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Dear Friends,

With its exceptional levels of biodiversity, robust wildlife, over 820 species of bird and thousands of square miles of pristine rainforest and savannah, Guyana has been a natural draw for conservationists for years. Many community-led and owned tourism experiences in Guyana are centered around conservation and preservation, and dozens of NGOs have initiated projects here with the aim of preserving Guyana's natural riches while helping its people grow and prosper. It can be a fine line, but very few have walked it better than Conservation International. Since CI arrived in Guyana over 30 years ago, the organization has made numerous contributions to the sustainable development of the country. I invite you to read on, learn more about the relationship between conservation and tourism, and get inspired.

Yours in travel,

Jane Behrend
Lead Representative, North America

UPCOMING WEBINARS

October 22. Culture & Heritage: The 6 influences that makeup Guyana | [Register Here](#)

PERSON OF THE MONTH: **GILLIAN ALBERT**



When she was a little girl, working on a small farm near the village of Karasabai, Gillian Albert had no idea how her professional career would one day benefit from her ability to tame horses and bring in a crop. Today Gillian is a Community Development Assistant for Conservation International (CI), a group she's worked with intermittently since 2006. Her work in conservation, however, began in 1998 when she was among the first park wardens hired at the [Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development](#). "It was my

introduction into ecotourism," she says. "We did a lot of work in setting up the tourism product there in the early phases. We did visitor interaction, guiding, looking at Amerindian (Indigenous) rights and history, skills and practices." Gillian was involved in establishing Rewa Eco-Lodge, one of Guyana's early indigenous owned and operated lodges. As a member of CI, she now helps other villages establish their ten-year Village Improvement Plans (VIPs), continuously helping more and more communities in Guyana on their journeys toward sustainable tourism.

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL AT WORK IN GUYANA

Conservation International (CI) is a global NGO that has had success in implementing environmental and social conservation projects by taking an inclusive approach. To get things done, CI pitches a wide tent. They work with governments, corporations, communities, scientists, academia and anyone else that can make things happen. They take a pragmatic approach to all they do.

[Conservation International](#) has been in Guyana since 1989, and their impact, while not always visible, has been significant. It was in Guyana, in 2002, that CI and the Government of Guyana launched the world's first conservation concession agreement. In it, CI orchestrated payments to the holders of land that had extractive rights for not exercising them. This created both ecological and economic wins in local communities and helped protect 80,000 hectares (200,000 acres) of forest in the Essequibo watershed.



In addition to marvelling at Guyana's pristine nature and abundant wildlife, today's travelers to the country's interior locations can also enjoy the unique experience of staying at one of several indigenous



community-led and owned eco-lodges. Conservation International has helped many communities turn this dream into a reality including lodges such as [Rewa Eco-Lodge](#).

In 2015, Guyana's Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (now the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs) designed the Sustainable Villages initiative so that the Indigenous Peoples of the Rupununi can remain effective stewards of their traditional lands. CI is helping the government and communities

develop a planning guide, the Sustainable Villages Framework, to help enhance the value of the communities' natural, cultural and other assets. Elements of this framework have been used to help inform the Community Led and Owned Tourism Development Framework that the Guyana Tourism Authority now works with upcoming communities to establish their tourism product.

CI helps communities develop their ten (10) year Village Improvement Plans (VIPs). Every VIP is different because every community has its own objectives. The VIP is developed by individual community members and outlines what the communities would like to do for their local development – including tourism. As of February 2018, 22 villages had developed their VIPs, impacting the lives of over 15,000 people and preserving over 2 million hectares (over 7,700 square miles) of land. It is hoped that by the end of 2025, every village in Guyana will have a VIP in place.



There are numerous NGOs at work in Guyana, and once travel opens up again, travelers will be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor with communities through tourism experiences. To learn more on CI-Guyana's 2025 Vision for Guyana, check out this [short video](#).

FEATURED ITINERARY:

7-DAY IWOKRAMA EDUCATIONAL TRIP

Most education-based itineraries in Guyana are customized to meet the needs of the group traveling.

However, here is a sample itinerary from the [Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development](#) that gives you an idea of what a 7-day educational trip with a focus on conservation could consist of.

[SEE FULL ITINERARY](#)



VIDEO OF THE MONTH

From biodiversity research in the Iwokrama Rainforest Reserve and caiman tagging research at Caiman House to solar-powered ecolodges and well-managed tourism, Guyana welcomes you to enjoy a bit of conservation and SAVE (Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational) travel forms a part of the Guyana tourism experience.



GTA LAUNCHES OTT COURSE

Last week, we officially launched the North American OTT Course for Guyana. The course has been divided

into four modules: Guyana Essentials, Nature, Birding & Wildlife, Culture & Heritage and Community-tourism and Lodges.

The course also includes practical advice and information to help you sell Guyana including itineraries and a list of trade-friendly and local Guyanese operators you can book through. We encourage you to [dive into the course](#) and learn more about this singular destination. [Did we mention there are prizes for the first 40 agents to complete it?](#)



GUYANA IN THE NEWS

"Guyana's community-led and owned tourism (CLOT) initiatives take sustainable tourism to another level. They engender life-changing self-sustainability that benefits local people - and protects the environment." So says this new, comprehensive ["Tell Us Your Story"](#) feature from Rough Guides."

We're delighted to have been included in the recent Conde Nast Traveller article, ["The 21 Best Holiday Destinations for 2021."](#)

October 17-18 will mark the first ["Global Bird Weekend,"](#) when people around the world will be birdwatching together (virtually, of course). Team Guyana will be taking part, and we hope you'll join us as we "put a glass on" some of our 800+ species of bird.



September 2020

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