

An Italian-Swiss foundation for Monte San Giorgio

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✘ Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in August 2010, today, it is a time for celebrations for **Monte San Giorgio**. Applications have been made for the Isolino Virginia and Castel Seprio to be declared World Heritage Sites, and the Sacred Mount was declared as such in 2004, but today, Monte San Giorgio is being “presented to the people”, with excursions, but also with an **ad hoc administration plan**.

Covering an area that extends as far as Lake Lugano and Porto Ceresio, Monte San Giorgio is a heritage site that is part Italian and part Swiss. For this reason, **its administration will be given to a foundation** made up of representatives from both countries. “UNESCO has expressly requested that administration of the maintenance and use of this World Heritage Site be shared. In 2013, there will be an inspection by their commissioners, to check how the area is being administered,” Francesca Brianza, the councillor for culture and tourism in the Province, explained.

On the Swiss side, the area covered by the mountain includes that around Mendrisio, and **in Italy, it covers the towns of Besano, Clivio, Porto Ceresio, Saltrio and Viggiù**. And, this morning, on Thursday 7 April, it is these towns which presented, in Villa Recanati, **a series of initiatives to celebrate the nomination of the mountain**. With the support of the Mountain Association of Piambello, with the Province, with the Provincial Tourist Agency and with the Tourist Board of Mendrisio, **a postcard and a postal mark dedicated to the event were presented**. Moreover, the towns suggested organising guided tours, on Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 April, for people to discover Monte San Giorgio.

Paola Della Chiesa, the director of the Tourist Agency, confirmed her wish “to support the promotion of this heritage site, to attract the attention of visitors, but also to make institutions sensitive to the protection and development of **an area of great natural importance**.” Indeed, Monte San Giorgio was made a UNESCO site because of its archaeological treasures. Thousands of fossils of reptiles, fish and marine invertebrates (dating back 230-242 million years, to the Middle Triassic period) have been discovered throughout the region since the 19th century, many belonging to rare, or even exclusive species.

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