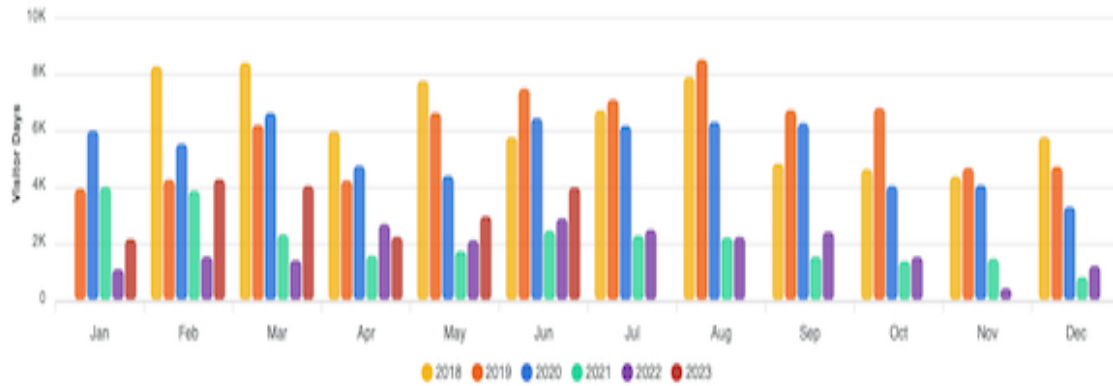
- Saturdays were significantly busier than the rest of the week.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- February and March were the busiest for Coupeville with a downturn in April.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



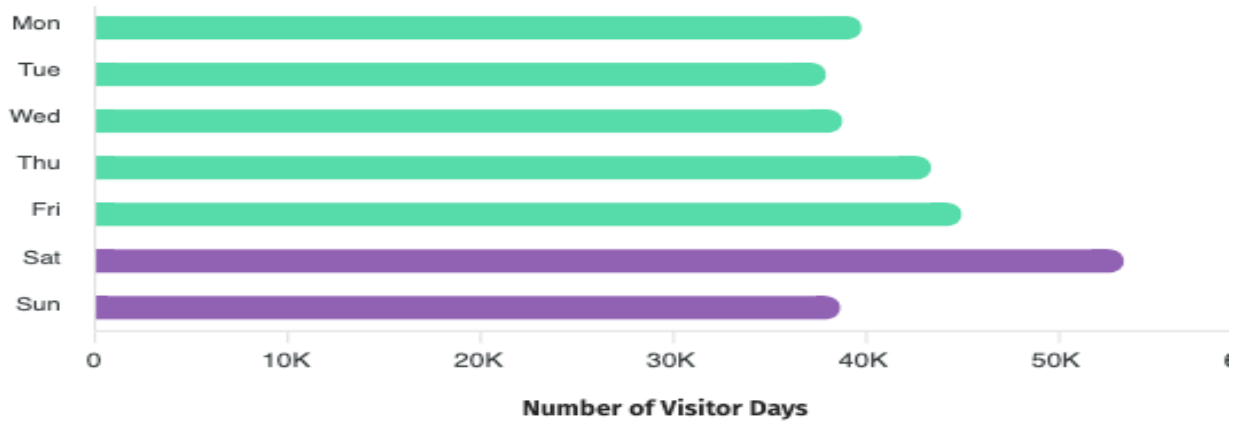
- At 5 – 1,000 miles,
 - Residents of Coupeville visit Coupeville the most followed closely by those who live in Oak Harbor.

Top Cities

City	Trips
Coupeville, WA	101,967
Oak Harbor, WA	95,483
Langley, WA	12,756
Clinton, WA	7,766
Freeland, WA	7,655
Greenbank, WA	3,028

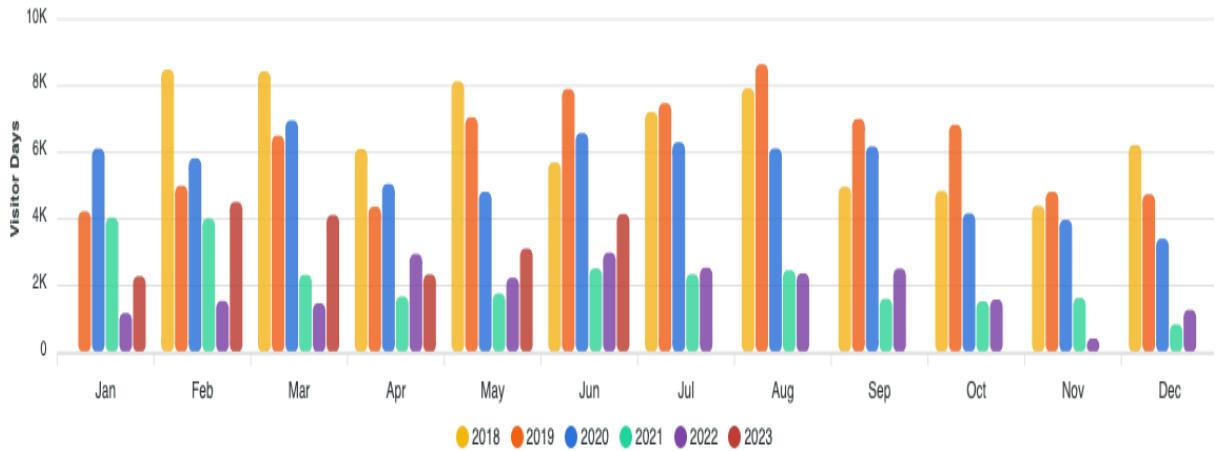
- Saturdays were significantly busier than the rest of the week.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- Monthly Volume by Visitor Days is trending upwards with February and March as the busiest months this year to date. 2023 visitation to Coupeville is higher in all months as compared to 2022 except April and has been higher than 2021 in most months.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days

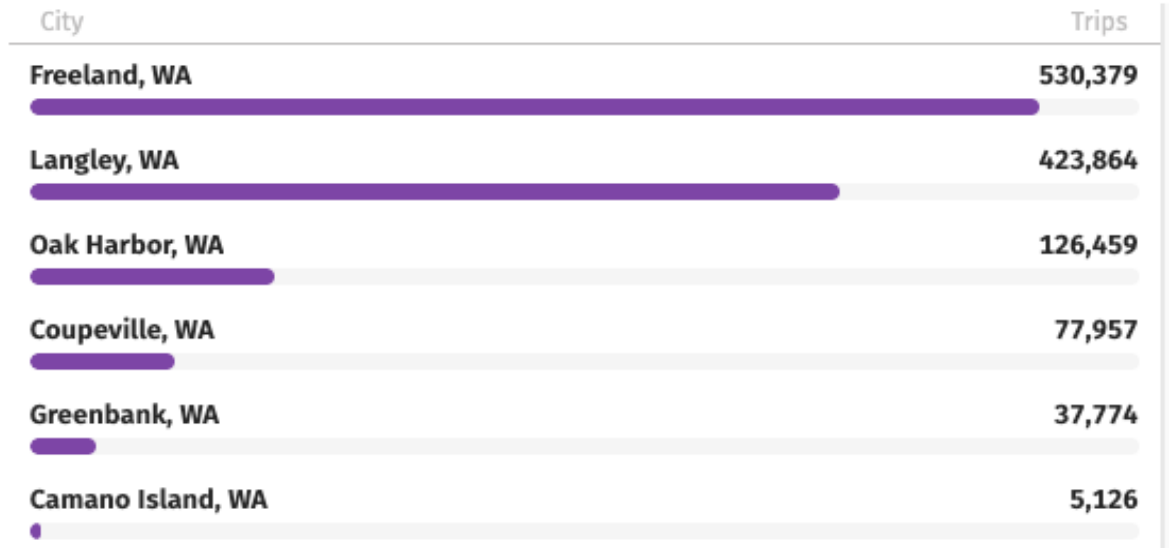


Freeland

- At 0 – 15 miles,
 - Residents of Freeland visit Freeland the most followed by Langley.

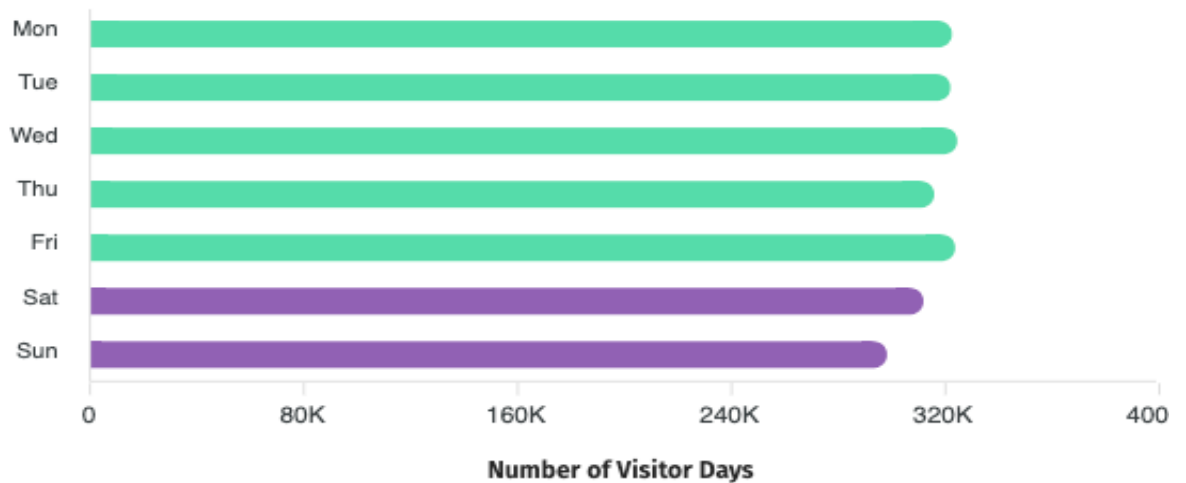
Top Cities

City ▼



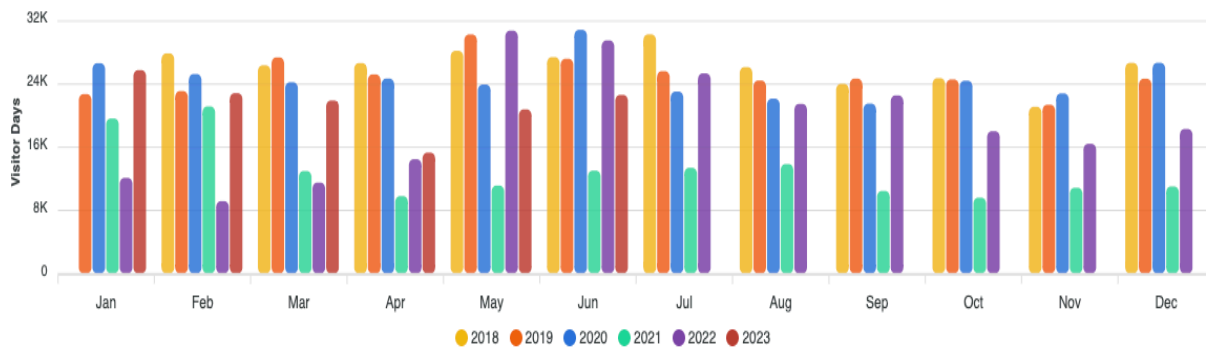
- The busiest days are weekdays.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- January, February, and March showed high monthly volume of visitor days. April saw a sharp decline with May and June making modest increased visitor days.

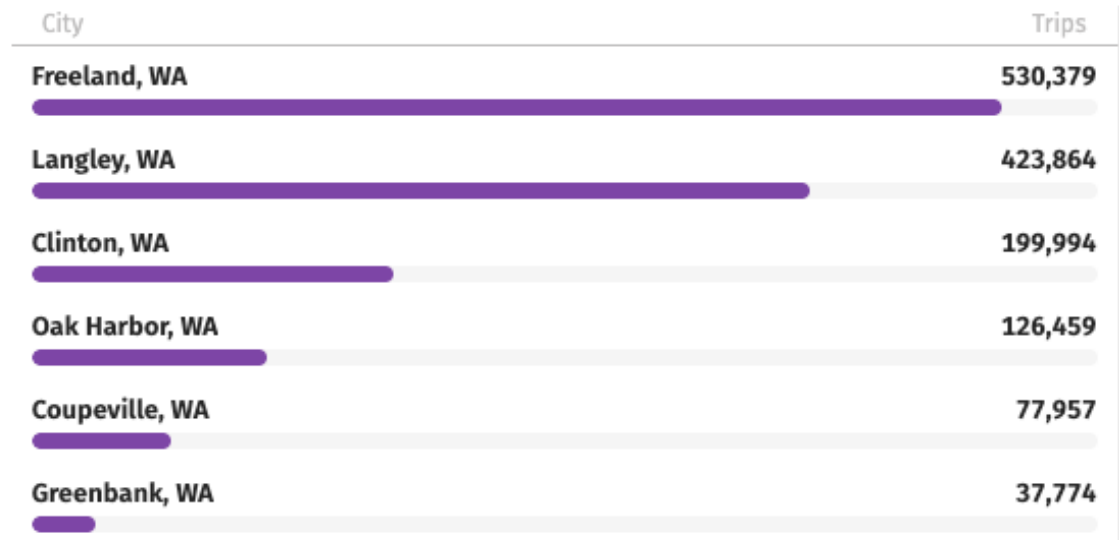
Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



- At 5 – 1,000 miles,
 - Residents of Freeland visited Freeland the most followed by Langley.

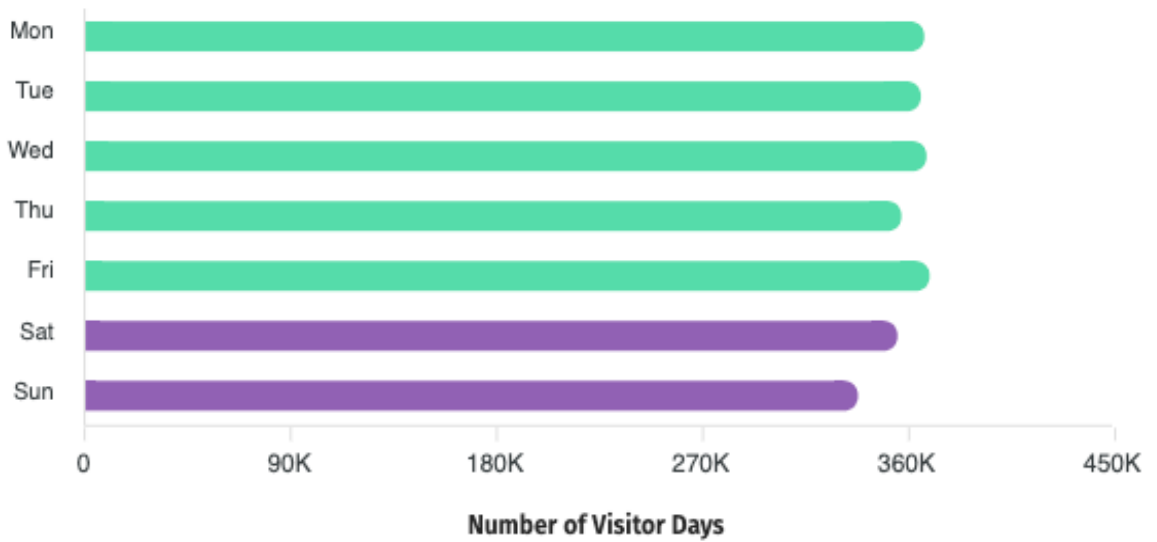
Top Cities

City



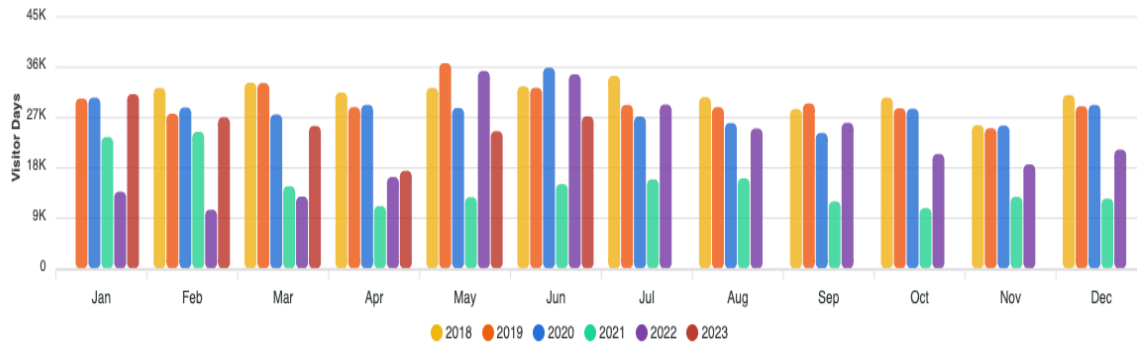
- All days of the week are mostly evenly busy with the exception of Sunday.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- January, February, and March showed high monthly volume of visitor days. April saw a sharp decline with May and June showing increased visitor days.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



Langley

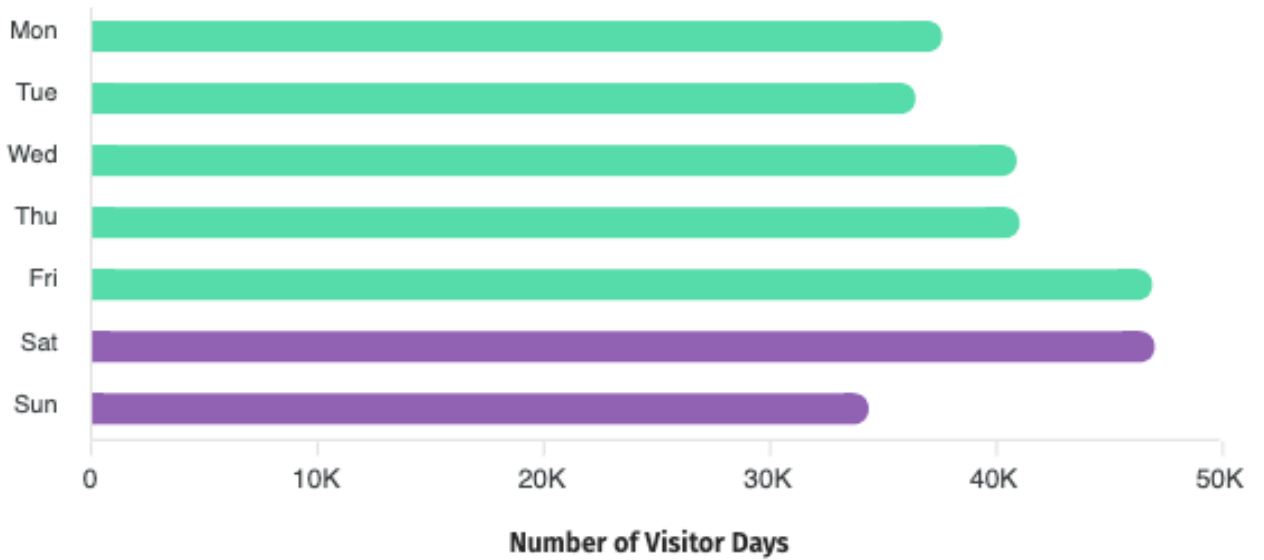
- At 0 – 15 miles,
 - Residents of Langley visit Langley the most followed by Freeland.

Top Cities

City	Trips
Langley, WA	128,178
Freeland, WA	27,359
Oak Harbor, WA	19,822
Coupeville, WA	11,831
Greenbank, WA	5,129
Camano Island, WA	2,018

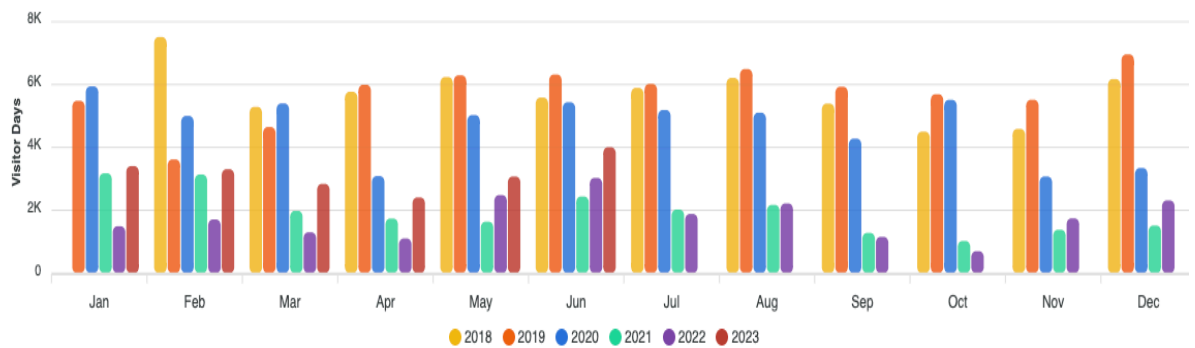
- The busiest days are Friday and Saturday. Sunday is the least busy.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- Langley shows 2023 as having more monthly volume by visitor days than 2022 or 2021. April showed a decrease in visitor days with increases in May and June.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



- At 5 – 1,000 miles,
 - Residents of Langley visit Langley the most followed by those who live in Clinton.

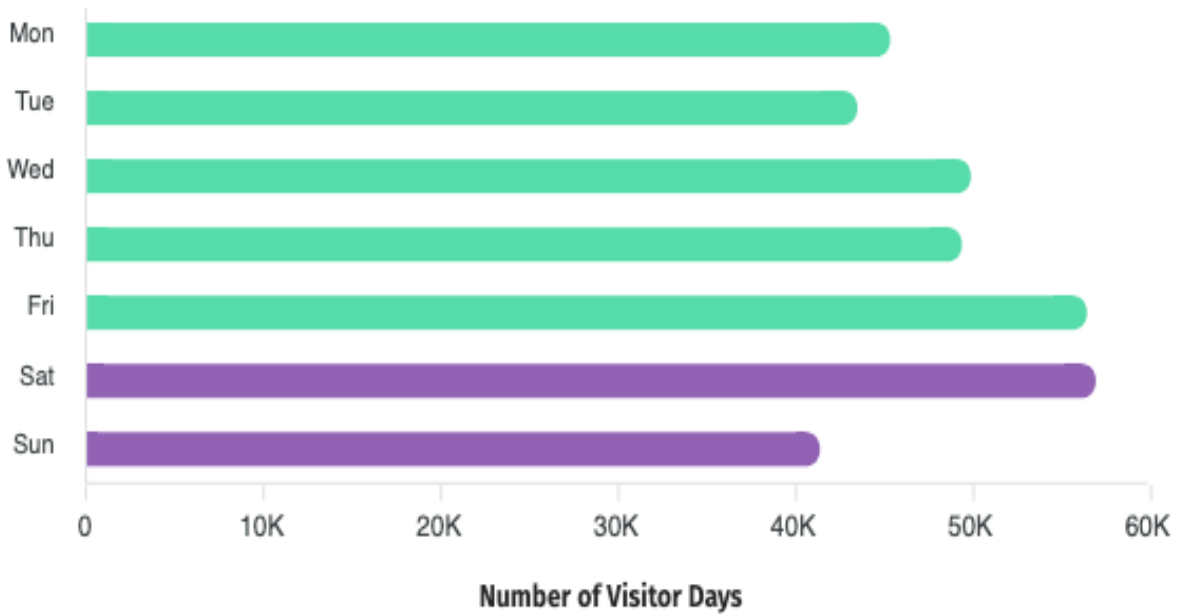
Top Cities

City

City	Trips
Langley, WA	128,178
Clinton, WA	44,317
Freeland, WA	27,359
Oak Harbor, WA	19,822
Coupeville, WA	11,831
Greenbank, WA	5,129

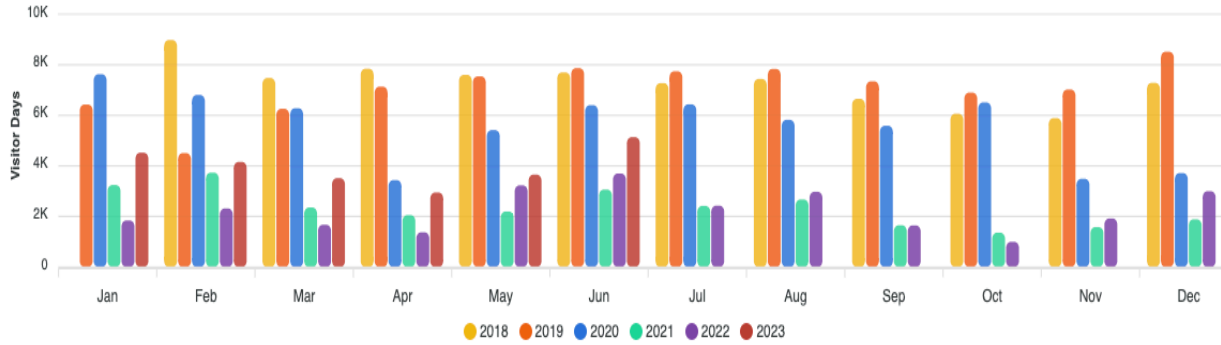
- Friday and Saturday are the busiest days.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- 2023 has had more monthly volume visitor days than 2022 or 2021. March and April showed a decrease in visitor days with increases in May and June.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



Oak Harbor

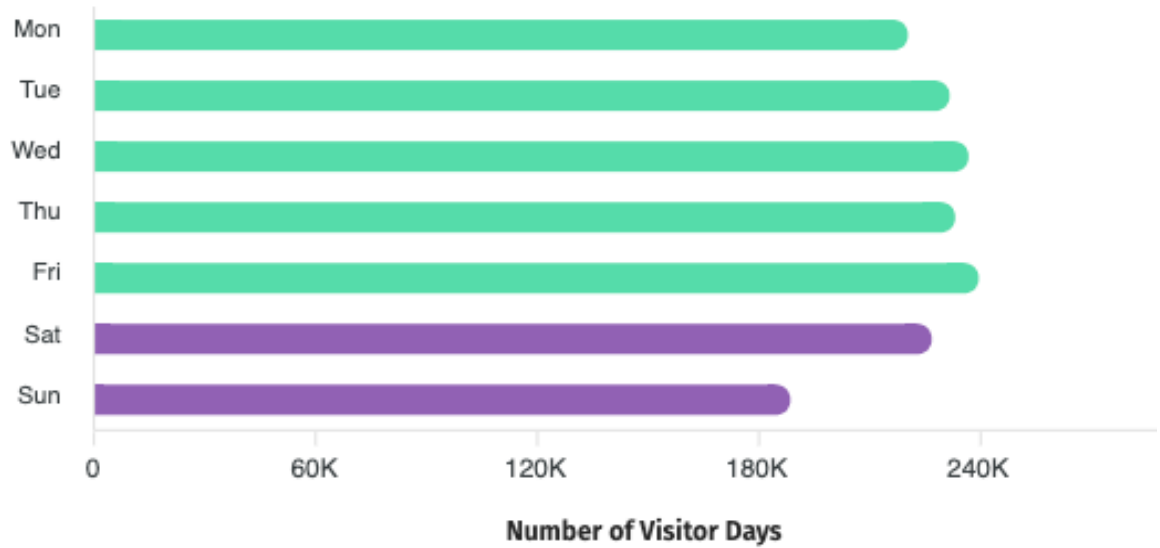
- At 0 – 15 miles,
 - Residents of Oak Harbor visit Oak Harbor the most followed by Coupeville.

Top Cities

City	Trips
Oak Harbor, WA	930,211
Coupeville, WA	79,462
Langley, WA	14,579
Freeland, WA	10,915
Camano Island, WA	8,032
Greenbank, WA	5,693

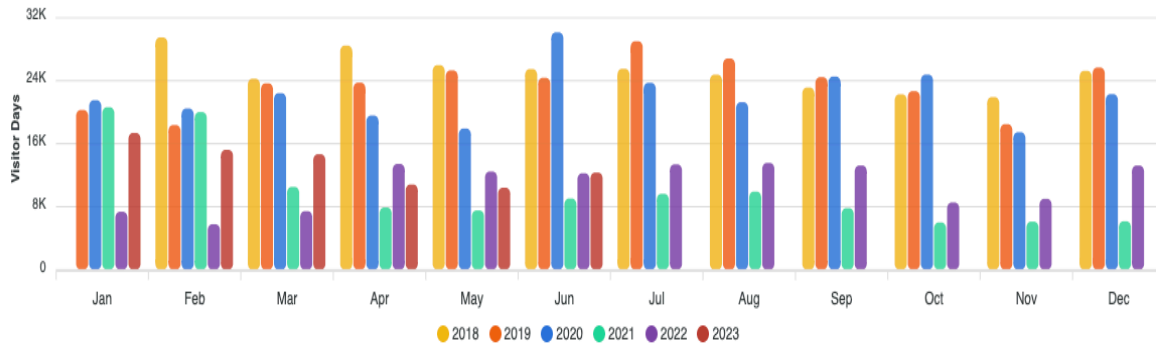
- Weekdays are busier than weekends with Sunday being the day least visited.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- January, February, and March had higher monthly volume by visitor days. January has been the busiest so far this year. April began a decrease in monthly volume by visitor days.

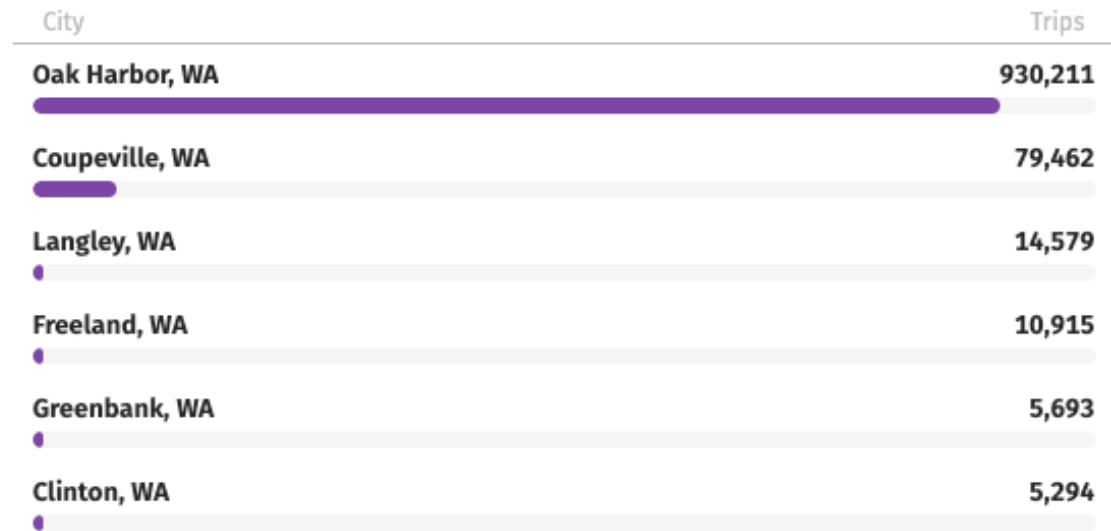
Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



- At 5 – 1,000 miles,
 - Residents of Oak Harbor visit Oak Harbor the most followed by Coupeville.

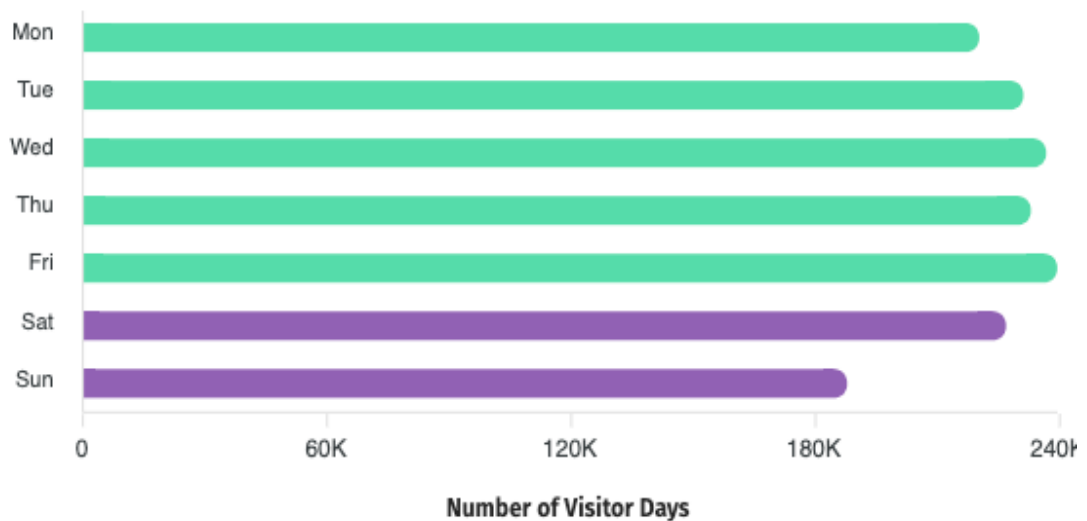
Top Cities

City



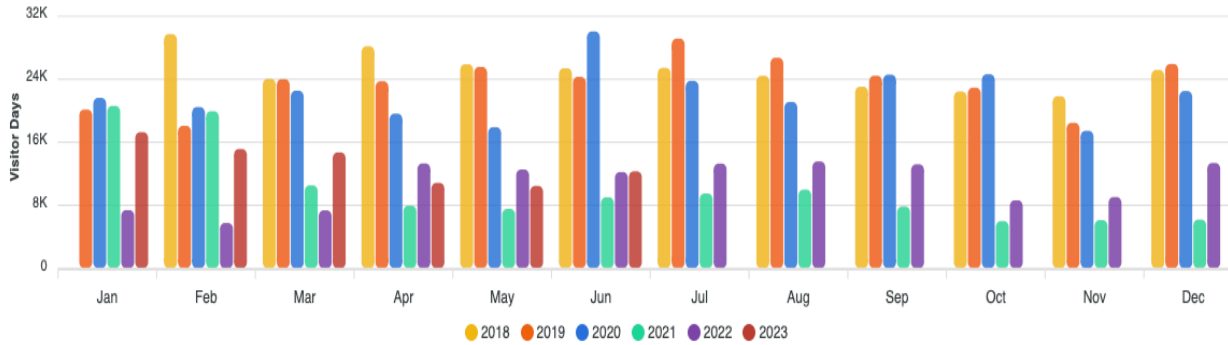
- Weekdays are busier than weekends with Sunday being the day least visited.

Weekday vs. Weekend



- January had the highest monthly volume by visitor days followed by February and March. April began a decrease in monthly volume by visitor days.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



Take Aways

- Residents tend to stick close to home.
- Locations might do a better job of encouraging visitors from other parts of Island County. What can you do to encourage others from within Island County to come visit?
- It might be interesting to see how opened and closed schedules of stores and restaurants follow weekday vs weekend data trends.
- When reviewing the Findings, ask yourself “why might these trends be happening?” That might give you some insights you haven’t considered before.
- Remember, most of our visitors come from Seattle/Tacoma DMA (might that be the reason for our lower numbers, especially for those who have more than one resident?). If the tendency is to start spending more time closer to home (see article above) our largest pool of visitors may not be coming here as frequently or may be taking trips outside of the state.

LAURA HILTON

This last month saw local movie *Midday Black Midnight Blue* (MBMB) appear on island screens. Laura worked with the film distributors and local theaters to make sure islanders had a chance to see the finished film locally. She obtained the “picture car” from the film (an older model Jeep, owned by a



Camano resident) and brought set photos, movie posters, and contact sign up info to the screenings. Laura attended the screenings at WICA and Blue Fox Drive-In, chatting with locals about the film and encouraging people to list their property on Washington Filmworks’ Reel Scout location database, or get involved another way. There are no further screenings scheduled at this time, but the door remains open and Laura has communicated with local groups about the possibility of further MBMB screenings.

The creative team has also been hard at work on the in-person regenerative workshops recently, and the events on both islands seemed to be very well received. Laura attended meetings with the creative team and TTC facilitators regarding upcoming regenerative projects and the agenda of the workshops. Laura arranged the catering for the Whidbey-based workshop in Clinton, as well as facilitating break out groups on the day. We had some great minds present and lots of exciting enthusiasm.

With the arrival of the countywide regenerative guide, it is time to dive into the culture and heritage guide. Laura has been working with the creative team to narrow down the 24 categories to appear-a companion piece to the 24 trails-and research has begun. This guide, as well as the improvement of film resources, will apply towards the regenerative projects being developed by the group and wider community. Laura continues to follow updates and education opportunities from State of WA Tourism and other relevant groups.

ROSENKRANZ PRODUCTIONS

This has been another busy month. Thanks as always for your trust in our carrying out this work. Here is a recap of some of what we have been doing for Embrace:

- Regenerative Project sheet design revisions and production
- Port of Seattle SeaTac spotlight sign coordination. They had installed one version on both sides of display rather than different designs front and back.
- Sip Magazine ad, back cover
- Full day TTC workshop July 13
- Coordinate printing of Embrace documents for same workshop, as well as pick up and delivery
- Regenerative Guide:
 - Coordination of delivery from printer
 - Hand loading of 330 cartons of guides (30lb each) for storage
 - Delivery of guides to the Langley, Clinton and Coupeville chambers of commerce
 - Delivery of 60 cartons to July 13 TTC workshop
- Map Brochure:

Design revisions, preparation of final files for release to printer, coordination of printing process, including color proofing, image editing for color, reproofing and 1 day in-person press check in Bellingham WA.
- Trails Guide:
 - Gathering of competitive print quotes
 - Rebranding of guide
 - Redesign of SWS spread with new content from them
 - Update to Garry Oaks spread content. Redesign of page 61 with Manifesto.

VICKI GRAHAM

July has been very productive with meetings with TTC, managing correspondence and RSVP 's for July workshops and updating contact information in the action implementation plan framework.

Met with Shannon Bly from Whidbey Island Grown to discuss potential project for Eat Local Month in September 2023. Follow up meeting is planned during the “Virtual Office Hours.”

Registered to attend a tourism skill shop presented by State of Washington Destination Development Manager Matthew Ozuna on Thursday July 27. Matthew participated in both of the in-person workshops.