

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Itoigawa

UNESCO Global Geopark

(Japan, Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network)

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:

Inscribed 2009 / Last Revalidation 2021*

*Revalidation mission realized in 2022



Jade Designated Niigata's Prefectural Stone

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 16 staffs including 5 geoscientists and 2 archaeologists

Number of visitors: 88,669 (Visitors to Fossa Magna Museum)

Number of Geopark events: 33 (6 by management body, 27 by cooperating organizations)

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 127 schools (653 classes)

• Including school excursions visiting the Geopark: 101 schools (5,728 students)

Number of Geopark press release: 120 (Fax, email, homepage, social media, newsletter)

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2022

- New events to draw attention to issues facing the sea including a “Sea Art Exhibition” and “Geopark Kayaking at Benten-iwa Rock”
- Implementation of a new system for the discovery and registration of new sites within the Geopark with the cooperation of local residents and community organizations.
- Itoigawa Jade was designated as the Prefectural Stone of Niigata Prefecture, bringing greater attention to this resource and opening greater cooperation in conservation and promotion.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Actively participated in the APGN symposium in Satun, including an oral presentation on the progress of the Itoigawa Shimpaku Bonsai Project.
- Participated and aided in the facilitation of the APGN Online Exchange Series (6 times)
- Held two online exchange events for secondary school students with Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark. (Nov-Dec)
- Received our 3rd Revalidation Mission, which was originally scheduled for 2021 but delayed for 1 year as a result of COVID restrictions.

Management and Financial Status

- Management remains stable through the Itoigawa Geopark Council, consisting of 34 member organizations including national and local government bodies, local commercial and tourist organizations, local resident groups, transportation companies and universities. These organizations assist in the management and activities of the Itoigawa Geopark through five working groups: “Education & Disaster Risk Reduction,” “Preservation & Conservation,” “Community Development,” “Tourism” and “Project Management.”
- Geopark finances remain stable. Direct funding from local government authorities is supplemented through merchandise sales. New projects make use of available national, local and private grants whenever feasible.

Geoconservation

- A special committee formed in response to new limestone quarry development near a geosite concluded its assessment report. Future activities will focus on monitoring and conservation activities as the quarry is developed.
- A new system for discovering and designating new geosites has been implemented. This system provides a means for members of the public to discover and submit sites for registration as geo, cultural or natural sites within the Geopark. Submissions are reviewed by the Geopark’s academic and management staff.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- A model tour for foreign residents of Japan was held to further assess the opportunities and challenges surrounding the Itoigawa Shimpaku Bonsai Project. 6 participants representing 4 countries joined and provided valuable feedback for the project. (Oct 22,23, 6 participants)
- A Geopark Kayaking event was held to bring attention to responsible ways of enjoying the coastal areas of Itoigawa Geopark. (Jun 18-19)

New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

- Partnered with Kadokawa Dwango Educational Institute to hold a special thematic workshop about natural resources and sustainability.

Strategic partnership

- Itoigawa Geopark partnered with Montbell, a major outdoor goods manufacturer, to host Sea-to-Summit, a large triathlon event.

Promotional activities

- The Niigata Prefectural Council designated Itoigawa's jade as Niigata Prefecture's Prefectural Stone. This is the first example of a prefectural stone designation in Japan and is hoped to bring greater attention to this precious geological heritage. (Nov 4)
- The "Sea Art Exhibition" was held in cooperation with a local artist who uses plastic waste collected along the coast for artwork. This exhibition highlighted the issues facing our seas and coastal regions, including plastic pollution

4. CONTACTS

Manager: Ōnishi, Manabu geopark@city.itoigawa.lg.jp

Geologist: Takenouchi, Kō museum@city.itoigawa.lg.jp