



December 22, 2025

Margaret Hastings
Executive Director, Georgian Bay Guardians
Adjunct Professor, Schulich School of Business, York University
Retired Board Member, Georgian Bay Forever

Subject: Canadian Commission for UNESCO position on the Georgian Bay Geopark project

Dear Ms. Hastings,

On behalf of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, I am writing to acknowledge our ongoing exchanges regarding the Georgian Bay Geopark project in Ontario. As the designated body in Canada that submits new Geopark nominations to UNESCO, I would like to take this opportunity to set out information about the UNESCO Global Geopark designation and summarize our position.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are established through a bottom-up process involving all relevant local and regional stakeholders and authorities in the area (e.g. landowners, community groups, tourism providers, Indigenous people, and local organizations). This process requires support from the local communities, the endorsement of existing UNESCO designations in the area, and the development of a comprehensive strategy that will meet the communities' goals while showcasing and protecting the area's geological heritage. A geopark proposal cannot proceed to UNESCO without meeting these requirements.

We have taken note of the letters of opposition or concern that we have received and will give these due consideration should an application be received. Moreover, we note that the Georgian Bay Biosphere Region has publicly stated that it does not endorse the Geopark at this time.

As you know, the Georgian Bay Geopark has not submitted an application to UNESCO, nor does it hold a UNESCO designation. It therefore has no affiliation with UNESCO or the Canadian

Commission for UNESCO at this time. Moreover, according to UNESCO guidelines, a geopark seeking a UNESCO designation may not call itself “aspiring” until it has submitted its application. We have been in communication with the Canadian Geoparks Network and they have amended their policy and communications regarding the use of the term “Aspiring”. We continue to follow this closely.

I hope this information is helpful, and I welcome the chance to discuss further in January.

Yours sincerely,



David Schimpky

CC: Manda Maggs, Chair of Canadian Geoparks Network
Zoe Compton, Natural Sciences Programme Officer

See reference documents:

- [Submit a UNESCO Global Geopark proposal | UNESCO](#)
- [Checklist to define an aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark \(aUGGp\) - UNESCO Digital Library](#)
- [Checklist explanatory notes to define an aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark \(aUGGp\) - UNESCO Digital Library](#)
- [UGGp Application Process - Frequently Asked Questions](#)