

Company: Sigrist Kies GmbH
Location: Unterschlächte, Menznau, Switzerland

Objective Sigrist Kies GmbH is a family business with a small gravel extraction site. The extraction site which has already been depleted and brought back into cultivation is being used extensively; its ecological value is very high.

Context In 1999, Bruno Sigrist took over gravel extraction in the Unterschlächten area in the local authorities of Menznau and Wolhusen when the Sigrist Kies GmbH company was incorporated. The land, together with the recultivated extraction area at Sticherlöchli, and the gravel pit which is currently being worked, is owned by the business. In his secondary capacity as a farmer, Bruno Sigrist farms the Sticherlöchli exclusively on an extensive basis. The spawning ground for amphibious creatures is particularly attractive and valuable; it is in fact of national importance with its permanent and temporary waters and the adjacent dry embankment with piled-up stones and branches.

Solution Through extensive farming and tending of the former Sticherlöchli extraction area, a structured site has been created here with ponds, piles of stones and branches, pastureland and lean meadows which are now growing. The area with its various small structures is home to many flowering plants (including St John's wort and the yellow iris) and a rich diversity of insect life (including the golden garden spider, sixspot burnet moth, great green bush cricket), together with the yellowbellied toad, grass frog, water frog, common toad and sand lizard.

Result Thanks to the link between gravel extraction and farming established by the general manager who, together with his wife and son, is genuinely committed to nature conservation, a natural area with a wide variety of species and great ecological value has been created.

