

Gangwon Paleozoic Geopark: An Ideal Place To Experience The Paleozoic World In Korea

Kyung Sik WOO^{1,2}, Kwang Choon LEE^{3,4}, Lyoun KIM⁴

¹ Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network, ² Department of Geology, Kangwon National University, < E-mail: wooks@kangwon.ac.kr >, ³ Department of New Energy and Resource Engineering, Sangji University, ⁴ Geoheritage Research Institute of Korea

Four local governments (Jeongseon County, Pyeongchang County, Taebaek City and Yeongwol County) in Gangwon Province are pursuing a national geopark in Korea, 'Gangwon Paleozoic Geopark'. Diverse geological features such as Paleozoic sedimentary rocks, numerous limestone caves and karst landforms, and a meandering fluvial system (Donggang River) are distributed in the Gangwon Paleozoic Geopark. One of the main geological features is the Paleozoic sedimentary rocks which are composed of the Lower Paleozoic (Cambrian to Ordovician) Joseon Supergroup and the Carboniferous to Triassic Pyeongan Supergroup with coal beds. There are numerous type localities with well-preserved sedimentary structures, and invertebrate and plant fossils throughout the sequence. They also provided significant information on tectonic evolution of the East Asian region. Within the park, four different groups of sedimentary strata have been described because they show different lithofacies and sedimentary settings despite the same age within the geopark. This area has been famous for various types of mining in the past and its contribution to the Korean economy has been significant. The other features in the geopark are numerous limestone caves, various karst landforms and entrenched type of a meandering river system (Donggang River, about 57km long). Magnificent scenic views as well as numerous significant plants and animals, and cultural heritages add geopark values in this region.