#### **ASPECTS OF TOURISM 32**

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# Lake Tourism An Integrated Approach to Lacustrine Tourism Systems

Edited by C. Michael Hall and Tuija Härkönen

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Although lakes have long been a focal point for leisure and tourism activity, it is only in recent times that they have become a foci of tourism research. The first international academic conference on lake tourism was held in Savonlinna in Finland in 2003, the second in China in 2005. Indeed, concerns over environmental quality, amenity migration, regional development, access to fresh water and environmental change mean that tourism has now become a central issue for those interested in the management and sustainability of lakes and lacustrine systems. Nevertheless, it must also be remembered that lakes are often locations of intense personal and place attachment for people who live on them or visit them. In Nordic countries, for example, there are arguably few locations like a quiet forested lake to make one contemplate a sense of belonging or feelings of absence and longing – the generation of a positive response of wishing you were there. Indeed, in the Nordic context, it is readily apparent that the landscape and water in particular, plays a strong part in senses of national and regional identity, a feeling that is also shared in many other regions of the world.

It is within this context that this volume has been developed. Its origins lie within the Lake Tourism Project that was developed within the Finnish University Network of Tourism Studies (FUNTS) and managed by the Savonlinna Institute for Regional Development and Research at the University of Joensuu. That lake tourism is associated with Finland and Savonlinna in particular should come as no surprise for those with an interest in the area. There are arguably few countries that are so dependent on lakes as an image and activity factor in their tourism than Finland, while Savonlinna is a destination whose development is inseparable from that of its lake setting. However, as this volume demonstrates, while the Finnish experience with lake tourism provides a significant source of knowledge on the subject, interest in lake-related tourism is now a worldwide phenomena.

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