

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2024

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 due to COVID-19



Students from Hantang River Geopark participate in the Itoigawa Shimpaku Festival

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

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

Number of visitors: 86,150 (Visitors to Fossa Magna Museum)

Number of Geopark events: 10 (3 by management body, 7 by cooperating organizations)

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 109 schools/4,391 student (School excursions visiting the Geopark: 34 schools/1,292 students)

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

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2023

- Hosted the Japanese Geoparks Network National Training Conference on the theme of sale and use of minerals within the area of Geoparks.
- Began new exchanges with Hantang River Geopark in Republic of Korea.
- Held the first annual Itoigawa Shimpaku Festival in which 30 participants planted Itoigawa Shimpaku saplings in and around Mt. Myojo and the Kotaki District.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Actively participated in the Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium in Cao Bang, including oral presentation and coordination of the Japanese Geoparks booth.
- Participated and aided in the facilitation of the APGN Online Exchange Series (4 times)
- Restarted in-person student exchange visits with Sister Geopark in Hong Kong.
- Began new exchange with Hantang River Geopark (Korea).
- Participated in GGN 20th Anniversary Celebration at special exhibitions.
- Hosted an exchange between Japanese and Finland Geoparks with Rokua.
- Hosted an exchange with ACCU Bangkok as part of Sustaining Our Oceans Projects.

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. We are in discussions with the Itoigawa City Tourism Association proceeding toward a merger between our organizations to open up more funding and financial independence for the Geopark.

Geoconservation

- Successfully rescued a jade boulder as part of the Jade Rescue program.
- Iwakami Shrine in Itoigawa's Ohora District was dedicated as Itoigawa Geopark's newest registered site. This site showcases the close connection between landforms and spirituality.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- The Itoigawa Shimpaku Festival was successfully held in October with 30 participants enjoying lectures, bonsai demonstration and planting experiences. This new event will provide an opportunity to develop sustainable tourism around the Itoigawa Shimpaku tree.
- New "Pro Guide" training courses were held to improve Geopark Guide quality and create new and attractive employment opportunities within the Geopark Framework.

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

- No new programs, but current activities remain popular and well-supported.

Strategic partnership

- A new tripartite partnership was signed with the Kanazawa University Institute of Nature and Environmental Technology and the Taiwanese Geoparks Network. This partnership will allow us to work together to promote environmental conservation issues through geopark activities.

Promotional activities

- The "Earth Time Journey Exhibition" continues to be promoted throughout Japan.
- Exhibited at the Cool Japan Expo in Niigata City.
- Held a Special Exhibition on the 50th anniversary of the 1974 Mt. Yakeyama Eruption.

4. CONTACTS

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