



NEWS

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Pollution Controlled Ships and Competition Decide Glacier Bay National Park Summer Cruise Ship Allocations

High standards for minimizing pollution and maintaining healthy competition within the cruise ship industry were the key factors in a decision announced today by the Interior Department Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Don Barry to distribute 42 entry permits for cruise ships going to Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska.

The number of cruise ships entering the bay during the peak season of June, July and August is limited to 139, with no more than two per day, in order to protect park resources.

“Strong competition for these valuable entry permits should produce more choices for the visiting public over the next several years. In addition, it has brought significant commitments by the industry to protect the resources of the park by operating ships that are cleaner than ever before,” said Barry.

The permit system is complex and operates under several overlapping laws. Of the 139 permits, 71 are given to historic operators as provided for in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980; and 68 are periodically offered for competitive bids in a prospectus. The awards made today stems from a February 1998 prospectus, and cover cruise ship operations from 2000 to 2004.

Of the 68 entry permits awarded, 26 were encumbered by legal preferences which could be exercised only if the companies with those rights matched or exceeded the “best bid” in response to the prospectus. The National Park Service ranks bids based on several key factors, including pollution minimization, visitor education programs, safety, and competition.

The allocation of the remaining 42 permits was based on the strength of the bid and a desire by the Interior Department and National Park Service to maintain or expand the number of companies doing business in Glacier Bay. “More competition will result in better quality service to the customer at a fair price,” Barry said.

Holland America submitted the best bid of the five companies competing for entries, and was awarded 23 of the 42 permits. The company also holds 39 of the 71 historic operator entries.

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“Holland America’s proposal indicated its commitment to substantially improving pollution abatement and applying this standard to all of its ships entering the park, not just those with permits awarded under this prospectus,” said Barry. “Holland America is to be commended for its excellent package of environmental controls.”

The remaining entries were awarded to Princess (7), World Explorer (2), Crystal (4) and Norwegian (6).

The 26 permits which went to companies holding preference rights and who matched the Holland America bid were distributed to the following companies: Princess (13), World Explorer (4), Crystal (2), and Norwegian (7).

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