

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2020

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Katla UNESCO Global Geopark, Iceland, European Geoparks Network)

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2011 / 2017

Representative photo with caption (from the most important event this year)



Introduction of Katla UGGp's strategy plan to strengthen the role of Katla UGGp within the municipalities. Picture from meeting where Berglind, manager of Katla UGGp, introduces to the local councils of the three municipalities in Katla UGGp main projects and achievements of the Geopark in the last 5 years, as well as future vision of Katla Geopark.

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 2 full time staff working directly for the Geopark which are also geoscientists. Additionally, 3 part-time specialists/contacts (30%) from each municipality working on marketing. One board member and EGN CC member contributes to about 20% towards the Geopark.

Number of visitors: If total number of the visitors to the geopark is difficult to estimate, show the number of the visitors to the major geosite(s), museum or visitor center. Approximately 400,000 visitors came to South Iceland in 2020.

Number of Geopark events: 15.

- Various events through the Geopark Week planned by the Geopark and its partners.: Annual trail around Hjørleifshöfði geosite, about 3 digital introductions about Katla Geopark and its geology, interview with archeologist working in Skógasafn introducing some of its specimens. Geo-questionnaire where people could send in questions about geology, a digital walkthrough the Geopark with a geologist, digital walkthrough and storytelling with a specialist (virtual tour (2) into the Geopark showed on facebook), Vatnajökull National Park, in association with the Geopark introduced a geology game introducing some major geosites in both Katla Geopark and the National Park, environmental events where locals were

encouraged to pick up litter in their surroundings and encourage others through facebook (shared on the Geopark's social media).

- The Geopark published 5 news articles online with a description and explanation of various phases of the 2010 Eyjafjallajökull eruption, regarding the 10 year anniversary of the eruption.
- IDDR: Online Class for students in Geoparks in Iceland (collaboration between Reykjanes and Katla Geoparks hosted by the Icelandic Met Office). Introduction to the new catalogue (online) about Icelandic Volcanoes. (www.icelandicvolcanoes.is)
- 5 workshops in the project RURITAGE were held, working on the projects "increasing the resilience of local people towards Geo-hazards" and "research and study old travel paths within the Geopark".
- On the international day of mountains, the Geopark published a news article about Mt. Lómagnúpur.
- Renewed walking path and information sign (text written by the Geopark) unveiled at Sólheimajökull outlet glacier geosites.

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: placeholder text

- Hvolsskóli. – teaching a weekly course early 2020 for age 14-16. There are 300 students involved in the Geoschool program in Hvolsskóli elementary school.
- Víkurskóli. – 50 students approximately involved through the GeoSchool program.
- Students from secondary school in Höfn (just east of Katla UGGp) are participants in an ongoing international project with Trollfjell and Rokua Geopark and are educated by Katla UGGp through outdoor education at geosites.

Number of Geopark press release: 2 ?

- New strategy for Katla Geopark being worked on with consultants from Alta published online in DFS.is (by Rangárþing eystra, one of the municipalities in Katla Geopark)
- About the Víkurskóli beach project, published online in DFS.is by Víkurskóli.
- News about infrastructure development and trail renewal at Sólheimajökull, minister of Tourism and innovation formally inaugurated the path and news about it in DFS.is
- Additional grant to the design and development around Visitor Center Þorvaldseyri (previous information center of Katla Geopark before covid), design is to increase safety of visitor and enhance their experience of the area and view to Eyjafjallajökull.
- RURITAGE workshop – DFS.is

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2020

- Working with the municipalities and stakeholders to implement new strategies for the Geopark, involving the municipalities more with the Geopark to ensure its future operations

and financial stability.

- Agreement between Katla Geopark and Víkurskóli school made about a 2-year student research project about the beach near the town of Vik. Research started in early 2021.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Participating in all digital meetings with EGN and GGN meetings. Sending articles for newsletters 17 and 18. Sending article for the Magazine. Participating in projects such as, Ruritage (Horizon2020), Nordplus with Rokua UGGp and Trofjell UGGp (Geoheritage, culture and sustainable communities in rural areas in Finland, Iceland and Norway).

Management and Financial Status

- Status is sufficiently good, but it was a difficult year due to covid and needing to lay-off half the team for limited funding from municipalities. Closing of GeoCenter due to lack of tourism revenue and other reasons.

Geoconservation

- Working closely with the municipalities and governmental agencies regarding application of funding for infrastructure development. Examples: 1) Prime minister's office regarding development and signage at Sólheimajökull geosite, 2) with vegetation protection and reclamation at Skaftáreldahraun geosite with Skaftáhreppur municipality and the Environmental Agency. 3) Working with the Natural History Museum on geosites inventory relating to our area (Katla Geopark). 4) Looking into protection of Drumbabót geosite with landowners, municipality and the Ministry of Environment. 5) Start of morphodynamic research of Vík beach, to gather data to use to combat the coastal erosion that has been ongoing for decades.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Preparing for Geopark Training Course in 2021 with the Directorate of Labour. Working with local initiatives (tourism companies) on planning activities and educational events (unfortunately being delayed due to covid and meeting restrictions).
- New signage and various developments in the field at geosites and in other leisure areas, such as a new forest trail in Tumastaðaskógur, new sign and developments at Kvernufoss (next to Skógafoss), and various other geosites managed by municipalities, landowners and other governmental agencies.

New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

- Simultaneous digital teaching for all students in primary schools within Katla Geopark and Reykjanes Geopark. Online class organized by both Icelandic Geoparks intended for the schools within geoparks. Introducing the new category of Icelandic Volcanoes by specialists

at the Icelandic Meteorological Office.

- Various events through our Online/Virtual Geopark in the end of April. Introduction to the Geopark and the Geology of Katla Geopark, Virtual Geopark Tour to Katla Geopark with materials from partner in Crete (Manolis), visit to educational institutions such as Museum Skógasafn (Partner of Katla Geopark).
- RURITAGE workshops on “increasing the resilience of local people towards Geo-hazards”, the project will involve further education programmes for local people and tourist about Geo-hazards in the area, especially volcanic hazards and how to respond during an eruption.
- The research project of Vík beach will involve education to the students about how to conserve sandy beaches and reducing the risk of ocean flooding.

Strategic partnership

- Working closely with our present partners at museums, companies, local and national institutions, academia, etc.

Promotional activities

- Working with the marketing body of South Iceland on marketing the Geopark. Destination Management Plan for revise, Geopark is actively involved in the work. Active participation in South Iceland Professional Tourism Group. Discussions with Promote Iceland (now Business Iceland) on Regional Branding for the Geopark.
- The Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management agreed to add Katla Geopark on the list of agency informed of emergencies and potential natural disasters

4. CONTACTS

Manager: Berglind Sigmundsdóttir, Geopark manager and geologist berglind@katlageopark.is

Geologist: Sigurður Sigursveinsson (Board member of Katla UGGp, EGN member, Geographer) sigurdur@hfsu.is Jóhannes Marteinn Jóhannesson, geologist and project manager johannes@katlageopark.is