

Mobilising the Geoscience Community behind an Education/Outreach Initiative

Strategy Document – Version 3

Background

This document follows a 'mobilising the community' workshop held with a wide range of participants on Thursday, 17th November, 2016, followed by a Survey Monkey questionnaire survey to gather the further views of participants and an Earth Science Education Forum meeting in December 2016.

Strategy

Following build-up activities, a national initiative will be piloted in the summer of 2018 based on field experiences introducing the public to a series of EarthCaches in their local areas; this will be evaluated and further developed in following years.

A key aim of this strategy is to 'mobilise' as many geoscientists as possible behind the initiative. 'Geoscientists' include professional and academic geoscientists, retired geoscientists, amateur geoscientists, lecturers and undergraduates, teachers and school students studying geoscience.

The advantages of this approach are:

- There will be a week-long focus in the summer on local urban and rural field visits across the country that, in due time, would seek to emulate the success of the Spanish Geolodays (where nearly 10,000 members of the public undertake fieldwork in a single day in May each year)
- Many of the sites visited will have been EarthCached so that the educational potential of each site will have previously been explored and documented
- These sites will remain as a permanent record of the field excursion, that can be re-visited by participants and are available to others as well
- The participants will have been introduced to Earthcaching and may wish to continue their interest elsewhere
- The end-of-field visit evaluation will provide feedback to further develop the initiative

The role of local and national groups

- Each group will be asked to nominate a 'Mobilising the community' representative.
- The role of the representative will be to 'fire up' their national or local group for the initiative.
- They should test the 'How to set an Earthcache' documentation that has been prepared.
- They should ask for regular agenda items in their group's meeting, during which they should introduce their group to Earthcaching.
- They should begin planning for 2018, considering the focus of the visit, sites to be visited, those to be involved and local advertising.
- They should give feedback on their progress to the Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales) (ESEF (E&W))

Proposals for planning field visits for 2018

- Each urban or rural field visit should have a broad focus on how Earth processes have affected the area, from the geological past to today, and how this impacts on human activity.
- A wide range of sites could be used, from natural exposures to quarries and cuttings, from small geomorphological sites to landscapes; from building stones and buildings to urban landscapes; from inland to coastal areas.
- Try to broaden each experience beyond 'rocks' so that it becomes a wider social experience of the local area, and might include the terrain, soils, vegetation, land use, industrial history, art, music, etc.

- Each visit should be based on a series of EarthCaches – although not all sites visited need to be EarthCached.
- Try to bring rock exposures and landscapes ‘to life’ for participants, using a range of approaches.
- The field visits could be of any appropriate length of time or distance, since different types of approach will fit different needs
- Motor transport to and between localities can only be provided if this is funded by your group
- Field experience leaders will need insurance. For groups which do not have insurance, it may be useful to know that the Geologists’ Association’s has the following on its website: ‘Properly constituted Societies which have interests consistent with the objectives of the Geologists’ Association may apply to the Council for Affiliate status, that offers benefit such as reduced insurance premiums.’
- End each experience with a resume of what has been found and experienced, to consolidate the ‘learning’
- Formally evaluate each visit as a record of the experience and to improve future visit experiences.

Questions in April 2017 needing responses by groups

Date?

Feedback received so far indicates that the best time for the national geoscience field visit initiative should be in May or July 2018 and that an 9-day ‘week’ would give the best flexibility. Which of these weeks does your group think is best for the national initiative?:

- Sat 5th May – Sun 13th May (includes Early May Bank Holiday)
- Sat 12th May – Sun 20th May
- Sat 19th May – Sun 27th May
- Sun 26th May – Sun 3rd June (includes Spring Bank Holiday)
- Sat 30th June – Sun 8th July
- Sat 7th July – Sun 15th July

Name?

Names for the national initiative suggested so far include:

- Geolodays (after the Spanish initiative)
- Geoheritage week (after the Ottawa initiative)
- Geoloweeek
- Geoweeek
- Geodiversity week
- Another name?

Which of these names does your group think is best for the national initiative?

Logo?

How should we best devise a logo – a competition?

Mobilising the community?

How can your group bring as many geoscientist from as many levels as possible behind the initiative?

Advertising?

What are the best methods of local/national marketing/advertising?