

the need for managers to expand carrying capacity through creative facility designs.

For hundreds of years, communities have utilized natural and cultural resources to attract visitors. However, as tourism continues to grow, additional attention and efforts will need to be focused on planning, management, and preservation efforts. History has taught us that failure

to do so can lead to a variety of unintended consequences from what should be positive economic benefits. When tourism grows unchecked, locals may not only become resentful and even envious of visitors, but they may also witness increases in crime, congestion, and what many consider to be a “way of life,” or a desire to return to “the way it was,” before tourists arrived.

## You Decide

Alaska, population 600,000—the last frontier of the United States. Far away, difficult to get to, inhospitable. Not today’s Alaska. Thanks to the cruise industry, anyone can visit the distant sights of Alaska, even the far interior Denali National Park. In the past, Mount McKinley, at the heart of Denali park, was visited by relatively few hearty backpackers. With the influx of dozens of cruise ships each summer season, over 100,000 visitors view the majesty of the tundra of the park. Carnival Corporation alone moved 110,000 cruisers from its ships onto its trains and to its hotels on the outskirts of Denali.

The 800,000-per-summer cruise passengers have most affected the tiny coastal towns of Alaska, such as Skagway (year-round population 862). On a typical summer day, 9,000 passengers descend from their “floating hotels” to the buses that whisk them off to several dozen shore excursions, including the White Pass & Yukon Railway or Broadway, the shopping district of Skagway. Some are local shops offering Alaskan souvenirs, but many are shops transplanted from the Caribbean, like Diamonds International. The cruise lines “get a cut from stores . . . in exchange for recommending the establishment and mentioning a money-back guarantee on items” (p. 98).

What do the residents of Alaska think of the growth of tourism to the state? They see the massive increase in visitors as good news and bad news. The bad news? Pollution, congestion, noise. The good news? “The cruise industry

spent \$900 million into Alaska, mostly in wages and retail sales. Three-quarters of Skagway’s \$80 million in revenues came from [the cruise industry]” (p. 98). Former railroad conductor, now day-tour operator Steven Hites says, “If it weren’t for the cruise industry, my little town of Skagway would have been boarded up” (p. 98).

In the oil-supported state, where there is no income, sales, or property tax, some towns have tried to tax the cruise lines. For example, Haines passed a 4% organized-tour tax in 2001. Cruise lines dropped the port from their future itineraries, and the decline in the town’s revenues resulted in a 40% increase in the unemployment rate (9%–12.5%). In 2003, Haines repealed the tour tax, hoping that the cruise ships would return. With the return of cruise ship traffic, the unemployment rate in Haines had dropped to 4.7% in the summer of 2010.

What does the future hold for Alaska? The emerging issues for tourism in Alaska are the same as those for tourism anywhere in the world. More development? More environmental protection? More taxes? More jobs, more entrepreneurial opportunities?

Kroll, Luisa. (2004). Cruise control: Carnival Corp. is leading the charge to open up the last frontier to the vacationing masses. *Forbes*, 174(4), 96–102. Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/lau/laucntycur14.txt> (retrieved December 2, 2011).

## Net Tour

To get you started on exploring Internet links for this chapter, please see

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## Discussion Questions

1. How can tourism aid in the preservation of societies, cultures, and natural environments?
2. What host community resources are shared by both visitors and local residents?
3. What are the major factors that determine an area’s carrying capacity?
4. How can culture be used to attract tourists?
5. What negative effects has tourism had on cultures and the natural environment?
6. How can tourism be used to benefit a culture? What are some of the cultural problems that can result from large numbers of visitors?
7. What are the potential unintended consequences of tourism?