

Aspiring Global Geopark : Cheongsong National Geopark (Korea)

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Cheongsong National Geopark is located southeast of Korea, Northeast Asia. Its total land area is about 845km², a typical mountainous rural area with forests covering 80% of the total area. The population of cheongsong-gun is about 26,732, which is quite small for the total area. Ever since Cheongsong National Geopark proclaimed its beginning as a geopark, Cheongsong National Geopark successfully performed its role as a geopark, joining the Korean National Geoparks Network (KGN) on April 11, 2014 and preparing to join the Global Geoparks Network at the moment.

The geological features of the Cheongsong National Geopark mainly consist of Precambrian metamorphic rocks, Mesozoic sedimentary rocks and volcanic rocks, and Cenozoic acidic intrusive rocks and recent sediments. In the Mesozoic era, trench was located southeast of the Korean Peninsula. The southeast part of the Korean Peninsula, which includes the Cheongsong area, had experienced active volcanic activity of subduction zone. For that, large quantity of lava and pyroclastic materials from the activity are found in the area along with Mesozoic sedimentary rocks. Numerous geoheritages with outstanding landscape and high scientific value such as the Flower stone, fantastic rock, river terrain, columnar joints, dinosaur footprints, and carbonated mineral water springs that ground from excellent geodiversity are found in the Cheongsong area. The spherulitic texture of spherulitic rhyolite formed in Cenozoic Rhyolite intrusive dike is globally acknowledged for its morphological· aesthetic excellence and the developmental characteristic and uniqueness of water quality of the natural mineral water springs throughout the area are superb.

The Cheongsong area is surrounded with high terrains and its nearby road networks are undeveloped. This delayed the industrialization and development of the area compared to the other parts of the Korean Peninsula. Such characteristic preserved the clean natural environment of the area and diverse organisms including endangered and protected species inhabit the area, while outstanding cultural heritages, boasting its long history and tradition, are located in the area as well. For that, there are various experiences and education programs that utilize such environment.

The Cheongsong National Geopark has continued different activities such as installing various guidance and explanation boards, training geopark guides, developing educational tour programs, and advertising the geopark to vitalize geotourism.

The objectives of Cheongsong National Geopark in joining the Global Geoparks Network are as follows:

Firstly, to have a chance to share the value of diverse and outstanding geoheritages of Cheongsong National Geopark to the local residents and people around the world.

Secondly, to advertise the excellence of Cheongsong National Geopark which seeks for education & experience based geotourism, Lastly, to seek for a sustainable eco-friendly economic development for the relatively underdeveloped area of Cheongsong through geotourism vitalization.