

Comment

Holden Village

Owner

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Comment Information

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Details

Comments

Discover Lake Chelan dba Lake Chelan Boat Company has proposed revisions to its boat schedule to add a Sunday boat service starting January 1, 2020 and add 30 minutes to the layover in Stehekin starting October 25, 2019. Holden Village will be directly affected by both changes. Although the Sunday boat service will increase our business costs, it also increases our revenue potential. This is a change we can accept.



However, the additional 30-minute layover on each day of the week the boat is running is a serious safety concern for our volunteer staff and guests and should not be approved without modification. Holden Village is a Lutheran-based non-profit 501(c)(3) located in the Cascade Mountains ten miles west of Lucerne at an elevation of 3,200 feet. The Village operates all year, providing guests a unique wilderness experience along with education, programming, rest, and spiritual transformation. Transport to and from the Village and Lucerne is via a Holden Village bus that travels to Lucerne to meet the Lake Chelan Boat Company's boat, covering approximately eleven miles each way on a Forest Service road (#8301) that gains just over 2,000 feet of elevation as it winds up the Railroad Creek valley. In the winter FS Road 8301 travels directly across 26 active avalanche chutes. Our transport schedule has been developed over the decades to minimize avalanche risk for our bus drivers and passengers.

We already have 75 staff members and confirmed reservations for 644 visitors who will be traveling this road throughout the upcoming avalanche season of mid-November through April. This number will increase as more reservations are made. Currently our bus departs Holden Village with guests and staff at 10:45 a.m. and arrives in Lucerne at 11:30 a.m. After picking up arriving guests and staff from the boat it travels back to Holden just after 12 p.m. People catching the boat downlake to Field's Point and Chelan wait in Lucerne until 1:50 p.m. for the boat to pick them up and take them downlake. Our bus does not wait at the dock for the downlake boat to arrive because the bus needs to travel back up the road before the sun has warmed the surrounding slopes to the point of causing slides. The timing of the bus transit has been developed to strike a balance between getting on and off the road as early as possible while the snow is relatively stable and minimizing the wait time at Lucerne for the boat. The only facilities for passengers waiting at Lucerne to go downlake are a pit toilet and a rustic wooden shelter that provides some protection from the cold through one small, wood-burning stove. Capacity of this structure is limited to twenty-five people so waiting for a boat is a combination of huddling around a stove and going for cold walks in the elements. Upgrading the structure is not an option because it is in a potential flood zone.

Currently, people have the option to purchase a round-trip ticket to Stehekin rather than wait for the returning boat in Lucerne. However, at a cost of \$12.75 per person (in addition to the regular fare to go downlake) this is an option not often selected by our guests and volunteer staff. The request of Discover Lake Chelan to increase the lay over time in Stehekin by 30 minutes may seem minor, but it will have a big impact on our business. If the proposal to add 30 minutes to the layover time in Stehekin is approved as submitted, our staff and guests will be trying to stay warm in Lucerne for almost three hours in the middle of winter. What may have seemed a quaint winter visit for people will become an exercise in patience and the ability to stay warm. This is likely to adversely affect our revenue as many guests decide a winter visit is just too challenging, given such exposure to the elements and the fact that many of our guests are elderly. We can't safely run a later bus for outgoing passengers because of the increased chances for avalanches as the day goes on.

Holden Village recommends this modification to the proposal: The boat company should allow round-trip transit—at no additional charge—between Lucerne and Stehekin for anyone with a boat ticket from Lucerne to Field's Point or Chelan.

Visitors and staff from Holden Village would board the boat at 12 p.m. for the trip to Stehekin before heading back down to Field's Point and Chelan. The boat would seldom need to make the flag stop at Lucerne on the trip back downlake because few passengers would choose to wait at Lucerne for the return boat. For the boat company, it is likely there will be an increase in revenue due to passengers purchasing concessions on the boat. For the community of Stehekin, it is likely there will be increased revenue at local businesses due to the increased number of passengers laying over in Stehekin. An additional benefit for the boat company is that the time required to stop a second time at Lucerne on the down lake trip would usually be eliminated.

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Filing Support	No	Web Create Date	10/16/2019
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Related Case Information			
Case Number	 190848	Case Title	
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Themes

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0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)

Page 1