

2ND INTERNATIONAL INTENSIVE COURSE «GEOCONSERVATION AND GEOPARKS: INTERPRETATION AND COMMUNICATION»

LESVOS (GREECE), 23 - 28 SEPTEMBER 2008

FIRST CIRCULAR – DECEMBER 2007

IN COLLABORATION WITH:

GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK - UNESCO

EUROPEAN GEOPARKS NETWORK

IAG WORKING GROUP "GEOMORPHOSITES"

ORGANIZATION:

UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN – DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF THE LESVOS PETRIFIED FOREST



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OF THE LESVOS
PETRIFIED FOREST



AEGEAN UNIVERSITY
GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT



Introduction

Geology, geomorphology and landscape have profoundly influenced society, civilization and cultural diversity of our planet. The Geoparks initiative adds a new dimension to the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage by highlighting the potential for interaction between socio-economic and cultural development and conservation of the natural environment.

The initiative of UNESCO to support Geoparks responds to the strong need expressed by numerous countries for an international framework to enhance the value of the Earth heritage, its landscapes, geomorphological features and geological formations, which are key witnesses to the history of life.

European countries are currently dealing with landscape issues as evidenced by the adoption of the European Convention on Landscape by the Council of Europe in 2000 in Florence. Recently, the European Union adopted a *Manifesto on Earth Heritage and Geodiversity*

These actions highlight the rising need for individuals to discover and appreciate the ever-increasing knowledge gained by the earth scientists. The understanding by non-experts of the Earth's processes, the resulting natural features and the impact of human activity on them plays a key-role to the realization of the potential of Earth sciences for better planning and decision making among politicians. In this context, the Geoparks initiative to promote the communication of earth sciences to a broad audience is essential for the utilization of the knowledge by the authorities towards the creation of safer, healthier and wealthier societies.

The European Geoparks Network was created with the support of the E.U. and in cooperation with UNESCO in 2000. The main aim of the network is to bring sustainable regional development to the geopark by using that region's geological heritage, primarily through the development of geotourism. It is our aspiration that geotourism on a European-scale can be developed this way.

The Global Geoparks Network (GGN), established in 2004, is an international, non-governmental, non-profit network, which provides a platform of cooperation among Geoparks, brings together government agencies, non-governmental organizations, scientists and experts from all countries around the world in a unique worldwide partnership and operates according to UNESCO regulations.

The GGN mission is to influence, encourage and assist local societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of abiotic and biotic nature, to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and sustainable and to support economic and cultural development of local communities through the valorisation of their unique heritage and identity.

The GGN operates in close synergy with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) World Network of Biosphere Reserves, national and international undertakings and non-governmental organizations active in geological heritage conservation.

The GGN in collaboration with the EGN supports initiatives aiming to building staff capacity in management and efficient operation of Geoparks. Geopark staff members as well as of young scientists who want to contribute in the development of Geoparks all over the world need

continuous education. Introduction to the newest concepts of communication is essential for the personal improvement and, therefore, the improvement of services Geoparks can offer to their visitors and to the local communities. Exchange of information, knowledge and experiences among Geopark experts, Geopark staff and young scientists in the framework of an international course facilitates the creation of special bonds and collaborations among the Geoparks.

If one of the primary scopes of the EGN and GGN is enhancing geotourism as a means of sustainable development, focus and great attention should be given to the application of the appropriate techniques in order to communicate geology, geomorphology and landscape to the society. Interpretation of natural and cultural heritage should play, in the above context, a major role in the development of the EGN and GGN communication policy.

Interpretation, as a communication process, is designed to reveal meanings and relationships of cultural and natural heritage, through involvement with objects, artifacts, landscapes and sites. In other words, interpretation is not just presenting information, but a specific strategy developed to translate information for people, from the language of the expert, to the everyday language of the visitor. Interpretive Communication principles have evolved from a variety of other communication professions. The basic idea of what makes a message interpretive versus informative is not what is said, but rather how it is said.

For the communication to be interpretive, it must provoke curiosity, attention and interest in the audience, relate the message to the every day life of the visitor, reveal why the message is important for the visitor, have message unity in terms of the right colors, designs, music, etc., and 'address the whole' or have a single take-home-message for the visitor. Two questions should be consistently addressed when communication techniques are designed: "Why would the visitor want to know that?" and "How is the visitor expected to use the information interpreted to them?"

Invitation

The University of the Aegean - Department of Geography and the Natural History Museum - Lesvos Petrified Forest Geopark invite you to participate in the Intensive Course "**Geoconservation and Geoparks: Interpretation and Communication**" on Lesvos Island, Greece, from 23 to 28 September, 2008.

The Course is co organized in close cooperation with the Global Geoparks Network, the European Geoparks Network and the Working Group "Geomorphosites" of the International Association of Geomorphology (IAG). The Course will take place on Lesvos, at the premises of the Lesvos Petrified Forest Geopark.

The course is open to PhD and Master students working on geopark, geotourism, geosite, geomorphosite and landscape topics, as well as to Geopark staff members with a degree in Geosciences.

Those who are interested in participating in the course are invited to send an application form accompanied by a short CV and an abstract (one page) of their PhD thesis or Master project, which they will present during the Course.

Information on the Intensive Course

Title:	Geoconservation and Geoparks: Interpretation and Communication
Language:	English
Participation:	20-30 PhD and Master students, Geoparks staff members
Organisation:	Faculty of Geography - University of the Aegean, Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest
Co- Organisers:	Global Geoparks Network, European Geoparks Network, Working Group "Geomorphosites" of the IAG
Patronage:	UNESCO
Date:	September 23-28, 2008
Venue:	University of the Aegean - Department of Geography, Mytilene Natural History Museum of the Petrified Forest of Lesvos, Sigri, Lesvos, Greece
Access:	Transportation from Mytilene airport by coaches will be arranged.
Inscription rate:	€400 for PhD and Master students (including lessons by International staff, didactic material, food and housing during the course, travels during the course, participation in the workshop, but not travel to Lesvos)
Application deadline:	May 30th, 2008
Scientific direction:	As. Prof. Nickolas Zouros, University of the Aegean
Information:	nzour@aegean.gr, +30 22510 36431, 22510 47033

Registration

All participants are kindly requested to complete the [Registration form](#) and submit it electronically or by fax to the Organising Committee, to the following address:

Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest

8th November 17, Mytilene, Lesvos Isl.,

GR- 81100, GREECE

Fax Number: +30 22510 47033

e-mail: lesvospf@otenet.gr

Registration Fee

Participants: € 500

Students and Post-graduate Students: € 400

The Registration Fee covers the right to attend the Course, including lessons by International staff, didactic material, food (Lunch and Dinner) and hotel accommodation (6 nights B/B) during the course, travels during the course, **but not the travel to Lesvos**.

The reduced fee will be applied to post graduate students and to researchers working full time for an advanced degree (M.Sc., Ph.D.) at the time of registration. Those wishing to register at the student fee should attach to the registration form a copy of their current student card to prove the student status.

All payments related with the workshop must be made to the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest. A written confirmation will be sent to all registered participants.

Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest

8th November 17, Mytilene, Lesvos Isl., GR- 81100, GREECE

Fax Number: +30 22510 47033

Registration fees can be paid by Bank transfer:

Account number: IBAN GR03 0150 0580 0000 9800 3698 432,

SWIFT: GHBAGRAA

Name of the bank: Geniki Bank / Mytilene Branch

A copy of the bank transfer action must be sent to the Natural History Museum by mail or fax. Unless a copy of the bank transfer is sent, the registration will not be processed.

General Information

Transportation

Arrival by air: Ulysses Elytis International Airport of Lesvos Island (airport code MJT) has several daily connections to Athens and Thessaloniki.

Charter flights from the UK, Germany and other countries can be also used.

Delegates are strongly recommended to book air travel as early as possible, since Greece is a busy tourist destination.

There is a regular public bus connection between the airport and the Mytilene city centre, which is located 8 km to the north of the airport.

Arrival by boat: Ferries to Mytilene depart from Piraeus Port (daily), Thessaloniki, Alexandroupolis and Kavala.

Sigri village, where the Natural History Museum of the Petrified Forest of Lesvos is, is located on the west side of Lesvos Island, 96 km from Mytilene.

Climate

The weather is usually mild in September, but it can occasionally be wet. Temperatures may reach well above 25° C. Sunny days with high humidity and perhaps cool nights should be expected.

Useful addresses

Some Internet addresses that might be of use to the participants:

Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest

<http://www.lesvosmuseum.gr>

Lesvos Petrified Forest Geopark

<http://www.petrifiedforest.gr>

The Friends of the Lesvos Petrified Forest Association

<http://www.petrifiedforest.gr/filoi>

European Geoparks Network

<http://www.europeangeoparks.org>

Information on Lesbos island

Lesbos, renowned since antiquity, is a peaceful island rich in geographical features. The bright sunlight makes its land fertile and rich in a vast range of vegetation, from the silver olive trees to the dark green pine trees and its unique wild flowers. Lesbos' natural beauty, its mythology and history have inspired many poets and writers.

Located in the north-east of the Aegean Sea, Lesbos is one of the biggest Greek islands. It lies to the north of Chios and west of the Asia Minor coast (Turkey) which is only 5-8 miles away.

The island, which encompasses an area of 1,630 sq. km, a coastline of 370 km and a population of 92,000 inhabitants, belongs to the prefecture of Lesbos which also includes the islands of Lemnos and Agios Eustratios.

The most important mountains are Mount Lepetymnos in the north, 968 m high, a main volcanic centre activated during Miocene times, and Mount Olympus in the south, 967 m high.

There are no extensive plains on Lesbos. A multitude of headlands and the numerous gulfs and bays are what give the island its distinctive look, unique in the Greek archipelago. During the Cenozoic period, Lesbos took its present impressive shape, which the famous poet Ulysses Elytis (Literature Nobel Prize 1980) likened to the leaf of a plane tree. The sea enters deeply into the southern portion of the island and forms the two enchanting gulfs of Kalloni and Gera. Small coves and fishing harbours ornament its shores and the headlands along the coast are most picturesque.

The warm climate of the island, the fertile soil and the abundant water supply has created the lush green Lesbos that every visitor enjoys today. Olive groves and pine trees cover mountains and plains on the central and eastern part of the island while a wide variety of aromatic and medical herbs are also present. Eleven million olive trees produce more than 20,000 tons of olives per year.

These ancient, boundless olive groves, the forests of pine, the thousands of varieties of plants and trees all make for an enchanting island landscape.

Mytilene, the capital of the island, is largely built on the ancient town. It spreads amphitheatrically around the harbour with extensions to the northern and western heights. To the north of Mytilene's harbour the Venetian castle crowns a magnificent pinewood which reaches down to the shore. It is one of the largest mediaeval castles in the eastern Mediterranean. Places of special interest are the Ancient Theatre with its marvellous acoustics, the Archaeological Museum, the Byzantine Museum, the Theofilos Museum, the Teriade Museum of Modern Art and some of the monumental churches, having both impressive architectural features and ecclesiastical articles.

On the northern edge of the island stands the picturesque town of **Mythimna** (Molyvos) which has been declared a settlement subject to preservation. Its impressive castle has been crowning the town since the Byzantine times.

On the western edge of the island lie **Sigri** and **Eressos**, small villages in an area of incomparable wild and stark beauty, where visitors can encounter large accumulations of fossilised tree trunks comprising the well-known «Petrified Forest of Lesbos». The glossiness and the chromatic variety of the petrified pieces is fascinating. On Megalonisi, the island which protects the bay of Sigri, lie some marvellous trunks of petrified trees. The Natural History Museum of the Lesbos Petrified Forest, located in Sigri since 1994, undertakes scientific research on the natural monument, as well as the preservation and promotion of the petrified forest.

In the village of Sigri, the small castle built by the Turks in 1757 to protect the fishermen's locale has been kept in good condition.

Southeast of Sigri lies the beautiful country town of Eressos, birthplace of the poet Sappho and the philosopher Theophrastus, who is considered to be the father of modern Ecology and Botany. The outstanding beach of Eressos, almost 3km long, was deemed the cleanest in Greece.