



Perspectives on the Chaine Des Puys and Limagne Fault UNESCO World Heritage Project

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The Chaîne des Puys and Limagne fault project is acknowledged to have Outstanding Universal Value (38th session of the World Heritage UNESCO committee, June 2014). One ongoing challenge for the project is to consolidate the outreach, and to work with other sites to increase the public perception of Earth sciences.

The Chaîne des Puys volcanic field in central France, became a celebrated mecca for 18/19th Century scientists, only once the volcanoes were 'discovered'. Beforehand they were only hills, but the ability to interpret landscape with prior knowledge allowed these early geologists to create a popular understanding of the geology. Since that time, the Chaîne des Puys has become a well-known volcanic site to a worldwide audience through textbooks, tourism, and commerce. To the 19th century geologists, the Limagne escarpment was just as fascinating, but lacking the ability to fully interpret this rift margin, the idea of a fault did not percolate down to the general public. With the advent of the current UNESCO project, it became clear that the geological link between the volcanoes and the fault could be exploited, not only to raise the profile of the volcanoes, but to create a greater awareness of the tectonics in the greater public. Not only have the volcanoes, become better known and more clearly understood than previously, but the fault has begun to emerge as a feature in public consciousness. We will demonstrate the many communication techniques at all levels that have been used in the project. We explain the rationale between creating a geological scale model that works on processes as well as landforms to raise the public awareness. The success is that we show how geological features can be made readable by the general public, something highly important for conservation of heritage, but also for risk perception. The increased education efforts of the scientists have also lead to an increase in science. The more informed and participatory the public is, the more efficient the communication can be.