



International Mountain Day

“Mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery” - John Ruskin

Every year on December 11, the world celebrates International Mountain Day (IMD); this year’s theme is “Sustainable Mountain Tourism”.

Why do mountains matter?

The mountains of the world provide essential ecosystem-based services to global communities as well as inspiration and enjoyment to millions.

Mountains are particularly important for their biodiversity, water, clean air, research, cultural diversity, leisure, landscape, and spiritual values. They are income sources for communities through agriculture, tourism, and use of natural resources and important for minimization of natural hazards and early warning systems.

Mountainous formations also occur across considerable areas of the ocean floor. These important and diverse underwater mountain ranges and islands constitute a large portion of the mountainous surface of the planet.

Sustainable mountain tourism

Sustainable tourism in mountains has and can contribute to creating additional and alternative livelihood options and promoting poverty alleviation, social inclusion, as well as landscape and biodiversity conservation. These actions allow for the preservation of the natural, cultural and spiritual heritage, promote local crafts and high-value products; and celebrate many traditional practices such as local festivals.

Mountain tourism attracts around 15 to 20% of global tourism. This sector was not spared from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; affecting economies, livelihoods, public services, and opportunities on all continents. The restriction in movement caused by the pandemic has further compounded the vulnerabilities of mountain communities.

However, these setbacks can be seen as opportunities to rethink mountain tourism and its impact on natural resources and livelihoods, so as to manage it better, and harness opportunities that will promote a more resilient, green, and inclusive future.

Guyana is home to hundreds of breathtaking mountains and four (4) mountain ranges; namely The Acarai Mountains, The Imataka Mountains, The Pakaraima Mountains, and The Kanuku Mountains. Like other mountains around the world, these mountains also

boast enormous biological wealth, diverse wildlife and are home to many of our indigenous communities.

What can you do to help with Mountain Day awareness?

This year, the EPA encourages natural lovers and the general public to join the conversation on social media using the hashtag #MountainsMatter. Pass on some of the key messages or share about the tourism in the mountains near you. Post a photo of your favorite mountain moment and share it with us @epaguyana and your friends.

Did you know? Of the world's 237 countries, 197 include mountains.

Did you know? The Kanuku Mountains are legally protected in Guyana.

Sources

<https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas/our-work/mountains>

<https://www.fao.org/international-mountain-day/theme/en/>

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/mountain-day>

You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: “Our Earth, Our Environment”, C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: eit.epaguyana@gmail.com or follow us on Facebook and Instagram