



It's more fun in the
Philippines 

MEDIA RELEASE

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3rd International Mt. Apo Boulder Face Challenge to boost tourism and environmental protection

The Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Municipal Government of Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur will hold the International Mt. Apo Boulder Face Challenge on 27 – 28 April 2013 to further raise tourism activity and awareness on environmental protection for the Philippines' highest peak.

“The protection of the environment is a major thrust of tourism. Our 21st century tourists are more discerning and tend to patronize destinations with sustainable practices. The Davao region boasts of many unique offerings and attractions: the durian, waling-waling, Philippine Eagle, and the Mt. Apo. Top that with the community's active advocacy for protection, and we will have more desirable tourists appreciating these natural assets,” Tourism Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez, Jr. enthused.

The third international installment of the race and its sixth overall spans 113.3 kilometers: 47.8 km of biking, 50 km of trekking, 3.5 km of water tubing, and 12 km of road running. Any team of three, composed of two racers and one logistics crew, all above 18 years old, are allowed to join the race. “For regular climbers, it takes two days to climb the peak of Mt. Apo and one day to descend. This competition invites participants to do a 24-hour climb of Mt. Apo and back,” DOT Region XI Director Arturo Boncato said.

Forty teams participated in last year's Boulder Face Challenge with 11 foreign teams from Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, Hong Kong, and Vietnam. The race's winners were Corporal Cresenciano Sabal and PCF Gerald Sabal, brothers and members of the Philippine Army, who clocked a record of 15 hours and 38 minutes. They are hoping to defend their title this year.

Sta. Cruz Municipal Councilor Fernando Ugdoracion said the organizers gave equal footing in terms of distance covered in the road running and mountain biking parts of the race. "Last year, there were only 20 km required for mountain climbing and then almost 80 km were allotted for trekking," he added.

The race is also part of the municipal fiesta, *Pista sa Kinaiyahan* (Festival for Nature), which was first organized in 2001 during a heightened call for the protection of Mt. Apo. The event has been espousing environmental protection awareness through tree and mangrove growing, clean-up climbs, recycled material art exhibits, and fashion show activities.

"One of the municipalities with best practices is Sta. Cruz because it trains its community members to be vanguards of the forest. That is why we made this as the entry point of the competition because it is a model local government unit," DOT Regional Director Boncato said.

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