



Tourism Commission Agenda

Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM
Harrigan Centennial Hall, 330 Harbor Drive

Members: Jeremy Plank, Bethany Lowrance, Carol Bryant-Martin, Devon Calvin,
Vaughn Hazel, Sherri Blankenship, Lillian Feldpausch
Katie O'Neill (ex officio), Amy Ainslie (ex officio), Judson Rusk (ex officio)

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

II. CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 9, 2026

IV. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

B. Cruise Ship Fuel Use and Sustainability Discussions

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(For items ON or OFF the agenda – not to exceed 3 minutes)*

VI. NEW BUSINESS

C. Update on Airport Visitor Survey and question review

D. Review of Draft TBMP Operational Framework

E. Review of TBMP website

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(For items ON or OFF the agenda – not to exceed 3 minutes)*

VIII. ADJOURNMENT



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Meeting Minutes Tourism Commission

Commission Members: Jeremy Plank, Bethany Lowrance, Carol Bryant-Martin, Vaughn Hazel, Devon Calvin, Lillian Feldpausch, Sherri Blakenship

Ex Officio: Amy Ainslie, Judson Rusk

April 9, 2026

6:00 P.M.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chair Plank called the Sitka Tourism Commission meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Sherri Blakenship, Devon Calvin, Vaughn Hazel, Bethany Lowrance, Carol Bryant-Martin, and Jeremy Plank.

Absent: Lillian Feldpausch (Excused).

Ex-Officio Present: Amy Ainslie, P&CD Director, and Judson Rusk, Tourism.

TC Liaisons: Katie O'Neill, Element Agency (Zoom), and Michelle Bowlds, Agnew Beck (Zoom).

Public: Larry Edwards and Rachel Roy.

Secretary Bryant-Martin confirmed a quorum was present.

II. CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Lowrance/S-Hazel moved to approve the minutes dated December 11, 2025, January 15, 2026, and March 12, 2026. The motion passed 6/0 by voice vote.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Update on TBMP branding work

Element Agency representative Katie O'Neill explained that the TBMP program in Sitka will be industry-led and responsive to community and resident concerns by adopting aspects of TBMP programs in Juneau, Ketchikan, Whittier, and Skagway. O'Neill then presented proposed graphics, logos, branding, and other marketing details for Sitka's TBMP program. She asked the commissioners and ex officio members for their feedback before the TBMP website goes live in May. O'Neill explained that the TBMP program logo was designed with the Visit Sitka brand in mind. Rusk will finalize the logo design to present to the commission. No formal business action was taken.

B. TBMP initial key findings

Agnew Beck representative Michelle Bowlds provided an overview of the company's duties for managing the TBMP program, as well as plans to collect economic impact data including visitor and crew spending, business revenue, and information on infrastructure and public services. She explained taking a holistic approach to research by reaching out to other TBMP programs in the state and to inquire about the criteria

for the data they have collected, and how that data is tracked and used. She explained that regenerative and sustainable tourism will be central to the TBMP program's "why" and "how" vision. Bowlds will present plans for a revised TBMP program during the May 14, 2026 meeting. No formal business action was taken.

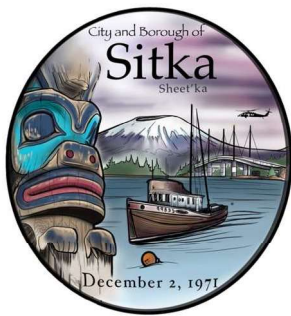
V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Chair Plank recognized Rachel Roy, Executive Director of the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, to speak. Roy stated that she appreciated hearing discussion about plans for the TBMP program and learning that it will be industry-led. She also noted the updates made to the CBS website, which have changed navigation for users. She recommended that city staff provide updates on construction and street closures to help downtown businesses be more proactive rather than reactive before the visitor season starts.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Chair Plank adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Minutes By: Carol Bryant-Martin, Secretary



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Plank, Tourism Commission Members

From: Judson Rusk, Tourism Manager

Date: May 8, 2026

Subject: Cruise Ship Fuel Use and Sustainability Discussions

On May 4, a presentation was given to the Sustainability Commission by Southeast Alaska Conservation Council representative Grant Echohawk regarding cruise ship fuel practices and related environmental concerns. The presentation included information on the use of heavy fuel oil by cruise ships, the operation and impacts of exhaust scrubber systems, and discussion of current state legislation that would require cruise ships operating in Alaskan waters to transition to cleaner fuel sources. The presentation also referenced actions and support from other municipalities regarding this legislation.

No formal action was taken by the Sustainability Commission at that meeting, as the item was presented as a special report rather than a scheduled action item. However, commissioners did discuss whether this topic should be formally added to a future agenda for further consideration. During that discussion, commissioners agreed that because this issue intersects significantly with tourism and the visitor industry, it would be appropriate for the Tourism Commission to also be informed and given an opportunity to provide input on any potential future recommendations or actions.

At this time, this is not an official agenda item before the Tourism Commission. However, I agree that awareness and understanding of the broader conversation is beneficial for this body as discussions continue to develop.

For reference, the audio recording of the May 4 Sustainability Commission meeting is available on the City of Sitka's website under Government > Boards, Commissions, & Committees > Sustainability Commission > Previous Meetings > May 04, 2026 Regular Meeting.

Mr. Echohawk's presentation runs from approximately 1:40–12:11, with commissioner

questions and discussion continuing until 25:53. Additional comments and information related to this topic were presented during the Persons to be Heard portion of the meeting beginning at 1:26:50 and concluding at 1:34:45.

I am currently working with Bri Gabel, CBS Sustainability Coordinator, on a public outreach and informational effort related to this topic. The intent is to host a public webinar-style forum that will present academic research and factual information regarding cruise ship fuel use, scrubber systems, and related environmental considerations. This webinar would be open to the public, and members of the Sustainability Commission, Tourism Commission, and Assembly would all be encouraged to attend.

Following the webinar, the subsequent formal meetings of both the Sustainability Commission and Tourism Commission will include agenda items to discuss whether there is interest in moving forward with any recommendations, policy positions, or other actions related to this topic.

Sitka Airport Survey Summer 2026

1. Where do you live most of the year?

1. Sitka [thank and end]
2. Other Alaska community
3. Other US state
4. Outside of United States

2. <If U.S.> What is your state? [add dropdown list of 50 US states]

3. <If International> What country are you visiting from?

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. Germany
5. India
6. Japan
7. Mexico
8. UK
9. Other _____

4. <If Alaska> Where in Alaska?

1. Juneau
2. Ketchikan
3. Other Southeast
4. Anchorage
5. Mat-Su
6. Fairbanks
7. Other _____

5. What was the main purpose of your Sitka trip?

1. Vacation/pleasure
2. Visiting friends/relatives
3. Business
4. Business/pleasure
5. Medical [thank and end]
6. Seasonal worker [thank and end]

6. How many nights did you spend in Sitka on this trip?

1. Zero [thank and end]
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4-6
6. 7+

7. [BUSINESS ONLY] Did you attend a conference or convention in Sitka during this trip?

1. Yes [Skip to Activities]
2. No [Skip to Activities]

8. [VACATION/PLEASURE ONLY] Did you sail on a cruise as part of this Alaska trip?

1. Yes
2. No

9. Which of the following activities did you participate in during your Sitka trip?

1. Fishing
2. Day cruise/boating
3. City/sightseeing tour
4. Hiking
5. Kayaking
6. Wildlife viewing
7. Parks
8. Museums
9. Festivals/events
10. Alaska Native cultural activities
11. None of the above

10. How did you get around the Sitka area during this trip?

1. Rental car
2. Uber/Lyft
3. Personal vehicle
4. Taxi
5. Hotel bus/shuttle
6. Bicycle/e-bike
7. City bus
8. Walking
9. None of the above

11. What type of lodging did you use during your Sitka trip?

1. Hotel
2. AirBnB/VRBO/etc.
3. Friends/family
4. Fishing lodge
5. B&B
6. Camping
7. None of the above

12. About how much did your traveling party spend on your entire Sitka trip, not including transportation to/from Sitka? Your estimate should include lodging, tours, food, gifts/souvenirs, and local transportation.

1. \$ _____
2. Don't know

13. Which of the following methods did you use to book your Sitka trip?

1. Airline websites
2. Lodging websites
3. Cruise website
4. Car rental websites
5. Tour operator websites
6. Travel websites (Expedia, Travelocity, etc.)
7. Travel agent
8. Directly over phone
9. None of the above
10. Didn't book my travel

14. How many friends/family members/colleagues are you traveling with?

1. None (traveling alone)
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5+

15. What is your age?

1. Under 25
2. 25-34
3. 35-44
4. 45-54
5. 55-64
6. 65+

16. What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other
4. Prefer not to say

17. Are you traveling with children under 18 in your party?

1. Yes
2. No

18. Which of the following categories best describes your annual household income?

1. <\$50,000
2. \$50,001 to \$75,000
3. \$75,001 to \$100,000
4. \$100,001 to \$125,000
5. \$125,001 to \$150,000
6. \$150,001 to \$200,000
7. More than \$200,000
8. Declined

19. Do you have any suggestions for how Sitka can improve the visitor experience?

1. No suggestions
2. _____

Thank you for your help! Have a great trip!

(redirect to: VisitSitka.org)

Memo

To: Sitka Tourism Commission

From: Agnew::Beck Consulting

Date: May 6, 2026

Re: Copy of TBMP Guidelines for Reference

Dear Chair Plank and Members of the Tourism Commission,

Agnew::Beck Consulting and Element Agency have collaborated to develop a plan to operationalize Sitka's TBMP Program during the 2026 tourism season. During the May Tourism Commission Meeting, we look forward to presenting and discussing a draft of the TBMP Operational Framework. The Operational Framework outlines key processes and identifies the roles and responsibilities of TBMP program administrators, program advisors and member organizations. The TBMP Operational Framework is a compliment to the TBMP Guidelines, and the Operational Framework is intended to help implement the Guidelines. The TBMP Guidelines are a set of standards and practices that members agree to follow, including the education of employees. Our team is in the process of updating the TBMP Guidelines and will be presenting an updated draft at the June Tourism Commission meeting for feedback and review.

While the TBMP Guidelines have not been fully updated yet, a copy of the most recent draft has been included in the May meeting packet materials as a reference for purposes of revieweing the Operational Framework. Our team will not be presenting the details of the TBMP Guidelines at the May meeting but wanted to share the Guidelines to aid in the overall discussion around the TBMP Operational Framework.

We look forward to sharing a revised draft of the TBMP Guidelines with the Tourism Commission and having a more robust conversation around the content included in that document in June.

TBMP Operational Framework

OPERATIONALIZING SITKA'S TOURISM BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (TBMP) PROGRAM

Prepared for the City and Borough of Sitka Tourism Commission

May 2026 Tourism Commission Meeting Update



AGNEW
::BECK

Today's Topics

- The Operational Framework and the role it plays in program implementation
- Program Governance and Structure
- Membership Enrollment, Compliance and Incentives
- TBMP Concern Hotline Operations
- TBMP Guideline Management and Updates

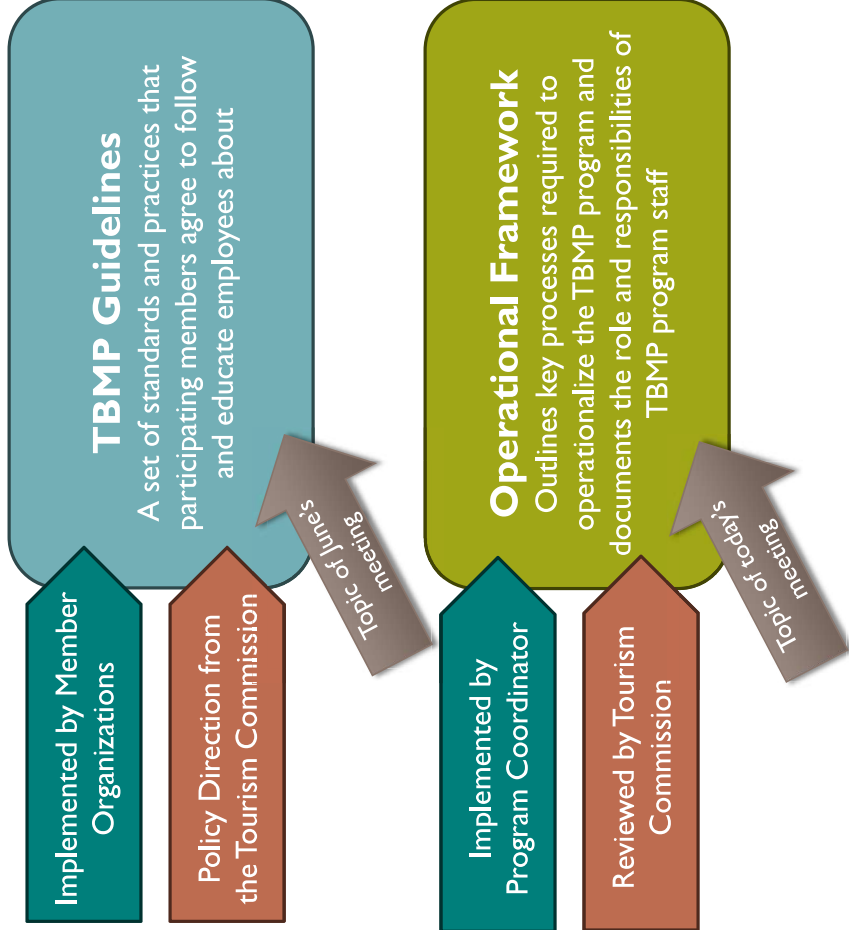
TBMP Operational Framework

The Backbone of the TBMP Program

Grounding Principals and Program Goals

- Sitka's TBMP program is a **cooperative effort** of Sitka tour operators, cruise lines, transportation providers, merchants, hospitality businesses, and the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS), administered by Visit Sitka, the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) in partnership with the Sitka Tourism Commission.
- In its inaugural year, the program will focus on **establishing foundational systems, onboarding members, and building community trust** before expanding in future seasons.

Two Guiding Documents



- Sitka's TBMP Guidelines were originally developed by the Sitka Tourism Task Force in 2023
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska had provided feedback and proposed edits, some of which could easily be incorporated into the TBMP Guidelines that are rolled out for the 2026 Tourism Season
- The Tourism Commission is responsible for recommending and reviewing updates to the TBMP Guidelines on an annual basis

- Draft of Operational Framework shared with Tourism Commission during May 14th meeting
- **Program Management Tool** that outlines program governance and structure, membership requirements, program compliance, concern hotline operations, monthly reporting standards, and TBMP Guidelines Management
- Intended to be updated annually to stay in alignment with TBMP Guidelines but has less of a formal review process

TBMP Program Implementation Process

Tourism Commission Finalizes TBMP Guidelines

- Initial Guidelines based off 2023 Tourism Task Force recommendations
- Feedback from Sitka Tribe of Alaska incorporated
- Guidelines updated annually based on feedback from members and recommendations from program staff

In Progress: Update Draft Guidelines will be presented at June Meeting

Finalize Operational Framework

- Guiding document for program implementation
- Adjusted annually based on prior year experience and program staff feedback

In Progress: Collecting feedback on draft and will finalize prior to June Meeting

Set up Concern Hotline

- Phone/Voicemail- a dedicated TBMP phone number
- Email- a dedicated TBMP email address
- Web form- a submission form on the TBMP webpage
- Update TBMP Guidelines and Operational Framework with contact information

Not Yet Started: Will be setting up/testing concern hotline infrastructure in June

Recruit Member Organizations

- Recruit member organizations to participate in TBMP inaugural season
- Share TBMP Guidelines with perspective members and community partner

In Progress: Actively recruiting member for 2026 inaugural season! Formal enrollment will take place after TBMP Guidelines are finalized

Program Governance and Structure

City and Borough of Sitka

Tourism Commission

CBS Tourism Manager, Judson Rusk

↓ Provides policy direction and plays advisory role to implement Visit Sitka ↓

Visit Sitka
Destination Marketing Organization

↑ Contractor support to implement Visit Sitka ↑

Element Agency

- Management of Visit Sitka Brand
- Liaison to CBS Tourism Commission
 - Develop Marketing Plan
- Meeting, Convention and Event Support Services
 - Visitor Information Resources
- TBMP Program Implementation (Program Coordinator)

Agnew::Beck Consulting

- Operationalize and Manage TBMP Program
 - Economic Data Collection
 - Annual Visitor Intercept Survey

TBMP Program Roles

Program Home: Visit Sitka

The Sitka TBMP is housed under Visit Sitka, the official DMO for the City and Borough of Sitka. Visit Sitka provides administrative infrastructure, staffing, and communications support for the program.

Role of Tourism Commission

The Sitka Tourism Commission plays an active advisory role in TBMP program, particularly in the annual review cycle.

TBMP Program Coordinator

The TBMP Program Coordinator is a part-time, seasonal position housed within Visit Sitka. The position reports to Visit Sitka Administrator and is the main point of contact for member organizations.

Membership Enrollment, Compliance and Incentives

Enrollment Process

The Program Coordinator will send a TBMP introduction and membership invitation to businesses by the end of February each year. This invitation will include:

- **TBMP Guidelines.** Guidelines will be updated and finalized for the upcoming tourism season by the end of February each year.
- **TBMP Member Agreement.** This form must be completed annually for an organization to enroll in the TBMP program. It states that the organization has received and reviewed the most recent version of the TBMP Guidelines and collects contact information for the TBMP membership directory.
- **Employee Partnership Agreement.** This form asks employees of member organizations to agree to honor the TBMP Guidelines to the best of their ability during the upcoming tourism season. Employee Partnership Agreements can be submitted after the TBMP Member Agreements to accommodate seasonal staffing timelines.

While the businesses are encouraged to enroll by April 15 to guarantee inclusion in all advertising incentives, enrollment will be accepted at any time of year. Enrollment in the TBMP program is good for one season/calendar year and businesses must re-enroll each year

**For the inaugural season, enrollment will be accepted through September 2026 to increase awareness of the TBMP program and build an initial membership base.*

TMBP Member Database

The TBMP membership database, maintained by the Program Coordinator, will be used to track member enrollment, populate the Membership Directory on the TBMP website and coordinate responses to concerns received through the TBMP hotline.

At minimum, this database will capture:

- Business name, type, and primary contact
- Mailing address, phone, and email to be published via the TBMP membership directory
- Date enrolled for current season
- Signed TMBP Member Agreement
- Signed TBMP Employee Partnership Agreements
- Points of contact for concerns received via TBMP hotline
- If the member is in or out of compliance with TBMP program standards
- Notes on any prior season concerns or issues

Member Compliance

Members are considered compliant with the program if they accomplish the following:

- Signed and returned a TBMP Member Agreement for the most current tourism season.
- Signed and returned a TBMP Employee Partnership Agreement from the most current tourism season.
- Respond to any concerns or complaints received through the TBMP hotline within three business days of being notified by the TBMP Program Coordinator.

If a business does not comply with the requirements of responding to concerns and complaints, the TBMP Program Coordinator will follow up with the member business as appropriate to encourage compliance.

The TBMP Program Coordinator may decide to omit a member business from end of season advertising incentives if they respond to complaints outside of the three-day response window more than three times in one season or if they fail to address a complaint all together, even one time during the season.

Member Incentives and Recognition

Enrolled and compliant member organizations are automatically enrolled or guaranteed the following advertising and recognition incentives for the inaugural 2026 season:

- Automatic enrollment as a Visit Sitka partner and a listing on visitsitka.org (if not already a partner)
- One guaranteed social media feature on Visit Sitka Facebook or Instagram
- TBMP verified badge on visitsitka.org website listing
- TBMP verified badge on Visit Sitka Official Visitors' Guide directory listing

At the conclusion of each season, the TBMP Program Coordinator will prepare and distribute a Certificate of Appreciation for all TBMP member organizations. The certificate artwork could evolve annually. This certificate should be in digital format that companies can post on their website and/or socials and a paper certificate that can be placed in the business.

TBMP Concern Hotline Operations

Creating a pathway for communication between community members and operators

Hotline Operations

The TBMP concern hotline accepts submissions through three channels: phone/voicemail, email, and website form

**The goal for the inaugural season is to have all three of the concern hotline channels operational by the end of June 2026.*

During the active season, the TBMP Program Coordinator should check all three channels each business day and:

- Enter all submissions into the hotline response database.
- Forward concerns to the relevant operator(s) primary contact with a request to respond to the complainant and copy the TBMP Program Coordinator in the response within three business days.
- Log operator responses in the hotline response database

Monthly Reporting

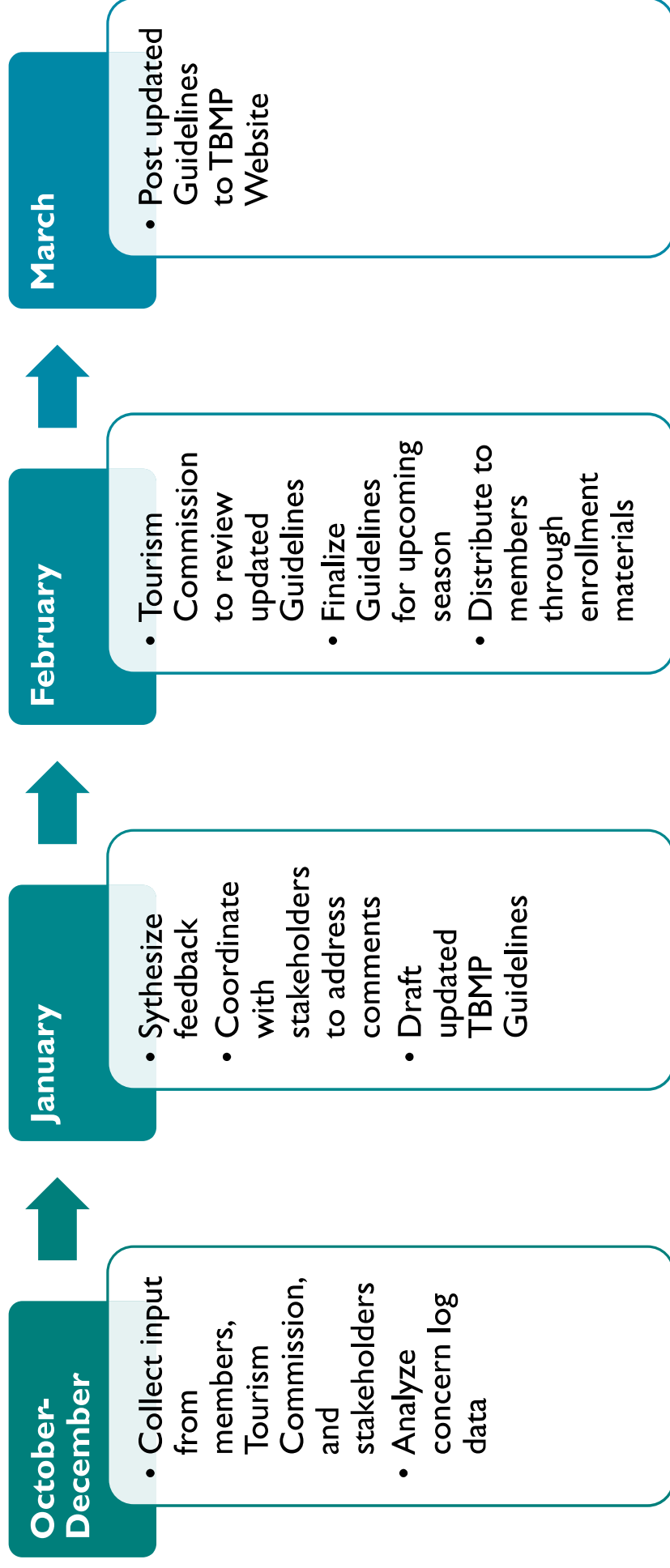
Report	Description
Hotline Log	Daily log of each submission for the reporting period, including concern summary and operator response status.
Calls by Category and Repeat Callers	Summary of submissions by concern category; flags repeat callers or repeat complaints toward the same operator or issue.
Year-Over-Year Category Comparison	Tracks calls by category and month and compares to prior season once data is available. (<i>Available starting in 2027 tourism season</i>)

- The TBMP Program Coordinator will generate three reports from the concern database each month. Personal information such as names, phone numbers and email addresses will be redacted or removed from monthly reports to protect the hotline caller's anonymity.
- Completed monthly reports will be distributed to all active TBMP members, the Tourism Commission, and the CBS Tourism Manager. Reports will also be posted on the TBMP website so that they can be viewed by the public

TBMP Guidelines Management

The TBMP Guidelines are a living document that should be updated annually. It is distinct from this Operational Framework —as it contains the actual behavioral standards that members agree to follow.

Annual Update Process



Pre and Post Season Meetings

Pre Season Meeting: Member organizations are asked to send at least one representative to an annual pre-season meeting held each March to review the updated TBMP Guidelines and any programmatic changes for the upcoming tourism season. *During the inaugural 2026 season, the TBMP Program Coordinator will review the TBMP Guidelines and Operational Framework with members individually.*

Post Season Meeting: The TBMP Program Coordinator will reach out to member organizations at the end of the season to collect feedback on the program and any edits or recommended updates to the TBMP Guidelines for the following season. Additionally, the Tourism Commission will provide an opportunity for public comments and feedback on the TBMP program during their regularly scheduled meeting in November each year.

Questions or Comments?

Please don't hesitate to follow up via email with any additional thoughts or questions: Michelle@agnewbeck.com

SITKA

Tourism Best Management Practices

Operational Framework · 2026 Inaugural Season

A Program of Visit Sitka

The inaugural season of Sitka's Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program will begin in earnest in June 2026, midway through the 2026 tourism season. The goal of the program during its inaugural year is to establish operational processes, build program awareness among operators and community members and lay the foundation for future program years to iterate off of. The following operational framework has been developed around a full calendar year and may be adjusted slightly to accommodate the mid-season start during the TBMP programs inaugural season.

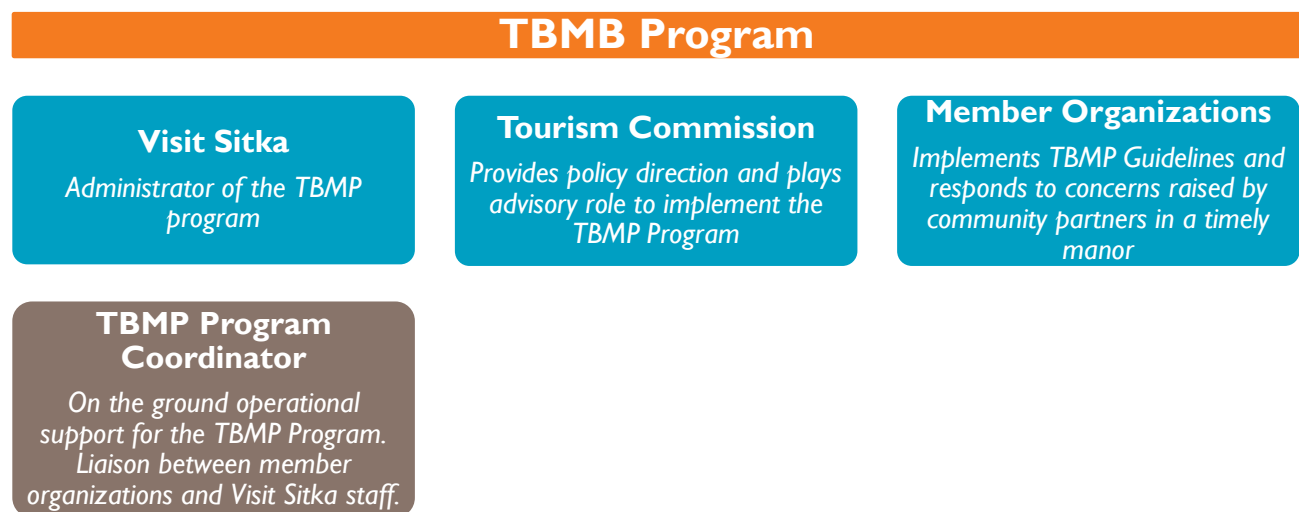
1. Mission and Purpose

Sitka's Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) is a program designed to minimize the impacts of tourism in a manner that addresses both resident and industry concerns while enhancing visitors' experiences in Sitka. Sitka's TBMP program is grounded in a set of guidelines that represent a holistic approach to tourism that proactively works to improve ecosystems, elevate local economies, and promote meaningful and responsible visitor experience. The TBMP guidelines are intended to be a living document that will continue to be refined to reflect new information, changing circumstances and evolving community goals.

The program is a cooperative effort of Sitka tour operators, cruise lines, transportation providers, merchants, hospitality businesses, and the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS), administered by Visit Sitka, the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) in partnership with the Sitka Tourism Commission.

In its inaugural year, the program will focus on establishing foundational systems, onboarding members, and building community trust before expanding in future seasons.

2. Program Governance & Structure



2.1 Program Home: Visit Sitka

The Sitka TBMP is housed under Visit Sitka, the official DMO for the City and Borough of Sitka. Visit Sitka provides administrative infrastructure, staffing, and communications support for the program.

2.2 Role of the Sitka Tourism Commission

The Sitka Tourism Commission plays an active advisory role in TBMP program, particularly in the annual review cycle. Commission responsibilities include:

- Reviewing TBMP guidelines annually and recommending additions, changes, or deletions
- Providing community perspective on tourism impacts and concerns
- Reviewing end-of-season hotline data and concern trends
- Supporting public outreach and community engagement

2.3 Program Coordinator

The TBMP Program Coordinator is a part-time, seasonal position housed within Visit Sitka. The position reports to Visit Sitka Administrator and is the main point of contact for member organizations.

Core responsibilities:

- Serve as the primary voice of the TBMP program with members and the community
- Manage membership database and distribute and collect enrollment forms
- Operate and monitor the TBMP concern hotline during the tour season
- Enter and track all concern submissions in the program database
- Notify operators of concern and ensure timely responses
- Prepare and distribute monthly concern reports to members and the Tourism Commission
- Post reports and program updates to the TBMP webpage and social media
- Support the annual guideline review process

3. Membership

3.1 Who Can Join

TBMP membership is open to any business operating in the Sitka visitor industry, including but not limited to:

- Tour and attractions operators
- Retail businesses serving visitor clientele
- Restaurants
- Shuttle, van and taxi operators
- Other businesses or organizations with tourism-related activities
- Cruise ship docking facilities and cruise lines.

Membership is free of charge.

3.2 Enrollment Process

The Program Coordinator will send a TBMP introduction and membership invitation to businesses by the end of February each year. This invitation will include:

- **TBMP Guidelines.** Guidelines will be updated and finalized for the upcoming tourism season by the end of February each year.
- **TBMP Member Agreement** (see appendix A). This form must be completed annually for an organization to enroll in the TBMP program. It states that the organization has received and reviewed the most recent version of the TBMP Guidelines and collects contact information for the TBMP membership directory. TBMP Member Agreements must be completed and returned by April 15 to guarantee inclusions in TBMP membership directory for that year's tourism season but can be collected throughout the season to bolster program participation.
- **Employee Partnership Agreement** (see appendix B). Member organizations will be asked to educate employees around the TBMP Guidelines. This form asks employees of member organizations to agree to honor the TBMP Guidelines to the best of their ability during the

upcoming tourism season. Employee Partnership Agreements can be submitted after the TBMP Member Agreements to accommodate seasonal staffing timelines.

- **Advertising and Recognition Incentives.** Information about advertising and recognition incentives available to TBMP members in the upcoming tourism season will be shared with business at the beginning of each season. Member organizations must complete and return both the TBMP Member Agreement and Employee Partnership Agreement to be eligible for member advertising and recognition incentives.

While the businesses are encouraged to enroll by April 15 to guarantee inclusion in all advertising incentives, enrollment will be accepted at any time of year. Enrollment in the TBMP program is good for one season/calendar year and businesses must re-enroll each year **For the inaugural season, enrollment will be accepted through September 2026 to increase awareness of the TBMP program and build an initial membership base.*

Participating organizations who successfully complete the TBMP Member Agreement and Employee Partnership Agreement will be listed on the TBMP Member Directory TBMP website and included in other promotional materials. Decals will be issued to partners for placement on tour vehicles and storefronts. Partners may include the TBMP logo in their own promotion.

3.3 Member Database

The TBMP Coordinator will maintain a membership database. The TBMP membership database will be used to track member enrollment, populate the TBMP Membership Directory and coordinate responses to concerns received through the TBMP hotline. At minimum, this database will capture:

- Business name, type, and primary contact
- Mailing address, phone, and email to be published via the TBMP membership directory
- Date enrolled for current season
- Signed TBMP Member Agreement
- Signed TBMP Employee Partnership Agreements
- Points of contact for concerns received via TBMP hotline
- If the member is in or out of compliance with TBMP program standards
- Notes on any prior season concerns or issues

3.4 Compliance

Members are considered compliant with the program if they accomplish the following:

- Signed and returned a TBMP Member Agreement for the most current tourism season.
- Signed and returned a TBMP Employee Partnership Agreement from the most current tourism season.
- Respond to any concerns or complaints received through the TBMP hotline within three business days of being notified by the TBMP Program Coordinator.

If a business does not comply with the requirements of responding to concerns and complaints, the TBMP Program Coordinator will follow up with the member business as appropriate to encourage compliance. Based on communications with the member business, the TBMP Program Coordinator has discretion to determine if and when a member business is “out of compliance” and will note the reasoning in the TBMP member database. The TBMP Program Coordinator may decide to omit a member business from end of season advertising incentives if they respond to complaints outside of the three-day response window more than three times in one season or if they fail to address a complaint all together, even one time during the season.

4. Concern Hotline Operations

4.1 Hotline Channels

The TBMP concern hotline accepts submissions through three channels. All must be active and tested before April 15 each year:

- Phone/voicemail – *[ADD- dedicated TBMP phone number]*
- Email – *[ADD- dedicated TBMP email address]*
- Web form – *[ADD- URL for submission form on the TBMP webpage]*

**The goal for the inaugural season is to have all three of the concern hotline channels operational by the end of June 2026.*

4.2 Daily Hotline Routine (April 15 – October 1)

During the active season, the TBMP Program Coordinator should check all three channels each business day and:

- Enter all submissions into the hotline response database.
- Forward concerns to the relevant operator(s) primary contact with a request to respond to the complainant and copy the TBMP Program Coordinator in the response within three business days.
- Log operator responses in the hotline response database

4.3 Concern Entry in Hotline Database

For each submission, record:

- Date received and submission channel (phone/email/web)
- Concern category (e.g., pedestrian/crosswalk, wildlife viewing, noise, emissions, littering, etc.)
- Repeat callers and repeat concerns
- Summary of the concern
- Name of operator(s) notified and date notified
- Operator response and date received

5. Monthly Reporting

5.1 Reports to Prepare Each Month (May – September)

The TBMP Program Coordinator will generate three reports from the concern database each month. Personal information such as names, phone numbers and email addresses will be redacted or removed from monthly reports to protect the hotline caller's anonymity.

Report	Description
Hotline Log	Daily log of each submission for the reporting period, including concern summary and operator response status.
Calls by Category and Repeat Callers	Summary of submissions by concern category; flags repeat callers or repeat complaints toward the same operator or issue.
Year-Over-Year Category Comparison	Tracks calls by category and month and compares to prior season once data is available. <i>(Available starting in 2027 tourism season)</i>

5.2 Report Distribution

The TBMP Program Coordinator will distribute completed monthly reports to all active TBMP members via a monthly email. Monthly reports will also be shared with the Tourism Commission through their monthly meeting packets during the tourism season and sent directly to the CBS Tourism Manager. Additionally, monthly reports will be posted on the TBMP website so that they can be viewed by the general public.

6. Annual Program Calendar

The following calendar outlines key tasks by month that the Visit Sitka staff and TBMP Program Coordinator will be responsible for managing. This framework is based on a typical calendar year and will be adjusted during the inaugural 2026 to account for a mid-season start date. Tasks and timelines will be refined as the program matures.

October – November (End of Season)

- Complete final end-of-season hotline report and distribute it to all stakeholders
- Begin collecting suggestions for TBMP Guideline revisions from member organizations, the Tourism Commission, CBS Tourism Manager, and other key stakeholders. Set deadline to receive feedback (December 31)
- Run season's-end advertising acknowledging/celebrating TBMP members, thanking community member for their input and notifying community the hotlines are no longer active for the season
- Post-season community feedback will be collected at a designated Tourism Commission Meeting after the conclusion of the tourism season

December

- Contact USFS regarding any updates to Wilderness Best Management Practices (WBMP) for incorporation into TBMP guidelines
- Send reminder to stakeholders about December 31 deadline for TBMP Guideline revisions/suggestions

January

- Compile and synthesize updates to the TBMP Guidelines. Summarize edits and coordinate with stakeholders to address comments when necessary.
- Draft updated TBMP Guidelines for the upcoming season
- Update the TBMP Member Agreement and Employee Partnership Agreements for the new season
- Identify and document TBMP member advertising and recognition incentives for upcoming tourism season

February

- Share draft of updated TBMP Guidelines with Tourism Commission for review and feedback before finalizing
- Send initial membership renewal invitations and update TBMP Guidelines to perspective member organizations

March

- Update TBMP Operational Framework to align with edits made to the TBMP Guidelines (if needed)
- Post finalized TBMP Guidelines and Operational Framework to TBMP website
- Host pre-season TBMP member meeting to review updated TBMP Guidelines and any programmatic changes for the upcoming tourism season
- Continue membership enrollment follow-up

April

- Test concern hotline – verify phone, email, and web form are operational
- Set up TBMP hotline promotional ads (radio, digital, social)
- Confirm TBMP member database is up to date before season opens (April 15 target)
- Distribute decals and member materials

May-September (Tourism Season)

- Prepare and publish monthly TBMP hotline reports
- Monitor TBMP hotline daily and follow up with members for response when needed

7. TBMP Guidelines Management

The TBMP Guidelines are a living document that should be updated annually. It is distinct from this Operational Framework –as it contains the actual behavioral standards that members agree to follow.

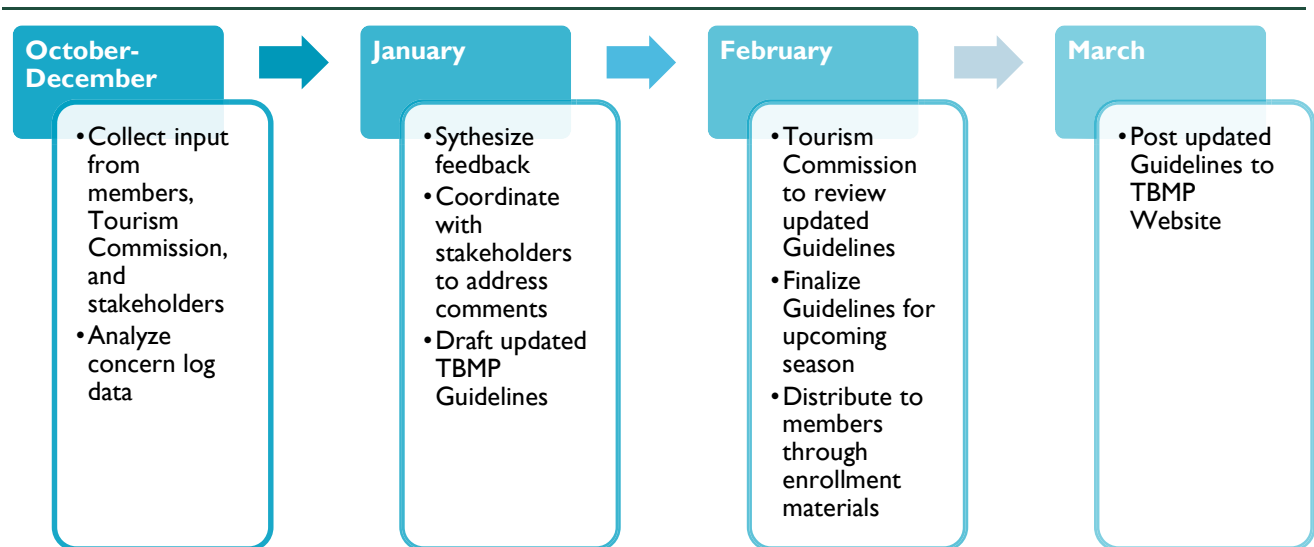
7.1 Annual Update Process

At the end of each tourism season, Visit Sitka staff will collect feedback from member organizations, the Tourism Commission, CBS staff and other key stakeholders around potential updates to the TBMP Guidelines. Visit Sitka staff will synthesis this feedback and propose revisions to the TBMP Guidelines for the upcoming season. Visit Sitka staff will coordinate with stakeholders to address comments when necessary and draft updated TBMP Guidelines for the Tourism Commission to review prior to being finalized. TBMP Guidelines should be finalized before distributing to members with other enrollment materials and posted to the TBMP website prior to the start of the tourism season each year (March).

7.2 Pre and Post Season Meetings

Member organizations are asked to send at least one representative to an annual pre-season meeting held each March to review the updated TBMP Guidelines and any programmatic changes for the upcoming tourism season. During the inaugural 2026 season, the TBMP Program Coordinator will review the TBMP Guidelines and Operational Framework with members individually.

Following the conclusion of the tourism season, the TBMP Program Coordinator will reach out to member organizations to collect feedback on the program and any edits or recommended updates to the TBMP Guidelines for the following season. Additionally, the Tourism Commission will provide an opportunity for public comments and feedback on the TBMP program during their regularly scheduled meeting in November each year.



8. Communications and Advertising

8.1 Website

The TBMP program will have a dedicated webpage. At minimum, the page should include:

- TBMP Program mission and description
- Current season's TBMP Guidelines (PDF download)
- TBMP Member Agreement Form (PDF download)
- TBMP Employee Partnership Agreement Form (PDF download)
- Current member director
- Hotline information and submission form
- Monthly reports archive

8.2 Member Directory

Maintain a publicly accessible member directory on the webpage, organized by business type. Members with websites should be hyperlinked. The TBMP Program Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining and updating the member directory as new members join throughout the season.

8.3 Advertising

TBMP advertising in the inaugural season should focus on building community awareness of the hotline and the program's purpose. Recommended channels:

- Radio – KCAW and other local Sitka stations
- Digital – Sitka Sentinel online, social media (Facebook at minimum)
- Promote the hotline number/email at the start of season and periodically during the summer

9. Member Recognition and Incentives

Enrolled and compliant member organizations are automatically enrolled or guaranteed the following advertising and recognition incentives for the inaugural 2026 season. Member incentives will be implemented by the TBMP Program Coordinator:

-
- Automatic enrollment as a Visit Sitka partner and a listing on visitsitka.org (if not already a partner)
 - One guaranteed social media feature on Visit Sitka Facebook or Instagram
 - TBMP verified badge on visitsitka.org website listing
 - TBMP verified badge on Visit Sitka Official Visitors' Guide directory listing

At the conclusion of each season, the TBMP Program Coordinator will prepare and distribute a Certificate of Appreciation for all TBMP member organizations. The certificate artwork could evolve annually. This certificate should be in digital format that companies can post on their website and/or socials and a paper certificate that can be placed in the business.

Appendix A: TBMP Member Agreement

Sitka Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) Program Member Agreement

Dear Tourism Best Management Practices Participants and Supporting Partners:

On behalf of Sitka's business community, we invite your organization to sign on to Sitka's 2026's Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program. Sitka's TBMP program is designed to minimize the impacts of tourism in a manner that addresses both resident and industry concerns while enhancing visitors' experience in Sitka. The program is a cooperative effort of Sitka tour operators, cruise lines, transportation providers, merchants, hospitality businesses, and the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) that is administered by Visit Sitka, Sitka's official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) in partnership with the Sitka Tourism Commission.

As Sitka's visitor industry has grown, so have concerns about impacts to the community. By actively participating in this voluntary program, member organizations demonstrate their commitment to addressing key community concerns.

Members agree to implement, to the best of their ability, appropriate best practices - including but not limited to what is captured in the TBMP Guidelines - in their own policies, standard operating procedures, and staff training. Members also agree to address, in a timely manner, issues or concerns raised by other participants, community members, the Tourism Commission, and other stakeholders.

Organizations that enroll in Sitka's TBMP program during the inaugural 2026 season will receive the following recognition and incentives:

- TBMP Member decals for placement on tour vehicles and storefronts
- Listing on TBMP Member Directory (listed on Sitka's TBMP Webpage)
- Automatic enrollment as a Visit Sitka partner and a listing on visitsitka.org (if not already a partner)
- One guaranteed social media feature on Visit Sitka Facebook or Instagram
- TBMP verified badge on visitsitka.org website listing
- TBMP verified badge on Visit Sitka Official Visitors' Guide directory listing
- End of season Certificate of Appreciation (in digital and physical formats)

TBMP Membership is free of charge but to enroll in the program organizations must complete the following:

1. Read the TBMP Program Guidelines
2. Return a signed and completed copy of TBMP Member Agreement (this document)
3. Return a signed and completed copy of the Employee Partnership Agreement

Please review 2026 Sitka TBMP Guidelines for an outline of full member expectations and benefits

By completing and signing this Member Form, you are confirming that you have read the TBMP Guidelines and agree to implement them to the best of your abilities during the 2026 tourism season. Please sign and return this letter to Victoria Wright (victoria@elementagency.us) no later than **July 1, 2026**. Please keep a copy for your records.

Thank you for your support and commitment to Sitka.

Business/Organization Name

Representative Name

Representative Signature

Date

Contact Information for Member Directory

Business Name	
Mailing Address	
Email	
Web (URL)	
Phone	
Social Media	

TBMP Program Point of Contact

Who would you like to receive emails concerning TBMP concerns/complaints and general information? *(This should be a contact or contacts who will be able to regularly check their email and respond promptly to any concerns we forward to you.)*

Name and title:

Email: _____
Phone: _____

Any additional contact information in case the first point of contact is unavailable:

Name and title:

Email: _____
Phone: _____

Name and title:

Email: _____
Phone: _____

Appendix B: Employee Partnership Agreement

Sitka Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) Program Employee Partnership Agreement

As an employee of

operating in Sitka, I certify that I have read the and fully understand Sitka's Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) Program Guidelines.

To demonstrate my personal commitment to making the visitor season as enjoyable as possible for visitors and residents alike, to the best of my ability I will honor the guidelines as outlined in this program. Further, I will convey to my fellow employees in the visitor industry the importance of operating our businesses in a manner that is both responsible and sensitive to neighborhood concerns.

Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date
Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date
Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date
Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date
Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date
Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date
Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date
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Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date
Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date
Employee Name Printed	Employee Signature	Date

**Attach more signature pages as needed*



SITKA'S TOURISM BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (TBMP)

Program Guidelines

Administered by Visit Sitka, Sitka's Official Destination Marketing
Organization, in partnership with the Sitka Tourism Commission

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Introduction

Sitka and Baranof Island, Alaska is Lingít Aaní, ancestral homeland of the Tlingít people who have been practicing their culture and way of life on these lands and waters since time immemorial. Gunalchéesh to the Tlingít people for their stewardship of this land.

The Sitka Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program was developed through a collaborative process that included community input and is modeled after the TBMP program first established in Juneau, 25 years ago. Ketchikan and Skagway have also modeled their TBMPs after Juneau's program. The Sitka TBMP is a voluntary compliance program for partners and organizations in the City and Borough of Sitka. Our TBMP is intended to be a living document that strives to establish guidelines that represent a holistic approach to tourism that proactively works to prevent negative impacts of tourism on local ecosystems, elevate local economies, uplift local culture, and promote meaningful, responsible, and culturally relevant visitor experience.

These guidelines do not replace applicable City, State, or Federal regulations.

As Sitka's visitor industry has grown, so have concerns about impacts to the community. Organizations are invited to sign-on to participate as Partners of the TBMP. By actively participating in this voluntary program, Partners demonstrate their commitment to addressing key community concerns.

Partners agree to implement, to the best of their ability, appropriate best practices - including but not limited to the guidelines of the TBMP - in their own policies, standard operating procedures, and staff training.

Partners also agree to address, in a timely manner, issues or concerns raised by other partners, community partners, the City and Borough, and other governmental agencies.

Partners comprise anyone signing on to the program, including tour and attractions operators, retail businesses serving visitor clientele, restaurants, shuttle, van, and taxi operators, other businesses or organizations with tourism-related activities, cruise ship docking facilities, and cruise lines.

Sitka's TBMP program is administered by Visit Sitka, the official Destination Marketing Organization for Sitka, in partnership with the Sitka Tourism Commission. Visit Sitka provides administrative infrastructure, staffing, and communications support for the program. The City & Borough of Sitka (CBS) Tourism Commission plays an active advisory role in the TBMP program, particularly in the annual review and development of the TBMP Guidelines.

TBMP Program Membership

Who Can Join?

TBMP membership is open to any business operating in the Sitka visitor industry, including but not limited to:

- Tour and attractions operators
- Retail businesses serving visitor clientele
- Restaurants
- Shuttle, van and taxi operators
- Other businesses or organizations with tourism-related activities
- Cruise ship docking facilities and cruise lines.

How to Enroll

The TBMP Program Coordinator will send a TBMP introduction and membership invitation to businesses by the end of February each year. This invitation will include:

- **TBMP Guidelines.** Guidelines will be updated and finalized for the upcoming tourism season by the end of February each year.
- **TBMP Member Agreement.** This form must be completed annually for an organization to enroll in the TBMP program. It states that the organization has received and reviewed the most recent version of the TBMP Guidelines and collects contact information for the TBMP membership directory. TBMP Member Agreements must be completed and returned by April 15 to guarantee inclusions in TBMP membership directory for that year's tourism season but can be collected throughout the season to bolster program participation.
- **Employee Partnership Agreement.** Member organizations will be asked to educate employees around the TBMP Guidelines. This form asks employees of member organizations to agree to honor the TBMP Guidelines to the best of their ability during the upcoming tourism season. Employee Partnership Agreements can be submitted after the TBMP Member Agreements to accommodate seasonal staffing timelines.

This information will also be available on the TBMP website. While the businesses are encouraged to enroll by April 15 to guarantee inclusion in all advertising incentives, enrollment will be accepted at any time of year. Enrollment in the TBMP program is good for one season/calendar year and businesses must re-enroll each year

**For the inaugural season, enrollment will be accepted through September 2026 to increase awareness of the TBMP program and build an initial membership base.*

Member Recognition and Incentives

Participating organizations who successfully complete the TBMP Member Agreement and Employee Partnership Agreement will be listed on the TBMP Member Directory TBMP website and included in other promotional materials. Decals will be issued to partners for placement on tour vehicles and storefronts. Partners may include the TBMP logo in their own promotion.

Enrolled and compliant member organizations are automatically enrolled or guaranteed the following advertising and recognition incentives for the inaugural 2026 season. Member incentives will be implemented by the TBMP Program Coordinator:

- Automatic enrollment as a Visit Sitka partner and a listing on visitsitka.org (if not already a partner)
- One guaranteed social media feature on Visit Sitka Facebook or Instagram
- TBMP verified badge on visitsitka.org website listing
- TBMP verified badge on Visit Sitka Official Visitors' Guide directory listing

At the conclusion of each season, the TBMP Program Coordinator will prepare and distribute a Certificate of Appreciation for all TBMP member organizations. The certificate artwork could evolve annually. This certificate should be in digital format that companies can post on their website and/or socials and a paper certificate that can be placed in the business.

Program Compliance

Members are considered compliant with the program if they accomplish the following:

- Signed and returned a TBMP Member Agreement for the most current tourism season.
- Signed and returned a TBMP Employee Partnership Agreement from the most current tourism season.
- Respond to any concerns or complaints received through the TBMP hotline within three business days of being notified by the TBMP Program Coordinator.

If a business does not comply with the requirements of responding to concerns and complaints, the TBMP Program Coordinator will follow up with the member business as appropriate to encourage compliance, even if the 3-day window passes. Based on communications with the member business, the TBMP Program Coordinator has discretion to determine if and when a member business is “out of compliance” and will note the reasoning in the TBMP member database. The TBMP Program Coordinator may decide to omit a member business from end of season advertising incentives respond to complaints outside of the three-day response window more than three times in one season or if they fail to address a complaint all together, even one time during the season.

General Agreements for All TBMP Partners

Sitka TBMP partners strive to provide a positive experience for our visitors while providing practical and innovative steps to ensure tourism can have a positive impact on both the community and the environment. Partners, organizations and individuals who wish to be recognized as TBMP compliant will abide by the agreements and standards set forth in the handbook and/or posted on a Sitka TBMP website.

Shared Vision & Purpose

Vision: “To authentically share our ways of life with the world.”

Purpose: "To celebrate and strengthen our ways of life through the cultivation of a regenerative visitor economy that will benefit our whole community."

Visitor Pledge

Partners agree to share, and encourage their guests to take, this visitor pledge:

I recognize that I am a guest of this Indigenous place, whose people have stewarded these lands and waters through a deep connection since time immemorial.

As a guest, I will:

- Honor the vibrant and diverse cultures, values and traditions of this place.
- Demonstrate respect for our living culture and ways of life including lands, artifacts, songs, language, and traditions.
- Respect all living beings, their homes, and the environments that support them. If I choose to hunt, fish, or gather, I will only take what I can use.
- Agree to be properly prepared, appreciative and open to the unique rhythms of nature and weather, understanding that all things are interconnected.
- Support Alaskans in maintaining their ways of life by connecting with and purchasing from local artists, producers and businesses.

General Practices

Partners agree to observe the following practices:

- Conduct business in a legal and ethical manner and not engage in business practices that could be damaging to others, the community, or the environment.
- Emulate the highest standard of customer service.
- Take responsibility to ensure that visitors and community members are treated with courtesy and respect, in such a way as to leave a positive impression on them.

- Accurately describe our products and services to address any safety, health related, legal or physical restrictions that customers should be aware of and to provide complete information on pricing, duration and location of tours and activities.
- Recognize it is in all our best interests to serve the needs and desires of the customer; and if our product is not appropriate, direct them to the service that best meets their needs.
- Strive to be good ambassadors of the community with accurate knowledge of the
- history, culture, and locations of public amenities such as post office, bus stops, museums, restrooms, and government buildings.
- Refrain from interfering while adhering to all local, state, and federal regulations with sport, commercial, and subsistence harvest activities.

Training

Partners agree to train all employees on the TBMP program and guidelines along with its standard employee training. Employees of participating partners will be required to sign a “**TBMP Employee Partnership Agreement**” certifying that the employee has read, understands and agrees to abide by the Tourism Best Management Practices guidelines applicable to his/her job description. Employees should be able to model the TBMP values in a way that sets the tone for all visitor engagement throughout their time in our community.

This could be achieved by posting the visitor pledge in public view, or seeking other creative and meaningful ways to incorporate the components of the TBMP into the visitor experience.

Cultural Protocols

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) asks that all partners agree to ensure respectful and accurate representation of Alaska Native culture by completing scheduled training, using reliable sources for interpretation, and disclosing the origins of retail items. STA expects all partners to recognize, honor, and strive to embody the following guiding cultural values:

Haa Aani (Our Land): We honor our land and oceans by utilizing them for food, medicines, and not over extracting. High respect and value are placed on stewarding our land, oceans, and culture. We add to the balance of the environment by problem-solving rather than adding to the current problems.

Haa Latseen (Our Strength, Leadership): We lead by example. We foster an attitude of willingness to adapt to changing times while maintaining our ancient values. We are open to new methods while still upholding to the values that have seen us through both challenging and prosperous times.

Haa Shuka (Our Past, Present, Future): Indigenous knowledge is considered a deep well. We continue to draw from our elders’ experience and wisdom, all the while maintaining an insatiable curiosity about new ways to improve and strengthen our communities. We invest in education because our future lies with our children.

Wooch Yax (Balance, Reciprocity, Respect): Respect and care for all people and all things. We take the time to care, listen, practice patience, and hold each other up. We honor and share our cultural lifestyle, knowing that it promotes healing and well-being for our communities.

Contact Name

Partners agree to provide the TBMP hotline administrator with a contact name, telephone number, and email address.

Work Sessions

Partners agree to participate in periodic work sessions to discuss progress made in attaining program goals.

Community Meetings

Beginning in 2027, all TBMP partners agree to send a representative to an annual preseason community meeting to:

- Identify problem areas where traffic and pedestrian congestion creates conflicts.
- Identify areas of concern to residents.
- Formulate strategies to mitigate or avoid conflicts in these areas and measure the effectiveness of the mitigation strategies.
- Review and address feedback from the community/public that was received throughout the prior year.

Partners also agree to attend a postseason community meeting beginning in 2026 to review the summer and note opportunities for improvement.

Response to TBMP Hotline

Partners agree to respond within three (3) business days to calls and emails received via the Tourism Best Management Practices Hotline.

- Partners will provide the TBMP Hotline Administrator with a summary of their response. Callers will be asked to communicate as much information as possible, including:
- Name of participant business and/or staff member,
- Description of the aircraft, watercraft, or vehicle,
- Vehicle number if applicable,
- Date and approximate time of observation.

Callers will also be asked to leave a name, phone number, and/or email address so the partners can follow up. In addition, callers are also encouraged to provide positive feedback via the hotline to recognize partners who are following the guidelines and operating their business in a courteous and neighborhood-friendly manner.

Self-monitoring

All partners agree to strengthen their self-monitoring efforts through collaboration. Partners are also encouraged to support and guide other participants who may not be following the TBMP guidelines, helping them improve their compliance. These actions honor the spirit of TBMP and ultimately help all companies reduce tourism impacts in the community.

Ongoing Training of Employees

Partners agree to provide periodic training and coaching for their employees, to reinforce compliance with the guidelines that pertain to their operations.

Litter and Recycling

All TBMP partners are expected to be familiar with and comply with the anti-litter ordinance outlined in Sitka's General Code, Chapter 9.10. Partners are strongly encouraged to commit to a recycling program which is effective for their individual size and type of business. The City and Borough of Sitka, along with commercial property owners, are asked to ensure adequate receptacles are available throughout the community for proper disposal of smoking material and trash.

Cleaning and Sanitation Protocols

All TBMP partners agree to maintain and update as needed, procedures for staff and guests to maintain infection control and mitigate the potential transmission of highly contagious viral diseases such as Norovirus Gastroenteritis and

COVID-19 coronavirus. Partners will train staff and monitor policy implementation and agree to comply with all applicable local, state and federal regulations.

Wildlife Protocols

All partners agree to:

- Dispose of and secure trash in a manner that does not attract wildlife.
- Report concerning bear activity to the police department or State of Alaska Troopers.
- Refrain from feeding or baiting wildlife of any kind and comply with the Sitka General Code Chapter 8.10.050 Fighting or Baiting of Animals.
- Be familiar with and adhere to Department of Fish and Game guidelines and procedures.
- Watch for signs of distressed wildlife as recommended by Alaska Department of Fish and Game guidelines on wildlife harassment. *Gen code reference*

Alaska's Smoke Free Workplace Laws

All partners comply with City and State laws pertaining to smoking in and around the workplace.

Accessibility

To better serve the number of visitors arriving in Sitka each year with limited mobility and/or visual or hearing impairments, TBMP partners agree to establish "best practice" objectives to provide these visitors with a quality experience. SAIL (SE Alaska Independent Living) provides the following suggestions:

- Consider how best to make accommodation for customers with limited mobility and/or a visual or hearing impairment, as appropriate to their operation.

- Include accessibility information in tour/activity descriptions and have it readily available for those seeking details (i.e. how many steps? How long of a walk? Are necessary service companions given complimentary space?).
- Train all employees in accessibility awareness, including how to accommodate requests for various types of assistance (mobility, hearing, visual, etc.), how to provide excellent customer service to those with disabilities or impairments, and when to seek additional support.
- Maintain clearances for wheelchairs or walkers.

Privacy and Security

Partners will train staff to handle customer data, including but not limited to personal identification, credit/debit card numbers, security codes, and other sensitive information are handled with the utmost care. These measures are intended to safeguard privacy and to minimize potential risk of identity theft.

Emergency Procedures

Partners are expected to have relevant policies and procedures and ensure staff are trained to aid customers in the event of an emergency.

TBMP Program Contacts

Contact will be added to final draft including:

- TBMP Program Coordinator (phone and email)
- TBMP Hotline (phone, email, web)
- TBMP Website (URL)

Transportation and Vehicles

Commercial passenger vehicles are required to comply with all applicable City, State, and Federal laws and regulations that pertain to the operation of commercial vehicles on public roadways.

For purposes of this program, “vehicles” include motor coaches, buses, mini-buses, limos, vans, trolleys, taxis, motorcycles, airporters.

Residents should be aware that tour vehicles are sometimes used for non-tour activities, including charters, government service contracts, school field trips and charity work. While this program focuses on tour activities, operators agree to conduct all activities in a courteous manner and to emphasize these guidelines during pre-season training.

School Zone Safety Protocols

All companies agree to exercise heightened caution in school zones, including watching for children when approaching crosswalks, stopping for school buses, and strictly observing school zones and posted speed limits.

Downtown Traffic/Staging

All companies utilizing staging areas should be aware of times when congestion into and out of these lots will be at peak level. Dispatchers and drivers will assist in promoting efficient traffic flow in the area by managing vehicle movements in a courteous manner and by yielding to other vehicles and users as necessary.

Traffic Flow

Drivers agree not to impede normal traffic flow by slowing down or stopping except in designated turnouts and/or drop-off zones. They will not pull over in bike lanes or walking paths or on the shoulder of roads. Drivers will be especially attentive to not slow down or stop when transiting intersections or main roadways.

Empty Tour Vehicles

Drivers agree to not park or idle in designated loading zones unless they are actively loading or unloading guests on tour or in a designated staging area.

Vehicle fluids and Emissions

Drivers of ALL VEHICLES agree to monitor any engine oil and/or fluid leaks and excess emissions/ black smoke when operating throughout the road system. This includes monitoring at all staging/loading zones, docks and attractions, as well as venues. Should any vehicle exhibit a leak of a substantial nature or visible emissions in excess, the operator should be prepared to immediately pull the vehicle from service until repaired. Any vehicle exhibiting signs of a mechanical failure should pull over immediately at the next safe location for repairs. This is to ensure vehicle failures do not block public rights-of-way. Vehicles should be appropriately maintained to limit excess noise or emissions.

Engine Idling

Drivers of ALL VEHICLES agree to turn engines off at every reasonable opportunity when loading and unloading passengers and/or when staging in the various loading zones, staging areas and tour venues throughout Sitka. Vehicles should not sit with engines idling while actively loading, unloading, or waiting for passengers to arrive. Engines should be started only when the vehicle is ready to move, and thereafter, only when the vehicle is in motion or in traffic. Exceptions include safety related issues, including vehicles that may need to idle in order to defog windshields and windows, situations where vehicles with air brakes may need to idle to build air pressure or when weather requires engines to remain on for guest comfort.

Noise Abatement

Drivers of ALL VEHICLES agree to NOT use Compression Braking (commonly known as Jake Braking, Engine Braking, etc.) in the City and Borough of Sitka, except in emergency situations. Bells and Public

Address (PA) systems should not be utilized in any tours unless the noise is restricted to the cabin of the vehicle.

Transiting Residential Neighborhoods

Drivers agree to avoid transiting residential neighborhoods within the City and Borough of Sitka unless conducting a specific pick-up or drop-off in the immediate vicinity or a known commercial activity, including Katlian and Jeff Davis Streets. Drivers of vehicles with capacities for 35 or more guests agree to not utilize Jeff Davis Street with the exception of public transportation. It is expected that tours do not divert off the main road system to bypass traffic.

ADA Zones Not for Staging

Drivers utilizing equipment with a wheelchair lift will use the designated ADA zones only for active loading and unloading and not for staging of vehicles.

Safety Backing

All motor coaches, buses, mini-buses and vans will take special care when backing out of loading/unloading zones. When preparing to back up, drivers should be aware of the backup beepers and the sound they make and should strive to spend as little time as possible in reverse. Drivers should only shift into reverse when they are ready to commence backing to minimize beeper sounds.

Safety on Roadways

Drivers will use caution when encountering pedestrians, cyclists, and animals on narrow roadways, bike lanes, and school zones throughout the city. Companies will incorporate these safety considerations into their driver training programs. Drivers should operate with courtesy at all times, exercise extra caution when approaching crosswalks, and be familiar with changing or reduced speed limits in downtown and highway areas. Operators are required to use headsets or Boom microphones and NOT handheld microphones. By law and in the interest of safety, all operators agree to abide by Sitka's **no cell phone** policy when their drivers are operating a vehicle except in the case of an emergency. Particular care shall be taken in areas frequented by children and families such as the Crescent Harbor Playground.

Resource Scheduling

Operators agree to assign vehicles to scheduled tours and transfers in a manner which efficiently maximizes the use of all vehicles on duty. The number of vehicles and type of equipment will be assigned to a tour or transfer based on capacity needs on a given day. Operators will collaborate with partners/vendors to find opportunities to reduce negative impacts whenever possible.

Training of Schedulers

Operators will train all schedulers to take advantage of synergies that are present in the Sitka tourism transportation industry. Schedulers should strive to better serve their constituents and community stakeholders by minimizing vehicles on the road whenever possible.

Crossing Guards

Crossing Guards may be positioned in strategic locations in order to promote safety and facilitate vehicle and pedestrian movement. TBMP members should be mindful of their presence and obey their instructions.

Identifiers for All Shuttle and Tour Vehicles

Operators agree to ensure all vehicles are easily identifiable with the company name and vehicle number on both sides and on the rear that are clearly visible from a reasonable distance and even while the vehicle is moving.

Local Recreation Areas

On days when there is heavy public use and parking availability is limited, drivers agree not to use popular local recreational areas such as Sandy Beach or the Halibut Point Recreation area as tour destinations.

As always, Operators are responsible for abiding by Alaska State Statutes governing operation of vehicles on state roadways including but not limited to stopping, standing or parking on highways, unlawful obstruction or blocking traffic, and pedestrians on highways.

Rental Vehicles/Vessels

Including scooters, Turo, e-bikes, boats, personal watercrafts, other non-motor-powered watercraft such as kayaks

All renters have a responsibility to inform and educate on safety and proper use. It is the responsibility of the owner to share the TBMP Guidelines with all renters. For purposes of trail systems, we consider e-bikes a motorized vehicle.

Flightseeing (Fixed Wing, Floatplanes & Helicopters):

Flightseeing operations are subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and operational requirements. Mt. Edgecumbe landing trips are also subject to US Forest Service permit requirements. Although the following guidelines are designed to minimize noise, safety and flight operations take precedence over noise abatement procedures. Operators will conduct pre-season training in a manner which emphasizes these guidelines.

Routes and Aircraft Identifiers

Operators agree to provide the following to TBMP administrator who will make the information available to interested partners of the public:

- Established flight routes

- Common factors influencing route choice, such as weather, turbulence and traffic.
- Aircraft colors or other distinguishing characteristics useful in identifying individual operators.

Seaplane Floats

Commercial use is permitted from the seaplane float. Operations for commercial use of seaplane float is managed and regulated by the Sitka Harbor Department

Altitude

Operators follow voluntarily agreed upon routes for tour flights and do not operate above residential areas within the road system.

Fly Neighborly

Helicopter operators agree to conduct flightseeing tours in accordance with the Helicopter Association International (HAI) Fly Neighborly Program. The Fly Neighborly Program is a voluntary noise reduction program designed to be implemented worldwide by local helicopter operators, large and small. Additional information on this program can be viewed on the HAI website— www.rotor.com

Operating Times

Operators agree not to schedule flightseeing tour departures before 7:30a.m. or after 7:00 p.m. and to complete all tour flights by 8:00 p.m. Operators agree to minimize tour support operations outside of these hours. Operators agree to take the same care to minimize their impact during non-tour flight operations.

Wildlife Viewing

Operators conducting air tours within the Sitka area agree to minimize impacts to backcountry users and wildlife. Operators will not circle, hover, harass or decrease altitude for wildlife viewing. Flightseeing operators also agree to avoid key mountain goat kidding areas.

Walking, Hiking, Bicycling Tours

Commercial use of public trails may be permitted on some municipal, State Parks, National Forest, and National Park lands. All commercial use of public land requires permitting from the managing government/agency.

Permitted use

Commercial operators are responsible for understanding public land ownership and obtaining permits from each agency. Operators agree to follow group size regulations and avoid crowding on trails.

Identifiers for Tour Guides

All operators agree to ensure tour guides are easily identifiable and that company names are visible on guides' attire and company vehicles.

Peer enforcement

All operators agree to report unpermitted commercial use to the appropriate public land manager. A list of permitted operators is available from each agency.

Trail Conditions & Maintenance

Operators agree to report trail conditions and trail abuse to appropriate regulatory agencies. Operators agree to educate guides on basics of trail maintenance standards to adequately detect emerging issues of erosion and damage.

Operators using public trails are encouraged to annually dedicate at least one paid day for an employee to support a trail maintenance project, led by the agency or Sitka Trail Works.

Noise Abatement

All tour operators agree to monitor the volume and use of their microphones and outside speakers in a manner which reduces their impact on others.

Resource Protection

Operators agree to protect the environment by encouraging clients not to litter, walk off trail, cut switchbacks, or otherwise damage vegetation and soils adjacent to trails. Operators agree to train guides in *Leave No Trace* principles and encourage an ethic of care for the land.

State Highways (Halibut Point Rd and Sawmill Creek Rd)

Cycling guides agree to instruct clients to use bike lanes and ride single file to the right side of the right lane. A guide will always be in the lead to make sure that clients descend hills at a safe speed. Efforts will be made to keep groups as close together as safely possible.

Bikes and E-bikes

Operators agree to provide each bike rider with a card listing safety precautions including hand signals for bikers, use of sound signal to alert pedestrians and pets of their approach, yielding to all pedestrians, exercise care to avoid colliding with other persons or vehicles, and other biking rules of the road.. Operators agree to install bells on e-bikes to alert pedestrians and pets of their approach. Operators will encourage riders to use the bike lanes and travel on the right-hand side of the road. Operators will encourage bikers to wear helmets and other safety gear, such as bright colors or reflective clothing. Reference: AS 28.05.011

Safety on Roadways

Drivers will take caution when encountering pedestrians, cyclists, and animals on narrow roadways, bike lanes and school zones throughout the city and companies will take this into consideration during their driver training programs. Drivers should strive to operate in a manner which exhibits common courtesy throughout their daily travels, such as paying attention to biker hand signals, slowing down and giving at least three feet of space to pedestrians.

Trailhead Parking

Operators agree to use all trailhead parking in a courteous and responsible manner and to pay special attention to independent users.

Yield to Other Users

Guides agree to instruct clients to yield to all other users on commercially used trails.

Sitka National Historic Park

In order to keep the Park safe for all users, riding bikes or e- bikes on trails within Sitka National Park is expressly prohibited by Park rules.

Cruise Ships

Emission Standards

All cruise vessels agree to comply with the Marine Vessel Visible Emissions Standards (18 AAC 50-.070) and take all available and reasonable steps to minimize stack effluents on approach to, departure from and while in port in Sitka. Adhere to DEC permit. All cruise vessels agree to notify City officials if their emissions systems testing is not operating correctly.

Southeast Alaska Voluntary Waterway Guide: All Cruise ships agree to follow the guidelines included in the Marine Safety Task Force's [*Southeast Alaska Voluntary Waterway Guide*](#).

P.A. Announcements, Signals and Outdoor Entertainment

Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska (CLAA), Cruise Line Industry Association-Alaska (CLIA Alaska) and individual cruise lines will work to minimize vessel announcements, whistle signals, and outdoor entertainment (movies and use of music, bands or DJ) while docked or anchored within the City of Sitka. Cruise ships are also asked to monitor their outside speakers, announcements and entertainment on approach to and departure from Sitka. Cruise Line Agencies and cruise lines will ensure that shipboard staff understand the importance of this specific guideline. Certain signals and announcements are necessary and required by the US Coast Guard or are necessary for safety reasons.

Courteous use of vessel floats

Cruise ship tender operators agree to use the designated floats at Crescent Harbor or at the O'Connell Bridge Dock in a safe and responsible manner.

Tender operators also agree to minimize their wake on approach to and in the harbors, and to operate in a manner which exhibits common courtesy to all others.

Port No Wake Zone

Cruise ships and their lightering tenders are required to comply with No Wake requirements. Operators are responsible for their wakes.

Marine Tour Operators, Fishing Charters, Water Taxis and Kayak Tours

Marine tour operators and charter/sportfishing operators will take all available and reasonable steps to minimize impacts to coastal residents, other vessel operators, and marine mammals and other wildlife. Vessel operators will strive to minimize the impacts of their wake on other watercraft, docks and beaches throughout Sitka area coastal waterways, including popular crabbing and recreational boating grounds.

Rules of the Road

Marine tour operators agree to adhere to all applicable USCG rules of the road during operation.

Noise Abatement

Marine tour operators agree to monitor the volume and use of their onboard PA systems and outside speakers in a manner which reduces the impact on residents and recreational boaters.

Marine Mammal Viewing

Marine Operators will follow all applicable federal regulations regarding marine mammal viewing and actively participate in Whale Sense, who establishes guidelines surrounding the viewing of marine mammals. To that regard, each operator will ensure the following:

- Become a member of the Whale Sense organization.
- Ensure all licensed operators have conducted the required annual training as part of the Whale Sense program.
- Ensure all standard operating procedures are in line with the guidelines and regulations established by Whale Sense.

Whale Sense website: <https://whalesense.org/>

Alaska Humpback Whale Approach Regulations:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-09-08/pdf/2016-21278.pdf>

Port No Wake Zone

Marine sightseeing/tour vessels and charter fishing boats are required to comply with No Wake requirements. Operators are responsible for their wakes.

Vessel Engine Idling

All marine vessel operators (including charter fishing captains) agree to minimize engine idling at every reasonable opportunity. This includes loading and unloading of passengers and/or when standing-by in vessel loading zones. In the interest of reducing emissions, whenever it is deemed safe and prudent by vessel captains, engines should be turned off. Engines should not be started until the vessel is ready to get underway.

Downtown & Retail Partners

All partners agree to comply with City and Borough of Sika Municipal Code Chapter 14.20 and 14.30 regarding commercial sign and advertising devices and obstruction of sidewalks, as applicable.

Buildings and Grounds

Merchants will be responsible for keeping their locations neat and welcoming, to include monitoring sidewalks immediately in front of their establishment, sweeping as needed and picking up and properly disposing of litter. Merchants will not place their business' accumulated daily refuse into street-side, public refuse containers.

Seasonal merchants

In order to promote safety and a welcoming feeling in downtown during the winter months are asked to utilize ways to brighten up their storefronts in the off season when the business is shut down and refrain from covering windows with brown paper.

Consider keeping display windows lit (preferably with LED or other energy-efficient lighting).

Sales Tactics

Merchants and their employees agree to:

- Cooperate with municipal employees including but not limited to police, downtown ambassadors, crossing guards, public works, planning department and revenue staff.
- Refrain from handing out flyers or leaflets outside of their place of business and not engaging in sidewalk hawking or any other disruptive or aggressive physical behavior in order to lure potential customers.

- Refrain from displaying misleading signage or advertising and agree not to post stickers or signage in their windows indicating “cruise ship preferred or guaranteed shopping venue.”
- Refrain from reproducing and displaying logos for any cruise line without the line’s express written permission.
- Refrain from using false advertising (going out of business, closing soon, product origin, etc.) as a sales tactic.
- Adhere to the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 for truth in advertising to protect Alaska Native intellectual property

Appendices- Resources

TBD: add relevant resources, contact



Dear Tourism Commission Members,

The draft Tourism Best Management Practices website is now available for Commission and community review:

<https://ops4247.wixstudio.com/sitkatbmpdev>

Please note that this site is currently in a development environment. It is being shared at this stage to gather feedback from the Tourism Commission, community members, and other interested partners before the site is finalized and published.

The goal of this review period is to make sure the website is clear, useful, and reflective of Sitka's needs as the Tourism Best Management Practices program continues to take shape.

A few items are still in progress and will be updated in June, including the Guidelines page and final contact information. Additional refinements may also be made as feedback is received.

Commission members and community members are encouraged to review the draft site and share comments, questions, or suggested edits. Feedback received during this period will help inform updates before the website is finalized.

Thank you,

Katie O'Neill | Contract Manager Visit Sitka
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