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UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Entlebuch

Entlebuch Biosphere

UNESCO designated the Entlebuch as Switzerland's first Biosphere Reserve because of the outstanding biodiversity and natural beauty of its moors and karst landscapes, its cultural traditions, as well as the strong and historical regional awareness of the local communities.

The Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve covers 395 km² of the main valley of the Little Emme River between Lucerne and Berne, including eight municipalities. Few regions in Switzerland have natural and cultural landscapes that are as intact as those in the Entlebuch. They include marshlands and highland moors, river forests, as well as the limestone rock formations and cave systems of the Schrattenfluh and the Napf area. Fully one quarter of the Biosphere Entlebuch is moorland of national importance, including 44 highland moors, 61 marshes and four large expanses of moorland landscape. The Laubersmad-Salwideli moor is even included in the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

The diversity of the landscapes in turn allows a great diversity of the fauna and flora, including a wide number of endangered species. These include for example the golden eagle and the wood grouse (Auerhuhn), as well as the Sonnentau (a meat eating plant). UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves aim to address some of humanity's key questions of today: How can we integrate the protection of natural biodiversity and local cultural traditions with sound economic and social development?



Hiking across the river landscape of the Grosse Entlen River (© Biosphere Entlebuch)

The Entlebuch has been re-zoned according to UNESCO requirements, creating a core zone where the conservation of nature is at the forefront, a buffer zone, where nature and human values are given equal importance, and the transition zone, where the life and main activities of the communities take place. Great efforts are also undertaken to re-connect existing bits of vegetation so that animals and plants are able to move and mix genetically.

Without the commitment of the local communities, the protection of an entire region as a biosphere of international



Kneippanlage Schwandalpweiher (Flühli)

significance would not be possible. However, the eight municipalities of the Entlebuch have come together in a remarkable cooperative enterprise. They have created a democratically elected council, a board and an executive management team – not only focusing on the protection of the local biodiversity and cultural heritage, but also on realising economic and social opportunities in keeping with the goals of the biosphere. Industry, farmers, schools and volunteers all play a key role in this enterprise. The growing number of Entlebuch products that meet Biosphere goals are proud testament to the determination of the region's people. All up, the Entlebuch region has invented a unique concept around developing its Biosphere Reserve which is recognised as an international model.

Go Entlebuch!

Sources: <http://www.biosphaere.ch> and http://www.lakelucer-neregion.ch/en/aktivitaeten/pdf/Entlebuch_Projekt_EN.pdf



Mountain pines in the Laubersmad-Salwideli highland moor (© Biosphere Entlebuch)