



## Guyana's Protected Areas System

Guyana is recognised globally for its wealth of natural resources, particularly its vast rainforest, which provides habitats for an enormous variety of plant and animal species. These plants and



animals, some of which are endangered species, are important to the development of our country and play a key role in providing livelihood and business for our indigenous peoples who harvest and market them. Considering the exceptional benefits that are associated with biodiversity, their protection is increasingly vital. In recognition of this, the Government of Guyana (GoG), has over the years, been putting mechanisms in place for the effective management and conservation of these resources.

### Establishing of Protected Areas

Protected areas allow for the protection and conservation of the natural environment. In 2011, the Protected Areas Act was passed in Parliament; this provided much needed impetus to boost the country's efforts in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Protected Areas Legislation paved the way for the establishment of the Protected Areas Commission (PAC) in 2012. The PAC is responsible for 'protection and conservation of Guyana's natural heritage and natural capital through the coordination and management of the National Protected Areas System (NPAS)'.



Prior to the establishment of the PAC, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is the country's focal point for the Convention on Biological Diversity, solely coordinated the NPAS.

Under the NPAS, four areas of extraordinary biological value were designated legally Protected Areas: Kaieteur National Park, Shell Beach, the Kanuku Mountains, and the Iwokrama Centre for Rainforest Conservation which is a privately owned PA. Konashen, a community owned

Conservation Area is intended to be instituted under the NPAS. Other areas proposed for protection include Mount Roraima and Orinduik Falls. These areas ensure effective protection

and sustainable management of ecosystems within Guyana through a national system of protected areas which is self-sustained, transparent, decentralised and managed through partnerships.



To support the NPAS a Guyana Protected Areas Systems Project (GPAS) was implemented with funding from Germany through the German Development Bank (KfW). The GPAS Project is now in its second phase. In Phase I, the project supported alternate sustainable livelihood projects in over 30 Amerindian communities associated with Shell Beach, Kanuku Mountains, Kaieteur National Park and the Upper Mazaruni. It also led to the drafting of the

National Protected Areas Act, delineation process for both the Kanuku Mountains and Shell Beach Protected Areas, and a draft Kanuku Mountains Management Plan.

In Phase II, funds were allocated to support the establishment and infrastructural development of the PAC. To this end, the first national-level institution for protected areas management in Guyana was set up, with the commissioning of the new PAC building in the National Park. This Phase will also support the development of a management plan for Shell Beach as well as infrastructure in key protected areas.

Let's protect our biological wealth! Support Guyana's National Protected Areas System (NPAS)!

**Share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: "Our Earth, Our Environment", C/O EIT Division, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: [eit.epaguyana@gmail.com](mailto:eit.epaguyana@gmail.com)**