



Ecotourism: conserving nature while boosting the economy

November is regarded as Tourism Awareness Month in Guyana. Guyana's tourism product, as pointed out by the Honourable Minister of Tourism, Mrs. Cathy Hughes, is the country's exceptional natural wealth, most of which is concealed in our interior regions. For us to experience the benefits of tourism, the conservation of our environment is very important. Hence, the promotion of ecotourism and nature based tourism should be on the front burner.



Ecotourism not only allows for significant income generation, boosting the economy of the country, but it also contributes to conservation of the environment. Key features of ecotourism include:

- ✚ allowing a certain amount of visitors to a location at a particular time to ensure that the natural environment is not impacted in a negative way,
- ✚ education of visitors, as well as workers on the natural heritage at sites they visit,
- ✚ emphasis on the importance of the environment to the local population,
- ✚ employment of local people, and
- ✚ support for local conservation efforts.



While we have become familiar to referring to foreigners as tourists, it is important to point out that we can be tourists within our own country. Therefore, when planning your family vacation, consider seeking out ecotourism destinations, which have been increasing in Guyana.

While on your vacation it is important to remember the following tips:

- ✚ Take only pictures and leave only footprints;
- ✚ Do not collect any wildlife (plant or animal) as a souvenir;
- ✚ Dispose of wastes properly;
- ✚ Notify tour operators of any encounter with wild animals; and
- ✚ Always remain with the tour group if visiting the destination with a group.



Businessmen who are interested in developing an ecotourism site need to consider the following:

- ✚ Ensure food stuff and other biological resources are from sustainably managed sources.
- ✚ Ensure all waste from the site, including sewage are properly treated and disposed of
- ✚ Support local conservation efforts through practical actions, including financial contributions and donation of equipment.
- ✚ Ensure that no threatened or endangered species are put at risk from tourism activities.
- ✚ Ensure that wildlife does not enter the tourism supply chain (especially as foods or souvenirs).
- ✚ Make a deliberate effort to increase the awareness of tourists and workers about the value of biodiversity and the steps they can take to protect it.



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.