

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

### Geopark name, country, regional Network:

Izu Peninsula UNESCO Global Geopark (Japan). A member of APGN.

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:** 2018/2022

Representative photo with caption (from the most important event this year)

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 7 staff, including 2 geoscientists

**Number of visitors:** 12,530(visitors to the central facility.)

**Number of Geopark events:** 102

**Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:** 40

**Number of Geopark press release:** 59



The evaluators attended an education program.

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

### Major achievements in 2022

- In agreement with the master and action plan, the geopark bureau organised two working groups composed of geo-guide, NGO, and local university representatives. The working groups enabled citizens to voice their opinions on the project design and mid-term strategy of the geopark bureau.
- A comprehensive cultural heritage database (including intangible heritage) containing 135 items

was made to be available online. Additionally, a database of modern literature works was compiled. These databases will be combined with an interactive digital map to enhance the visibility of the rich cultural assets in the geopark.

- The geopark bureau commissioned a series of meetings to strengthen the local network and have parties contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) become better acquainted. Furthermore, the bureau has been operating the 'SDGs train' under a cordial partnership with a local railway company to elucidate the activities of the parties.
- Following a three-year interruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the bureau offered a geo-guide certification course. The training module covered a wide range of topics from volcanology to mythology, reflecting the great diversity of our activities. Thirty new certified geo-guides will join our endeavour by April 2023.
- Progressing to further integration, the second conference was held by the visitor centre network in the peninsula. The participants developed their insight on the multiple roles of visitor centres, which are serving as focal points of community education.
- Similar to previous years, we coordinated a series of casual talk shows named 'Geo-cafe' in addition to Interactive workshops. The events in the show covered a wide range of topics, such as literary works and geo sites, the revitalisation of communal baths in hot spring towns, and dialogue with glass artisans.
- Members of our research grant program wrote an article on Mt. Ohmuro, which was published in the internationally renowned *Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research*. To foster relationships between academia and the local community, the bureau organised a public lecture inviting the authors.

### **Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation**

- As a symbol of active commitment to APGN, two researchers presented the results of recent research at the 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Geopark Network Symposium in Satun, Thailand.
- A researcher delivered a keynote speech at the conference titled the 'Multidisciplinary geoscience approach to Culture, Climate Change, and Sustainable Development' in Chiletu Perabuhan UGGp in August 2022.
- As a symbol of our commitment to GGN and APGN, the researchers joined all the online conferences, which included the intensive online training course hosted by the networks in November.
- With strong aspiration to establish the first geopark in the Republic of Ghana, delegates of African Youth Empowerment and Development (AYED) visited the Izu Peninsula and learned how to manage a UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) in March 2023.

## **Management and Financial Status**

- On 1 April 2023, the Izu Peninsula Geopark council merged with the Izu Peninsula Tourism Bureau. This merger entailed the establishment of a new entity called the Izu Peninsula Geopark and Tourism Bureau. The new entity primarily mandates appropriate management of the geopark to enhance the sustainability of the tourism sector in the region.
- While the former geopark promotion council failed to officiate its legal status and had been registered as a volunteer group, the merger vested a juridical personality to the new entity. Furthermore, the merger significantly strengthened the capacity for marketing and promotion.
- We received generous support from the Shizuoka Prefecture, 15 municipalities in the Peninsula. The public sector played a significant role in underpinning the council. The budget allocated for Fiscal Year 2022 was JPY 60,182,680. Since the merger, the geopark secretariat has shared the general affair section with the former tourism bureau to rationalize personnel expenses. This arrangement accounts for the difference from the previous fiscal year's budget.

## **Geoconservation**

- Under supervision of the Ministry of Environment, the Geopark bureau conducted a comprehensive survey of the geological and ecological heritages and identified 220 crucial items. Based on this survey, the bureau intends to discuss taking drastic action to protect especially endangered items with the appropriate municipalities.
- Instances of voluntary actions by visionary citizens are increasing. For example, beach clean-up and coaming in the southern part of the peninsula have occurred for more than a decade. The bureau proudly introduced this activity at the International Marine Debris Symposium in Oki Island UGGp.

## **Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)**

- Our cycling trip to an authentic wasabi production centre won the sustainable inbound tourism award from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. This honour was attributed to the zero-emission and community-based nature of the program.
- Under collaboration with the geo-guide association, the bureau designed day trips, which exclusively used public transportation. This was a pilot to overcome severe dependency on private vehicles and reduce carbon emissions.

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

- The Geopark bureau codified 'A guidebook for using Geoparks in school programmes.' The book contains a general guideline for geo-guides and compilation of good practices in classes and field trips. An editor of this guidebook won a prize from the Japanese Geopark Network in recognition of its quality.
- The geopark council carried out the 'Photogenic Geo-train' in collaboration with a railway

company in the region. The running gallery exhibited artistic photographs captured by local high school students. This project highlights incredible landscapes in the geopark and stimulates youth creativity.

### **Strategic partnership**

- The comprehensive agreement with Shizuoka University sees steady progress of the cooperation between the two parties. Academic staffs of the University are actively serving as a Board member, an adviser for the Geopark council, lecturers in the Geo-guide training courses, and a committee of educational strategy working group.
- In line with the pact with Izunokuni City Hall, the Geopark bureau carried out a workshop and an exhibition. In occasion of the UNESCO's revalidation in October 2022, a senior curator of the city presented his vision to renew exhibition in the World Heritage visitor centre in Nirayama in light with collaboration with the Geopark.
- Based on the comprehensive agreement on sustainable regional development between Shizuoka Gas Ltd. and our team, the two parties offered a series of programs about wildlife and vegetation. The annual program included public lectures on interaction between wildlife and vegetation, field trip to witness imbalanced increase of deer, and cooking class using *gibier*.
- Vast majority of the partnership agreement signed by the former entity have been successfully taken over by the new bureau.

### **Promotional activities**

- We are grateful for the close relationship between the Japan Railways and former tourism bureau. The geopark bureau appreciates the opportunities to promote our establishment in several major stations of the Tokyo Metropolitan Region. Our entity periodically opens a shop in an upmarket residential district in the capital, which aids in promoting local products.
- The extended network of the former tourism bureau had strong leverage to promote the peninsula as an ideal destination for educational tours. The staff actively partake in education tourism fairs in major cities in Japan.
- The new entity fundamentally revised the website. This update substantially improved the entity's accountability as it disclosed the mid-term action plan, budget, detailed reports on activities, and the decision-making process.

## **4. CONTACTS**

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