

Promotion Activity of Geoparks in Oita Himeshima Geopark

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Oita Himeshima Geopark is located about 6 km off the coast of northern part of Kunisaki Peninsula in Oita Prefecture. Himeshima is an island, about 7 km from east to west and about 3 km from north to south. Our geopark is a compact geopark, where geosites are closely located, characterized by Pleistocene sediments and seven monogenetic volcanoes. Since Oita Himeshima Geopark was approved as Japan Geopark in 2013, several promotion activities are conducted for community residents and visitors.

Understanding and cooperation of community residents are necessary for regional development through geopark activity. Himeshima is an island which is comprised of one village. As a result, information concerning geopark is relatively easy to spread and percolate among community. In Oita Himeshima Geopark, one approach to spread information is cable TV programs which are broadcasted to the most residents of island. Information about geopark is effectively broadcasted through TV programs, such as event news and sightseeing guidance including highlights of Oita Himeshima Geopark.

Though about 35,000 tourists visit Himeshima for a year, there are not many people come for the purpose of visiting geopark. Especially many people visit Himeshima on event such as Himeshima Flounder Festival in May, Himeshima Bon-odori in August and Himeshima Prawn Festival in October, for the purpose of enjoy watching Bon dance or eating fresh sea foods. As a promotional activity of geopark, we have conducted free bus tour guide of Oita Himeshima Geopark at the Himeshima Flounder Festival and Himeshima Prawn Festival. In addition, according to the request of group visitors who come Himeshima for business such as workshops and meetings, short time Geotours have been conducted for introducing an overview and highlights of Oita Himeshima Geopark.

As mentioned above, we have carried out several kinds of promotion activities for introducing Oita Himeshima Geopark. The promotion for community residents is important in order to induce positive action by their own. The attempt of free tour with geopark guidance is expected to impress geopark on visitors whose purposes are not for visiting Geopark, even for a short time.

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