

A substantial increase in the number of people using an area's resources is likely to have a detrimental impact on the environment. This impact may simply be annoying, such as increased traffic or crowded parks; but the impact may be severe enough to cause harm to a fragile natural area. For example, the Taman Negara National Park in Malaysia is suffering from the impacts of human intervention as visitor numbers have exploded. This astounding increase in tourists has made wildlife scarce, and the forests' floors have become littered with garbage.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, Banff National Park, Canada's oldest national park, continues to suffer from the millions of visitors it receives annually. Many places in its tundra wilderness have been "trampled by so many hikers that in places the route resembles a boggy, 20-foot-wide cattle trail" (p. 50).<sup>12</sup>

Air pollution can become a problem with the increased level of vehicle traffic in an area, along with other activities that cause air-quality problems. For example, the congestion of cars through Yosemite National Park causes the very air pollution that visitors try to escape by fleeing to national parks. Some communities have taken serious steps to try to reduce the other forms of air pollution that can be caused by tourism's success. In the mountain valleys of the Rockies, it is now common for towns to prohibit hearth fires on many winter days, because wood smoke is so dense and dissipates very slowly.

In addition to air pollution, noise pollution is becoming a new problem in many communities, especially with the relocation and/or expansion of airports. Noise pollution is even a problem at the Grand Canyon. Each year, about 80,000 scenic flights take tourists low over the canyon, creating an airplane buzz that disrupts the tranquility of its splendor.<sup>13</sup> In 2000, to restore peace and quiet, Utah's Zion National Park became the first park outside Alaska to ban nearly all cars. Tourists now take shuttles from the visitor center to experience the natural sights in the canyon.<sup>14</sup> Similar limitations have been put in place around the world, including the Jiuzhai Valley National Park, China.

Light pollution is another issue that has a close relationship with the tourism industry. The infrastructure and superstructure that support tourism contributes to pollution through the conveniences and safety that artificial light provides tourists. It has been estimated that over 99% of the population in the 48 contiguous United States lives in an area with light pollution.<sup>15</sup> The desire to see the night sky without pollution has created a new target market of dark sky tourists and National Parks such as Yosemite, Acadia, and Death Valley have developed night sky interpretive programs to meet the demand.<sup>16</sup> Dark sky tourism must be proactively managed in order to avoid development that contributes to light pollution, thereby reducing the ability to see the very resource that attracts the tourists.

Possibly most damaging, however, is the impact that can occur to vegetation, wildlife, and precious historical attractions. Unplanned or poorly planned development can lead to the endangerment of flora and fauna species and to the erosion of the very sites that are the destination's "reason for being." For example, the government of Egypt is excavating more of the dozens of pharaoh burial sites in the hope that by providing more sites, they can reduce the amount of tourist traffic to the Great Pyramids in Giza. Each year, millions of visitors troop through the most famous pyramids, worsening the water vapor problem that causes salt to leach from the stones and weaken the structures.<sup>17</sup> Other countries, such as Mozambique, which is recovering from years of civil war, have demonstrated the power of tourism's economic benefits for enhancing culture and the environment.<sup>18</sup>

Historic site deterioration can occur in more modern locations as well. Many historic towns in the United States have applied the brakes to tour buses rolling through their streets. For example, New Orleans officials stopped all tour bus access to the French Quarter owing to the damage inflicted on the delicate architecture by the vibration of hundreds of buses passing through the narrow streets. Other cities are considering similar restraints.<sup>19</sup>

Virtually every year, the National Park Service considers limiting the number of people into Yosemite National Park. In the meantime, roads have been upgraded to allow better bus access through the park to try to encourage visitors to leave their cars outside.