

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2023

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network:

Famenne-Ardenne UNESCO Global Geopark, Belgium, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2018 / 2023

Representative photo with caption (Geopark Day in Sohier)



2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 5 staffs including 2 geoscientists and 2 internship students

Number of visitors: 205.000 visitors (Han caves - major geosite)

Number of Geopark events:

- events held by management body : 3
- cooperative organization : 4

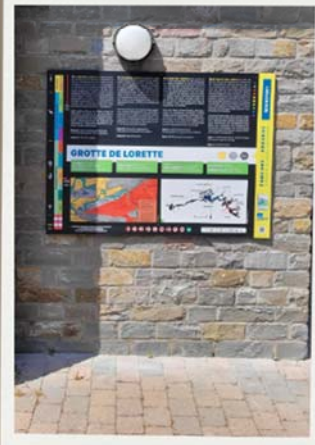
Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 17

Number of Geopark press release: 15

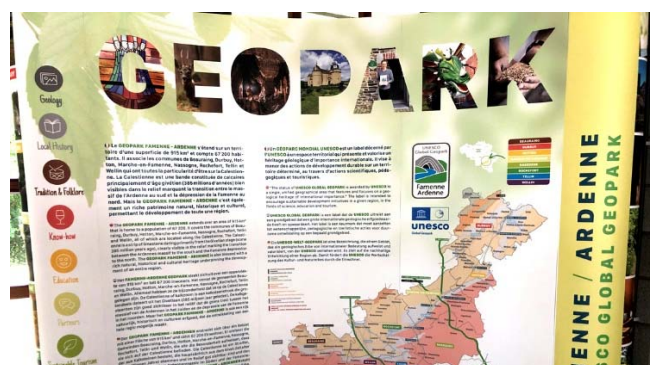
3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2023

In June, 16 geosite panels were installed at the following sites: Ambly, la Carrière de la Boverie, l'Anticlinal de Durbuy, le Fond des Vaulx (4 panels), Trotti aux Fosses, le Gouffre de Belvaux, le Trou de Han, la Grotte de Hotton, La Malagne, la Carrière de Resteigne, Revogne, la Grotte de Lorette, Sohier.



Creation of a Geopark Information Centre at the Grotte de Lorette-Rochefort, a strategically important geosite with a number of historical and geological reference sites.



Geopark actions and training in terms of teaching and education

Educational training continues to evolve thanks to Sabine Blockmans, who is in charge of education in the region's schools, and also thanks to visits from various universities and colleges. Partnerships with educational service providers continue to be developed.

Preliminary comment:

The educational activities concern :

- Schools in the Famenne - Ardenne Geopark area.

As the calendar of educational activities for schools is based on the school year, i.e. from September to June-July, the listing below concerns the years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

- School trips and nature courses for 2023.

- Seminars and fieldtrips with high schools and universities.

Revalidation mission - UNESCO experts

From 03/07/2023 to 06/07/2023 we welcomed two UNESCO experts, Henning Zelmmer and Berglind Sigmundsdottir, for our revalidation mission for the UNESCO Global Geopark label. Over the course of four days, we visited the entire region with them.

On the programme: 4 days of presentation of everything that has been achieved to respond to the 11 recommendations given by UNESCO on the Famenne-Ardenne Geopark since the last revalidation visit in 2021 and the yellow card given by UNESCO.

The programme included visits to our geosites, meetings with our partners, conferences and discussions.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- From 27 to 30 March 2023, Alain Petit and Serge Delaby attended the 47th meeting of the European Geoparks Network (EGN) at the Geoparcul International UNESCO Tara Hategului in Hateg, Romania. They took part in various conferences, working groups, networking and field visits in the company of other European geoparks.

- On 5 May 2023, Alain Petit took part in European Tourism Day at the European Commission in Brussels. At the request of the coordinators of the European Geoparks Network (EGN), he attended as vice-catalyst of the EGN tourism working group. His Portuguese colleague Carlos Neto (Catalyst for the group) attended by video.

- On 17 August 2023, at the invitation of the Asia Pacific Geoparks network, a presentation by our Geopark on the Development of a green and sustainable identity. We had some very interesting discussions and shared experiences with our colleagues from the UNESCO World Geoparks in Asia and the Pacific.

- In September, the Geopark team took part in the 10th International Conference of UNESCO World

Geoparks in Marrakech. We were able to give two lectures, take part in the EGN (European Geoparks Network) & GGN meetings and do some networking.

Management and Financial Status

We received funding of 47.900 € from our partner municipalities. We also received our annual subsidy of 150.000 € from our regional government.

Geoconservation

The year 2021 was marked in Belgium by major floods in mid-july.

In 2023, in relation with the grant of 28,000 euros from the French community, we produced educational and pedagogical films with the objective of mediating on climate change. Launched in 2022, the project presents testimonies from inhabitants and scientists.

Since september 2023, funded by Europe, the Geopark is partner of the european consortium Resiliage (18 partners from 10 countries). We are one of the 5 corelabs of analysis concerning natural disasters.

RESILIAGE's mission is to provide new knowledge and effective solutions to harness Europe's hidden and untapped resource: community resilience.

RESILIAGE will enable a step change in disaster risk management and in the way research and practice deal with disaster risk, such as culture, risk awareness, inclusion awareness, inclusion, socio-economic conditions and geography, co-creating resilient communities using digital tools, learning tools and soft solutions consolidated in a holistic and systemic approach.

RESILIAGE aims to improve understanding of the behaviour and psychological of various social groups affected by a natural or man-made disaster and to strengthen the resilience of communities.

Indeed, thanks to the proactive and participative involvement of all the players concerned and the end users, RESILIAGE will co-determine and develop a set of digital tools and software solutions to help first responders and public authorities, empower citizens authorities, share more accurate information on natural and man-made natural and man-made disasters.

These tools will be integrated into a digital platform, the ecosystem of resources for community resilience, and validated through a holistic systems approach to disaster and multi-hazard risk management in five community resilience labs and their networks.

The results and lessons learned will provide guidelines and policy recommendations to improve preparedness plans, the SENDAI framework and climate change adaptation strategies.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

Within the framework of projects managed via European funds, the Geopark has joined forces with the Maison du Tourisme Famenne-Ardenne. The aim of the project is to position the area as an area of excellence by associating it with a green and sustainable identity. Over the years, environmental concerns have become a societal issue at the heart of all discussions. Climate change, depletion of the earth's resources... so many factors that lead us to think about this issue and to work differently. The whole economic sector is concerned, including tourism. Considered as one of the pillars of the economic development of our territory, it is all the more important to play a major role in green tourism in order to limit the ecological footprint of the activity.

This project has given rise to various media:

*a vade-mecum of good environmental practices for tourist operators

*a flyer for tourists on good practices, TV spots, formations for tourism stakeholders,...

Alongside all the actions already carried out at local level, these supports will contribute to gradually positioning our territory as a true sustainable destination.

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

See above the chapter about the European consortium Resiliage.

Strategic partnership

We continued to develop our network of local and academic partners.

On the basis of our partner charter, a control grid with objective criteria (mandatory and optional) and an agreement, we have labelled brand new "Geopark Partners". These include hotels, gîtes, bed and breakfasts, restaurants and local producers. Following various exchanges with our partners, including a "training" evening dedicated to them, we created various projects together on which we could collaborate or simply communicate with them.

We defined with all our partners what it is to be a "Geopark Partner" and the actions they must or can carry out. As a Partner, they can use the logo of our Geopark on their products (beer, cheese, cured meats, etc.) and they must also put this logo on all their promotional material (tourist guide, brochures, website, etc.). Any use of our logo requires prior control by the Famenne-Ardenne UGGp team. Following the signature of their agreement with our Geopark, they are also part of a sustainable economic, social, cultural and ecological development approach. Beyond this educational and training aspect of sustainable development, we very often call upon our partners to highlight them during the filming of TV programmes or other media actions. They are the ambassadors of a certain know-how of our territory. All our partners are recognisable by the inhabitants of the area or any visitor thanks to the "Partner" sign that they have to display on their frontage or shop front. By doing so, we aim to create a "Geopark Partner" identity recognisable by all and a guarantee of a certain quality defined by sustainable and eco-responsible values.

Promotional activities

We continued to step up our media communications during the year. We carried out a number of promotional actions via different communication channels: print media, TV and social networks. In addition to the journalistic press, we were the subject of various articles for tourism and scientific magazines, notably in collaboration with Wallonie Belgique Tourisme.

- February 2023: Filming of the GRANDEUR NATURE programme in Hotton
- TVLUX.BE's 2023 Summer Tour took place in 8 stages in the Geopark area
- 16 November 2023: via VisitWallonia, a visit from the Spanish press to discover Wallonia's Trappist beers, including Rochefort. An opportunity to present the Famenne-Ardenne Geopark.

In 2023, we continued to feed our social networks and our website.

- Famenne-Ardenne Unesco Global Geopark Facebook account
- Instagram account [geoparkfamenneardenne](#)
- Website www.geoparkfamenneardenne.be

We also produced a film: 'Le Geopark Famenne-Ardenne, un livre ouvert sur le climat' available on Youtube, in response to the floods of July 2021 and the requests of the UNESCO experts.

June 2023, a collaborative promotional video initiated by Natur- und Geopark Möllerdall. A great collaboration with the UNESCO Famenne-Ardenne World Geoparks, Natur- und Geopark TERRA.vita, De Hondsrug UNESCO Geopark and Natur- und Geopark Vulkaneifel.

We took part in a number of tourism trade fairs:

- January 2023: presence at the Tourissima trade fair in Lille on the VisitWallonia stand.
- February 2023: presence at the Salon des Vacances in Brussels on the VisitWallonia stand.
- March 2023: Participation in the 16th Carrefour du Tourisme in Achêne.
- 3 and 4 June 2023: Stand at the Belgian Microadventure Festival at the Domaine de Lomme in Eprave.

To promote the Geopark, it has financed inserts in the Famenne-Ardenne guide (140,000 copies) published by the Maison du Tourisme Famenne-Ardenne. A free insert was included in Attractions et Tourisme's 365.be guide.

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21 May: organisation of GEOPARK FAMENNE-ARDENNE DAY in Sohier

4. CONTACTS

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