

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network:

UNESCO Global Geopark Ries, Germany, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2022 (initial certification)

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



Caption:

Official ceremony celebrating award of UNESCO Global Geopark status, 18th July 2022 in Nördlingen.

Front center, left to right, beginning with fourth from left (holding certificate): Geopark Ries e.V. Chairman and Donau-Ries District Administrator Stefan Röble (with certificate), Bavarian State Minister-President Dr. Markus Söder, Geopark Ries e.V. Vice-Chairman and Nördlingen Mayor David Wittner, Member of the Bavarian State Parliament Wolfgang Fackler, Member of the German Bundestag Ulrich Lange, Managing Director of the Geopark Ries e. V. Heike Burkhardt, Deputy District Administrator Claudia Marb, Member of the Bavarian State Parliament Eva Lettenbauer, Deputy District Administrator Ursula Kneißl-Eder

Photographer: Marco Kleebauer

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs:

6 employees, including 1 geoscientist, plus 4 part-time consulting specialists

Number of visitors:

The total number of visitors to the Geopark Ries is not known. The Geopark Ries is currently investigating methods to count visitors to the Geopark's most popular geosite, Adventure Geotope Lindle.

The tourism association encompassing the Geopark Ries, Ferienland Donau-Ries, periodically engages market research firms to provide detailed analyses. For example, market research determined that the Ferienland Donau-Ries benefited from 450,000 overnight visits and 5.2 million day trips in 2016.

The Ries Crater Museum in Nördlingen reports that it has hosted over 1,000,000 visitors since its opening in 1990, with from 35,000 to 50,000 annual visitors (except during Covid restrictions).

One indication of the Geopark's growing popularity is participation in tours by certified Geopark Ries tour guides. In 2022, a year with some Covid restrictions, a total of 2,881 people participated in booked and public guided tours. From the beginning of the guided Geopark tours in 2009, this was the fourth highest number of guided persons.

Number of Geopark events:

The events held by Geopark Ries management and cooperative organizations included:

- General meeting of Geopark Ries e. V. with all member communities
- Official ceremony celebrating award of UNESCO Global Geopark status, 18 July 2022, Nördlingen (see photo and caption above, description under Major Achievements below)
- Opening of Ries Panorama Trail – Hiking around the meteorite crater, 8 October 2022 (see Major Achievements, Sustainable Tourism below)
- Opening of the Adventure Geotope Daiting, 2 October 2022 (see Major Achievements, Geoconservation, Strategic Partnerships below)
- (Co-organizer) Sheep Day (6th annual), 2 October 2022 – in cooperation with the Heide-Allianz Donau-Ries (local landscape conservation association)
- (Co-organizer) Geological Symposium of the Upper Rhine Geological Association, 20-24 September 2022, Nördlingen (see Major Achievements below)
- (Co-organizer) Celtic Conference “Preservation of archeological historical monuments and research in the Ries” together with the State Offices for the Preservation of Monuments of Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg and the Town of Bopfingen, 15 October 2022, in Bopfingen. For the first time interstate research results of the last 15 years have been collected and publicly presented.
- Conference, workshop and forum meeting of the German UNESCO Global Geoparks and

the German Geoparks' Working Group "Education for Sustainable Development", 24-25 November 2022, Nördlingen

- Guided tours of select Geopark Ries geosites on (German) Geotope Day 18 September 2022 and (German) Region Day 2 October 2022, as well as numerous guided tours throughout the year through Bavarian TourNatur program

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:

- 117 guided tours specially designed for school classes and student groups were booked in 2022.
- The Alemannenschule (elementary school) in Kirchheim am Ries is the first UGGp Geopark Ries School. Under the motto "Learn where you come from", the partnership helps young people recognize and appreciate the past and presence of their home region, with the intent to better shape its future. Alemannenschule students learn about the formation of the Ries through the meteorite impact as well as interconnected topics reaching back to the Stone Ages. An important emphasis of the collaboration is the preservation of special natural areas.

Number of Geopark press releases: 69

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2022

- By far the greatest achievement of 2022 was certification as a UNESCO Global Geopark. The occasion was celebrated with an official ceremony attended by around 180 guests including Bavarian Minister-President Markus Söder. (See photo and caption above.) The interest of media was enormous.
- The opening of the Ries Panorama Trail in 2022 represented the completion of a large-scale project. The hiking trail has a total length of 130 kilometers divided into seven-day stages and encircles the meteorite crater mainly along the crater rim. Twenty communities in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg cooperated on the project which was funded by the Bavarian State Ministry for Environment and Consumer Protection and the Baden-Württemberg State Ministry for Nutrition, Rural Areas and Consumer Protection.
- The Geopark Ries and Heide-Allianz Donau-Ries (a landscape conservation association) cooperate on a nature conservation project "Quarrying sites in the District of Donau-Ries—from wounds in the landscape to nature paradises" funded by the Bavarian Nature Conservation Fund Foundation. The Adventure Geotope Daiting "Iron Ore and Limestone"

was developed as part of this project. Thirteen Geopark Ries info-panels provide geological, natural and historical information along two circular nature trails.

- The children's line continues to be developed and expanded. Child-friendly and playfully presented information about the Ries event and its consequences are conveyed at more and more sites in the UGGp Ries, including in Wemding and the Geotope Lindle. Among the engaging features are distinctive info-panels with mascots, memory games, riddles, interactive stations, and more. The children's line was co-financed by a one-time donation of the Rotary Club Nördlingen.
- The UGGp Ries and the city of Nördlingen supported a training of the ESA/NASA astronauts Alexander Gerst and Stephanie Wilson (including coaching stuff), who are candidates for the next manned lunar mission "Artemis". The training in the Ries crater lasted five days in September. The interest of German media was very huge.
- The political party of "Freie Wähler", coalition partner of the Bavarian government, held their autumn conference in Nördlingen, in the UGGp Ries. Half of a day was reserved for a speech of the Chairman of Geopark Ries e. V. and the Geopark's Managing Director about the chances of regional development through the UGGp Ries. A guided tour around the geotope Lindle also took place. Media inquiries of regional and nationwide radio and TV channels was enormous again.
- On 20-24 September 2022, in Nördlingen, the UGGp Ries co-organized the Geological Symposium of the Oberrheinischer Geologischer Verein (the Upper Rhine Geological Association is one of the two umbrella organizations for geologists and geoscientists in Germany). Renowned experts in impact geology presented ten lectures and three additional abstracts and led eleven excursions over four days (many concurrently), which are documented in the 240-page publication *Geological Excursions in the Nördlinger Ries and its Surroundings*.
- The autumn conference and forum meeting of the German National Geoparks' Working Group "Education for Sustainable Development" and the German UNESCO Global Geoparks were held in Nördlingen, 24-25 November 2022. Discussions were very productive, and the visitors enjoyed the impressive historical location.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- In April, the UGGp Ries was honored to participate in the official digital welcoming event for new UNESCO Global Geoparks with a presentation and musical performance. The award of the official GGN membership certificate took place in September.
- In April, the two representatives of the UGGp Ries participated in the EGN CC spring meeting

in De Hondsrug.

- In August 2022 the Geopark Ries responded to the EGN's Call for Contributions and submitted an article about the Geopark Ries School in Kirchheim, which was published in the EGN CC Delegates Newsletter No. 6.
- In September 2022 the two official representatives and an employee of the UGGp Ries attended the EGN Conference in Verbania, Italy, where they presented two presentations and two posters. Also at the EGN meeting in Verbania, Nicolas Zouros handed over the award of the official membership certificate to the UGGp Ries.



Presentation of the official GGN membership certificate through Nicolas Zouros

- Following the conference in Verbania, the UGGp Ries was happy to establish relationships and provide information, photos, geological samples, etc. upon request from UGGp Azores, UGGp Mellerdall, UGGp Karawanken and others.
- In October the UGGp Geopark Ries completed the questionnaire and supplied the photos, requested by the UNESCO Global Geopark Secretariat Paris, to participate in the book on UNESCO Global Geoparks to be published by the international publishing house.
- In October the Geopark Ries responded to the EGN's Call for Contributions with a 500-word article and three photographs for EGN Magazine 20.
- The UGGp Ries participated in all digital and physical meetings of the German UGGp Forum throughout the year.

Management and Financial Status

- The management of the Geopark Ries consists of the full-time management and the board of the Geopark Ries e.V. (e.V. denotes a registered association).
- The financing of the Geopark Ries e.V. is permanently secured through funding from members, municipal subsidies from districts (counties), towns and municipalities. In addition, project-related funding is provided by the participating states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.

Geopark Ries e. V. - Management



Geoconservation

- As mentioned above (see Major Achievements in 2022), the Geopark Ries and Heide-Allianz Donau-Ries (a landscape conservation association) cooperate on a nature conservation project “Quarrying sites in the District of Donau-Ries—from wounds in the landscape to nature paradises” funded by the Bavarian Nature Conservation Fund Foundation. The Adventure Geotope Daiting “Iron Ore and Limestone” was developed as part of this project.
- Pölsingen represents another important site that was valorized in 2022. The former quarry is the only remarkable outcrop of “impact melt rock” in the Ries that is currently accessible. Formerly referred to as “red Suevite” the rock is a molten matrix with fine-grained crystalline rock fragments of various stages of shock metamorphism. The red color is due to the weathered material hematite, a mineral containing iron.
- In total, the UGGp Ries has approximately 30 geotopes in its care-management, which are accessible for visitors.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- The tourism strategy of the Geopark Ries is focused on sustainability. The expansion of the tourism infrastructure is almost completely focused on hiking and cycling tourism. The marketing activities in print and online are also predominantly concerned with these sustainable segments.
 - As mentioned earlier, one of the major achievements of 2022 was the development of the 130-kilometer hiking trail, the Ries Panorama Trail, involving the cooperation of twenty communities and funding by the states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.
- The Culinary Geopark Ries is a continuing success. The Geopark Ries and its Culinary Partners (gastronomy, regional food producers and refiners) raise awareness for regional specialties and products by offering high-quality and healthy food for both locals and tourists. The regional cuisine uses products grown nearby.
 - Culinary Geopark Partner distiller Krater Spirits won international awards for its Krater Nostra gin, Kraterfeuer liqueur and Full Moon Krater Nostra gin at World Spirits competitions in Austria and San Francisco.
 - In December Culinary Geopark Ries co-founder and master chef Uli Grossman was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit for his great commitment in the fields of gastronomy, nutrition and promotion of young talent for over two decades.

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

- Geosite protection activities include developing visitor information infrastructure as part of the program “Quarrying sites in the District of Donau-Ries—from wounds in the landscape to nature paradises” already described (see Major Achievements and Geoconservation).
- The childrens’ line continues to be developed. Child-friendly and playfully presented information about the Ries event and its consequences are conveyed at more and more sites in the UGGp Ries, including in Wemding and the Geotope Lindle. Among the engaging features are distinctive info-panels with mascots, memory games, riddles, interactive stations, and more.
- Two new standard guided tours were developed for the newly accessible geosites.

Strategic partnership

- The partnership between the UGGp Ries and the landscape conservation association Heide-Allianz has already been described in Major Achievements and Geoconservation.
- Following in the footsteps of Apollo astronauts who trained in the Ries Crater in 1970, ESA and NASA astronauts have trained in the Nördlinger Ries for the past five years. In 2022 the

Geopark Ries was once again the site of astronaut field training. ESA astronaut Alexander Gerst and his colleague NASA astronaut Stephanie Wilson—who are considered strong candidates for the next Moon mission—trained in the Geopark Ries in September. ESA subsequently issued a press release explaining their geology training course, PANGAEA, which is based on Apollo-mission training principles and relies on four European locations—including the Ries Crater—that are similar to lunar and martian geology.

- The Culinary Geopark Ries welcomed the Senz family as a new gastronomy partner offering seasonal specialties, chilled beer and excellent wine in cozy niches of their wine tavern and shaded beer garden in Nördlingen.
- The international future partnership with the Ngorongoro Lengai Geopark, Tanzania, was initiated.

Promotional activities

- The Geopark logo was replaced by the Geopark-UNESCO logo on all newly printed brochures, on the entire business stationary, on new information boards as well as on the website.
- Print media, new:
 - Sehenswertes/Places of Interest map German-English
 - Ries-Panoramaweg/Ries Panorama Trail, 44-page booklet, German and English versions, with general info on UGGp Ries, signage, description of seven stages with maps and highlights
 - Geotope Daiting brochure
- Print media, updated:
 - Führungen im UNESCO Global Geopark Ries (Tours in the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries, with 14 standard guided tours and introduction of tour guides)
 - Offene Führungen 2022 (schedule of public guided tours 2022)
 - Tours for Families and School Groups 2022

Print

Language	Product
German:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basisflyer Fenster in die Erdgeschichte Erlebnisgeotop Daiting Wanderbroschüre Ries-Panoramaweg Offene Führungen 2023 Führungen im Geopark Ries Familienführungen Radkarte: Krater zu Krater Geopark Ries kulinarisch




Language	Product
Bilingual:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map: <u>Places of Interest</u>
Englisch:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic flyer Information booklet Windows into the Earth Wanderbroschüre (digital) Ries-Panoramaweg (digital)



- Online marketing:
 - Facebook: www.facebook.com/noerdlinger.ries
 - Instagram: [@unesco_globalgeoparkries](https://www.instagram.com/unesco_globalgeoparkries)
 - In August 2022, “Powerwalker’s blog for ambitious and culturally curious (long-distance) hikers” published an extensive journal of hiking the 130-kilometer Ries Panorama Trail. (The “preview” hike was approved by the Geopark Ries.) The journal entries were overwhelmingly positive and complemented by breathtakingly beautiful photos.
 - <https://powerwalkers.de/premiere-der-ries-panoramaweg-im-wandercheck/>

- Scheduled guided tours published on websites of Geopark Ries, Landratsamt Donau-Ries and RegioPortal Donau-Ries
- Advertising and text contributions in (trade) publications:
 - Augsburger Allgemeine (Donauwörther Zeitung / Rieser Nachrichten)
 - BayernTourNatur
 - Blättle
 - Die schönsten Fernwanderwege (OutdoorWelten)
 - Fahrplanheft ÖPNV
 - Ferienbroschüre Kommunale Jugendarbeit
 - Frankenkids
 - KidsMagazin FCA
 - LiesLotte
 - Several print media of Naturpark Altmühltal
 - Tambiente
 - Travel Guide: 100 Places to see before you die in Franken
 - VDN-Magazin
 - VHS DON
- Press releases: 69 (the distribution list may not be shared due to German privacy laws)
- Trade fairs and conferences: reduced to one participation in 2022 due to Covid restrictions – Freizeit Nuremberg (March),
- Other events and conferences: reduced due to Covid restrictions in 2022. Nevertheless, the UGGp Ries had a booth at the State Garden Show in Ingolstadt and at the international meeting of model flight in Genderkingen.
- Educational institutions:
 - Annual correspondence with all schools in the Geopark Ries region to inform of events, tours, facilities, etc.
 - Participation in Bavaria School Geography Day
 - Continuing education, teaching aids for teachers
- Broadcast media, 2022:
 - In January Bavarian television BR broadcast a film about the Ries Crater as the largest impact crater in Germany in their “Heimat der Rekorde” program. Filmed in fall 2021, the film interviewed Geopark Ries geologists and highlighted the special geology and archeology in the region.
 - In April local television station Augsburg.tv filmed on location in the Geopark Ries, including an interview with managing director Heike Burkhardt, for its program

“Heimatzeit aus den Landkreisen Dillingen und Donau-Ries”.

- In May Geopark geologist Gisela Pösges represented the Geopark Ries in the Literary Salon discussion on asteroids and the probability of impact with physicist Holger Sierks, a leading ESA-scientist for optical systems at space-missions. The discussion is available as a podcast on Spotify.
- In July German public television channel ARD broadcast a short film “Schön günstig hier: Nördlingen” in the Morgenmagazin (morning show).
- In July Bavarian television news BR covered the official ceremony celebrating the Geopark Ries as a UNESCO Global Geopark.
- In July the Bavarian television BR aired a short film “Hiking on the rim of the Crater” about the new hiking trail that was not even open at the time.
- In August the Bavarian television BR aired a film “Astronaut Training in the Nördlinger Ries” as a segment of the “Schwaben und Altbayern” program.
- In September the Bavarian television and radio reported on the astronaut training in the Nördlinger Ries.
- In September radio channel SWR Aktuell (South-West Radio News) broadcast interview segments with ESA astronaut Alexander Gerst and Geopark Ries geologist Gisela Pösges discussing astronaut training in the Ries Crater.

4. CONTACTS

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