

**Client:**  
*Holland America Westours*

**Media:**  
*Newsletter*

**Objective:**  
*Ongoing communication with prospective Alaska travelers*

Statistically, it takes an average of almost three years from the time someone inquires about an Alaska trip to the time when they actually take the trip. That means it's critically important to communicate regularly with those who express interest.

What's more, companies like Holland America Westours have passengers that book well in advance, but end up cancelling before the trip.

To help keep in touch with prospects – and to help buyers feel good about the trip they've already booked – a newsletter called "Northern Lights" was created. The newsletter was also used by travel agents who could imprint their logo on the mailing panel.



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## Expect the Unexpected on an Alaska Highway Tour

“Moose! There’s a huge moose on the side of the road!”

We all looked to where the excited woman was pointing and saw the tremendous creature grazing lazily in a lakeside meadow.

As if on cue, our fun-loving Driver/Guide, Bill, promptly stopped the coach to let us snap pictures of the shy animal in its natural habitat - it watched us in perfect stillness.

It was part of the routine - and the unexpected thrills - of our journey from Whitehorse, Canada to Fairbanks, Alaska, along the Alaska Highway with Holland America Westours.

As we rolled along this two-lane road, swooping, climbing and winding through a tangled and craggy wilderness once known only to a handful of sourdoughs - who had to penetrate it on foot - Bill told us the fascinating history of the highway’s construction 50 years ago.

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Before 1942 there was no overland link between Canada, Alaska and the Lower 48. Alaska was cut off, isolated from the rest of the world. But World War II and the Japanese occupation of two Aleutian islands ended that isolation. Suddenly a highway was needed to ship wartime equipment and supplies to Alaska.

In response, seven regiments of engineers descended upon Alaska, toiled around the clock to build the Alaska Highway - 1,550 miles, in only eight months.

The benefit for today's travelers, of course, is access to exploring an otherwise impenetrable wilderness, and a chance to glimpse some of the most breathtaking scenery in the world.

And Holland America Westours' new Alaska-Yukon Explorer LoungeCoach makes it easy, and comfortable, to explore this area up close, and in style.

The interior of the loungecoach is like a luxury railcar: plush. There is plenty of legroom and headroom for stretching out, and large tinted windows for exceptional viewing.

There's even a lounge - with a service attendant preparing snacks and beverages - right on board.

The scenery. . . is simply spectacular: high towering peaks mottled with snowfields and small glaciers, iridescent blue mountain lakes, seemingly endless forests, and, of course, the occasional grizzly bear, caribou, or moose!

The first stop on our trip was just a few miles outside of Whitehorse at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. Here we saw a wide variety of Alaska wildlife - moose, caribou, and mountain goats among others - in their natural habitat.

In fact, visitors are guaranteed to see wildlife here. That's why Holland America Westours has added this trip to the privately owned, 700-acre preserve. We all enjoyed the opportunity to take good closeup pictures of the animals - great souvenirs!

After a full day of touring we arrived at Beaver Creek, our destination for the night. Here we satisfied our hearty travelers' appetites at the Beaver Creek Rendezvous; a Yukon barbecue and dinner show for guests of Holland America Westours.

The evening put us in the spirit of the early 1800s, when the "Rendezvous" played an important social role in the settling of the Yukon. Trappers, Indians, traders, mountain men and other assorted characters would gather from miles around to trade goods, tell stories, eat, dance and sing. . . all of which we did, too, with vigor!

Next day, more Alaska lore came to life as we learned about dog sledding from a veteran dog musher in

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Tok - the self-proclaimed “Dog Mushing Capital of the World!” This is a big sport up here in the land of the Iditarod and the Yukon Quest dog-sled races, so as we watched the dogs being harnessed and exercised, we did so with a mixture of wonder and respect.

The Alaska Highway opens a path to some of the most beautiful and historically significant terrain in Alaska. It leads us back to a time when the world was a simpler, wilder place, and gives us a glimpse of the way we were.

(Sidebar)

### ***New LoungeCoach Service Raises Alaska Highway Touring Standards***

The new AlaskaYukon Explorer - a two-section articulated loungecoach - is bigger than a standard coach, and much more luxurious. It offers fully carpeted walls, large reclining club seats and whitewashed oak tables - all on a raised platform for great visibility.

Large, glare-cutting windows surround you, further enhancing the dramatic panoramic views. There’s even a full-service lounge on board - with a gracious Service Attendant who serves light snacks and beverages. Of course, there are modern restrooms, as well as videos for viewing upcoming sights and attractions.

### **Glacier Bay National Park: A World of Icy Beauty**

Everyone wants to be on deck for the magic moment when our cruise ship reaches the first of many glaciers we’ll see today in Glacier Bay National Park.

As we approach, the stress and strain of ice melting becomes audible: as water drips and ice creaks, cracks and moans.

Finally, the much-anticipated moment arrives: The huge blue glacier seems close enough to touch.

We cruise closer in, diligently waiting and watching for a chunk of ice to “calve” from the face of a glacier. As one breaks with a boom and smashes into the sea, I now know why the Tlingit Indians call this “Thunder Bay.”

We pause for some time in front of Margerie Glacier, which looks like a gigantic stairway leading to the upper reaches of Mount Fairweather. The massive monument of ice, with all its crooks and crevasses, is somehow endlessly fascinating.

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There are two National Park Service Naturalists on board to fill us in on the many sights of Glacier Bay, and describe its extraordinary history.

One begins by explaining Glacier Bay's impressive inventory of snow and ice: 16 tidewater glaciers, about 30 valley or alpine glaciers, and a dozen or so smaller unnamed ones.

"Tidewater" glaciers, she explains, are those that extend from the mountaintops to the water's edge; "valley" or "alpine" glaciers stop short of the water. Glaciers "advance" when more snow falls in the mountains than melts away at the base - the added weight pushes these "rivers of ice" downward, and they crawl forward at an imperceptible pace.

Today, about half of Glacier Bay's 16 tidewater glaciers are advancing.

Only two centuries ago, Glacier Bay was a great basin of solid ice left over from the Ice Age. A warming climate forced the ice to recede, and ocean water moved in to fill the void. This created a myriad of inlets and fjords which dot the 60-mile length of Glacier Bay.

When British explorer Capt. James Cook passed what is now Glacier Bay in 1778, the ice extended beyond Bartlett Cove and almost into Icy Strait. Only years later, when naturalist John Muir explored the area, he found the bay opened 30 miles farther inland. Today, ships can cruise a full 55 miles into Tarr Inlet.

As glaciers move, they pick up sediments that scour and sculpt the land. The result: an eye-dazzling display of coves, inlets and rocky cliffs. . . nature in the raw.

Some visitors to Glacier Bay sight whales spouting, an eagle soaring overhead, or see seals basking on ice chunks. We were fortunate enough to see all three! In fact, we also had the unexpected thrill of seeing a humpback whale thrust out of the water and into the air. It's called "breaching" and it's a rare and extraordinary event to witness.

No other north country locale can match the glaciers, waters, rainforests and wildlife of Glacier Bay.