

42nd World Heritage Committee

Inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List of



On Monday 2 July 2018, during the 42nd session, the 21 States composing the World Heritage Committee decided to inscribe the Chaîne des Puys - Limagne fault Tectonic Arena on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This unique landscape now joins sites such as the Grand Canyon, the Okavango Delta, Kilimanjaro and the Great Barrier Reef on this prestigious list. It is the first French natural site to be inscribed in Mainland France, and is one of the rare tectonic World Heritage sites.

Emblematic image of the Auvergne and the Puy-de-Dôme department, the Chaîne des Puys - Limagne fault Tectonic Arena has been recognised by UNESCO as an exceptional geological site. The alignment of the Chaîne des Puys volcanoes and the Limagne fault provides evidence for a large-scale process which has fashioned the Earth's surface: continental break-up.

A natural showcase, the site demonstrates how the Earth's crust was faulted and underwent collapse, allowing magma to rise up and the surface to be significantly uplifted. This geological history is superbly reflected in the landscape and stimulates the visitors' imagination as they gaze across the lush green volcanoes at what could have been a new ocean.

Backed by the government, this inscription is the culmination of a long process initiated 11 years ago by the president of the Puy-de-Dôme department, Jean-Yves GOUTTEBEL. The nomination is deeply rooted in the local territory, drawing on local authorities, businesses, associations and inhabitants to further the recognition and preservation of this exceptional natural heritage. The dossier was compiled by the Departmental council of the Puy-de-Dôme, in close collaboration with local universities for the scientific component, and the Auvergne Volcanoes Regional Park for that of the management.

This international recognition follows more than 40 years work of protection and management of the site. It is our duty now to preserve, promote and keep alive this universal heritage. It must be used as a basis for sustainable development, able to blend protection of the geological and landscape features with support for traditional activities and responsible tourism.

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