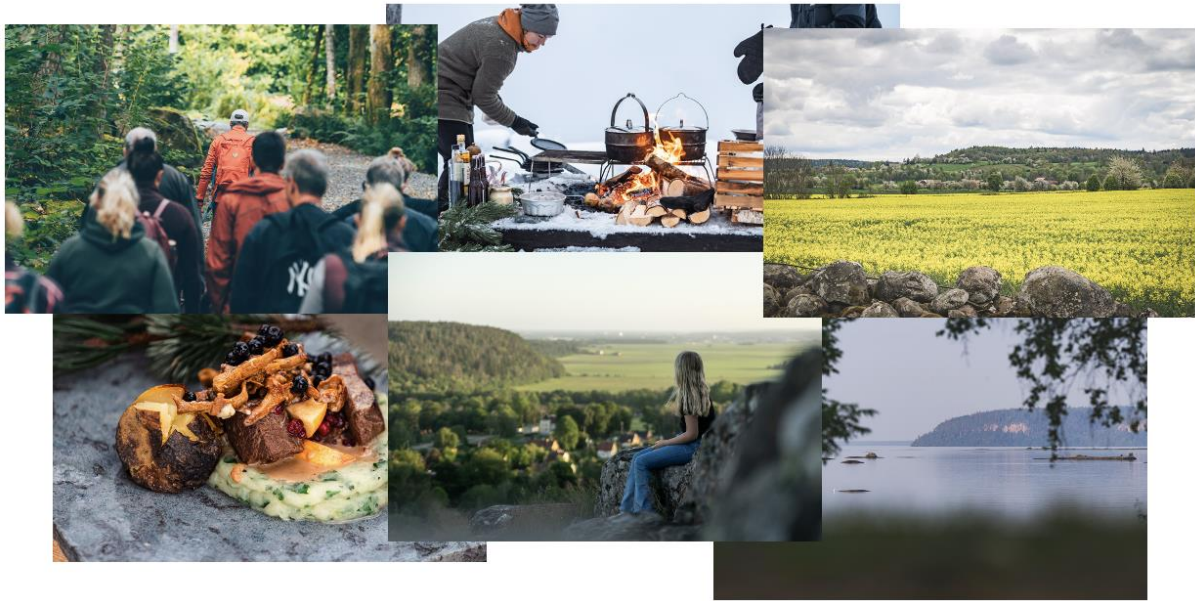


GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2024

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Platåbergens UNESCO Global Geopark, Sweden, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2022



2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 5 staffs including 1 geoscientist

Number of visitors to partners with geopark facilities:

Ekehagens forntidsby: 25 466

Falbygdens museum: 15 321

Naturum Hornborgasjön: 72 733

Vänermuseet: 21 279

Info-center Halle- Hunneberg: 23 000

Lugnås Qvarnstensgruva: 3 625

Naturum Vänerskärgården: 59 677

Balthazar science center: 70 000

Number of Geopark events:

We have had 71 geopark events help directly by the geopark or by a partner organization, with a total number of 1996 participants.

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:

Through our partner organization Vänermuseet and Naturum Vänerskärgrården 1664 students has participated in their school programme 2-5-8 for sustainable development. We have arranged two GeoKids summer camps with in total 30 participants. We also had to Geokids-day-events with approximately 200 participants in total.

Number of Geopark press release: 0

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2024

Platåbergen's UNESCO Global Geopark has delivered strongly in 2024, primarily due to additional financial resources through two major EU projects, which allowed us to have a total of five employees. This is reflected in the large number of activities (and visitors to these) as well as a strong upward trend in our communication channels. Our main printed material has been the magazine *Bergen som levebröd* ("The Mountains as a Livelihood").

Organizationally, this was the final year with Grästorp Municipality as the host municipality, as the nine collaborating municipalities decided in the fall that, starting in 2025, the geopark's operations will become part of Skara Municipality.

We have had strong network-building efforts, both locally, nationally, and internationally. In all the forums we have participated in, our work in strengthening local flavors and raw materials within the geopark area has been particularly appreciated, especially through the development of geopark products such as *Platåbergsmusten* (a local must/juice).

Examples of some major events we have attended or organized:

- Nordic Geological Winter Meeting in Gothenburg, January – trade fair/conference with over 500 participants
- UNESCO Concept Conference in Stockholm, March – organized by the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, with around 100 participants; we held a workshop and tasting session
- Spring Meeting of the European Geoparks Network, Turkey – 300 participants
- Spring Tour Kinnekulle
- Rural Entrepreneurs' Day in collaboration with Leader – **about** 80 participants
- Opening of Welcome House in Skövde – about 80 participants
- Opening of Stora Torget (Main Square) in Falköping
- EGN Conference in Reykjanes, Iceland – about 500 participants

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

During the spring, we participated in the EGN (European Geoparks Network) Spring Meeting in Turkey (49th EGN Coordination Committee). The meeting took place in the Kula-Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark. Over three days, we attended meetings, workshops, and field visits.

As part of the project "The Flavors of the Table Mountain Landscape", we conducted a study trip to Norway in April, where we visited the two global geoparks Gea Norvegica and Magma Geopark. In the same project, we traveled to Dalarna in May for a study visit with Visit Dalarna.

At the end of May, Anna traveled to Greece to participate in the GGN Geopark Course for a week. The course was held on Lesbos, home to one of the original geoparks. More than 70 participants from over 50 countries attended, highlighting how the geopark concept is spreading worldwide and growing in popularity.

In September, EGN held its autumn meeting digitally over two days, with Anna and Sofia participating.

In early October, Sofia, Henrik, and Sven-Erik traveled to the European Geopark Conference, which this year took place on the Reykjanes Peninsula, Iceland. The conference had nearly 500 participants. We contributed with both an oral presentation and a workshop, both as part of the project "The Flavors of the Plateau Mountain Landscape."

Throughout the year, Anna has been a member of the GGN Advisory Committee, which has held several digital meetings.

2024, the Global Geoparks Network celebrated its 20th anniversary. As part of the celebration, a global photo competition was organized, and we held a local competition to select our representative. The winning photo was chosen in December and will now compete as Sweden's global representative.

Management and Financial Status

The geopark's finances during the year have been divided into different accounts: one for core operations, one for the EU-funded project from Leader ("*The Mountains as a Livelihood*"), and one for the EU-funded project from the Swedish Board of Agriculture ("*The Flavors of the Table Mountain Landscape*"). In total, we had a budget of 3,448,000 SEK, including all projects. Of this, the core operations had a budget of 2,248,000 SEK.

Over the year, our total expenses for core operations amounted to 2,280,627 SEK.

Both EU projects were completed at the turn of the year 2024/2025. In the fall, we submitted a new application for a larger EU project starting in 2025. This is a collaboration between the geopark, Visit Skaraborg (through Destination Läckö-Kinneulle) and Visit Dalarna, where we applied for funding to continue working on the development of culinary tourism.

At the beginning of the year, the geopark's staff expanded with Adrian Gyllingberg, who was hired part-time (50%) as an educator.

We conducted four meetings with the geopark's steering/working group — two digital and two in-person. Additionally, we held a reference group meeting focused on local development.

We also held two meetings with the geopark's ownership council, one in person and one digital. Throughout the year, discussions about the future organizational structure took place. At the March meeting, the ownership council supported the proposal for Skara to become the new host municipality starting in 2025, and for a new cooperation agreement to be drafted and approved by all municipalities in the fall. The cooperation agreement was approved by the ownership council in an extra digital meeting in June. It was then approved by each respective municipality in the fall, and during November and December, work began to transfer the geopark's operations from Grästorps to Skara.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism) and Promotional activities

In total, we have organized or participated in activities that have reached just under 2,000 visitors – for many events, we have not been able to count the exact number of participants.

Throughout the year, we have continued to promote the concept of "Taste and Experience Walks" in collaboration with Visit Skaraborg. The concept is designed as a three-hour walk combined with a tasting experience. The walks have been organized by our local guide companies – this year, Falbygdsturism, Kinneulle Turism, and Genom Naturen.

We have also received a high demand for private guided tours and lectures. The public lectures we organized were part of the project "The Mountains as a Livelihood." Other guided tours and lectures included a group of Dutch birdwatchers, participants in a study trip arranged by Stockholm Senior University, a guided tour for the municipal conference for Sweden's cultural and leisure managers, lectures for local heritage and nature conservation associations, and more. We also arranged a walking lecture at the peneplain in Nordkroken as part of Vänersborg's Sustainability Week.

From February to April, Skaraborg Senior University organized a study circle on the geology of the table mountains. This included public lectures, separate study circles, and a concluding bus trip through the Falbygden area. The number of participants ranged from 50 to 80 at each session.

From September to October, we collaborated with Vänersborg Art Gallery on the exhibition "The Wild." The geopark contributed with a lecture and tastings from Halle- and Hunneberg, as well as materials for a creative workshop where participants could build their own table mountain models.

Another event in September was the acoustic experiment "Breaking Sound – An Underground Search," held in collaboration with the Qvarnstensgruvan millstone quarry in Lugnås. The event was part of the project "The Mountains as a Livelihood" and was also included in Mining Day.

Throughout the year, a number of new signs have been installed at Hunneberg, Mösseberg, Billingen, Mariestad, and other locations. These signs have been funded in part by LONA and Visit Skaraborg.

In June, we printed this year's edition of the magazine "The Mountains as a Livelihood," with a total circulation of 15,000 copies. This has been our main printed communication material for the year and has been distributed to all tourist information centers, partners, info points, and more.

During the fall, we worked on developing a visitor map for the geopark. It was printed in December and will be distributed in 2025.

In August, it was officially announced that the Great Quarry at Kinnekulle was selected as one of the 100 geological heritage sites of global significance for the advancement of geological science and the understanding of Earth's history. The designation was made by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) following a successful nomination process led by Per Ahlberg and Anders Lindskog from the Department of Geology at Lund University.

We have been visible across various channels, including our website, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, newsletters, and LinkedIn (not included in the statistics below). Here is a summary of the number of visits during the year:

- 1,816 visits to our Instagram profile
- 10,892 visits to our Facebook page
- 9,233 views on YouTube
- 889 newsletter openings
- 1,420 QR code scans leading to our website
- 88,461 website users

4. CONTACTS

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