Atkins, P.J. (2012) Consuming the rural landscape, *Geography Review* 25, 4, 14

Introduction
Agriculture now represents only a small part of the wealth creation of the Global North and in rural areas there has been a shift in recent decades towards tourism and other activities that support farm incomes and diversify the economy. What used to be remote locations without facilities for visitors are now 'consumed' by tourists in the same way as seaside resorts or city-based attractions. Although this trend has provided some employment and prosperity, it has also led to pressure upon what are often fragile rural resources.
www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/pdf_res_brief/sb02-92.pdf
hsc.csu.edu.au/geography/activity/local/tourism/FRURALTO.pdf

Carrying capacity
According to some estimates, one billion people travel abroad each year. While some trips are low-impact ecotourism, others use scarce resources unsustainably, such as high levels of water use in dry areas. There are also examples of serious damage, such as the clearance of forest to make way for hotels or the pollution caused at honey pot visitor attractions.
http://www.sustainabletourism.net/
http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Schools/Resources/ESD/Sustaining+Geography/Sustainable+tourism.htm

According to the notion of carrying capacity, we should be able to identify the maximum number of visitors that can be allowed without degrading the environment (physical, economic and socio-cultural). But who decides how much damage there is? Is it the visitors, the locals or the planners? Another problem with the idea is that capacities vary as the factors in the system change. In reality such systems are dynamic and complex, and therefore difficult to manage. Arguably, the ability of an ecosystem to adapt under pressure from tourism is more important, including any thresholds beyond which damage may accelerate and become irreversible. Some environments and landscapes are remarkably resilient but others are not.
http://unwto.org/en
http://www.unep.org/ourplanet/imgversn/151/binger.html
http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/envi/index.html
http://www.resalliance.org/

Management
Carrying capacity modelling has now been largely replaced by planning based upon Limits of Acceptable Change. Since leisure and tourism always cause some change, how much is acceptable and how should the outcomes be monitored? In America this LAC approach was first applied in wilderness managed by the US Forest Service and later it was widely adopted in National Parks.

uneau.org/tourism2/documents90-99/Limits_of_Accpt_Change96.pdf
http://www.jurassiccoast.com/downloads/WHS%20Management/purbeck_carrying_capacity_report.pdf

Wilderness is an interesting example of management. We may think of it as that ever-decreasing portion of the environment that has not been influenced by people but in reality most 'wild' areas have experienced the conscious or unconscious impact of society over lengthy periods. An example is the treeless uplands and moors of Scotland, where people were first replaced by sheep and game animals, and then the empty landscapes later became a scenic draw for tourists. It is also true of National Parks all over the world, where wilderness is encouraged, managed, protected and therefore no longer fully 'natural'.
http://www.wild.org/
http://www.wilderness.net/

There is now a widespread call for 'rewilding' certain aspects of the countryside, not just by environmentalists wanting to redress the effect of humans but also from advocates of sustainable tourism, who see an opportunity to educate the public about native flora and fauna.
http://rewilding.org/rewildit/what-is-rewilding/
http://rewildingeurope.com/

For example, there are several fascinating experiments in 'Pleistocene rewilding' in Europe and North America. The argument is that the absence of large animals (megafauna) on these continents is the major gap in their ecosystems and that the reintroduction of wild cattle and bison would be a move in the right direction. Some argue for the release of wolves and bears but the public are probably not ready for this in densely populated countries as Britain. Beavers have recently been reintroduced to Scotland and the various colonies of red kites in England are the result of rewilding initiatives. These activities are controversial because not everyone agrees on the definition of 'wild' and whether it is a good idea to manipulate nature in this way.
rewilding.org/pdf/Pleistocene-Re-wildingNorthAmerica1.pdf
advancedconservation.org/library/donlan_etal_2006.pdf
www.largeherbivore.org/assets/pdf/britishwildlifevera.pdf
http://www.scottishbeavers.org.uk/
http://www.redkites.co.uk/

And finally
The relationship of tourism to rural areas is complex and deserves serious study. As we have seen, the existing models are undergoing revision and improvement, so attention to the literature is important. There are many opportunities for fieldwork and the impact of rewilding is potentially one of the most interesting.
http://www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/fieldwork/course/fieldwork-topics-and-themes/human-geography/tourism/

http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCE New GCE/GCE-Geography-Unit-4-Example-Report-Consuming-the-Rural-Landscape-Jan2010.pdf
http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCE New GCE/Unit 4 Option 6 Consuming-the-Rural-Landscape-Leisure-and-Tourism.ppt

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