

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2023

## 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:**

Ekehagens forntidsby: 24 200

Falbygdens museum: 13 700

Varnhem: 100 000

Naturum Hornborgasjön: 48 000

Vänermuseet: 26 090

Kungajaktsmuseet Älgens berg: 22 329

Lugnås Qvarnstensgruva: 5000

Naturum Vänerskärgården: 60 897

**Number of Geopark events:**

We have had 54 geopark events help directly by the geopark or by a partner organization, with a total number of 1657 participants.

	<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Organised by geopark or by partner organisation</b>
1	04-feb	Stories from Ranstad	120	Geopark
2	09-feb	Storytelling evening Karlsfors	70	Geopark
3	13-feb	Study circle	35	Geopark & partner
4	27-feb	Study circle	35	Geopark & partner
5	03-mars	Bustour Transäsong	50	Geopark & partner
6	07-mars	Lecture Trollhättan	12	Partner
7	14-apr	Opening Astro Skara	–	Partner
8	15-apr	Opening Astro Skara	–	Partner
9	16-apr	Taste- and Experience walk - Åsle	15	Geopark & partner
10	18-apr	Education Hunneberg	7	Geopark
11	19-apr	Education Hunneberg	10	Geopark
12	25-apr	Education Kinnekulle	12	Geopark & partner
13	26-apr	Education Hornborgasjön	4	Geopark & partner
14	26-apr	Stories from Ranstad	74	Geopark
15	27-28 apr	Geoturism workshop	35	Geopark & partner
16	01-maj	Taste- and Experience walk - Vråhålan	21	Partner
17	03-maj	Lecture Vara folkhögskola	15	Partner
18	06-maj	Taste- and Experience walk - Älleberg	8	Geopark & partner
19	06-maj	Vårundan Kinnekulle	150	Geopark
20	07-maj	Vårundan Kinnekulle	150	Geopark
21	08-maj	Lecture S Falköping	45	Other
22	09-maj	Guided tour Karlsfors senioruniv	50	Other
23	10-maj	Education Miniambassadörer	30	Geopark & partner
24	11-maj	Lecture frukostforum Vbrg	80	Partner
25	13-maj	Taste- and Experience walk - Borgunda	20	Geopark & partner

26	15-maj	Guided tour Karlsfors politicians		Annan
27	17-maj	Guided tour Karlsfors/ studenter Lund	15	Partner
28	27-maj	Lecture Naturrum Hornb.	50	Geopark
29	28-maj	Taste- and Experience walk - Kinnekulle	25	Geopark & partner
30	11-juni	Taste- and Experience walk - Hunneberg	12	Geopark & partner
31	19-juni	Guided tour LPIV Hunneberg	8	Geopark & partner
32	09-juli	Taste- and Experience walk - Älleberg	9	Geopark & partner
33	31-1-aug	GEOKIDS Camp	15	Geopark & partner
34	2-3 aug	GEOKIDS Camp	15	Geopark & partner
35	01-sep	Guided tour Hunneberg/ private company	70	Geopark & partner
36	03-sep	Vänermuseet Opening	20	Geopark & partner
37	04-sep	Taste- and Experience walk - Åsle	12	Geopark & partner
38	05-sep	Guided tour Hunneberg	10	Geopark & partner
39	09-sep	GEOKIDS Vänerskärgården	20	Partner
40	19-sep	Föreläsning Eggby Hembfr.	25	Partner
41	23-sep	GEOKIDS Hornborgasjön	20	Geopark & partner
42	27-28 sept	Study visit Mineralriket	5	Geopark & partner
43	01-okt	Taste- and Experience walk - Kungslena	12	Geopark & partner
44	05-okt	Lecture Falköping	40	Geopark & partner
45	10-okt	Guided tour Ållbergsgymn.	20	Geopark & partner
46	17-okt	Guided tour STF Kinnekulle	5	Partner
47	15-okt	Lecture Hornborgasjön	35	Geopark & partner
48	24-okt	Guided tour Skövde kommun	15	Geopark & partner
49	28-okt	Lecture Stockholm	20	Partner
50	13-nov	Guided tour	12	Geopark & partner

		Kulturturismgrupp VGR		
51	16-nov	Lecture Naturum Vänersk.	54	Geopark & partner
52	17-nov	Get together – geopark guides, Lugnås	10	Geopark
53	21-jan	Lecture Vallevägen	20	Geopark & partner
54	23-nov	Lecture GU students	35	Geopark & partner
		<b>PARTICIPANTS, TOTAL</b>	1657	

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

Through our partner organization Vänermuseet approximately 1400 students has participated in the 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 30 participants in total.

In August, the GeoKids event was held as usual in collaboration with Ekehagen's ancient village. Due to high interest, we expanded this year with an additional session, so we had two 2-day camps, both of which were fully booked. As in previous years, we collaborated with Studieförbundet for registrations. The program included knowledge about the right of public access, fossil hunting, volcano building, deeper explorations into ancient times, and this year, the children also got to try cooking with local ingredients.

During the year, a new exhibition at Balthazar Science Center opened, focusing on the geology of the table mountain landscape for children. The plan is to develop the exhibition in the coming years. During Easter break, Balthazar had GeoKids activities in connection with the exhibition.

GeoKids as a one-day event was held at the inauguration of Lilla Bergaparken in Grästorps on 6/6, at the naturum Vänerskärgråden/Victoriahuset on 9/9, and at the naturum Hornborgasjön on 23/9.

**Number of Geopark press release: 0**

### **3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES**

#### **Major achievements in 2023**

Year 2023 has been the first full year during which we officially held the status as Sweden's first UNESCO Global Geopark. We've noticed it, not least through an increased number of inquiries to host international press, but also through our activities and the concept of geoparks gradually gaining traction.

Throughout the year, we've had three major EU projects ongoing, one of which funded by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth concluded in October. We've had four employees during the year, one of whom is project-employed for two years in one of the EU projects.

During the year, the municipalities have decided that increased municipal funding for the geopark will apply from 2024 onwards. Investigation regarding future organizational structure from 2025 is still ongoing, but the solution we are looking at is continued municipal operation, possibly with a change of host municipality.

We've had numerous successful outreach and communication efforts, ranging from hikes, lectures, workshop arrangements, to participation in events and conferences. We've published a magazine, "Bergen som levebröd," and launched a new editorial section of our website. Anna and Sofia attended the Global Geopark Conference in Morocco, which unfortunately had to be interrupted due to an earthquake. In August, we organized two fully booked Geokids camps together with the Ekehagen prehistoric village.

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

Anna and Sofia were appointed to represent the Platåbergens Geopark in the regional geoparks network European Geoparks Network (EGN) in the Coordinators Committee and were supposed to attend the European geoparks' spring meeting in Romania in March. However, due to a general strike in Germany, our flight was canceled, and it was impossible to find alternative transportation, so unfortunately, we had to stay home. However, a successful two-day digital autumn meeting was held on November 8-9. This was the first digital EGN meeting organized as part of efforts to reduce travel for meetings. In September, we attended the Global Geopark Conference in Marrakesh, Morocco.

Since the approval, Anna has been a member of the GGN Advisory Committee and has participated in several digital meetings, as well as one physical meeting in connection with the conference in Morocco. We've also had two digital meetings with the other Nordic geoparks.

Sofia is also a member of the EGN working group on Tourism, Anna is a member of the EGN working group on Climate Change and Henrik is a member of the EGN working group on Communications.

During the year, we have twice submitted a joint application for Erasmus funding together with a geopark in Austria. Unfortunately, the application has not been approved, but we will continue the collaboration and rewrite the content to submit again in September.

## **Management and Financial Status**

During the year, we haven't made any changes regarding organizational structure. Anna has worked full-time throughout the year, Henrik at 80% with an increase to 100% from December, and Sofia has worked at 60% for a period before increasing to 75%. Starting from January, Sven-Erik Larsson also began a two-year project employment for the EU project "Platåbergslandskapets smaker" (The Flavors of the Table Mountain Landscape).

- We've had a physical meeting with the ownership consultation group on March 23rd in Lidköping, and a digital ownership consultation on December 19th.
- We've had five meetings with the steering group (they also participated in the ownership consultation), physically on January 10th, digitally on February 20th, physically on June 19th, digitally on October 5th, and digitally on December 14th.
- We had a digital meeting with the reference group in geology on December 7th.

After the decision at the ownership consultation in March, work began in the spring to increase municipal funding for the period 2024-2027, according to a funding model where each municipality pays 50,000 SEK plus 1.5 SEK per inhabitant annually. All municipalities have since decided that this funding model should apply.

Additionally, a consequence analysis was written regarding the future organizational form, starting from 2025. This was presented at an extra ownership consultation in December. The politicians then requested that we investigate the conditions for continued municipal operation of the geopark, and that we should look closer at which municipality could be the host municipality.

The geopark's finances during the year have been divided among different accounts: one for core operations, one for EU-funded projects from the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, one for EU-funded projects from Leader, and one for EU-funded projects from the Swedish Board of Agriculture. In total, we've had a budget of 2,770,000 SEK, including all projects. Of this, core operations have had a budget of 1,048,000 SEK.

During the year, we've incurred total costs for core operations amounting to 1,047,573 SEK.

## **Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)**

In 2023, we concluded the final year of an EU project where we worked on raising awareness among the tourism industry and nature tourist guides, both through the digital login page and also through physical meetings. During this project, Geopark Tours were also developed and uploaded to the website throughout the year: [platabergensgeopark.se/geoparksrundor/](http://platabergensgeopark.se/geoparksrundor/).

The project ended in October and was followed by finalization work in the form of a final report and two interim reports:

- Description of digital tools tested in the Platåbergens UNESCO Global Geopark
- Evaluation of a UNESCO designation - examples from the Platåbergens UNESCO Global Geopark

2023 marked the beginning of the project "Platåbergslandskapets smaker" (The Flavors of the Plateau Landscape), funded with a total of 1.8 million SEK from the Rural Development Programme (via the Swedish Board of Agriculture). The project will run for two years with the aim of creating dining experiences and unique products linked to the natural and cultural heritage of the plateau landscape. Our hope is that through flavors and food, we will benefit local producers in our area and create a clear profile for products originating from the plateau landscape and the various mountains within our area.

In the "Bergen som levebröd" (Mountains as a Livelihood) project, we have organized storytelling evenings, published articles online at [www.platabergensgeopark.se/berattelser](http://www.platabergensgeopark.se/berattelser), and released a magazine. The magazine was printed in 15,000 copies and has been distributed through tourist information centers, accommodations, museums, restaurants, and collaborative partners, etc. For example, at Billingeus Hotel, the magazine is distributed in every hotel room.

In April, we coordinated a national geotourism workshop in collaboration with SGU (the Geological Survey of Sweden). 35 participants from across the country were registered for the event, which took place from lunch to lunch. The workshop included lectures at the University of Skövde on Thursday and a guided tour at Silverfallet, Karlsfors, as the conclusion on Friday.

### **Promotional activities**

During the year, we've sent out three newsletters. The number of followers has increased in most of our channels, especially YouTube and Facebook. Due to limited resources, Instagram has not been prioritized during the year, which is reflected in the numbers as the number of followers has decreased there. We see a significant impact from the project "Bergen som levebröd" (Mountains as a Livelihood), where we've published videos for all interviews on YouTube.

At the beginning of the year, we decided to discontinue our app, as we don't believe it adds value at present, and it's resource-intensive to develop it. The website works just as well on mobile devices. However, we have collaborations with other apps in our area, such as Kulturväg Skaraborg and Läckö-Kinneulle.

A positive aspect of the year is that we've had a high demand through the Tourist Board of West Sweden to host and guide foreign journalists visiting. We've hosted British The Times, French magazine GEO, Dutch Wandermagazine, and Danish Politiken. We've also hosted French influencer Bruno Maltor, who publishes videos on YouTube for over 350,000 followers.

An article conducted in the fall of 2022 was published in the magazine 365 (published by Naturkompaniet). We've also had a longer article published in the magazine Geologiskt Forum (issue 117), published by the Swedish Geological Society.

During the year, we've finally installed a number of new signs - after some delays from the supplier's side. The signs tell about the unique geology and connections to the natural and cultural heritage. The new signs are located at the following places:

- Silverfallet- Karlsfors Nature Reserve – Billingen (a total of 9 signs along a trail)
- Jättadalen – Öglunda Nature Reserve – Billingen (a total of 4 signs along a trail)
- Ryds Caves - Billingen
- Södra Brottet – Billingen (a total of 2 signs, together with Skövde Municipality)
- Kata Farm – Varnhem
- Stora Stenbrottet, Kinneulle (together with the Biosphere Reserve and Götene Municipality)

#### **4. CONTACTS**

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