



For Immediate Release -

July 10-2020 – DISCOVERY GEOPARK UNESCO DESIGNATION - With an already established artistic, cultural and historical presence on the lower part of the Bonavista Peninsula and varied geology and paleontology discoveries, cultural treasures and breathtaking coastal scenery, members of Discovery Aspiring Geopark Committee felt that the Tip of the Bonavista Peninsula was the ideal location for a Geopark when they submitted their application to UNESCO in November 2018.

The hard work of Committee members and partnering organizations paid off today when the announcement of Discovery's approval of Geopark designation came at the 209th Session of UNESCO Executive Board in Paris, France. Discovery is now amongst a short list of five Global Geoparks in North America.

According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a Global Geopark is a unified area with geological heritage or international significance. They often use best practices for utilizing renewable energy and 'green tourism,' they also inform about the sustainable use and need for natural resources while promoting respect for the environment and the integrity of the landscape.

"John Norman, Chair of Discovery Geopark's Board of Directors says, "This is an amazing announcement that has far reaching benefits for our tourism industry (private and not-for-profit) and municipalities, and will especially be true for recovering our local economy both financially and in terms of creating new and sustainable employment in post-COVID."

He carried on saying, "The process for Discovery to receive this honour has been a long one...just over thirteen years in the making. The Board of Discovery expresses their deepest thanks to all those who have supported our efforts over this time period and we look forward to continuing to work with everyone as we now move together after designation to promote our Geopark area as a destination when it becomes safe for doing so once again."

While the project has been on-going for many years the last couple of years have been even more active with planning and preparing the dossier for obtaining Geopark status. Community and regional consultations and updates were provided, financial, verbal, and written support was gathered for the completion of the dossier along with advice, guidance, and financial support from federal and provincial governments. In addition, on the road to UNESCO's decision, the Committee, has been evaluated and endorsed by delegates from UNESCO Global Geoparks, and the Canadian National Committee for Geoparks.

The Board especially thanks the four founding members of the Steering Committee that took the first steps for designation: The Sir William Ford Coaker Heritage Foundation, Tourism Elliston, Trinity Historical Society and King's Cove Historical Society; Dr Sean O'Brien, former Senior Geologist with the province who planted the seed for the Geopark; the local municipalities and businesses of the area; the continued support and involvement of the staff at the Geological Survey, Department of Natural Resources; Paleontological Researchers from Cambridge, Oxford, and Memorial Universities; the funding

partners with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. The Board also thanks past project managers Sharon Porter-Trask and Amanda McCallum for their dedication and involvement in the project during the journey to designation and the submission of the dossier. Mr. Norman says, "It's through the commitment, perseverance and working together towards a long-awaited achievable outcome for our region that today we have this designation. We recognize and thank everyone for their efforts, and we look forward to holding a regional celebration in the future when it is safe to do so to recognize this contribution."

Discovery was one of 16 other applicants approved for UNESCO Global Geopark status at the conference. Canada also gained another geopark, the Cliffs of Fundy in Nova Scotia. The Global Geoparks Network now includes 161 sites in 44 countries. (4 new countries) New additions include:

- Cliffs of Fundy (Canada)
- Discovery (Canada)
- Xiangxi (China)
- Zhangye (China)
- Lauhanvuori-Haemeenkangas (Finland)
- Hantangang (Korea Rep. of)
- Granada (Spain)
- Maestrazgo (Spain)
- Dak Nong (Vietnam)
- Rio Coco (Nicaragua)
- Black Country (UK)
- Djerdap (Serbia)
- Toba Caldera (Indonesia)
- Estrela (Portugal)
- Yangan Tau (Russian Federation)

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