Scientists back Trench’s Unesco nomination

A group of 55 scientists hailing from different parts of the world has sent a letter to support the nomination of the Marianas Trench to the World Heritage Site list of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, or Unesco.

The letter was addressed to Jonathan Putnam of the National Park Service Office of International Affairs. All signatories were international scientists that support the nomination. Some of them are from the United States, Chile, France, United Kingdom, Iceland, Portugal, Namibia, India, Italy, Japan, Austria, Canada, Brazil, and Greece, to name a few.

The 55 members of the deep-sea research community represent 46 institutions and 19 nations, all in support of the nomination.

Deep-sea ecologist and population geneticist Dr. Andrew Thaler, who recently visited the CNMI and Guam, claims that “global recognition [of the Marianas Trench] is long overdue.”

The Marianas Trench could fit the whole Mt. Everest in it plus a mile more, making it the deepest point in the planet, measuring a little over 932 miles long, more than 37 miles wide, and over 6 miles deep.

The Marianas Trench would be the first ever World Heritage Site that includes unexplored ecosystems that could possibly house undiscovered species found only in the Trench along with major scientific discoveries and information on biological processes in the deepest ecosystem on the planet. It is also home to submerged volcanoes that host deep-sea hydrothermal vents, the largest documented mud volcanoes, coral atolls and fringing reef ecosystems that support apex predators like sharks and whales, as well as habitat-forming stony corals.

Historically, the Marianas Trench, which hosts Challenger Deep, the deepest point on Earth, also proved to be valuable to the Challenger Expedition of 1872, which is noted as the birth of modern marine science, by providing the British Royal Navy survey ship HMS Challenger the first recordings of a portion of the Marianas Trench.