



Glacial heritage: knowledge, inventory and promotion in the Chablais area (France, Switzerland)

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This study is part of an Interreg IVA project (www.123chablais.com) dealing with the promotion of different types of natural and cultural heritage in the Chablais area (French and Swiss Prealps) and is linked to the candidature of the French Chablais territory for the European Geoparks Network. The objective of the study is to develop a strategy for the promotion of the glacial heritage (landforms, deposits) in an area where the geomorphological features are highly influenced by glacial history and where key concepts in the Quaternary sciences were developed (e.g. the theory of multiple glaciations by Morlot in 1859), but that is now nearly completely deglaciated. The challenge is to find solutions to explain why the glacial heritage is so important for the regional economy and how it influences the life of inhabitants (e.g. Evian and Thonon mineral water, extraction industry, landscape and tourism), even if glaciers are not so impressive than in other parts of the Alps.

The research is divided in three parts. (1) The first one aims to enhance knowledge on glacial landforms and deposits. The study area, that is quite large, has been intensively studied for more than two centuries; nevertheless, some parts have been only poorly studied. Intensive field survey was carried out to fill in the gaps of knowledge and some landforms, such as erratic boulders, have been dated in order to establish a chronology of deglaciation. All of these different elements have been included in a Geographic Information System with the aim of establishing maps of glacial stages in the Chablais area. (2) From this, an inventory of glacial geosites has been carried out, using the assessment method developed by Reynard et al. (2007). A specific focus has been on the assessment of the potential of the selected sites for educational purposes and geotourist promotion. (3) The last part has been the preparation of adapted educational and promotional supports. In particular, an exhibition will be available to regional stakeholders (municipalities, schools, geopark managers, tourist offices, etc.) for the promotion of the glacial heritage at the regional scale.

Reference

Reynard E., Fontana G., Kozlik L., Scapozza C. (2007). A method for assessing the scientific and additional values of geomorphosites, *Geographica Helvetica*, 62(3), 148-158.