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Sustainability II:

Gotthard rock for bathing belles

The rock lay deep inside the mountain for millions of years. Today, it serves as a place where sun-worshippers go to relax. Both bathers and the flora and fauna in Sedrun and on Lake Uri are benefitting from the material excavated from the Gotthard Base Tunnel. Take a look at two flagship projects combining leisure and sustainability.

Some of the around 28 million tonnes of rock excavated from the Gotthard Base Tunnel is now benefiting the flora and fauna on Lake Uri, where it has been used to regenerate the delta of the River Reuss on the southern shore. The result is an ecologically valuable shallow water zone with several islets – a newly created Eldorado for bathers and relaxation seekers.

The Neptune nature reserve islets and Lorelei bathing islands form a barrier protecting the shoreline of Lake Uri from the waves – which can be particularly strong in high föhn winds. Some 200 plant and 70 bird species have settled into the embanked areas and the adjacent nature reserves where Mother Nature is enjoying a new place in the sun. Today, bathers bask on the Lorelei islands, on the very rock that lay deep inside the Gotthard Massif for millions of years. “It’s like the Caribbean!” was the enthusiastic press reaction at the inauguration of the bathing islands. The project was realised at no additional cost and is a prime example of the kind of sustainable commitment that benefits the environment, economy and society in equal measure.

Sedrun in canton Graubünden is the recipient of a new swimming lake – Lag Claus Surrein – courtesy of the construction of the Gotthard Base Tunnel. The construction site at Sedrun yielded greater quantities of spoil than anticipated. On the initiative of the local municipality, this was used to create an artificial lake. An idyllic natural paradise set against a backdrop of the surrounding mountains now attracts bathers and sun-seekers to relax and linger. In summer the waters are pleasantly warm, making the lake an asset to the region that delights locals and visitors of all ages.

The Kommission für das Reussdelta (Reuss Delta Commission) is committed to the protection and promotion of the Reuss Delta. Its members assist the government of canton Uri in an advisory capacity and keep the population informed on the project. <http://www.reussdelta.ch/Kommission.41.0.html>

Disentis Sedrun Tourism is responsible for promoting Lag Claus Surrein and has all the latest information on this nature-oriented lake project.