



Recent Perspectives in Geoheritage

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Geoheritage is developing at all scales from small local sites, regional and national initiatives, to global Geoparks and to UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is increasingly appreciated that the more people understand geosciences and Earth systems processes, the better we as scientists are able to communicate concepts such as natural hazards, risk, and environmental change. Getting people to visit geoheritage sites is one of the best ways to communicate concepts and to draw the public into the geoscience process. Local communities, and be involved in the creation of geoheritage sites and can benefit from an increased awareness and a deepened sense of place and importantly, can reap the economic benefits from visitors.

As geoscience itself changes, geoheritage should adapt to reflect new knowledge and find ways to communicate and answer newly-arising societal questions. Also, geoscience individuals and organisations should assure a strong representation in governmental and international heritage structures, to assure that the community and our science is fully represented at all levels and that the great diversity of outstanding geological value be fully realised.

In 2014 a complete GeoHeritage review has been called for by the UNESCO World Heritage committee, echoing a widening gap between the geo-community and mandated NGOs. Clarification of Geopark and World Heritage site distinctions has been called for. This is a consequence of the divergence between States, academics and UNESCO advisory bodies. The gap is about 1) what geological elements are outstanding for science and heritage; 2) site assessment, 3) who is competent to assess; 4) management and compatibility of humans in geoheritage sites. We will explore and share experience on geoheritage and World Heritage from an international viewpoint and through our experiences on the Chaîne des Puys and Limagne Fault World Heritage project.