Stonehammer UNESCO Global Geopark "Sparking curiosity about the Earth"

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Our lives are shaped by geology. Where we settle, the landscape, the crops we grow, natural hazards, water resources, climate, what we mine, and the energy we use are all linked to geology. With a landscape created by the collision of continents, the closing and opening of oceans, volcanoes, earthquakes, ice ages, and climate change, Stonehammer UNESCO Global Geopark includes geological stories from late Precambrian time, a billion years ago, to the most recent Ice Age, and almost everything in between.

Stonehammer's 2500 km^2 area recognized by UNESCO Global Geoparks has exceptional geological heritage. This simply means that the area has a natural landscape that is good for education, has a significant scientific value, is particularly rare or it is simply beautiful to look at. Stonehammer is about geology, but it is also about the people, society and culture. Geoparks take in sites with interesting archaeology, wildlife and habitats, history, folklore, and culture, all of which are intricately linked with the underlying geology. What makes a Geopark different from designations such as World Heritage sites is that they have a commitment to benefit the local economy. This is done by bringing visitors into the region, creating jobs and increasing the need for new businesses, all of which help create an awareness and understanding of such a wonderful natural resource. Sparking Curiosity every step of the way!

Stonehammer was the first Geopark in North America and is one of 7 world-wide that has recently formed an international partnership with Northern Periphery and the Arctic Geoparks with a "Drifting Apart" project. This will leverage the geopark on the international stage through partnerships and best practice sharing. The geology of the Northern Periphery and Arctic provides a common link between diverse regions. Millions of years of moving continents, mountain building, volcanic activity, changing climates and sea levels, erosion, and deposition have shaped our landscape. Not only does the resultant geodiversity help us understand the history of our Earth but it also profoundly shapes the world around us. Drifting Apart will support the development of new and aspiring Global Geoparks, the promotion of innovative products and services for social and economic prosperity and to continue to build a strong network of Geoparks in the Northern Periphery and Arctic Region and develop a model for sustainable management of the geological areas designated as UNESCO geoparks.

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