

August 6, 2006  
SITKA COLLABORATIVE LONG RANGE TOURISM PLAN  
PRESENTATION DATA

QUESTIONS:

1. Harbor Department-who are the owners, number of users of harbor by visitors, plans-moorage
2. Current resources from Harbormaster / possible development of harbors?
3. Does local government have regulations in place to regulate cruise ship industry?
4. Sitka harbor usage data by time
5. Carrying capacity, which optimizes safety and quality of experience, of harbor system

Mike Litman, presenter

1. Harbor dept.-who are the owners, number of users of harbor by visitors, plans-moorage

I interpreted this question to ask- the demographics of boat owners, the number of transient vessels, the status of any planning of projects. To answer it I interviewed Ray Majeski, the Harbormaster and the harbor office staff; Gary McCarty, the City's Information Systems Director and his staff.

The municipal harbor system contains 1,337 slips in 5 harbors. There is about a mile of "side-tie" (as opposed to finger-tie) transient moorage. There is also the Port Facility bulkhead, which is the sheet pile bulkhead between S.P.C. and the western Petro Marine fuel dock. The slips range from skiff-size up to 125 feet. All the slips are assigned, with waiting lists. Of the 1,337 assigned boats, 710 are commercial, 627 are non-commercial (53%/47%). There is no other information available about the assigned boat owners. The city staff said it would take a lot of work to do more research. Mr. Majeski guessed that ownership would be about evenly split between local and out-of-town.

The variable is the transient usage. The season of heaviest use lasts about a hundred days, from Salmon Derby to September. During that period the harbor staff has to scramble to find space for all the boats. There are transients arriving and departing daily. Mr. Majeski guessed about 60% of them are commercial vessels. There are both long term and daily charters operated from the harbors. The city keeps no data about these boats, distinct from the other users (staff counted about one hundred day-charter boats with assigned slips). The number of cruise ships using the city harbor system has been reported by others.

The harbor department's planning is focused on repair of the harbors, especially Old Thomson and A.N.B. The harbor dept. has no plans for expansion. S.E.D.A., in cooperation with the City and Borough of Sitka, has a request for proposals posted at [www.herringcove.net](http://www.herringcove.net), for a private marina development to be built at Herring Cove.

2. Current resources from harbormaster/ possible development of harbors?

The harbor department is a department of the city. It is operated as an Enterprise Fund, meaning that its operating expenses are covered by revenue collected from its users. The staff consists of 2 full-time permanent maintenance workers, 2 office workers, the harbormaster and a deputy harbormaster, 3 assistant harbormasters and 1 part time seasonal assistant. The department operates:

1. A.N.B. Harbor
2. Sealing Cove Harbor
3. Crescent Harbor
4. Old Thomson Harbor
5. New Thomson harbor
6. Sitka Port facility
7. O'Connell Bridge Lightering Facility
8. Crescent Harbor Lightering Facility
9. Several fish cleaning stations

For more information see answer 1.

3. Does local government have regulations in place to regulate cruise ship industry?

I interviewed John Stein, the city administrator for the answer to this question. He told me that there is no local regulation of cruise ships. Federal law controls the passage of marine traffic. The city can't prohibit their movement. We could regulate landings to municipal facilities. He mentioned that the community has a lot of possible means to encourage or discourage visitors besides regulation or ordinance.

4. Sitka harbor usage data by time

See answer 1 for small boat usage. To this add the cruise ships and their passengers: There are 163 cruise ship visits this year, between May 9 and September 26. It breaks down like so:

Crescent Harbor ships	83	Crescent harbor passengers	121,950
O'Connell ships	<u>73</u>	O'Connell passengers	<u>130,378</u>
Total ships	163	Total passengers	253,126

5. Carrying capacity, which optimizes safety and quality of experience, of harbor system

I don't know of any way to quantify this. Based on my experience as a commercial harbor user (I work at the harbors daily on boat repair projects) as a recreational user and as an island resident who commutes from Crescent harbor, and my talks with the harbor department personnel my impression is that certain parts of the system are at capacity during the 100 day busy season. Crescent harbor and New Thomson harbor are very crowded and busy, to the point that it's hard

for me to do my work there.I'd say it's true for many of the commercial users of those harbors.