

Adam Zack

From: Janet Knowles <janet@moeraki.com>
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To: Vacation Rental Comments
Subject: vacation rental regulation

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August 17, 2021

Dear Members of the San Juan County Planning Commission:

There has been a huge increase over the years in the number of permits issued for San Juan County for vacation rentals. How bad do things have to get before these numbers are not only capped but reduced?

In the recent July meeting, it was shared that permits will be limited to 520 for San Juan Island and limited to 500 permits for Orcas Island.

However Orcas Island is much smaller by population than San Juan Island. So why are the permit numbers virtually the same?

Probably the most important and glaring omission is impact - impact study for the environment including maintaining the rural character of the islands, impact on the infrastructure and impact on access to services including the State Parks.

We bought property in 1999 on Orcas and began living here full time in 2005. In the summers today, it no longer resembles the island that attracted us to move here. It is overrun with tourists and not in a good way.

The restaurants and shop owners will on the one hand say how happy they are with all the business but have had to reduce their hours open due to lack of available short term workers - ie - the workers have no place to live.

You only need to look around America to see that other areas have gotten out of control by the same issues that we are experiencing and are now having to scale back - and that's really hard to do. It's appearing out of control in our County as well and will take making some hard decisions to rein in our permits to bring it back to a workable number. The longer this correction takes to happen will adversely impact how much worse things will get in our County.

Our hopes are that the Commission will take the necessary corrective action before it's too late.

Sincerely,

Janet Knowles
John Finlay
Orcas Island, WA