

Operation and challenge by Geonet Hitachi, North Ibaraki Geopark

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1. Hitachi City Museum, 2. Geonet Hitachi

Many civilian interpretative guides from Hitachi City have played an active part in the North Ibaraki Geopark since it opened in 2011. At first, the role of Hitachi City was as a passive observer of the Geopark, and so the Hitachi City Office did not recognize Geonet Hitachi as an official entity. However, following continued requests from the interpretative guides, Hitachi City became a regular member of the Geopark. Here, we report the operations of Geonet Hitachi over the past year.

Geonet Hitachi has been an active participant in many public relations and educational events organized by Hitachi City to promote the Geopark to citizens and students. As examples, the interpretative guides acted as guide and stewards during a public hike events, Geonet ran educational booths for the general public at the Hyakunen-Juku Festival and for students at a science festival, interpretative guides assisted at the summer geo-school at Hitachi City Museum (on four occasions), and Geonet set up a booth at an event organized by the community centers of Hitachi City. Geonet compiled a set of rock and fossil specimens from the Hitachi Cambrian Formation, and this has been presented to all the junior high-schools of Hitachi City as a travelling display. In addition, the interpretative guides frequently collaborated with the other geonet groups of the North Ibaraki Geopark as a guide and as a partner in the Geopark.

The members of Geonet Hitachi have attended bimonthly lectures and taken part in several field excursions that have enable them to increase their knowledge of the Hitachi Geosite. Bimonthly meetings are held for the purposes of event planning and organization, and the financial accounts have been presented at the meeting. With 37 interpretative guides, Hitachi Geonet is the largest Geonet group in the North Ibaraki Geopark. Many of our members have lobbied the Hitachi City Office for increased support of the Geopark.

There is ongoing scientific research into the Cambrian Formation at the Hitachi Geosite. Geonet Hitachi has undertaken geological studies and published reports (Tagiri et al., 2015 & 2016) on the Hitachi Cambrian Formation. Cambrian fossil data from the Hitachi Geosite are currently held by the Geonet Hitachi.

Keywords: Geonet Hitachi, North Ibaraki Geopark, Hitachi Cambrian Formation, Cambrian fossil