

Dear Committee,

I had the privilege of working at Glacier Point for 7 seasons (3 with Chilkat Guides and 4 after the sale to Alaska Excursions) including my final season as Assistant Manager for the site. I left the company on good terms to pursue another guiding opportunity (I can send you my final e-mail exchanges with both the owner and GM if there is any question about that). I do not like to burn bridges and I avoided writing a letter before the initial meeting to preserve that relationship.

After a lot of thinking I have decided, however, that in good conscience I cannot listen to some of the falsehoods I heard during the previous meeting without addressing them.

The assertions that captains were not pressured into running in big seas, that trips were cut off at small craft levels or that a couple of isolated incidents on the water were taken out of context are not true. It would be hard to cancel trips every time it hit small craft levels (25 kts) as those conditions are extremely common in the Upper Lynn. While a ride in 25 kts is uncomfortable for the guests (people often did not want to get back on the boats those days) they are not necessarily unsafe. The problems arose when running trips in winds above 30 kts or when it was 25 kts but the forecast clearly called for winds to build further, both things that happened on a fairly regular basis. There were indeed a couple of instances that stand out because they were particularly dramatic (including two where we almost called the coast guard and one where it took a boat an hour to get from Glacier Point to Seduction Point due to heavy seas) but these were not crazy outliers.

I can't speak to how well the skiffs ran last year as I no longer worked there. However, during my last few years there we regularly went weeks or even months without working boats-and they didn't just magically start to work when there was a party as was implied. I have personally raced a fellow guide to town who was approaching anaphylaxis so I understand the importance of the skiffs. I have also spent hours manually holding a boat off of the rocks near Letnikoff Point while waiting for a tour boat to tow me because the outboard was broken. That time I was getting food and drinking water for the camp, not going to a mythical party. The maintenance on the skiffs, busses, atvs, and canoe motors was extremely spotty and it was often very hard to get a mechanic to come out, even when we were on the verge of not being able to run the trip. I understand that it is a very large operation and they were stretched very thin between the point and mechanic duties at Dyea. I also understand from personal experience that working on the vehicles at the point entails using an entire day to get there and back and working in the swarming mosquitoes or pouring rain but to pretend that lack of maintenance just wasn't a big issue the last few years is simply not true.

Also to clarify, the piece of old construction equipment that came off the point 2 seasons ago had nothing to do with Chilkat Guides' operation out there. It belonged to a totally different landowner and at the time of the sale every vehicle in the tour operation was running.

Compounding the lack of the AED for the last two seasons were the often misleading tour descriptions that undersold the physical effort involved and led to people who regularly told us that (because of asthma, heart conditions, breathing problems, etc) they would not have come if they had known what it really entailed. In all fairness Alaska Excursions did not write most of these descriptions and it can be hard to get the cruise lines to change them on their websites. However, we repeatedly brought this up in

meetings and I was once told point blank by Robert that if we told people how much walking there now is (due to glacial recession it is now a mile walk roundtrip from the canoes to the ice) tour numbers would go down and he might have to let some guides go. I think it is extremely telling that no one who testified in support of the tour actually worked at Glacier Point as Stephanie Scott pointed out.

I believe in people being left alone on their private land and as someone in the tourism industry I am always happy to see more business come to our area as long as it does not degrade where we live. To be totally honest I don't have a strong opinion on the tour being approved or not I simply could not listen to some of the statements at the meeting and not send some clarifications. I write this reluctantly and with no rancor for my former employers; the seven seasons I spent working at the point were some of the most fulfilling of my life. Thank you for your time and feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sam Edwards