



Role of IUCN WCPA Geoheritage Specialist Group for geoheritage conservation and recognition of World Heritage Sites, Global Geoparks and other protected areas

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Geoheritage comprises those elements of the Earth's geodiversity that are considered to have significant scientific, educational, cultural/aesthetic, ecological or ecosystem service values. IUCN Resolutions at Barcelona (2008), at Jeju (2012) and at Hawaii (2016) clearly recognised that geodiversity is part of nature and geoheritage is part of natural heritage. Formal recognition of the geodiversity component of protected areas was made in 2008 in the revised 'IUCN Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories'. All 6 of the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories are applicable to the protection of geosites and the wider landscape values of geodiversity. Recognising the wider values of geodiversity therefore provides opportunities to integrate geoheritage much more closely in protected area networks, as the approach advocated by the Geoheritage Specialist Group (GSG) of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. Although geoparks are not a protected area category as such and only includes some parts of protected areas as geosites, the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network also provides an international framework to conserve and enhance geoheritage values as UNESCO World Heritage sites has provided. GSG will pursue significant roles for geoheritage recognition and conservation as follows: 1) Establish the Best Practice Guideline of geoheritage sites for protected areas in the world, 2) Revise the Thematic Study on volcanic sites of Outstanding Universal Values and International Significance, 3) Revise Criterion (viii) for WH recognition, and 4) Initiate 'Key Geoheritage Site' concept in the future.