

Geoheritage sites: the starting point for Global Geoparks

JOHN CALDER - *Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 698, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T9, Canada <jhcalder@gov.ns.ca>*

The spectrum of geoheritage recognition ranges from simple interpretive signage to the complex undertakings of Global Geoparks and the ultimate designation of World Heritage status. In all of these, the construction of a geoheritage list is key. Seldom will a Global Geopark encompass all geoheritage sites in a given jurisdiction. Where then to draw the boundaries? In the case where a comprehensive inventory of geoheritage sites has been documented, the selection of possible Global Geoparks has the greatest chance of being made on sound grounds, with an over-arching, connecting theme. Such a unifying theme, which can be expressed as a 'tag line', will give an Aspiring Global Geopark a sense of unique identity, and one that can be effectively marketed. Models employed in Ireland, Québec and Nova Scotia illustrate the range of approaches in establishing a list of geoheritage sites. The Irish model requires a formal process of evaluation by specialist teams for a large number of provisional sites (circa 1200), which has proven to be a multi-decadal undertaking. Québec has enshrined geoheritage in legislation, which places responsibility for identification of sites with the provincial geological survey. An open nomination process is employed in Québec, but the list began modestly and is growing incrementally. The Nova Scotia approach has been to develop a list using a simple, universally applicable rubric that has been vetted through consensus of the geoscience community; like Québec, the process invites open nominations. Public awareness of the process of building a list and of the very concept of geoheritage has promoted interest and identified partnerships at different sites, both key to a successful Global Geopark. Sample evaluation tables demonstrate how the list can then be used to assess the geoheritage values of prospective candidate regions, providing a strong foundation that will serve Aspiring Global Geoparks well.

Presented in Theme 1