

Embrace Whidbey & Camano Islands Board Meeting Minutes April 4, 2024 – 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce and Virtual Via Zoom

Committee Members Present

Bryan Stucky - Oak Harbor City Council – Vice Chair
Greg Lanza - N.Whidbey Lodging – Treasurer
Lynda Eccles - Coupeville Chamber of Commerce – Secretary
Jill Johnson - Island County Commissioner
Angela Muniz - Freeland Chamber of Commerce
Nicole Worthington-Johnson - Langley Chamber of Commerce
Tom Felvey - City of Langley Lodging
Max Lindsay-Thorsen - Unincorporated S. Whidbey Lodging
Alannah Johansen - Cama Beach State Park
Kennedy Horstman - Mayor of Langley - City of Langley

Absent:

Jackie Henderson – Town Council – Chair
Jessica McCready - Camano Island Chamber of Commerce
Magi Aguilar – Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce
Katie Grindo n - Clinton Chamber of Commerce
Sharon Sappington - Economic Development Council Island County
Aly Willis - Unincorporated Central Whidbey Lodging
Scott Rosenkranz - Embrace Graphic Design/Branding
Erin Osborne – Social Media

Creative Team Present:

Inge Morascini – Embrace Marketing and Program Manager
Jack Penland, Embrace Digital Marketing/Website/Data/Content Creation
Krista Loercher, Embrace Regenerative Places Program
Laura Hilton, Film Liaison/Special Projects
Diane Binder – Bookkeeping

Call to Order

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. and established that there was a quorum.

Adoption of Agenda

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky asked if there were any changes or additions to the April 4, 2024, agenda. There were none, so the agenda was approved.



Approval of Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky asked if there were any changes to the March 7, 2024, meeting minutes. There were none, motion to approve March 7 minutes made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Mayor Langley and approved by the full board. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky asked if there was anyone from the public present who wished to make a public comment. No one responded.

Treasurers Report

Approval of Invoices

Treasurer Greg Lanza presented March Invoices for payment totaling – 34,108.71. Lynda Eccles made a motion to approve payment of the March Invoices totaling \$34,108.71, Allanah Johansen seconded, the board approved the motion and it was passed.

Financials

Treasurer Greg Lanza presented the Budget vs. Actual as of 3/26/24 showing March expenses\$145,719.16. As of March 26 expenses are 16.2% of total budget.

Diane Binder presented Revenue report from the State and County. For 2024 to date income is \$137,042.70 and total income revenue fo2 2% lodging tax is \$131,479.59. Diane reported that Coupeville has yet to submit their 2% income for the first three months.

Treasurer's Report

Diane Binder presented the Treasurer's report and noted that the State had finally updated the report. To date we have received \$88,488.42 so far this year. Income less expenses for 2024 funding \$1,099,525.65. Total Tax Revenue income reported by County \$8,355,299.49. Lodging Year over Year showed that the county has turned the corner and increased to 12.3%.

Angela Muniz made a motion to approved the financials, _____ seconded and the motion passed.

PR/Marketing Report

Newsletter – Program Manager Inge Morascini referred everyone to the Whidbey and Camano Islands newsletter for reports from our Contract team. Inge announced the new Culture & Heritage Experience guide which was delivered to Island Chambers last week and thanked Scott Rosenkrantz and Laura Hilton, Krista Loercher and Jack Penland for all their work on this new guide. The newsletter will be on the WhidbeyCamanoIslands website as well as the Chambers. Scott will send a pdf to the Chambers.

Inge then presented her preliminary plan for 2024 marketing plan and areas where we will be promoting Whidbey and Camano, it was well received. Comments/questions following the presentation were as follows:



Commissioner Johnson feels there is community education needed as to what to see and do on the islands, we also need to promote locally as we have different demographics and that should be looked at

Lynda Eccles commented the importance of making sure the information reaches everyone including NAS Whidbey and suggested Crosswind, Whidbey Weekly as outreach as well as contacting Navy Wives groups on base. We need to focus on Canada as some parts of the island get a lot of Canadian visitors and we could increase those numbers.

Other suggestions were "Are we using Facebook as much as we should"?

Financial Impact? Inge said we are still pricing this plan.

Chamber of Commerce Roundtable:

Both Langley and Freeland Chambers talked about their upcoming Fireworks celebrations and that they both applied for the new Fireworks grant that was made available.

Coupeville announced the upcoming Memorial Weekend Parade and Remembrance and Music at town Park.

Oak Harbor, Camano and Clinton were all absent.

Next Meeting

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky reminded everyone that the May 2nd meeting will be at the Island County offices on Camano Island. Information will be emailed to everyone. Lynda reminded everyone to make sure they rsvp their attendance to her whether it is via zoom or inperson once the notice has gone out.

The meeting closed at 12.32 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Lynda Eccles Secretary, Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands



Embrace Whidbey & Camano Islands Board Meeting Minutes April 4, 2024 – 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce and Virtual Via Zoom

Committee Members Present

Bryan Stucky - Oak Harbor City Council – Vice Chair
Greg Lanza - N.Whidbey Lodging – Treasurer
Lynda Eccles - Coupeville Chamber of Commerce – Secretary
Jill Johnson - Island County Commissioner
Angela Muniz - Freeland Chamber of Commerce
Nicole Worthington-Johnson - Langley Chamber of Commerce
Tom Felvey - City of Langley Lodging
Max Lindsay-Thorsen - Unincorporated S. Whidbey Lodging
Alannah Johansen - Cama Beach State Park
Kennedy Horstman - Mayor of Langley - City of Langley

Absent:

Jackie Henderson – Town Council – Chair
Jessica McCready - Camano Island Chamber of Commerce
Magi Aguilar – Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce
Katie Grindo n - Clinton Chamber of Commerce
Sharon Sappington - Economic Development Council Island County
Aly Willis - Unincorporated Central Whidbey Lodging
Scott Rosenkranz - Embrace Graphic Design/Branding
Erin Osborne – Social Media

Creative Team Present:

Inge Morascini – Embrace Marketing and Program Manager
Jack Penland, Embrace Digital Marketing/Website/Data/Content Creation
Krista Loercher, Embrace Regenerative Places Program
Laura Hilton, Film Liaison/Special Projects
Diane Binder – Bookkeeping

Call to Order

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. and established that there was a quorum.

Adoption of Agenda

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky asked if there were any changes or additions to the April 4, 2024, agenda. There were none, so the agenda was approved.



Approval of Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky asked if there were any changes to the March 7, 2024, meeting minutes. There were none, motion to approve March 7 minutes made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Mayor Langley and approved by the full board. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky asked if there was anyone from the public present who wished to make a public comment. No one responded.

Treasurers Report

Approval of Invoices

Treasurer Greg Lanza presented March Invoices for payment totaling – 34,108.71. Lynda Eccles made a motion to approve payment of the March Invoices totaling \$34,108.71, Allanah Johansen seconded, the board approved the motion and it was passed.

Financials

Treasurer Greg Lanza presented the Budget vs. Actual as of 3/26/24 showing March expenses\$145,719.16. As of March 26 expenses are 16.2% of total budget.

Diane Binder presented Revenue report from the State and County. For 2024 to date income is \$137,042.70 and total income revenue fo2 2% lodging tax is \$131,479.59. Diane reported that Coupeville has yet to submit their 2% income for the first three months.

Treasurer's Report

Diane Binder presented the Treasurer's report and noted that the State had finally updated the report. To date we have received \$88,488.42 so far this year. Income less expenses for 2024 funding \$1,099,525.65. Total Tax Revenue income reported by County \$8,355,299.49. Lodging Year over Year showed that the county has turned the corner and increased to 12.3%.

Angela Muniz made a motion to approved the financials, _____ seconded and the motion passed.

PR/Marketing Report

Newsletter – Program Manager Inge Morascini referred everyone to the Whidbey and Camano Islands newsletter for reports from our Contract team. Inge announced the new Culture & Heritage Experience guide which was delivered to Island Chambers last week and thanked Scott Rosenkrantz and Laura Hilton, Krista Loercher and Jack Penland for all their work on this new guide. The newsletter will be on the WhidbeyCamanoIslands website as well as the Chambers. Scott will send a pdf to the Chambers.

Inge then presented her preliminary plan for 2024 marketing plan and areas where we will be promoting Whidbey and Camano, it was well received. Comments/questions following the presentation were as follows:



Commissioner Johnson feels there is community education needed as to what to see and do on the islands, we also need to promote locally as we have different demographics and that should be looked at

Lynda Eccles commented the importance of making sure the information reaches everyone including NAS Whidbey and suggested Crosswind, Whidbey Weekly as outreach as well as contacting Navy Wives groups on base. We need to focus on Canada as some parts of the island get a lot of Canadian visitors and we could increase those numbers.

Other suggestions were "Are we using Facebook as much as we should"?

Financial Impact? Inge said we are still pricing this plan.

Chamber of Commerce Roundtable:

Both Langley and Freeland Chambers talked about their upcoming Fireworks celebrations and that they both applied for the new Fireworks grant that was made available.

Coupeville announced the upcoming Memorial Weekend Parade and Remembrance and Music at town Park.

Oak Harbor, Camano and Clinton were all absent.

Next Meeting

Vice Chair Bryan Stucky reminded everyone that the May 2nd meeting will be at the Island County offices on Camano Island. Information will be emailed to everyone. Lynda reminded everyone to make sure they rsvp their attendance to her whether it is via zoom or inperson once the notice has gone out.

The meeting closed at 12.32 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Lynda Eccles Secretary, Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands



April 2024

NEWSLETTER

Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands is Island County's umbrella destination marketing organization and is governed by a joint agreement between Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Langley and Island County, and is funded by lodging tax.

Island Exposures:

A snapshot of all the ways we are reaching out to our audiences

Film Liaison/Special Projects

More contact from filmmakers this month and a much appreciated, enthusiastic response from businesses and homeowners offering to participate as filming locations. The spring and summer look busy. (continued on p. 5)

Regenerative Coordinator

The new Cultural & Heritage Guides are very well received, garnering compliments from organizations and residents. Delivering them is also opening doors for conversations with a wide range of people, from the Regional General Manager of Vacasa to the Education Curator of the Hilbulb Cultural Center. And the Eat Local Month plan has expanded to truly embrace most of our regenerative pillars! (continued on p. 6)

Public Relations

Spring media partnerships are underway, featuring visits from major outlets like Modern Luxury and The Guardian. Scheduled appearances on KING 5 and Q13 FOX in May will showcase culinary and indigenous tourism. A press release launched the Culture + Heritage Guide, emphasizing intentional travel. Future media partnerships will amplify these themes. (continued on p. 2)

Creative Services

The Culture and Heritage guides are here and distribution is well underway. Also the 2 day photoshoot for our seasonal brand image library was a success, and will be followed up with an additional shoot on May first, if my weather dance works. (continued on p. 3)

Digital Marketing

Visitor days, length of stay, and unique visitors are down (unique visitors are down a lot). Total trips are up 10% (Feb 2024 vs Feb 2023). People were coming, just not staying as long. (continued on p. 6)



Scan this code for full reports

Getting to know you. Getting to know all about you.

The song, sung by Julie Andrews in the King and I, runs through my head as we outline our information gathering campaign, slated to begin mid-May.

The campaign, with the working title of "Your Perfect Island Getaway in 5 Questions," will enable us to test potential visitor's interests based around the subjects of: Culinary/Wine, Wellness/Culture, and Recreation/Environment. Presented as a quiz, the campaign will be conducted in the social media channels of Facebook, Instagram, Google and will also be served up by Datafy.

How it works:

The ad message will be served to people ages 30-50 who live in the DMAs of Seattle, Portland and Spokane, (our top three DMAs), and have not been to our destination previously. The ad copy offers "the perfect getaway" and invites the viewer to take a short 5 question quiz. On the quiz, the potential visitor will be asked a series of 5 questions that have a relationship to the three areas (Culinary/wine, Wellness/Culture,

(Continued on page 5)

Public Relations Overview

Erin Osborne

Overview

Spring media partnerships are in full swing, with two high-profile media visits planned for May, representing outlets like Modern Luxury, The Guardian and more. Our team has

also secured spring media appearances, on KING 5 and Q13 FOX coming up in May, featuring both culinary and indigenous tourism themes. We also developed and distributed a press release for the launch of the Culture + Heritage Guide. Furthering the key messages of intentional and deep travel, future stories and media partnerships will highlight these stories.

Press Highlights include 8 pieces of coverage with an audience of 9.5 million people. To view the coverage in full go to

https://share.coveragebook.com/b/d375ce1ed77e360a





wentwick

MAKING ARTISANAL PASTA ON WHIDBEY ISLAND

Making Artisanal Pasta on Whidbey Island

Recent and Upcoming Media Partnerships

- March 31, Caroline Stratos, visited Camano Island and Kristoferson Farm for a tour and research trip to pitch her editors at Fodor's, Outside and for her blog, Caroline's Corner.
- May 3-5, Kirsty Papdopolous, visiting Whidbey for a girls' trip for a regenerative travel angle
- May 8-11, Kathryn Wagner, seeking trip support for slow travel themes for pitching to Modern Luxury and The Guardian

Upcoming Press Placements

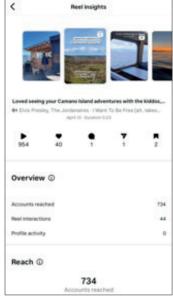
- King 5 New Day Northwest, Wildly Beloved Foods Aurora Echo will be in a featured cooking segment on April 30, highlighting culinary travel to the islands.
- Studio 13, Penn Cove Water Festival Vicky Reyes and one performer will be featured in an upcoming segment on May 16, highlighting the festival.
- Travel + Leisure, feature article on Whidbey Island slated for June issue. Features include Inn at Langley, Briggs Shore Ceramics, Orchard Kitchen, and Deception Pass State Park.
- Caroline Stratos Freelance writer and blogger will be publishing an article on her site Caroline's Corner and is actively pitching content to outlets such as Fodor's Travel and Outside Magazine based off her recent media visit to Camano Island.

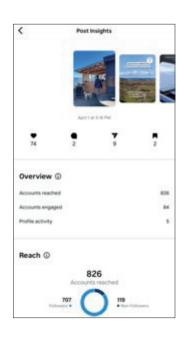
Social Media Objectives

Community management with likes, comments, responses, and interaction on the @GoWhidbeyCamano Instagram page.

Analytics:

IG followers at 3,309 (+62). Most successful posts:







Brand Management and Creative Services

Scott and Kerry Rosenkranz

The Cultural and heritage guides have arrived, and were loaded into the storage unit, thanks to Scott, Kerry and Krista (3 pallets worth). Distribution is well on its way and will be ongoing. At this point all visitor Centers, and Jessica should have plenty on hand. If anyone needs more Just say the word. Beyond that most of the distribution will happen out of the chambers. If there are folks that need guides but can't get to a visitor center, let us know and we will find a way to get guides out to them.

The photoshoot on April 3 and 4, covered 6 locations and used 8 different models. We got some beautiful images for the brand library. These images will feature in our upcoming marketing pieces. A lot of planning coordination, location scouting and more went into this project.



Bowers Bluff looking over Crescent Harbor, Saratoga Passage and Camano Island.



April 2024







Monroe Landing



Eckholm Farm



Film Liaison/Special Projects Support

Laura Hilton

This month we received one new film request (a short) and another expression of interest (a feature). Laura met with the new filmmaker via zoom and established their location needs. She provided four possibilities on Whidbey and reached out to two options on Camano. A scouting trip will be coordinated before the shoot in early summer. A reminder for anyone who is interested in listing their property as a potential filming location to please visit www.washingtonfilmworks.org/locations/list-your-property, especially businesses and home owners on Camano Island.



Laura has been in touch with many local businesses this month about providing locations to a feature planning to film in late summer. She was so pleased at the enthusiastic response and was able to coordinate with the filmmakers to have a busy scouting trip full of great options (early April). Big thanks to all those businesses for their timely responses and helping to create such a vibrant film-friendly culture in our community.

Laura is now working with Jack to refresh the film pages on the Embrace website and also submitted seven new locations to SetJetters this month, promoting film tourism.

Eat Local Month is set to be a roaring success this year, and Laura joined a meeting with Whidbey Island Grown to see how Embrace could partner with this excellent local event. She also attended the County Town Hall meeting about the very sad but necessary closure of Cama Beach cabins. Although these and the Wooden Boats Center are listed in the printed version of the Culture & Heritage guide, the stories online have been updated to reflect the ongoing maintenance and extended closure. Visitors are still encouraged to visit for day trips to the park.

Getting to know you. Getting to know all about you. (Continued from pg 1)

and Recreation/Environment). They will be asked to choose one of three images, which will have a short description, presented for each question. At the end of the quiz, the participant is asked for their email and their "perfect itinerary" will be emailed to them.

The emailed itinerary will offer several options (lodging, food, activities, etc.) for each question, and we will further direct them to our website for expanded information in their area of interest, or for other itinerary ideas. Because the information is served in "real time" we will have the opportunity to modify the responses we provide as we move along, ensuring that we "spread the love" to many businesses and activities.

The quiz will be placed as an A/B test: "Test A" will ask potential visitors to participate in the survey only. "Test B" will have the additional enticement of the participant being entered to win one of three itineraries (based on the original categories.) This will provide us with participation data for future campaigns, allowing us to understand the value of offering an enticement.

In addition to providing us with a rich source of information, on which we can base future targeted communication, the campaign will have the benefit of creating awareness about what we have to offer in Island County, will introduce us to a new audience, and will provide a source of new contacts to add to our email list.



Embrace Program Manager

Krista Loercher

This month included open and direct discussions with the Executive Directors of Camano, Freeland, and Langley Chambers of Commerce that generated project ideas including how to expand a recreate responsibly message and how to communicate regenerative tourism criteria.

The Eat Local Month restaurant week idea has been expanded into a longer and larger campaign that allows more types of

business to participate, from farms to restaurants to coffee stands. It is more inclusive, easier to participate, and is expandable, thus this really ticks more of our regenerative project "pillars."

I also had a very good conversation with the Regional General Manager of Vacasa where she shared visitor and owner frustrations (businesses with limited hours, what to do when the weather isn't good, how to find tradespeople for repair & maintenance). We discussed possible ideas for a Lodging Expo which will follow-up on the gathering last year. Also gave her Trail and Cultural & Heritage guides for distribution in their units on both Whidbey and Camano.

Another highlight this month was learning more about our indigenous community by attending two Whidbey Native Connections meetings and visiting the Hibulb Cultural center for the first time.

ComputerPIX

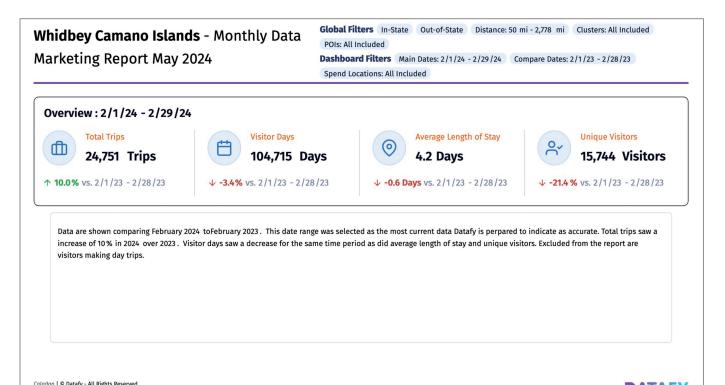
Digital Marketing

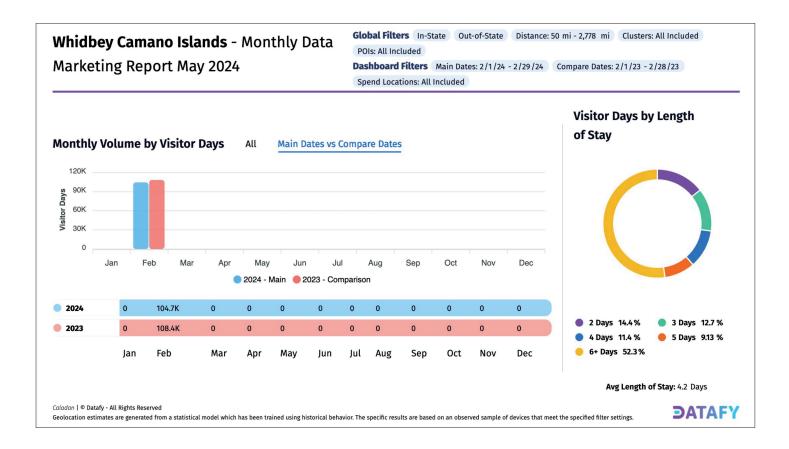
Jack Penland

To try to keep our visitation figures consistent we're presenting the latest month for which we have an entire month's worth of final figures. So the Datafy and Book Direct reports will be a month or two in arrears.

February Visitation Update from Datafy

While 2024's total trips were up 10% over 2023, the number of unique visitors was down 21.4%. This likely indicates repeat visitors and short stays in February. Note: We specifically excluded visitors making day trips from this report.

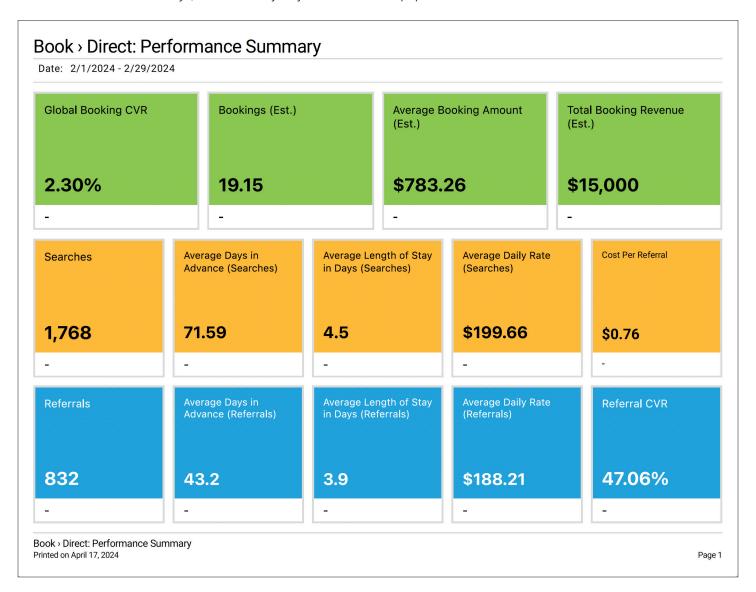


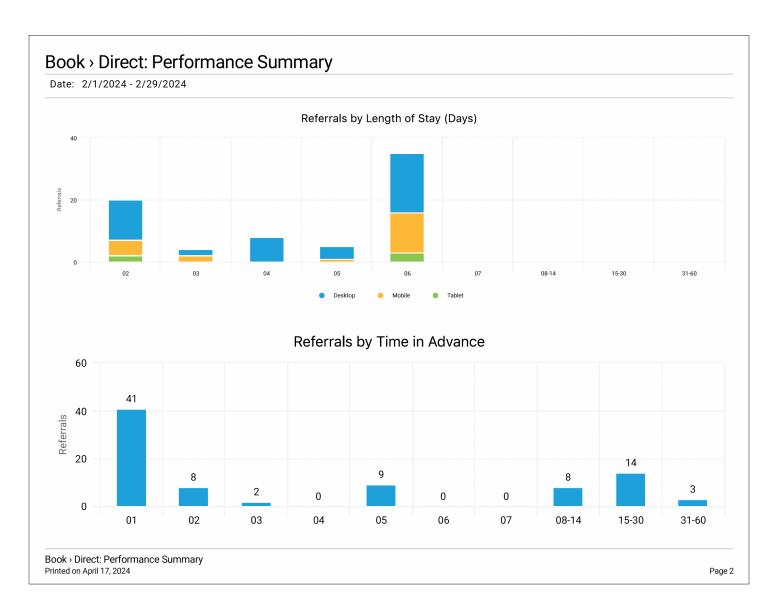


February Booking Update from Book Direct

In February, there were 1768 searches done for lodging through Book Direct, and searches were being done an average of 71+ days in advance and for stays of an average of 4.5 days. As expected, that's more searches than in January.

Most referrals were for six days, with a two-day stay as the next most popular.





Pace Report

New to this monthly report is AirDNA's Pace report. It looks at advance bookings in short-term rentals and compares it to the same date last year. Looking at all of Island County, bookings are somewhat ahead of last year, but rates are down. We also get Pace data for nearby counties and can make comparisons. For example, in May, Island County has 975 listings, up 11% and San Juan County has 706 listings, up 7% from the previous May.

Monthly Pace - Island County

All currency in USD. Entire place properties only.

Contact us at hello@airdna.co

Terms and Conditions

Available Listings

Current Year Previous Year Current vs Previous %

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1054	975	972	912	836	829
847	879	889	875	860	860
24%	11%	9%	4%	-3%	-4%

Booked Listings

Current Year Previous Year Current vs Previous %

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
787	714	723	787	616	377
697	595	626	717	600	377
13%	20%	15%	10%	3%	0%

Occupancy Rate

Current Year Previous Year Current vs Previous %

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
30%	23%	27%	42%	31%	11%
36%	23%	26%	38%	28%	12%
-17%	0%	4%	11%	11%	-8%

Average Daily Rate

Current Year Previous Year Current vs Previous %

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
271	287	351	379	383	338
306	332	386	397	397	351
-11%	-14%	-9%	-5%	-4%	-4%

RevPAR

Current Year Previous Year Current vs Previous %

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
	81	65	95	160	118	38
	111	75	100	152	110	41
Γ	-27%	-13%	-5%	5%	7%	-7%

Supply (Nights)

Current Year Previous Year Current vs Previous %

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
26057	28632	27117	25029	23229	23402
19045	24021	23040	22672	22063	21743
37%	19%	18%	10%	5%	8%

Demand (Nights)

Current Year Previous Year Current vs Previous %

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
7765	6529	7352	10543	7163	2614
6921	5434	5944	8704	6084	2512
12%	20%	24%	21%	18%	4%

Revenue (USD)

Current Year Previous Year Current vs Previous %

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
2105933	1874363	2580249	3992641	2745006	884115
2116391	1804905	2292825	3455418	2417618	880984
0%	4%	13%	16%	14%	0%

Website Acquisition Report

This looks at how our website attracts visitors. You'll see that Google Search is the largest way we get traffic and that the number of searches between March 20 – April 16 was up nearly 19% over a year ago. People are more aware of us.

