

Geodiversity as a tool for the better management of geoheritage

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With the rapid development of geoparks in China, geologists have begun to focus on the exploration of geoconservation and sustainable utilization of geoheritage. With the aim to make a comprehensive framework for better management, experts have been aware of the importance of geodiversity, which has been gradually known to the public and widely used in geological research in recent years. The concept of geodiversity can be expressed as the diversity of the special places and objects in nature, which includes concrete manifestation of the natural range of geological strata, structure, lithological characters, fossils and geomorphic landscape, and processes, as well as reflecting their regular patterns and interrelation. Research regarding geodiversity is complex and challenging, but is an essential part in the process of providing guidance for geoheritage planning and meeting new requirements of development of the geological resources. As demanded, the establishment of an evaluation index will promote the sustainable utilization of geoheritage resources. There is an abundance of geological heritage in China, among which three geoparks have been chosen as research areas (Hexigten Global Geopark, Xingwen Shihai Global Geopark, Mt. Funiushan Global Geopark).

Certain laws and regulations have been issued to protect geological landscapes in China, and the identification and conservation of geodiversity has become an important and effective measure in doing so. From this perspective, the theoretical definition of geoheritage and practical conservation find common ground. Geodiversity reflects the diversity of nature resources and also shows us the possibility to secure the natural values in combination with human utilization.

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