

Company: Bersier SA
Location: Ménières, Switzerland

Objective To promote the image of the sand and gravel extraction industry towards the population.

Context The sand and gravel extraction site is characterized by areas of recent and spreading vegetation with some unusual plant varieties such as the rosemary-leaved epilobium and the German tamarisk.

But much of the population tends to see gravel pits as a blot on the landscape and a source of noise, in short a cause of damage to the natural environment. Public access to gravel pits is also barred.

Solution Extraction has been under way for more than 60 days in the area of the present gravel pit. To mark the 60th anniversary, Bersier SA set up a gravel pit learning center for schools, with many small but valuable biotopes.

This learning center was planned and put in place with the FSKB (Swiss Gravel Industry Federation) and representatives of the cantonal services.

Many species typical of gravel pits are found here. A number of target species live both in the extraction area and in the learning center: they include the yellow-bellied toad, the red-bellied toad and the rosemary-leaved epilobium.

Result The Ménières gravel pit learning center, the first of its kind in French-speaking Switzerland, helps to counteract the prejudice through education and experience of nature and highlights the special values of this site in an impressive and varied manner.

Pupils from schools are given an insight into the world of gravel extraction and are able to learn new things in a series of lessons or themselves take part in shaping the learning center (e.g. by building a dry stone wall).

The creation by the extraction company of this learning center, which is looked after by machine operators, foresters and trained students, has developed into a uniquely diverse small gravel pit oasis.

Partners FSKB (Swiss Gravel Industry Federation) and representatives of the cantonal services

