World Beach Day



Did you know that World Beach Day is officially celebrated at the start of September, every year?

This commemorative event was started by Ms. Patti Jewel after she completed a year-long project to visit all of the beaches in Florida and raise awareness about the ecological problems that are negatively affecting our global beaches. As such, the day aims to continue this mission to increase awareness around the different threats that global beaches face.

When thinking about the major issues that global beaches face, the first thing that comes to mind is beach pollution. The term 'beach pollution' broadly refers to any harmful substances that contaminate our coasts (NRDC 2022). One of the main sources of beach pollution is litter or solid waste. This may originate when beach-goers do not dispose of their garbage, or when people in rural or urban inland areas improperly dispose of their waste, causing them to be picked up by surface runoff and eventually flow into our bays and oceans. Beach pollution can also occur when there are

accidental or intentional discharges from ocean vessels such as fishing gear and ballast water.

Overdevelopment is another key issue faced by our global beaches. Increased development along regional coastlines can lead to the increased degradation of coastal habitats. This can also increase the rate of coastal erosion, which is another significant issue for beaches, especially as climate change increases risk of sea-level rise. This is concerning as the erosion of regional beaches will affect the capacity of affected beaches to protect coastal communities from the impacts of extreme weather events and storm surge, as well as the capacity to provide a secure habitat for local species.

In light of these issues, it is more important than ever to promote the conservation of our global beaches. The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) aims to contribute to this cause through its work towards the achievement of its Strategic Objective C which seeks to reduce environmental risks, biodiversity loss and promote the restoration, preservation, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and other natural resources.

The Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) of the ACS is currently working in the Sandy Shorelines Project. The main objective of the project is to monitor and preserve the coastlines of the Caribbean to address climate change issues with the sponsorship of the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The project aims to bring together coastal erosion experts of the region to establish a regional monitoring network. This would then enable the Caribbean Countries to better understand the impacts of climate change on coastlines and advocate for international funding due to the Caribbean's high vulnerability due sea level rise. The participating countries include Antigua & Barbuda, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Panama and Trinidad & Tobago.

The Association especially aims to increase collaborative action towards the sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea as it recognizes that we can only move closer towards of goal of protecting our beaches and shared ocean spaces through commitment to joint action. In support of this, we would like to encourage all readers to take inspired action towards the protection of our regional beaches by opting to host or attend beach cleanups, or by simply sharing this information with your family and friends.

With your help, we know that we can make a significant impact.

Sources

https://worldbeachday.com/

www.epa.gov/beaches/learn-what-affects-beach-health

https://www.nrdc.org/stories/beach-pollution-101