Dynamic Geoconservation and Tourism as a Geoconservation Tool: Comparative Analysis of Europe and Japan

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This paper analyzes the concept of dynamic geoconservation, particularly focusing on two concepts: Despite identification of ‘geosites’ and creating appropriate protection measures in geoparks, many sites continue to be ‘fragmented’ because of insufficient attention to the ‘integrity’ of the natural processes operating at large spatial scales and over long time.
How properly informed tourism could be used as a ‘tool’ for monitoring such environments and promote non-obtrusive geoconservaion.
Through key case studies from Europe (especially the UK) and comparative cases in Japan, the paper analyzes the problems of mismatch between geoconservation objectives and praxis. The paper introduces Gray(2013)’s contention that the abiotic diversity of the planet should be recognized for its ‘intrinsic’ value, and Mathews’ (2014) contention that geodiversity and biodiversity components should be integrated to promote a strong feedback loop for conservation of geosites. The paper argues that geomorphic and ecological processes operating over large spatial units (and over long temporal scale) offer important insights for geoconservation. Based on the case studies, we also put forward the idea of ‘dynamic geoconservation’ whereby the integrity of natural processes rather than scenic or tourism capital values of a specific site or landmark is considered the conservation goal. Lack of monitoring data on geosites and heritage landmarks is a major challenge for dynamic conservation, and the paper argues that properly informed multi-stakeholder tourism can act as a ‘stewardship’ tool for geoparks (or similar heritage management schemes) by providing monitoring bby guides and tourists and elevating the awareness for dynamic conservation at the same time.

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