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**FW: VITF**

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From: Bob Janes  
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2026 9:24 AM  
To: City Clerk <city.clerk@juneau.gov>  
Subject: VITF

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

Sent from my iPad

Dear Madam Mayor and Members of the Juneau Tourism Task Force,

35 years ago, Gastineau Guiding Company was founded to provide outdoor experiences to passengers from the cruise lines that visit our community. We began as a small shore excursion operator, taking guests on nature walks. In 2004 Gastineau Guiding became one of the few tour operators to venture into Whale Watching. Along with the population of local "Juneau" whales, which has grown approximately 5% per year for the past few decades, we grew as well.

To address impacts, Gastineau Guiding became one of the founders of TBMP, and since then has remained involved in developing annual Guideline additions.

In 2023, Gastineau Guiding was instrumental in the formation of SEAWWA (Southeast Alaska Whale Watching Association). We have worked diligently over the past two years to find ways to address our impacts on both the whales and the Juneau public. We have developed guidelines regarding operating distances around whales, numbers of boats viewing any group of whales, traveling speeds, and most recently, guidelines relating to transiting the Coglin Cut .

Gastineau Guiding has employed thousands of people, both young and older over the past 30 years. Many are, or have become permanent residents. We now employ a year-round staff of eight, a seasonal staff of 120, and bring back at least 70 return seasonal employees every year, many whom remain in Juneau throughout the winter and have been assimilated into the permanent workforce.

Gastineau Guiding is a supporter of Alaska Heat Smart, donating thousands of dollars each year, which are then allocated to heat pump installation in local low income households.

Because the work is never finished, Gastineau Guiding will continue working with other Operators to update TBMP Guidelines. We advocate for sensible limited entry to the Whale Watching fleet, and encourage a formal vessel wake study so that different companies can become more aware of their wake impacts.

Tristin Gibbs, a returning guide, sums up the excitement we are all feeling as we prepare for the coming

season:

" Coming into my second year of work with Gastineau Guiding, I still show up every day ecstatic and energized, looking forward to the new and unique day that lays ahead of me. The work community and environment is the most uplifting and engaging setting I have ever had the pleasure to call myself a part of. Seeing my managers, coworkers, and guests truly does fill me with a fresh sense of pleasure and satisfaction, along with the feeling of being valued for my day-to-day work."

We ask the Task Force to please consider the community value of our industry when weighing the difficult decisions ahead.

Thank you for your service to the community,

Bob Janes  
Gastineau Guiding