

MAESTRAZGO CULTURAL PARK

Progress Report, September 2007 - March 2008

Main activities

Maestrazgo Cultural Geopark attended at the Andalusian Geopark European Week . There, it presented a paper about Maestrazgo Geopark in Rodalquilar (Cabo de Gata Geopark – Níjar) and in Cabra (Subbeticas mountain range Geopark).

Our involvement in Rodalquilar took place on Monday 22nd and on Tuesday 23rd , and in Cabra on Wednesday 24th . As a representative from Maestrazgo Geopark were Julia Escorihuela (an engineer from Aliaga Geopark) and José Manuel Salvador (he is an engineer from Maestrazgo Geopark).

Luis Alcalá, (Dinópolis) a member of member of Maestrazgo Geopark scientific committee, he presented a paper in Rodalquilar too.

The event was organized by the Environment Cabinet from Andalusia, because two Geoparks depend on it.

The result was very positive, we have to emphasize the treatment we recived, the conference development and the accommodation.

We note down some questions we consider interesting:

- Most of the Geoparks do not have any protection figures, because of that they have to struggle with other economic interests in order to keep their geological resources, (reservoirs, industries that are polluting, electrical cables...)
- The European Geoparks chain is chasing the excellence and the quality in their territories and it is increasing the demands in their periodic assessments. As a conclusion of this we mark the next questions:
 - 1- There is a debate about how many Geoparks should exits in each country.
 - 2- In order to keep the status of the Geopark, we have to invest in it and give it the necessary infrastructures (geological museums, geological routes...)
 - 3- Geoparks assessment is going to be constant and more demanding every time: selling geological material is banned, this demands a specific organizative structure and it raises shared criterions about the celebration of some activities and about the chain visibility.

The most developed activities in Geoparks are:

- 1- Education; educational school trips, museums about environment, educational notebooks, postgraduate courses and master´s degrres.)
- 2- Geological tourism; geological routes, interpreted paths, establishments with quality (gastronomy)
- 3- European Geoparks Week; standard activities for all the territories, conferences, guide tours...
- 4- Products; linking local products with Geoparks trademark, merchandising...

VISITORS CENTRE IN MAESTRAZGO GEOPARK

We follow some objectives with the visitors centre creation ;

- Emphasizing the whole cultural heritage of Maestrazgo Geopark in suitable facilities.

- Including Maestrazgo Geopark in the European Geoparks chain, it means excellence and advertising.
- Getting that Maestrazgo Geopark will be a tourist reference. We think that the best place for the visitors centre is Ejulve and we can give many reasons about why the visitors centre has to be in Ejulve;
- Ejulve has got a special location because it is connected by road with many nearby villages like Aliaga, Pitarque, Molinos, and Castellote, it means that Ejulve can be the perfect 'door' for the Geopark.
- Ejulve Town Council agrees with this proposal. Town Council is going to adapt an old building (the old hospital) as s visitors centre and it is going to llor for the suitable staff.

IMPROVEMENTS IN ALIAGA GEOPARK

- Protecting and signpostin the places with geological interest (P.I.G.)
- We hope promotion and help from the state institutions (D.G.A, D.P.T...) to spread the wonderful scientific interest of this Geopark like other countries do with their Geoparks.
- Another one idea for the improvement in this Geopark is a cable car. It would make of this Geopark a very interesting place to visit. If we add a lookoutom the highest place of the tunnel we will see the twist geological folds. From there we can imagine the past time of Aliaga, the past way of life in the mines in the last 20th century, In 1950 the coal wagons followed this route and they were unloaded at the power station. The cable car will cover a distance between 900 metres and 1000 metres more or less. The height difference from the start point until the lookout would be between 200 metres and 250 metres.

GEO DAY 07, ON JULY THE 15TH

Villarluengo and its area recived the Geo Day 07 celebration again. The event was organized by Turolenses studies Institute, Maestrazgo Geopark, Maestrazgo area, Palaeontology Studies from Teruel and Zaragoza University. We have to emphasize the high participation. Peoploe could see in situ the amazing Maestrazgo geology , that was on showed in a very interesting way. The trip began between Ejulve and Villarluengo. After a short presentation about the geology of the area by José Luis Simón and the French geologist J. Carenot, the group covered different geologic places that were planned before. There, people could see the different history periods in the mountains and in the rocks. This was an amazing experience for all of them. Showing the history of our land, the evolution of our territories and their constant changes was the main objective that we followed with the celebration of the Geo Day 07.

These activities are inside the promotion and advertising activities that some state institutions and non-profit making institutions are doing for this Geopark.

ALL TOGETHER FOR GUADALOPE RIVER , on August the 10th and 11th .

The conference was about Guadalupe River and its importance inside the ecosystem.

There were guide tours around the river.