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**GEO TOURISM: TRANSFORMING GUNUNG LANG RECREATIONAL
PARK AS GEO PARK THROUGH GEOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL
APPROACH**

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ABSTRACT

The Geo Park Lembah Kinta has set initiatives to entitle as international geo park site. Meanwhile the identified site in Perak has a high geo tourism value in terms of geo heritage, geo cultural and geo formation. From this geo sites, procedures has been made to take place of the geo assets. Also the geological of Perak is dominated by limestone hills that which make some of the geo sites suitable to be enhance as Geo Park. The UNESCO Global Geo Park defines that the Geo Park concept is derived from the development of geological diversity and the need to conserve geological heritage. It is more focused on preserving, conserving and maintaining this valuable assets for the use of future generations. However, one of geo sites in Perak has been identified to meet the Geo Park requirements. The Gunung Lang Recreational Park, an urban escape park with serene nature backdrop with natural limestone hills. The Gunung Lang Recreational Park has the potential to be main Geo Park Center for Geo Park Lembah Kinta. This is because the GLRP itself is a tourism hotspot during the ‘Tahun Melawat Perak 2017’ which set by Department of Tourism Perak. The site study has a good positive feedback from both local and tourist, unfortunately the uniqueness of GLRP were not outstand among community of Ipoh. Through geological and ecological approach, GLRP can become a successful Geo Park for Geo Park Lembah Kinta. Thus, the awareness and interest of geo tourism will lift the community lifestyle and tourism sector in Perak.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of 'Geo Park' is derived from the development of geological diversity and the need to conserve geological heritage. In conferences, particularly the Malvern International Conference on Geological and Landscape Conservation that took place in London in 1993, the international community of geo-science began to extend considerable attention to the importance of conserving geological heritage sources. In 1997, the UNESCO Annual General Meeting in Paris approved the initiative to promote the Global Geotechnical Network as a machinery to promote global conservation efforts. Following this initial initiative, in 2000, the Division of Earth Sciences, UNESCO has proposed to the Executive Board to approve a program known as 'UNESCO Geo Park Development' (Eder 2002). The program is the beginning of the development of global geopark concepts, and thus spurred several national, regional and global efforts to create geopark entities.

The geopark idea evolved in Europe when a small group of geologist legacy managers in France, Greece and Germany proposed the concept 'Geo Park' as a necessity for expanding tourism activities (geotourism), conservation and involvement of local communities to develop a 'geo park' sustainably. At the same time, in Asia Pacific, the geo park idea was developed by the Malaysian Geological Heritage Group, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) when the results of the research on 'geo heritage values' need to be translated into conservation ideas. An area that is vast and contains many geopark, such as Langkawi Island, should be restored based on innovative approaches. The concept of geopark was introduced to incorporate a number of important geopark as a unity that needs to be preserved and developed for the benefit of tourists and local communities.

The preliminary idea when UNESCO introduced the concept of geopark was that areas of special geoheritage resources would serve as a tool for promoting the concept of conservation of geoheritage and sustainable use of resources to the general public. Geopark is also capable of generating local community economic activities in remote areas, in particular by developing geotourism products. For the first time the concept of geopark was introduced globally. The concept of 'geopark' is defined as 'national