

Towards Aspiring Kinta Valley Geopark in the National Level

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Dalam pertengahan abad ke-20, Lembah Kinta di negeri Perak terkenal sebagai pengeluar bijih timah terbesar dunia, dimana aktiviti perlombongan tersebut sedikit sebanyak memainkan peranan besar dalam pembangunan awal wilayah itu. Lembah Kinta mempunyai pelbagai sumber warisan geologi semula jadi, biodiversiti dan warisan budaya dan sejarah yang perlu dipelihara dan dibangunkan melalui konsep geopark. Cadangan pembangunan Geopark Lembah Kinta telah mendapat perhatian daripada kerajaan negeri Perak dan bersetuju untuk memberi peruntukan kepada JMG Perak untuk menjalankan kajian dan penyelidikan secara terperinci. Kawasan cadangan pembangunan Geopark Lembah Kinta ini meliputi tiga (3) kawasan pentadbiran pihak berkuasa tempatan yang terdiri daripada Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh, Majlis Daerah Batu Gajah dan Majlis Daerah Kampar dengan keluasan hampir 2,000 km persegi. Lebih daripada dua puluh geotapak dengan pelbagai tapak warisan dari segi geologi, biodiversiti, budaya dan warisan serta produk tempatan telah dikenal pasti. Ciri-ciri geologi tersebut termasuklah topografi kars bukit batu kapur dan

landskap gua, lata, jeram dan air terjun serta mata air panas. Dari aspek biodiversiti, kawasan Lembah Kinta ini terkenal dengan hutan simpan dan taman herba. Lembah Kinta sememangnya kaya dengan bangunan-bangunan bersejarah dan muzium yang sering menjadi tumpuan pelancong. Ianya juga sangat terkenal dengan kemanisan limau bali, kayu gaharu dan produk pertanian yang lain, kraftangan tempatan dan produk masakan yang akan dilabelkan dan dipromosikan sebagai sebahagian daripada produk geopark. Sebahagian besar geotapak-geotapak tersebut telah diusahakan sebagai tumpuan pelancongan setempat oleh pengusaha-pengusaha yang dibuat secara persendirian tanpa kaedah pengurusan pelancongan yang baik. Oleh itu, dengan wujudnya geopark ini geotapak-geotapak tersebut dapat diperkenalkan di seluruh negara dan seterusnya dapat melonjakkan ekonomi setempat. Lembah Kinta perlu diusahakan untuk mendapat pengiktirafan sekurang-kurangnya di peringkat Geopark Kebangsaan apabila melihat kepada senarai geotapak, warisan dan produk yang memenuhi ciri-ciri dan keperluan sebagai geotapak.

During the mid-20th century, Kinta Valley in Perak state was well known as the world largest producer of tin ore, hence mining activities played as a major role in the early development of the region. Kinta Valley has a variety of natural geological heritage resources, biodiversity and cultural heritage and history that should be preserved and developed through the concept of geopark. Kinta Valley Geopark development proposal has received much attention from the Perak state government and agreed to give provisions to JMG Perak to carry out details studies and research. The Kinta Valley Geopark development proposal area includes three (3) administrative area of the local authorities comprises of Ipoh City Council, Batu Gajah and Kampar Municipalities with an area of almost 2,000 square km. More than twenty geosites with a range of heritage sites in term of geology, biodiversity, cultural and heritage as well as local products have been identified. The geological characteristic includes limestone hills karst topography and cave landscapes, cascades,

rapids and waterfall as well as hot springs. In term of biodiversity aspect, the Kinta Valley area is well known with its reserved forest and herb garden. Kinta Valley is well endowed with many historic buildings and museums which has always been a tourist attraction. It is also very famous for its sweetness pomelo, sandalwood and other agricultural products, local handicraft and culinary products which will be tagged and promoted as part of the geopark products. Most of the geosite has been developed as a tourist attraction by the local entrepreneurs on their own without a proper tourism management methods. Therefore, the existence of this geopark can be introduced throughout the country and can boost the local economy. Kinta Valley should be worked out to gain recognition at least at the National Geopark level when referred to the list of geosites, heritage and products that meet the characteristics and needs as a geosites.