



香港地貌岩石保育協會
Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong

Hong Kong National Geopark: a holistic conservation approach

The opening of Hong Kong National Geopark on 3 Nov. 2009 as the 139th National Geopark of China highlights the “cosmopolitan geopark” concept i.e. a bustling metropolis of only 1,100 sq. km populated with seven million people is endowed with world class invaluable geological heritages which are in close proximity to the city. The establishment of the geopark also earmarks the decisiveness of our Government and our Hong Kong citizen to conserve our geological heritage and to strike the balance between conservation and economic development.

Geopark is recognized as the most effective means of geoconservation and has become a global trend. Its core mission is:

- 1) Conservation - to conserve and enhance the value of the Earth heritage, its landscapes and geological formations which are key witnesses to the history of life and base of all ecological system;
- 2) Education - to popularize earth sciences and provide a mean of teaching geoscientific disciplines and
- 3) To foster sustainable development.

A geopark is the best avenue to work towards the successful preservation of Hong Kong's unique and diversified geological features, ensuring that these legacies are inherited and cherished by future generations. Ultimate conservation must be via education - broadening general awareness and knowledge of our rock and landscapes, enabling the public to understand their importance, to appreciate and cherish their beauties and value.

The Hong Kong National Geopark is not a property, tourism or economic project, nor is it another Disney Land, Ocean Park or Wetland Park. It is a greater integration and holistic approach for nature conservation. Geopark is a conceptual development within the existing framework of our country parks and marine parks which are regulated under respective ordinances. The integration of the geological and geomorphological interests and information in our country and marine parks would increase their attractions, would enable visitors to learn more about invaluable rocks and landscapes.



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Within the geopark territory or invaluable geological sites, major development or construction are not required. Excessive setups are not allowed. Minor setups will be installed for safety, instruction and interpretation of geological features purposes.

The establishment of a geopark offers a superlative platform for professionals and scholars to conduct further studies and research.

It also creates an opportunity to enhance the professionalism of current geotourism industry. All the appreciation guides would have the common mission of promoting geoconservation and popularizing earth sciences. Clearer guidance and code would be provided to the appreciation guides about the appropriate geotourism practices. Accreditation of their geotourism practice would also be required.

In the assessment for the national geopark of China, we are proud to get very high marks in respect of management and earth sciences popularization. However, the establishment of the geopark is only the start. The subsequent development and management of our national geopark must be closely monitored to ensure it is for the ultimate benefits and betterment of Hong Kong citizen. It will not be the tool of any political parties nor any development such as theme park, spa centre, or holiday resort which will destruct our environment and deviate from the principles of global geoparks or global geological heritage which Hong Kong is targeting at.

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