

BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEPEND ON EACH OTHER



May 22 is celebrated as the International Day of Biodiversity and this year it is the first time that Donald Trump has experienced the day as US president. He is known not to be fan of environmental protection and plans to decrease the budget of the environmental agency.

However, Trump actually has many reasons to work for the preservation of the environment and especially biodiversity. Like the rest of the world, USA benefit greatly from biodiversity and its preservation.

The international day of biodiversity is devoted to tourism this year. Offers of eco, adventure, and natural tours are booming. Intact and beautiful landscapes, mountains, coasts, beaches, dunes, oceans, forests and meadows are growing in popularity among travelers. **Biodiversity and tourism in U.S. should thus work hand in hand.**

Biodiversity is under pressure worldwide. It is estimated that up to 380 species of animals and plants die every day. The 17 “megadiversity” countries with the highest biodiversity include Brazil, South Africa, DR Congo and Indonesia, but also the United States which are home to 70% of the species living in the world.

The negative impact of tourism on biodiversity can be significant if habitats are destroyed and contaminated, as in Cancun, Mexico, where large mangrove and forest populations have been cut down because of tourism. The tourism industry has developed rapidly over the last two decades. The number of international tourist arrivals per year increased by an average of 4.2% and there is no end to the growth in sight. The pressure on biodiversity through tourism will thus continue to increase in the future. It is therefore important to think about the protection and sustainable use of nature also for the sake of tourism.

There are sufficient economic arguments regarding the necessity of cooperation of biodiversity and tourism in U.S. The US Department of Defense estimates that in the 59 US National Parks more than 3 million jobs depend on tourism and in 2016 nearly \$35 billion was generated.

Other American industries are also dependent on biodiversity, including the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry - the world’s largest. Many profound products are based on plants and their active ingredients, which were discovered in biodiversity hotspots.

So far, no US president has succeeded in ratifying the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the United Nations. Here, Trump could stand out from his predecessors and surprise the world positively.

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