

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2021

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark, Germany, European Geoparks Network)

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2015 / 2021



Revalidation Mission 2021, field day, location Hohle Fels (chairman of Geopark Swabian Alb Ulrich Ruckh, new manager Dr. Sandra Teuber, geologist Iris Bohnacker, UNESCO evaluators Alessia Amorfini and Antonino Sanz Matencio, archaeologist Dr. Guido Bataille, advisory board member Conny Meister; photo by Bettina Claass-Rauner)

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 5 staff including 2 geoscientists

Number of visitors: Total number of visitors is difficult to determine. However, the 26 infocenters had between 5.000 and 30.000 visitors each, and individual Geopoints (which are part of the ongoing Geopark project “a journey into Earth history”) recorded up to 45.000 visitors. The SAT (Swabian Alb

Tourism association) states that between January and June 2021 approximately 2.6 million overnight stays were recorded.

Number of Geopark events: 34 (management body) and 463 (cooperative organization)

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: Currently 7 Geopark-schools work with the management body of the UNESCO Global Geopark. Due to the pandemic, many projects had to be postponed as classes were reorganized to be in accordance with the continuously changing quarantining conditions in Germany and Baden Württemberg in particular. Still, one class was able to be held in attendance, where geologist Iris Bohnacker introduced students to the Geopark, its geology and the international Geopark community.

Number of Geopark press release: 25

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2021

- Equipment of infocenters with new information panels to create more unified Geopark corners
- Inauguration of SDG-project “Geotürle”, which addresses each SDG within the landscape of the UGGp and shows its relevance to life within the Geopark and to global sustainable development.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Presentation at Workshop “Education for Sustainable Development” at the 9th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks on Jeju Island UNESCO Global Geopark, Republic of Korea
- Presentation at the Czech- German conference 2021
- Article in EGN Magazine and listings in the EGN Newsletter

Management and Financial Status

- Change of management: Dr. Siegfried Roth left the Geopark, Dr. Sandra Teuber started on July 1st 2021.
- Geopark is mainly financed by the members of the association, which are 10 counties, 3 communities and 3 associations. Additional funding was secured for 2020 and 2021 via third-party funding provided by the Ministry of Food, Rural Areas and Consumer Protection Baden Württemberg (Ministerium für Ernährung, ländlicher Raum und Verbraucherschutz Baden Württemberg). As part of the Forum of German UNESCO Global Geoparks funding from the Foreign Office was secured for two cooperative projects of all German UGGps.

Geoconservation

- The Geopark addresses Geoconservation in everyday work. The new Höhlenforscherkarte for example explains the significance of Geoconservation to children in the context of caves.

- A co-authored paper was written with archaeologists concerning the cave Hohle Fels and its contemporary use. This addresses the challenges to geoconservation and archaeological protection, see http://gcr.khuisf.ac.ir/article_686026.html.
- Continuation of collaboration with community of Urach, scientists of different universities and members of other associations to develop a holistic visitor guidance concept for the Uracher waterfall, which has been subjected to overtourism during the pandemic years.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Two new touristic products were finally launched in 2021 after their launch in 2020 had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The “Höhlenforscherkarte” and the “Entdeckerkarte”, which contribute to a holistic visitor guidance concept for the Swabian Alb by showing that the same geological phenomena can be experienced at different locations in the Swabian Alb. The “Höhlenforscherkarte” for example invites people to visit all 12 show caves and the visitor mine to experience firsthand the diversity of caves and mines in the Swabian Alb Geopark. It further shows that you do not have to travel far to visit a cave. The “Entdeckerkarte” on the other hand uses a geological map to illustrate where different and fascinating geological phenomena are located within the Geopark. It also informs about the AlbCard for tourists with an overnight stay. This AlbCard offers free public transport within the Geopark and is a project of our partner Swabian Alb Tourism (SAT). Thus, the “Entdeckerkarte” promotes sustainable transport and illustrates the strong collaboration between the different stakeholders of the Swabian Alb.
- An online workshop was held by the Geopark office for employees at communal touristic information centers concerning the Geopark and the themes it stands for
- A field trip coorganized by Geopark and Biosphere Reserve Swabian Alb concerning the topic indicator plants took place.
- A new Geopoint was added to the project “A journey into Earth history”. Through this self-guided tour, tourists and inhabitants of the Swabian Alb alike can learn how the Swabian Alb was formed through time.

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

- A workshop for nature and landscape guides that included aspects concerning Education for Sustainable Development was created and tested in a pilot project. It will be continued and continuously adapted and improved.
- A workshop concerning cave environments was developed due to the international year of caves and karst.

- A new presentation was developed in collaboration with a cave explorer and an archaeologist that addresses the topic of caves from three perspectives: the geological, the archaeological and the cave explorer one.

Strategic partnership

- Establishment of a round table with the other UNESCO stakeholders within the Geopark, which includes the Biosphere reserve Schwäbische Alb (certified in 2009) and the three Cultural Heritage sites Caves and Ice Age Art in the Swabian Jura (2017), Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps (2011, one site located in Geopark), Obergermanic-Raetic Limes (2005) as part of “Frontiers of the Roman Empire”.
- Continued cooperation with the SAT (Swabian Alb Tourism association) to develop the region holistically and create a sustainable visitor guidance concept.

Promotional activities

- Originally planned was a participation at the CMT, the biggest international tourism fair, which is open to the public. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the fair was cancelled.
- New Geopark-corners with new CD installed in all Geopark info-centers.
- Two new touristic maps (s. sustainable geotourism) to promote the geodiversity of the Swabian Alb.
- Press releases concerning the different activities of the UNESCO Global Geopark Swabian Alb
- Social Media Campaign during the EGN-weeks concerning the topic SDGs
- Start of a Social Media Campaign “The Ways of the Water” in fall of 2021

4. CONTACTS

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