

Working on 'Amakusa Geopark'

Hiroaki Ugai[1]; Koji Hirose[2]; Yoshitaka Hase[3]

[1] Goshoura Cretaceous Museum; [2] Goshoura Cretaceous Mus.; [3] Dep't Earth Sci., Kumamoto Univ.

<http://www5.ocn.ne.jp/~g-museum/>

The board of education of Amakusa City has a project based on a cultural promotion plan called 'All Islands Museum' which proposes a design for a network of cultural facilities and a kind of field museum designed to promote cultural and historical heritage sites in the city. In conjunction with this, there is a proposed plan entitled 'Amakusa Geopark'. The plan will start at the Goshoura area and will eventually cover all of the Amakusa Islands. After that, an application will be made to add Amakusa Geopark to the Global Geopark Network.

There are many important geologic aspects including valuable fossils of dinosaurs, mammals and mollusks in the Goshoura area. The Goshoura area was selected as the [top 100 geologic areas in Japan] in May, 2006. There are over 40 educational spots for finding fossils in the area, a fossil park, a show-house of ammonite and others with plates for explanation, not to mention various dinosaur remains.

There are short trip programs giving elementary, junior high school and high school students hands-on experience in fossil identification and gathering. The programs for tourists, which include taking fossils, learning a traditional fishing method called tontoko-ryo and a home-stay plan.

We think that the actions and events which began in 1997 in Goshoura already comply with the main theme of the geopark. Amakusa City will start consultation for Amakusa Geopark in 2009 and will apply to the Japanese Geopark Committee. Within three years from that time, Amakusa City, along with some neighboring city and town will apply to have Amakusa Geopark join the Global Geoparks Network.

We have some plans to encourage volunteer service and will prepare English language geologic guide panels. We will also continue to produce successive plans for the park and publish a guidebook for non-Japanese visitors.