

25 high value geo-tourism spots in Sabah — expert

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KOTA KINABALU: Sabah has many geo-tourism spots that have remained relatively unexplored for promotion as a tourism product.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) geologist Professor Dr Felix Tongkul said there are over 25 high value geo-tourism spots in Sabah, some of which are located at non-protected areas, and which may soon be gone as no efforts are being undertaken to protect them.

The others, however, are located at protected areas such as within the Mount Kinabalu Park and Maliau Basin as well as at Simpang Mengayau, otherwise known as the Tip of Borneo.

Dr Felix said most people go to Mount Kinabalu merely to conquer the mountain.

“But if you deal with these geo-tourism spots as a tourism product, you could look at the diverse rock trail,” he said.

Geotourists visiting the Maliau Basin, on the other hand, will look at the unique shape of the basin and its numerous waterfalls, while those going to Simpang Mengayau would look



Dr. Felix

at the rock formations and other interesting geo-products.

Even Pulau Tiga has its own geo-story to tell. Did you know that Pulau Tiga was actually formed by three mud volcanoes?

“All this information will give a more meaningful experience,” said Dr Felix.

And there’s more. Sipadan Island is actually a volcanic island.

“These are geo-tourism spots that you can promote as a tourism product,” he reckoned.

Surprisingly though, Sabah

has yet to have a single geo-park, while nationwide, only Langkawi Island has one, although efforts to promote it has dimmed over the years, said Dr Felix.

He added that geo-tourism had been included as a subject in his faculty at UMS, which is the Science and Natural Resources Faculty.

He said this was to allow geologist students at the university to have a wider range of career prospects open to them.

“One cannot expect all of them to become geologists,” he remarked.

He added that geo-tourism requires guides who can explain about the earth formation, and who are more knowledgeable in that area if not those who have studied geology.

Unfortunately, most geology students want to work in the oil and gas sector and would even work in banks rather than venture as geo-tourism tour guides, he lamented.

“But I am seeing a huge potential for geology students to go into this,” said Dr Felix when met at the sideline of the BIMP-EAGA Education Summit yesterday.