

Bandaisan Geopark: Introduction

Bandaisan Geopark encompasses sites within Bandai-Asahi National Park and around Lake Inawashiro that are recognized for their geological and topographical significance. They include Mt. Bandai, an 1,816-meter stratovolcano. The mountain was reshaped by two large eruptions in 806 and 1888, the latter of which dramatically altered the surrounding landscape and had a devastating impact on local communities. The geopark was established in 2011 to help protect and manage the area's natural resources through education, conservation, and sustainable development. The village of Kitashiobara and the towns of Bandai and Inawashiro are within the geopark, and the communities play an active role in park initiatives.

Bandaisan Geopark is part of the Japanese Geoparks Network (JGN), a nonprofit organization that was formed in 2009. There are over 200 sites of natural, historical, and cultural significance within the geopark, which rangers and other staff work to conserve in cooperation with Bandai-Asahi National Park. Geopark staff also provide education programs to local schools and facilitate conservation activities across municipalities. The JGN operates under the same guiding principles and certification standards as UNESCO Global Geoparks, which was established in 2015. Bandaisan Geopark chronicles the region's geological and cultural history through its mountains, wetlands and lakes, while also providing educational opportunities for younger generations to ensure a sustainable future.