

Brittany, a Region Involved In the Preservation of its Geological Heritage

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As early as 1996, geologists from the university started to consider as important the heritage dimension of some geological outcrops known in Brittany. It is in this context that the unconformity between the Paleozoic and the Precambrian (Landes quarry near Guichen) has been protected. It is now considered as a « classified site » (if we refer to the law of 1930 about the natural monuments, the important sites and the landscapes). In 1982, the first national reservation was created on Groix Island for the preservation of the « blue schists », an unique geotope in the Armorican Massive. I was the second one created in France dealing with the geological heritage. In 1985 the Plougastel-Daoulas community decided to protect the Pointe de l'Armorique cliff in order to save the only Lower Devonian reef known in Europe ; latter the region decided to buy the site for a definitive protection.

Inventory

After these isolated tentatives the problem of the geological preservation started to be seriously considered. Between 1992 and 1994 a regional inventory of the geological sites was developed in the framework of various associations with the help of the government and the cooperation of geologists from the university. This inventories now incorporate about 100 sites. Each of them is fully documented and the corresponding observations have been sent to various administrations. It is why Brittany is now considered to be a pilot region and why the Geological Society is now consulted every time the government intend to develop a national action. Its work is well recognized, mainly because we launched a clear preservation methodology and started to create a national database.

Since 2003, the Geological and Mineralogical Society of Brittany, in accordance with the Region enlarged the inventory and weighted the heritage value of new considered sites. We also attract the intention on the interest of the sites to be preserved and suggest various procedures to develop a better preservation. We are now a partner of the territorial power and we start developing new protections. Nowadays, the complete inventory incorporates 154 geosites. 37 sites are now classified and 3 are located in regional natural parks. At last 36 are controlled by the public affairs. The regional map displays the various important geological sites of Brittany we intend to develop and suggests how to define new political rules. At a lower level, we are now communicating our data to the communal assemblies (project of a Paleozoic natural reservation in Crozon, interpretation center on the Miocene « faluns », protection and development in the mining of karsentite, etc ...).

The Main Programs to Develop

In Brittany, the mother country of the geological heritage, the understanding and the preservation of the geological sites of interest are slowly progressing in the public domain under the push of the associations.

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