

Young Geomorphologists' Field Trip

Les Diablerets / Sanetsch region (BE/VD/VS) –1./2.10.2016



SCHWEIZERISCHE
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Eight young geomorphologists met in Fribourg on a cold morning. Despite the uncertain weather forecast, we departed on a two-day excursion in the Les Diablerets / Sanetsch region. We drove to Ormont-Dessus (VD) with a minibus, where we took the cable car to Col du Pillon. We were introduced to the regional geology (figure 1). With the view on a rock glacier nearby, insight was provided about research methods related to glacial and periglacial forms and processes. Interactions between glaciers and permafrost were discussed. After taking the cable car to the top (Sex rouge) and warming up with a hot chocolate in the restaurant, we were ready to cross the Tsanfleuron glacier (figure 2). Arriving at Tour St-Martin (Quille du Diable), we were able to observe landslide deposits in Derborence dating back to the 18th century. The hike took us further over the now ice free glacier bed (figure 3) that is characterized by many glacial erosion forms. After the lunch break, we travelled across a hilly moraine landscape (figure 4), while heading towards the stunning glacio-karstique area of the Lapiez the Tsanfleuron (figure 5). On the way to the Hotel Sanetsch, where we stayed overnight, we saw more fascinating phenomena such as a sander and an empty river bed (figure 6) whose main water source is glacial melting on warm summer days.

During the night, a fine layer of snow covered the peaks around us (figure 7). A few snowflakes found their way down to us when we started our hike after a nice breakfast. Soon the sun was shining and an impressive scenery at Col du Sanetsch (figure 8) was unveiled. We discussed lateglacial glacier retreat and associated dynamic landforms, such as hummocky moraines, dropstones and deposits from an ice-dammed lake at various stops along the way. In Creux-de-la-Lé, we were provided with an update about the interactions between the glacier, permafrost and ground ice. We ended the day by taking the cable car down to Gsteig and driving back to Fribourg.

All in all, the excursion was a chance to partake in two full days of interesting discussions and exchanges among students and alumni from various parts of Switzerland in a beautiful high alpine landscape. Many thanks to all participants for their active attendance and to our excellent expert and trip organizer Mario Kummert. We would like to thank the Swiss Geomorphological Society for their financial support.

