

TERRA.vita

Progressreport October 2007 - March 2008

A. Activities concerning the EGN and GGN

3rd International UNESCO Conference on Geoparks 2008 in Osnabrück

Preparations for the 3rd IGeoC were continued as planned. The conference website www.geoparks2008.com provides information and is ready for bookings now.

The call for papers showed a tremendous success. About 180 abstracts and poster presentations have been sent and are under revision by the scientific committee now.

The 1st Global Geoparks Fair will be held on the marketplace in front of the historic townhall in Osnabrück the weekend before the conference (21. and 22. 6.2008). If all EGN parks will attend as promised, we will be able to present more than 50 Global Geoparks. 19 Chinese parks will be there plus parks from Malaysia and Iran. One of the new Chinese parks will bring 10 Shaolin Kungfu Fighters.

The student exchange project "Meet Your Geopark" will be supported by 15 EGN parks and will be held from 20.6.- 29.6.2008 during the IGeoC.

IYPE Activities

A huge array of oral presentations and excursions will be offered three months in advance of the IGeoC. We intend to support the outreach program of the IYPE. We will reach out to as many people as possible and will use this tool to raise the awareness for the upcoming conference. We are addressing local and global issues.

Dinosaurs are going to roam the Geopark from end of May until end of June.

At the "kids campus", special lectures for children will be held by the University of Applied Sciences, Osnabrück and will give answers to the question: "Why happened the extinction of the dinosaurs?"

All activities will be presented during a kick off press conference in Osnabrück on 31.3.2008. It will be attended by the Secretary General of the German Environmental Foundation Dr. Fritz Brickwedde, by the coordinator of the European IYPE activities Dr. Wolfgang Eder, by Dr. Lutz Möller of the German UNESCO Commission, by the managing director of the Alfred Wegener Foundation, Dr. Christoff Ellger and TERRA.vita representatives.

B. Activities by TERRA.vita

Economic effects of the Nature- and Geopark TERRA.vita

The project started in June. 20 students of the University of Osnabrück began a questionnaire of visitors at nine different hot spots on 13 days (representing holidays, weekends and workdays). The results: Looking at the selected 9 spots only, an annual turnover of net 9.1 million € has been generated. This leads to a job equivalent of 750 persons. The method will be explained by the University of Osnabrück in a workshop during the IGeoC.

New sponsor membership

The first sponsor signed an agreement with TERRA.vita, adding 500 € annually to our budget.

Certified tour guides

A second course to qualify volunteers as certified tour guides started in autumn after 16 candidates passed the first program in May 2007 successfully. They will help to raise the quality standards in TERRA.vita significantly. Exams hopefully will be passed in April.

C. Positive effects by others for TERRA.vita

State funding

TERRA.vita applied for 110.000 € in December 2007. The funding by the state of Lower Saxony (30 %) and the EU (50%) will be invested for a communication project, to introduce visitors to Lower Saxony's largest Calcite sinter terraces.

New members

Two communities Lengerich and Westerkappeln joined TERRA.vita. Lengerich is already located within the borders of the geopark, while the new membership of Westerkappeln marks a first step for a planned extension of our geopark.

TERRA.vita listed as National Geopark

Finally we have been added to the list of Germany's National Geoparks.

Hartmut Escher

escherh@lkos.de

Timo Kluttig

kluttig@lkos.de

www.naturpark-terravita.de