Khorat National Geopark and conservation of biodiversity

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ABSTRACT:
The Khorat Geopark was recognized in 2018 as the Khorat National Geopark. This park covers five districts in Nakhon Ratchasima Province and has geological sites of international significance, including cuestas, excavation sites of dinosaurs and other Mesozoic vertebrates, and abundant deposits of Cenozoic mammals and other vertebrates. The geopark is playing a significant role in the conservation of both biodiversity and geodiversity and is bringing together local officials, villagers, and religious leaders to be involved in the conservation efforts. The following examples illustrate the conservation activities. At Loet Sawat (or Khao Chan Ngam) temple in Sikhio District, at the site of ancient pictographs on the sandstone walls, the geological and archaeological features as well as dry evergreen forest and the resident wildlife is being protected with the involvement of monks and local villagers. The locals also offer instructions on the various uses of medicinal plants. At Pha Yai Thiang, a cliff in Sikhio District, local children perform puppet shows for visitors promoting conservation of the local forests. Dry evergreen forest in Sung Ngoen District is protected at Wat Pa Phu Pha Sung at the top of a 700 meter cuesta. At the Khorat Fossil Museum in Mueang District, some of the natural deciduous dipterocarp forest is being preserved. In Chaloem Phra Kiat District, where numerous ancient elephant and other animal and plant fossils have been discovered, natural vegetation is being conserved along the Mun River, including an immense fig tree, Ficus benjamina. In all of these sites of the Khorat National Geopark, local officials, local tour guides, monks, teachers, school children, and villagers are involved in education about and protection of the local resources.

KEYWORDS:
Conservation; cuestas; Khorat National Geopark; Nakhon Ratchasima Province.