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Mt. Pulag open to hikers



Bokod, Benguet , Philippines – Mt. Pulag is open to mountain climbers, the Mt. Pulag Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) has clarified amid confusion after the municipal government of Kabayan earlier declared it temporarily closed.

In an emergency meeting last March 19, the PAMB decided that Resolution No. 26-10 issued by the Kabayan municipal council temporarily closing Mt. Pulag to hikers did not pass through proper channels, thus it “could not be implemented outright,”

said Abner Villanueva, spokesman of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ Cordillera office.

The PAMB, according to Villanueva, “was also unanimous in saying the Mt. Pulag National Park continues to be open to the public.”

Mt. Pulag, whose peak is mostly grasslands, is a favorite destination of mountain climbers especially during the Holy Week.

Kabayan officials reportedly “closed” Mt. Pulag – the highest mountain in Luzon and the second highest in the country – to hikers to protect it from wild fires.

The PAMB, however, said it would still study the issues raised by the Kabayan municipal council whose committee on tourism, culture, arts and special events endorsed the closure of the Mt. Pulag National Park to allow the forest vegetation to regenerate, among other reasons.

The committee also cited the need to resolve differences among transport groups plying the Mt. Pulag access routes, and to retrain tour guides, porters, drivers and other tourism service providers. - **By Artemio Dumlao (Philstar News Service, www.philstar.com)**