



For Immediate Release
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National Tourism Week: Honoring the Spirit of Travel in the San Juan Islands

Friday Harbor, WA... National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3 -- 9, is the annual salute to the positive effects of travel in the U.S. Now, more than ever, is a time to reflect on what visitors bring to the vitality and resilience of the San Juan Islands.

Travel is in our DNA, and the spirit of travel isn't only found in far-off places. When island residents embrace the spirit of travel by supporting local visitor-oriented businesses and helping their neighbors, we are also playing a key role in rebuilding our communities. Communities around the world benefit from the spirit of travel, which permeates through small businesses, unique landmarks, and all those who welcome residents and visitors alike with a smile and hospitality.

It would be hard to imagine San Juan Island without Lime Kiln Lighthouse, or Orcas Island without Moran State Park, or Lopez Island without the National Monument. When the time is right, the travel and tourism industry will be integral to our islands' and nation's recovery—for the economy and jobs. But it is the spirit of travel that will heal our country's morale.

The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau and the Islands' tourism industry recognize that the economic vitality of tourism is only sustainable if our natural beauty, rural character, and watchable wildlife are preserved. A 2018 [tourism impact study](#) by our local land managers supported the fact that visitors come here primarily to take part in low-impact outdoor activities. Visitors who value outdoor ethics such as Leave No Trace will continue to be a target niche when marketing resumes.

With tourism occupying such a significant percentage of the San Juan Islands economy (in 2018, visitors spent over \$251 million in our County), and currently on a 'time out' of sorts, this is a golden opportunity to create a more resilient method of managing tourism. There's no time like the present to evaluate our current standards. A Tourism Management Plan has been on the County's docket since last fall. We encourage you to get involved in the planning process so that tourism moving forward represents the wishes of our whole community.

The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau is the official destination marketing and management organization for San Juan County and Town of Friday Harbor. It represents over 300 island businesses and nonprofits representing local history, arts, outdoor recreation, agri-tourism, and visitor education. Mostly funded by lodging tax paid by visitors, it also receives membership dues and web advertising fees.

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