

Redefinition of “geosites” in Unzen Volcanic Area UNESCO Global Geopark

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The Council of Unzen Volcanic Area Geopark defined 189 Geosites in the territory in 2008. However these “geosites” had been constructed by mixture of geological, ecological, historical / cultural sites and included in elements which were irrelevant to define as geosites, e.g., art museums and so on. Furthermore, the sites which established after 2009 had not authorized as “geosites” in Unzen Geopark. Recently, GGN requires classification of these “sites” on the basis of these geological, ecological and historical / cultural values of them to geopark areas.

In order to cope with these requirements, the Council of Unzen Volcanic Area Geopark has redefined “sites” in the territory depending on their academic values. Specifically, we removed sites that had difficulty in linkage with the earth activity and sites that we could not observe now including backfilled remains from a list. And then we authorized new sites (historical / cultural sites along a new mountain trail etc.) and divided these sites into 4 categories on the basis of academic values; 1: 23 geological sites, 2: 9 ecological sites, 3: 57 historical / cultural sites and 4: 41 composite sites. Total numbers of sites and facilities are 130 and 16, respectively.

In enforcing the redefinition of sites, it is important that members concerned geopark activities argues and shares what kind of value each site has. If the values of each site share geopark members, they would make conservation and utilization plan of these sites easily. On the other hand, redefinition of sites has great influence on the production of materials and hardware. It is desirable to do a careful argument about the values of sites among geopark members.

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