

**Company:** Grob Kies AG

**Location:** Tal Degersheim quarry, Lichtensteig, Switzerland

**Objective** To combine the needs of extraction sites with nature protection areas. To prove the positive impact of extracting activities on biodiversity.

**Context** As early as 1970, the first authorisation for extraction was granted for the gravel pit “Tal Degersheim”, but since the then operator was declared insolvent in 1978, the extraction came to a halt.

During these years, an inventory of all amphibian spawning areas in Switzerland was made. In 1982, Grob Kies AG was able to acquire the plants after long negotiations and to restart operations.

Following this, a new extraction plan was prepared. This quickly resulted in the first conflict. On the one hand, there was the intensive extraction, which damaged many habitats. On the other hand, there was the amphibian spawning area, which had not received its official status as yet. The site is still in activity and is regularly supervised by a biologist, who makes his proposals for improvement of the biotopes in an annual report ([Reports 2017](#)).

**Solution** With the new extraction plan, which legally came into effect in 2003, this conflict could finally be solved. It specified that the extraction area remains in the inventory as amphibian spawning area SG 517. The raised moss “Bühl”, covering an area of about 1 ha, was excluded from the extraction area and included in the communal protective regulation. A covered channel is renovated as an open creek with two biotope ponds in several stages. Various meadow ditches, hedges, dry and wet locations will connect the area in its final stage between the habitats at the “Wissbach” creek and the “Hengelenbach” creek.

**Result** About 40 years are still to pass until this is accomplished. During this time, the opportunities to create ever new pioneering habitats in the extraction area are countless. Smart planning of the processes and careful treatment of the landscape and nature allow combining the necessities of extraction with the aims of an amphibian spawning area without problems. The extraction area is certified by the Stiftung Natur und Wirtschaft (Foundation Nature and Economy) as a Nature Park of the Economy ([www.naturundwirtschaft.ch](http://www.naturundwirtschaft.ch)).

