

Conclusion of Round Table “Water”

In January 2003, the pilot project “Round Table – Science et Cité” on the topic water came to a close, with a final event at the EAWAG and the publication of the final report. For three years, citizens and researchers from EAWAG have taken part in dialogues, have found ways of mutual understanding and formulated several deductive principles.

In the panel discussion on the question “Is the dialogue between society and science necessary?”, they discussed with Charles Kleiber, State Secretary for Science and Research. As president, he represented the interests of the foundation Science et Cité. EAWAG-director Alexander Zehnder, member of the Round Table, and Cité-representant Alfred Meier-Jucker reported on their experiences with the dialogue. Christine Burgener, community president of Thalwil ZH, explained why politicians are interested in such platforms.

The final report contains several principles showing how similar platforms for a dialogue between society and science can be designed in a constructive way. It is very important to choose topics which are closely related both to the scientific work at the research institution and the problems and interests of the society. Furthermore, such a

dialogue requires time, allowing the vital climate of mutual tolerance and understanding to develop.

At the EAWAG first steps towards translating the dialogue into action have already been taken: The citizens of the “Round Table” took part in the EAWAG budget planning for the period 2004–2007.

The final report (in German only) can be downloaded from: www.eawag.ch/news/science_et_cite/schlussbericht.pdf



Students in Practice: Case Study Thur

Modern environmental research cannot be learned in a classroom. This is why students of the environmental sciences at the ETH Zurich worked on a real environmental problem between October 2002 and



February 2003, exercising interdisciplinary teamwork. Subject of this case study was the Thur which had been forced into a tight corset during 140 years of regulations and is now being revitalised in an extensive programme started in September 2001. Experiences made there are not only valuable as landmarks for major projects in the future but also for the specialists to-be.

Forming six teams, the students analysed – together with scientists from the ETH Zurich and the EAWAG – a diversity of aspects connected with the revitalisation of the Thur and, for example, thought about how to evaluate the success of revitalisation projects, how landowners involved can be convinced of the benefits of the revitalisation projects, how to align ecology and flood protection, and whether the climatic change affects the flood situation along the Thur more than a change of land use does.

The results gained in the teams were presented to the public at a river inspection in February. They are supposed to be included in the revitalisation project, which is why the authority for water supply in Thurgau is now examining the “Case Study Thur” in detail.

Further information: www.eawag.ch/thur

First Graduates from PEAK-Course “Ecotoxicology”

The aim of ecotoxicology is to evaluate toxic effects of chemicals and prevent them wherever it is possible. Specialists in industry, administration and science are responsible for the careful handling of these substances. They need good basic knowledge of ecotoxicology and have to know the latest state-of-the-art. The ecotoxicology course “coetox” (collaboration en éco-toxicologie) – initiated by the EAWAG and the EPF Lausanne in 1994 – serves the education and further training of these specialists and intends to promote the exchange of experience. In June 2003, the first graduates were able to receive their certificates. Presenting their seminar papers was the final step of their comprehensive training.

The whole course takes three years and contains five modules presented in German or French. There is a new coetox-course starting in March 2004.

Further information: www.eawag.ch/events/peak

