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'Understanding volcanoes and society: the key for risk mitigation'



Geotourist itineraries along the El Hierro volcanic geopark (Canary, Spain)

Javier Dóniz-Páez^{1,2,3}, Rafael Becerra-Ramírez^{2,3} and Elena González-Cárdenas^{2,3}

¹Department of Geography and History, Universidad de La Laguna, San Cristóbal de La Laguna, Spain

²Department of Geography and Land Planning, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Ciudad Real, Spain

³Instituto Volcanológico de Canarias (INVOLCAN), Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain

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Volcanic geodiversity offers various activities with his geoheritage, the most important are the geotourism. The volcanic geotourism has been recognised with the National Parks and the geoparks. The aim of this study is to propose a geomorphosite itinerary in El Hierro volcanic geopark. Geomorphosites are geomorphological landforms that have acquired a scientific, cultural/historical, aesthetic and/or social/economic value due to human perception or exploitation. El Hierro is the youngest of the Canary and located in the west Canary Islands (Spain). In general the main volcanic characteristics of El Hierro are recent mafic volcanism with variety of landforms with a predominance of cinder cones and lava fields. The last eruption started off the south coast of El Hierro in October 2011. As different from other islands of the archipelago, which construct their offer on sunshine and sand model, El Hierro offers a sustainable alternative product resting on any of its natural attractions such as diving or hiking. This methodology used in this study is based on scientific, cultural and management values of the different geomorphosites selected on the island. According to the values obtained for any of the geomorphosites, their use will be different. In this sense, several uses can be proposed: natural, cultural, didactic, touristic, etc. We have selected five geomorphosites in El Hierro geopark with high geodiversity: La Corona del Lajial and Orchilla cinder cones, Hoya Fileba hydromagmatic cone and El Golfo and Las Playas valleys giants landslides. The geodiversity and the existence of paths that traverse its volcanic landscapes are reasons to a potential offer of these geomorphosites as tourist resource through itineraries. The goal of these activities is to use the volcanic relief as a geotouristic activity that can make visitors aware of the touristic potential of volcanoes in El Hierro.