

The concept of National Geopark Convention at Izu Peninsula Geopark

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1. Izu Peninsula Geopark

The National Convention of Japanese Geoparks will be held in Izu peninsula Geopark in Autumn 2016. Izu Peninsula is promoting its geological heritage through the concept of collision between the Izu massif and Honshu due to subduction of the Philippine Sea Plate. Visitors can enjoy a variety of volcanic landforms like submarine volcanoes (remnants), terrestrial volcanoes and monogenetic volcanoes. The area is close to Tokyo and a famous hot spring hub so there is additional attraction for tourists.

The main theme of this year's Convention is 'Constructing and Deepening Ties.' This theme is divided into the following 3 components:

Getting together with other geoparks: This will help in better formulation of stories unique to Japanese geoparks and formulation of stories on the birth of Japanese archipelago and each region (geopark). We will conduct joint tours with nearby geoparks.

Ties with World Heritage, Biosphere Reserves etc.: Properties like Mt. Fuji (World Heritage), Nirayama Furnace (Part of World Heritage Properties), Minami Alps Biosphere Reserve, and Kakegawa Tea Gardens (GIAHS) are present near the geopark. Based on concepts like conservation, education and people's participation we will seek to develop ties with these neighboring properties.

Ties with food: Our geopark has started a system of 'geopark supporters where business enterprises and individuals who feel interested to the concept can become a geopark supporter. Geopark supporters have different specialties, on this occasion we will focus on the concept of food and explore how to foster ties through serving local food in the Convention.

Izu peninsula is a large geopark with a total area of 2,027 sq.km. There are 15 towns and cities that actively support geopark, and an independent guide organization. In addition there are education activities in various schools of the peninsula. Our specialist researcher is collaborating with local schools to develop easy to understand scientific education programs for young children. Holding the National Convention in this large and diverse geopark is both an opportunity and a challenge for geopark managers.

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