

ST GEORGE ISLAND

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Working Paper - Sustainable Tourism

June 2019

Community Feedback and Opportunity Summary



70% of residents support the idea of developing ecotourism opportunities (e.g. reindeer hunting trips).



50% of residents are interested in jobs or training created as a result of ecotourism opportunities, with 27% saying they need more information.¹

OPPORTUNITIES	Potential - Jobs	Additional Notes / Benefits
<i>Build on our current assets (promote ecotourism, develop reindeer hunt)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 – 4 seasonal and part-time local jobs without developing harbor, ferry, or marine sanctuary • 1 full-time, 6 – 8 part-time seasonal jobs with new harbor, ferry, and marine sanctuary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently 1 part time local job on island • Currently less than \$5,000 in benefits • Potential for less than \$30,000 in benefits without developing harbor, ferry, or marine sanctuary • Potential for \$60,000 - \$150,000 in benefits with new harbor, ferry, and marine sanctuary
<i>Develop our own ecotourism business: community ecolodge and programming</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – 2 full time jobs, 7 – 10 part time jobs with new harbor, ferry, and marine sanctuary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for \$150,000 - \$500,000 with new harbor, ferry, and marine sanctuary

¹ Community survey of adults living on St. George. May 2019. (n = 28)

St. George Economic Development Working Papers are early efforts to pull together the best available information for future decisions on St. George. These should be seen as partial, incomplete, and in need of your feedback. We are looking to those who care about St. George to provide corrections and better information so these can be updated for final recommendations and reporting.

Thank you to everyone that has provided their input so far.

To provide feedback, additional information, comments, or questions about this Working Paper, please contact stgeorgeeconomicdevelopment@gmail.com or visit our website at www.stgeorgealaska.org. We look forward to hearing from you.





Our island is home to skilled people with a deep history and connection to St. George (D. Sikes CC, by SA, 2012)

Introduction

The kind of tourism we want for St. George is sustainable, it reflects our Unangan heritage and embraces the ideals environmental integrity, social justice and economic development.² Tourism has the potential to provide an important part of our local economy. We have what global visitors are looking for: exceptional nature-based experiences, a unique heritage, and a distinctive culture. St. George is home to over 200 species of migratory birds, rare seabird sightings, huge colonies of Northern Fur Seals, arctic fox, Orca whales, and other wildlife.^{3,4} Our landscape and history have been shaped by our Unangan people as well as Russian and American fur traders and colonists, altering the island's economic, political, and cultural makeup over time. The natural and cultural features of the island provide an opportunity for St. George to market itself as a tourism destination to attract more visitors, and to create income for both residents and the broader community.

The demand is there. In 2018 the State of Alaska reported a significant amount of growth in the tourism industry as compared to any other sector of development in the state. The visitor industry in Alaska has seen a 20% growth in jobs since 2008, a 32% growth in labor income (\$1.5 billion), and a 32% growth in visitor-related spending for the region. The southwest region, home of St. George, accounted

for 1,800 jobs and \$50 million in labor income in 2017.⁵ With only minor organizational and marketing effort, St. George has already been hosting dozens of visitors in past years, mainly cruise ship day visitors or small groups of adventurous and self-motivated nature lovers.⁶ While seasonality and climate change create some external uncertainty, there is potential for tourism to significantly contribute to our economy for the foreseeable future.

In this working paper we outline our assets, opportunities and challenges.



Source: Economic Impact of Alaska's Visitor Industry, 2017

² Pursuing economic opportunities that are community driven can minimize adverse impacts and capture more of the benefits.

³ Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference & Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development (1996) Rural Alaska Tourism Infrastructure Needs Assessment.

⁴ Travel Alaska (2019) Retrieved from <https://www.travelalaska.com/Destinations/Communities/Pribilof-Islands.aspx>

⁵ State of Alaska Division of Economic Development (2019) Economic Impact of Alaska's Visitor Industry.

⁶ Personal communication, St. George Traditional Council, 2019

Current Situation

OUR ASSETS

In order to know where to focus our efforts in developing our community, having an inventory of what our current assets are is key. This table shows current assets on St. George with ownership responsibility and a description.

Asset	Ownership/Responsibility	Description
Hotel	Tanaq Corp	The St. George Tanaq Corporation currently operates one hotel, the Aikow Inn, which provides accommodation to travelers and visitors to the island, hosting up to 18 guests at a time.
Airport	Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities	The only airport on the island is 6 miles from the town of St. George. The layout of the airport prevents flights from landing in stormy / unsafe weather, which can strand visitors at times.
Reindeer Herd	Tanaq Corp	An introduced species to St. George, this herd of around 400 reindeer are occasionally hunted by locals for subsistence. Currently this herd is managed by the Tanaq Corporation. ⁷
Wildlife	Residents of St. George International Community	Our Island is home to one of the largest populations of nesting seabirds in Alaska, large fur seal populations, and arctic foxes all attracting photographers and visitors from around the world.
Landscape/Seascape	Residents of St. George	The natural landscape around St. George is rugged and beautiful, attracting hikers and photographers to the island.
Current Tours	Traditional Council, Tour companies ⁸ , Independent Travelers ⁹	The only tourism venture operating out of the hotel is a guided tour of the island to see the bird and seal rookeries and other points of interest on the island. Our Island attracts ‘niche’ visitors who are looking for birding, wildlife, as well as heritage and cultural tourism opportunities. In the past, when visitors came to our community we would host, feed, and put on cultural performances, charging per person. ¹⁰
Roads and Infrastructure	City of St. George	The City of St. George has limited road and trail network to support on-island movement of people.
Nationally Designated Heritage Sites	Residents of St. George	St. George is home to the Fur Seal Rookeries National Historic Landmark (NHL), nominated for formal listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1962, with unique themes related to industry, conservation, and ethnic heritage. The NHL designation encompasses the entire town of St. George and is associated with Northern Fur Seal processing from the 19th century and into the early 20th century (1786 – 1959). ¹¹
Remote and Rugged Location	-	Few places in the world are as remote and rugged as St. George. This geographic fact is a challenge but also an asset to be leveraged for a unique tourism experience. Research shows that remoteness is a quality that sells in the higher-end ecotourism market. ¹²
Unangan Culture	-	We have unique knowledge, heritage, values, beliefs, art, skills traditions and activities that are important to us and of interest to others.

⁷ Personal communication, St. George Traditional Council, 2019

⁸ Planet Earth Adventures: <https://www.discoverak.com/st-george-island-photo-tour>

⁹ <https://www.fodors.com/world/north-america/usa/alaska/the-bush/hotels/reviews/st-george-tanaq-hotel-431327>

¹⁰ Personal communication, St. George Traditional Council, 2019

¹¹ US Army Corps of Engineers (2018). St. George Navigation Improvements – Preliminary Draft Feasibility Report.

¹² For example, see Ontario Nature. Recommendations for Developing Ecotourism in the Northern Boreal: North Spirit Lake Breeding Bird Survey, 2005



INSIGHTS FROM ALASKAN TOUR OPERATORS

There's no doubt that St. George is an ideal place for tourists to visit, with its epic landscape, wildlife, culture, and history. Our island has an abundant amount of bird species and a landscape that is ideal for birders, photographers, and hikers. Tour operators in the region identified some of the biggest barriers to making St. George a thriving tourism destination:¹³

- **Limited and unreliable access...**
a harbor with ferry access could greatly increase visitors coming to our community. Tour operators go through St. Paul to come to our island anyway, so reducing dependence on flights by having a harbor with ferry access to St. George increases opportunities to travel to our island. A ferry would also create a partnership between St. Paul and St. George leading to additional benefits between the two communities.
- **Lack of on-island tourism infrastructure...**
signage for trails and wildlife would help people experience our islands; restaurants and more hotel space would allow travelers to stay for longer and spend more money in our community; and sharing our island's culture and history with visitors can let visitors learn and experience what life is like here.



¹³ Personal communications, May 2019, with Planet Earth Adventures, St. Paul Island Tours, High Lonesome Tours, and WINGS Birding Tours

Key Challenges and Possible Responses

BASIC NEEDS TO BUILD ON OUR CURRENT TOURISM ASSETS

	Challenges and Success Factors	Description
Commitment	<p>Challenge: Commitment by Tanaq Corp to tourism.</p> <p>Success Factor: Confirm commitment by Tanaq</p>	<p>Lodging is an essential tourism asset. It is unclear if Tanaq Corp. is considering a stronger commitment to pursuing tourism as a priority on St.George.¹⁴</p> <p>For near-term tourism development, Tanaq would need to be on-board, as they own the hotel (and the reindeer herd).</p>
Coordination and Strategy	<p>Challenge: Coordination among our Traditional Council, City Council, and Tanaq Corp.</p> <p>Success Factor: Strong leadership and organizational commitment and a strategy as well as a champion to drive tourism on St.George</p>	<p>Our community has identified the need for our governing institutions to work more closely together while Tanaq could possibly pursue a small level of tourism independently. A model with a higher chance of success would include a coordinated effort by our Tribe and our City (e.g. to access development grants and maximize local participation). They each have assets, access to grants, and can lead our community forward.</p> <p>With the support of our citizens, our leaders need to make a commitment to work together to put into place a strategy and organizational pathways that will help establish new foundations supporting tourism in the new revitalized local economy.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Challenge: Activating/ Developing Partnerships</p> <p>Success Factor: Nurture current partnerships and form new partnerships</p>	<p>Tourism is an industry that requires experience and know-how. Partnerships with organizations that have the knowledge and capacity to make tourism happen on St.George will be critical to success.</p> <p>We have established partnerships with organizations that can help, like APICDA, APIA, NOAA, National Audubon Society, St. Paul, Alaska Conservation Foundation and cruise ship operators. These partnerships will need to be activated for growth of our tourism sector. New relationships and partnerships with nature-based tourism companies and external partners will also support our desire to develop tourism.</p>
Training	<p>Challenge: Lack of trained tourism professionals</p> <p>Success Factor: Training of locals</p>	<p>For us to have more visitors to the island we will need to capitalize on our community members' current skill sets, while also learning skills we don't yet have.</p> <p>Our community members need the training required to be local guides and cooks for businesses where visitors travel and stay.</p>
Tourism Infrastructure	<p>Challenge: Lack of tourism support infrastructure</p> <p>Success Factor: Upgrades to Island tourism infrastructure</p>	<p>Ecotourism requires little infrastructure, so addressing our limited tourism support infrastructure could be a quick start action.</p> <p>Of key importance is the tourism product. We will need a well-planned network of trails to provide access to various habitats and points of interest, improved signage (interpretive and directional), basic infrastructure (observation stations), improving renovating the heritage site, World War II historical sites, Russian and American colonial sites, trail development, machinery, ground transportation (e.g., ATV, van), and equipment. Also developing opportunities for tourist to gather and spend money – coffee shop/restaurant/gift shop/ etc.</p>

¹⁴ Tanaq Corp did not respond to queries as to their priorities for this working paper.

Support for Next Level Tourism

There are several key challenges that need to be addressed to give tourism a chance to be a real sustainable contributor to our local economy. These are discussed below.

	<i>Challenges and Success Factors</i>	<i>Description</i>
Harbor Development	<p>Challenge: No functioning harbor</p> <p>Success Factor: Functioning Harbor</p>	<p>Without a seaport, our island is inaccessible for tourists. For example, St. George used to receive four to five cruise ships per year with 150-200 people stopping by the community on their way to other destinations using landings near the village, which have now become more difficult to land on due to damage by storms. We now see maybe one or two. Our south harbor is also in a state of disrepair.</p> <p>If a new harbor were to be built, this would replace the landings near the village and allow for safe access to the island, potentially leading to increases in visitors from cruise ships and allowing for reliable marine access.</p>
Access	<p>Challenge: Reliable access to and from St. George</p> <p>Success Factor: Passenger Ferry Service</p>	<p>The remoteness of our community makes access the single largest barrier for tourism development.¹⁵ Tourists need reliable access on and off the island. It is not unusual for weather to delay flights. Uncertainty of access contributes to the difficulty of attracting visitors.</p> <p>Reliable transportation such as a passenger ferry or large transport vessel should be considered if we want to see more visitors to the island. A ferry between St. Paul and St. George would also greatly help to share resources between the two communities.</p>
Marine Sanctuary	<p>Challenge: Protecting, enhancing and distinguishing our primary tourism attraction – our unique ecosystem</p> <p>Success Factor: Dedication to conservation and designation of St. George Unangan National Marine Sanctuary</p>	<p>While this area has historically been one of the worlds’ most productive ecosystems, marine species populations have been declining over the last few decades, as observed by researchers and community members alike. Climate change and other pressures are contributing to this challenge.</p> <p>Scientists and residents can do more through accessing grants and coordinating with wildlife professionals and working together to conserve and protect our islands wildlife. If a National Marine Sanctuary were to be established around St. George, this would increase protection over our natural resource and boost local tourism, as this designation would signal to the world that the site has unique natural value worth protecting.¹⁶</p>
Ecolodge	<p>Challenge: Dedicated tourism accommodations</p> <p>Success Factor: New Ecolodge</p>	<p>Our hotel on the island can only host 18 guests at a time and is not designed specifically for tourism.</p> <p>A dedicated, specifically designed and located ecolodge would distinguish St. George for marketing purposes and add much needed capacity.</p>
Finance	<p>Challenge: Financial capacity</p> <p>Success Factor: Pursue grants / funding</p>	<p>Our community is struggling financially. We need to ensure that we have the capital assets required to pursue a tourism venture.</p> <p>Grants exist for tourism opportunities (see grants working paper for details on a list of specific conservation related tourism grants). If conservation grants and ecotourism could tie into and support other initiatives (e.g. harbor, marine sanctuary), this could work well on St. George and may provide needed resources for our community to pursue ecotourism options.</p>

¹⁵ Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference & Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development (1996) *Rural Alaska Tourism Infrastructure Needs Assessment*.

¹⁶ Earth Economics (2016) *The Economic Benefits of the Proposed St. George Unangan Heritage National Marine Sanctuary*.

Tourism Development Opportunities

Driving tourism on St. George is the wildlife and landscape: large numbers and diversity of migratory seabirds and extensive colonies of Northern Fur Seals and Steller sea lions. Our culture and heritage only enhance these primary tourism assets.

EXISTING TOURISM ASSETS

Efforts to develop tourism on St. George to date have been opportunistic and unorganized, hindered also by limited access to our island (damaged marine infrastructure and uncertain flight schedules).

Currently, our hotel provides one part-time local job (lodge attendant at the Aikow Inn) and generates less than \$5,000 in local revenue.

BUILD ON OUR CURRENT ASSETS

Promote Ecotourism

Our extraordinary natural assets and limited tourism related infrastructure (airport and hotel) can support a small tourism sector. However, with air transportation unreliable due to weather the potential risk of visitors getting stuck on St. George (and/or on St. Paul en route) for many days is a significant deterrent for tour companies and for all but patient or intrepid visitors. Further, with visitors having to pass through St. Paul on the way to St. George, and with St. Paul developing its own tourism sector based on similar natural assets, We are challenged to distinguish our tourism product and capture a piece of the growing Pribilof tourism market share. Despite these constraints a small niche market does exist for the authentic and unique experience that St. George currently has to offer. It is reasonable to assume that St. George could attract three to four wildlife/bird tours, resume of the occasional cruise ship day tours, and attract limited independent travelers. With effort and coordination, tourism could be a small contributor to our economy through promotion of our current assets, coordination amongst Tanaq, the Traditional Council and the City Council, building partnerships, and accessing training for our people. The prospects for growth of St. George's tourism sector could receive a very substantial boost, however, if the Sanctuary were designated.



CASE STUDY: ECOTOURISM VENTURE ON ST. PAUL, ALASKA

A nearby certified ecotourism business, St. Paul Island Tours, operates seasonal tour packages from May to October offering travelers' opportunities to see a variety of marine wildlife including Northern Fur Seals, Steller sea lions, whales, as well as nesting bird populations and Arctic foxes. A range of pricing is offered for both all-inclusive and land-only (non-airfare) pricing, ranging from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per trip. These tours are operated by Tanadgusix Corporation (TDX) whose operations generate about \$5 million in revenue each year, with between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in profits annually.^{17, 18}

¹⁷ St. Paul Alaska (2017) St. Paul Island Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: 2017 – 2022.

¹⁸ Adventure Green Alaska (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.adventuregreenalaska.org/aga-business/st-paul-island-tour>

Develop a Reindeer Hunt

Our island is home to a herd of approximately 400 reindeer that are occasionally hunted by our community members. Assuming that there are enough reindeer on island to support a sustainable trophy hunt every year, a hunting business on island could potentially see one or two hunting parties coming to our island to sustainably trophy hunt per season, charging \$10,000 per animal.¹⁹

Anticipated Local Benefits

1. *Without Harbor or Marine Sanctuary Designation*
 - 3-4 seasonal and part-time local jobs (local lodge attendant/chambermaids; guides; cook; maintenance)
 - Less than \$30,000 in local revenue
2. *With Harbor, Passenger Ferry and Marine Sanctuary Designation*
 - 1 full-time job (local manager)
 - 6-8 part-time seasonal local jobs (local lodge attendant/chambermaids; lead guides and assistant guides; cooks; maintenance)
 - \$60,000 to \$150,000 in local revenue



CASE STUDY: ST. PAUL ISLAND HERD

St. Paul Island has a herd of ~375 reindeer that are managed by the Tribal Government. Permits are required for harvest, free for residents and \$50 for nonresidents of the Island. The community is researching plans to grow the herd as a tourism opportunity, attracting visitors to the island for hunting. They are also exploring export potential for reindeer sausage as an economic opportunity.²⁰

ALEUTIAN ADVENTURES, APICDA

Aleutian Adventures, a reindeer hunting business run through APICDA., charges \$13,500 for one trophy reindeer hunt on Unmak Island, AK.²¹



¹⁹ Personal communication, APICDA, 2019

²⁰ St. Paul Alaska (2017) *St. Paul Island Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: 2017 – 2022*.

²¹ Aleutian Adventures (2019) retrieved from <https://www.aleutianadventures.com/alaska-hunting-trips/>

Develop our Own Ecotourism Business: Community Ecolodge and Programming

The Pribilof Islands are unique and we have natural assets that attract tourists from around the world. On St. George we also have our National Heritage site and our Unangan culture to share with visitors. To capitalize on this opportunity and justify the significant investment required to make tourism a core pillar in our local economy, we need reliable access to and from our island and commitment to the protection and conservation of our local ecology which is our primary tourism attraction.

1. Functioning harbor – this will allow for water-based transportation (a large passenger vessel) making access to and from our island more reliable
2. Marine Sanctuary – signaling a commitment to conservation of a rare and special environment (i.e., an exceptional product) that could be further leveraged for marketing advantage

Our neighbors on St. Paul are experiencing an ever-increasing number of visitors interested in observing migratory birds, seals and the landscape of the Pribilofs. Because our tourism attractions are like St. Paul's, we are at a competitive disadvantage due to unreliable access. Even with a functioning harbor, we lack a distinguishing feature. A marine sanctuary designation supported with a dedicated eco-lodge, however, would increase the overall demand for Pribilof tourism and distinguish us in the market.

Potential Tourism Activities and Programming:

- Photo Safari
- Birding
- SCUBA Diving
- Sports Fishing
- Wildlife Viewing
- Exploring (ATV, Jeep Tours, Guides)
- Kayaking
- Hiking
- Etc.

An assumption for this option is that St. George will attract investment or otherwise have access to the capital required to upgrade the Aikow Inn and / or create a new ecotourism hotel on the island. Another assumption is that there will be enough visitors per year to sustain new and updated accommodations after the harbor and marine sanctuary are implemented.



CASE STUDY: NIKOLSKI VILLAGE, UMNAK ISLAND

Alaska Adventure Travel, an ecotourism business that hosts various tours, lodgings, and educational travel opportunities runs an 8-10 person lodge in the rural village of Nikolski. Views of the town and the Vsevidof Volcano can be seen from the lodge and the \$2,000 - \$4,000 cost includes meals, guided tours, and in-field transportation.²²

²² Alaska Adventure Tourism (2019) Nikolski Trip, retrieved from <http://aatapaicda.wordpress.com/nikolski-trip/>



CASE STUDY: SPIRIT BEAR LODGE, KLEMTU, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Spirit Bear Lodge offers various seasonal trip packages to the territory of the Kitasoo Xai'xais First Nation. Visitors are guided on hikes, canoes, and kayaks and educated on how this community promotes wildlife, culture, and conservation of their territory.

Source: <https://www.spiritbear.com/site/experiences.html>

Anticipated Local Benefits

Assumes Harbor, Passenger Ferry and Marine Sanctuary Designation

- 1-2 full time jobs (on-site lodge manager)
- 7-10 part-time local jobs (chambermaids; lead guides and assistant guides; cooks; maintenance)
- \$150,000 to \$500,000 in local revenue²³

If the harbor is built, the Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA) has committed to contributing to:

- Construction of a lodge (est. 10 jobs)
- Seafood processing capacity (est. 100 jobs)
- Small businesses (est. 20 jobs)
- Seasonal ferry from St. George and St. Paul (est. 4 jobs)²⁴

These opportunities are reflective of the overall need for the harbor to assist St. George in developing a self-sustaining economy. If we develop a harbor, tourism and fisheries opportunities become more wide ranging, allowing our community's economy to thrive. For more information on fisheries opportunities, see the fisheries working paper.

²³ Our analysis supports the analysis of Earth Economics described in: *The Economic Benefits of the Proposed St. George Unangan Heritage National Marine Sanctuary*, 2016.

²⁴ "St. George Navigation Improvements: Preliminary Draft Feasibility Report." US Army Corps of Engineers. 2018.

THINKING AHEAD: GRANT FINANCING FOR TOURISM

Without funding, our community will not be successful in developing future tourism opportunities. There are a variety of grants available for St. George for this purpose, an example of which is listed here. If we were to successfully attain grants, other options would become much more feasible for us to pursue. More details on grants can be found in the List of Available Grants posted on the project website (link to website).

Tourism Related Grants – Alaska Conservation Program – Discovery Grants

Grant Title	Description	Amount
Alaska Native Fund	The Alaska Native Fund Steering Committee has identified environmental issues and core strategies to be supported by the fund. Indigenous Knowledge is at the center of the fund framework; the fund will support work in the following areas: climate change, food security, sustainable economies, energy, holistic wellness; applicants must incorporate at least one of the core strategies (policy development, leadership, youth organizing, communication and technology, art and expression, gathering)	Organizations range: \$10,000 - \$20,000; individual range: up to \$10,000; youth range: up to \$5,000



ST. GEORGE HARBOR

St. George's existing harbor, on the west side of the island, is essentially unusable due to its size and location. As such, plans for a new harbor on the north side of the island are currently being assessed. Developing this harbor would both enable and strengthen our tourism industry, as it would allow for reliable access to our community and provide economic benefits that we can use to develop other tourism related assets in our community. Some of the other anticipated benefits of the harbor include:

- improved moorage and fishing boat access;
- better transportation to and from the island (e.g., for passenger ships);
- jobs and revenue creation during and after construction;
- enabling St. George to receive up to \$383,800 worth of CDQ crab; and
- indirect benefits store sales, hospitality, marine services, and tourism industries.²⁵

The development of a new harbor will be further explored in an upcoming Working Paper.

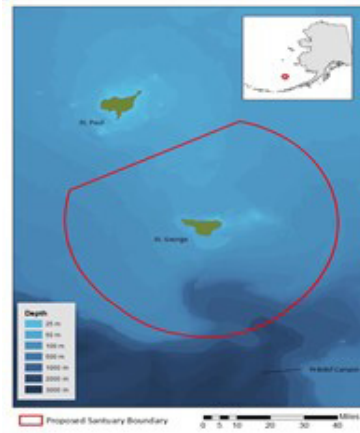


Figure source:
<https://unangansanctuary.wordpress.com/maps/>

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY DESIGNATION ON ST. GEORGE²⁶

Tourism provides a key source of economic benefits for many marine reserves worldwide.²⁷ By establishing a national marine sanctuary around our community, it signals to nature-loving visitors that we are protecting and preserving an outstandingly significant marine environment around our island (in addition to tourism and other indirect benefits). Direct benefits to St. George (in addition to tourism and other indirect benefits) include:

- At least four full-time jobs
- \$200,000 in annual government spending to support a sanctuary office
- \$140,000 to \$1 million in expenditures due to research grants
- \$55,000 to \$240,000 in annual recreation expenditures
- \$22,000 to \$44,000 in estimated subsistence harvest annually
- \$2.8 billion to \$3.3 billion in annual non-market ecosystem service benefits²⁸

²⁵ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (2018) St. George Navigation Improvements – Preliminary Draft Feasibility Report

²⁶ Earth Economics (2016) The Economic Benefits of the Proposed St. George Unangan Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

²⁷ Viana, D. F., B. Halpern, S. Gain. Accounting for tourism benefits in marine reserve design December 21, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190187>

²⁸ Ecosystem services are the benefits that humans freely gain from the natural environment and ecosystems, such as water purification, pollination of crops, and cultural services like recreation and sense of place.

Sustainable Tourism: The Impacts

If we're going to meet the objectives of our people, we need to understand how future opportunities will affect our community. This matrix shows the impact that each of these tourism options would have on each of St. George's economic objectives. They are organized by *without* and *with* options of a harbor, passenger ferry, and marine sanctuary designation on the island.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OPTIONS

Community Economic Objective	WITHOUT Harbor-Passenger Ferry-Marine Sanctuary			WITH Harbor-Passenger Ferry-Marine Sanctuary	
	Existing Tourism Assets	Promote Ecotours	Reindeer Hunting	Promote Ecotours	Community Ecotourism Business
Increase cooperation between Tribe, City, and each other	Low	Med	Med	Med	High
Secure jobs for St. George residents	Low	Med	Med-Low	Med-High	High
Maintain stable and sustainable finances	Low	Low	Low	Med-Low	High
Encourage our people to come home	Low	Low	Low	Med	High
Advocate for secure, informed consent and consultation from the government	Low	High	High	High	High

IMPACT SCORE END-POINT DEFINITIONS:

Community Objective	Low	High
Increase cooperation between Tribe, City, and each other	City, Tribe and Tanaq work independently	City, Tribe and Tanaq work together
Secure jobs for St. George residents	Less than 2 (seasonal)	More than 10 (seasonal)
Maintain stable and sustainable finances	No financial contribution to government services (city or Tribe)	Important contribution to government services (city or Tribe)
Encourage our people to come home	No economic incentive or opportunity for our people to come home	Jobs our people want are available on St. George
Advocate for secure, informed consent and consultation from the government	Our government and citizens are not informed and not involved in key decisions affecting St. George	Our government and citizens are informed and involved in key decisions affecting St. George

Conclusion

Now that we know what our assets, opportunities, and impacts are, what are your thoughts on the future of St. George's tourism industry? The impact that a harbor, passenger ferry, and marine sanctuary would have on our community is very promising. They could enable a thriving tourism industry that would bring money, jobs, visitors, and a sense of community pride to our Island.

We need your feedback to make sure we're getting everything we can to inform a strong economic development strategy. Help us by providing feedback, additional information, comments, or questions about this Working Paper!



TELL US WHAT'S MISSING!

Go to our online survey: bit.ly/stgeorgesurvey2



STAY A PART OF THE CONVERSATION!

Please contribute, your ideas are needed. Here are some simple ways to participate:

Go to our online survey and give your input about where St. George should go and how we should get there.

bit.ly/stgeorgesurvey2

Send an email or contact:

St. George Economic Development Project Team
stgeorgeeconomicdevelopment@gmail.com

Or visit the project website:

www.stgeorgealaska.org