

The connection between earth science and regional society in Mt. Asama North Geopark and future prospects

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Tsumagoi village and Naganohara town in Gumma Prefecture, located at the Mt. Asama north Geopark are the areas where the Earth has been felt close to the volcanic activity of Mt. Asama. Mt. Asama North Geopark was certified as a Japanese Geopark in September 2016, but since that time they have been utilizing geoscientific resources for tourism and community development.

On the other hand, with activities based on the Geopark philosophy, the community began to actively utilize geosites. For example, 38 geosites are selected, a story and model course linking geosites is constructed, and furthermore, geo guides for guiding them are also trained. For example, this is a glimpse of the fact that 38 geosites have been selected, stories and model courses linking geosites have been constructed, and geo-guides that guide them are being trained.

In Mt. Asama North Geopark, the local residence such as steering committee members and geo-guides are deeply involved in the geopark activity, so that the earth science and the community are connected. For example, Mt. Asama lava tree mold is a valuable regional resource registered as a national designated special natural treasure.

Local volunteers constitute "Lava tree mold protector association" and are engaged in conservation activities. The representative of the Association has been fully aware of the preciousness and encouraged the conservation activities, but as a result of activities at the Geopark triggered to understand why it is precious and even factors of formation. This is a case where the geopark contributes to discovering new value to the regional society, and it is a case where we associate earth science with the local community.

Geo-guides are also indispensable for linking earth science and community. The lava tree mold protector association held the lava tree mold observation event for the first time last summer. Many local people gathered at the observation event such as children and parents. Until now, the association of protection workers who used protection as the main activity came to develop activities including utilization of lava tree mold. Geopark activity seems to contribute to some extent to the community to know the importance of regional resources and to create a flow that spreads the importance of resources while keeping it.

In cooperation with junior high schools, a system for geo-guides to guide local children has also become established. In future, we would like to aim to build a system in which geoparks harmonize with the regional society by conducting activities in collaboration with all elementary, middle and high schools in the region.

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