

ASSESSING GEODIVERSITY IN TIERRA DEL FUEGO (SOUTHERN PATAGONIA, ARGENTINA). A STRATEGY TO PROMOTE GEOTOURISM

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This contribution aims to present three hierarchized areas in central and northern Tierra del Fuego (Argentina) whose geodiversity may be used for educational purposes to encourage the Earth Sciences and to design of geotourism strategies. In comparison with south Tierra del Fuego, tourism development in both areas is still low. After applying a specific methodology, 163 georesources were identified, described, mapped and classified. 123 of them represent enclaves –i.e. geological or geomorphological sites of scientific or didactic interest- and the other 40 refer to views –i.e. panoramic points to appreciate landscape as a whole-. For enclaves assessment, three values were considered as a first approach: aesthetic, use and intrinsic. As a second approach, enclaves were assessed considering level of conservation, singularity, diversity of elements, present activities and accessibility. The enclaves were hierarchically organized around the Fuegian localities: Tolhuin, Río Grande and San Sebastian. The first includes: three coastal lakes, a stock, cliffs made on till, a river mouth, a delta, a lake formed by pull-apart basins on a transform plate boundary and its storm berm. The second includes: abrasion platform, paleocliff, estuary, spit and capes; the third includes: erratic boulder field, receding cliffs, inclined sedimentary strata, an 11-meter-tidal-range bay, Holocene marshes and a cape. The hierarchized area around Tolhuin could develop a geotourism strategy treasuring the singular geographic position regarding the two tectonic plates involved in its geology as well as glacial processes. The georesources around Río Grande offer an opportunity to interpret current exogenous processes, past sea level fluctuations and climate changes. The hierarchized area around San Sebastian has georesources that allow the interpretation of coastal processes in a place affected by glaciations and the postglacial marine transgression. The methodology applied and the georesources analysed proved to be useful as tools to outline a geotourism strategy.

Keywords: Geodiversity; geotourism; Tierra del Fuego