

## Neogene and Recent Volcanism of Southern Puna: a Proposal for Volcanic geopark

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Souther Puna is a natural laboratory of volcanic geodiversity, so the geological heritage of this area is mainly represented by volcanic landform. In the vicinity of Antofagasta de la Sierra- El Peñón (Catamarca, Argentina) there are a large number of diverse volcanic centers located within protected areas and Ramsar Sites, which are proposed as a volcanic geopark. Here, a volcanic tour allows knowing different volcanic landforms, geochemical variety and eruption style diversity. Several young scoria cones and its lava fields associates can be seen from the road. To the west, the youngest rhyolitic caldera of the Central Andes -Cerro Blanco Caldera- can be visit, together with the andesitic-dacitic stratovolcanoes belonging to La Hoyada Complex (Neogene). Returning to El Peñón, Campo de la Piedra Pómez pyroclastic flow is along the way, which is covered by gravel megaripples. Landform changes generated by wind (yardangs) can be appreciated at Campo de la Piedra Pómez. Yardangs and megaripples are common features on Mars, so this sector is an astronomic natural laboratory too. At the Northeast, a large intermediate caldera named Cerro Galán and its associated ignimbrites are also part of the proposed tour. This volcanic park offers adventure tourism (trekking, mountain climbing, four wheel drive vehicles) and geoeeducational opportunities. The geoeeducational program has as a primary stage to provide introductory conferences for tour operators and also several workshops for all the community. We had planned together with the Environment Secretary of Catamarca a set of educational panels located in strategic places in order to appreciate the distinctive volcanic views. The advertising of this area as a volcanic geopark may have a significant role in the economic development of the nearby towns. The planning of educational activities reinforces the synergy among the communities, this research group and the State through the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente.