



National Park Service
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Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve
PO Box 140
Gustavus, AK 99826

907-697-2230 phone
www.nps.gov/glba

Glacier Bay News Release

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Contact: Scott Gende, 907-364-2622
Tom VandenBerg, 907-697-2619

Norwegians to Learn From SE Alaska Cruise Ship Operations

GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK, AK –Although they’ve come from far away, they are no strangers to icy fjords, cruise ships, and summer tourism. A delegation of Norwegian park managers, community leaders, and representatives of Norwegian local, regional, and national government arrived in Southeast Alaska today to learn about, and share experience related to cruise ship tourism. Their ten-day visit will provide a glimpse into cruise ship operations and tourism models in Skagway, Juneau, and Glacier Bay National Park.



Park officials review a site map



Cruise ship in West Norwegian Fjords

The officials represent **West Norwegian Fjords World Heritage Site** (*Geirangerfjord* and *Naeroyfjord*). The site's two fjords, among the world's longest and deepest, are considered archetypical fjord landscapes and among the most scenically outstanding anywhere. Norway has experienced rapid growth in large cruise ship visitation in the past decade, and managers at the World Heritage site are interested in learning how Glacier Bay (also a World Heritage Site) and Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park manage the volume and operating conditions of cruise ships in such a way that increases the environmental sustainability of ship visitation, sustains research and monitoring programs focused on cruise ship impacts, and provides opportunities for meaningful interpretive and educational programs.



Superintendent Hooe and West Norwegian Fjords Director Katrin Blomvik share ideas.

“There is much that we can learn from each other, and Glacier Bay is excited to be a part of this collaboration,” said Glacier Bay Superintendent Philip Hooe. “We see this visit as the beginning of an enduring partnership to enhance our holistic management, communication of world heritage values, and promote sustainable tourism.”

A highlight in Skagway and Juneau will be community roundtable discussions with National Park Service, tourism, city, and municipality

leaders. While in Juneau the delegation will also be meeting with officials from Princess Cruise Lines to tour dock facilities, view the process for connecting a ship to shore-based hydroelectric power, and familiarizing themselves with a variety of on-board environmental safeguard programs. An afternoon with the U.S. Forest Service at Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center will provide insight into that high cruise visitation site, sustainable operations, and climate change education practices.

The group will also be sharing strategies and initiatives developed in Norway for integrating the management of World Heritage sites into local community planning. This includes a “Green Fjord Initiative” that seeks to partner with cruise lines and other businesses on programs that preserve the economic sustainability of ship visitation while raising environmental sustainability. Aspects of this initiative are of great interest to Glacier Bay managers as potential criteria for future cruise ship contracts.

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