

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2021

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 2017



2. GEOPARK FIGURES

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

Number of visitors: 53,610 (Visitors to Fossa Magna Museum)

Number of Geopark events: 35 (16 by management body, 19 by cooperating organizations)

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 148 schools (586 classes)

• Including school excursions visiting the Geopark: 106 schools (6,100 students)

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

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2021

- “Make Stone Faces Contest 2021,” encouraging visitors to discover geodiversity through art.
- Celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Tsugami Shindō Trail, a geotrail that connects the Sea of Japan to the Japanese Alps.
- Conducted a survey of Mt. Asahi and the Tsugami Shindō Trail in cooperation with the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology and Niigata University.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Actively participated in 8th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks, including an oral presentation reporting the success of the Make Stone Faces Contest 2021.
- The Japanese representative to the 1st GGN Youth Forum was a student from Itoigawa Geopark. Our staff actively supported her throughout her preparation and participation.
- Submitted an entry to the 1st GGN Film Festival.
- Participated and aided in the facilitation of the APGN Online Exchange Series (6 times)
- Participated in and online exchange with Thai Geoparks, supported by the Japanese Geoparks Network. (Dec 9)
- Presented as a guest speaker on community engagement for an online thematic seminar hosted by the Korea National Commission for UNESCO. (Sep 29)

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. Conditions related to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic have resulted in a decrease in revenue, but new product development continues in anticipation for increased tourism in 2022.

Geoconservation

- An event for making fossil replicas was held to show sustainable ways to enjoy and “collect” geological heritage. This event proved popular with the local population, so similar events are planned for the future.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- A fam trip for media and travel agents was held to promote the Itoigawa Shimpaku Project and provide valuable feedback as we continue to prepare for new sustainable tourism products focused on this precious local heritage. (Nov 6 – 7, 6 participants)

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

- Partnered with the Jōetsu University of Education for a special lecture on alpine flora.
- Academic survey of the Kurumisawa Landslide with the Japanese Geoparks Network.
- Held SDGs-themed interactive workshops at community centers and elementary schools.
- Held the Geo School Lunch Contest to celebrate 10 years of the program.

Strategic partnership

- Partnership programs with the Niigata University Faculty of Science
- Signed new partnership agreement with Itoigawa Hakurei High School
- Created new interpretive panels for the Niigata University Science Museum with the assistance of the Itoigawa Geopark Kid Curators.

Promotional activities

- An online lecture was held with Niigata University and two Japanese Geoparks. (Mar 6)
- Celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Tsugami Shindō Trail with a special lectures, a commemorative museum exhibition, a clean hike and a commemorative climb.
- The Stone Face Contest 2021 was held to encourage residents and visitors to make fun and attractive art using local stones. Selecting different shapes and colors of stones to make their artwork helped participants understand and appreciate the wide variety of stones which can be found in Itoigawa. Over 1,300 stone faces were submitted via social media,
- A “Character Bento Contest” was held to celebrate the birthday of the Itoigawa Geopark Mascot Characters, Geomaru and Nuna. Making decorative boxed lunches (bentos) is a popular hobby in Japan, so local residents and fans of the Geopark were called upon to submit photographs of their own decorative bentos featuring Geomaru and Nuna.
- A promotional online event, “Museum at Home” was held with Niigata University and two Japanese Geoparks. (Jul 31)
- Itoigawa Geopark was featured on a highly popular national television program. In response, a new special page was added to our official website.

4. CONTACTS

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