

Valais Excursion on 11 – 12 June 2021

The 1½ day full excursion is leading us from Zurich to the canton Valais, into the center of the Swiss Alps, providing an insight into the extreme environmental conditions and functions of Alpine forest ecosystems.

On Friday 11 June, we will travel by bus from Zurich to the Long-term Irrigation Experiment within the Pine forest nature reserve Pfyn.

On the nearby [ICP Forests Level II plot Visp](#), *Pinus sylvestris* is heavily affected by drought, leading to tree mortality up to over 50% since 1996.



Figure 1. View on the Pine forest nature reserve Pfyn, located on a debris cone (Foto: Schmitt, WSL)



Figure 3. Nature Reserve Center Villa Cassel (Foto: ©Pro Natura Zentrum Aletsch)

At the [Long-term Irrigation Experiment in Pfyn Forest](#), the natural precipitation of approx. 700 mm is doubled on 4 replicates since 2003 to investigate drought effects on *Pinus sylvestris* and gain a better understanding of the pine decline.

On Saturday 12 June, we will take the cable car to Riederalp, located at 1'925 m a.s.l., in the center of the [UNESCO World Heritage](#), the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch. We will visit the [Nature Reserve Center Villa Cassel](#), enjoy a splendid view on the [Aletsch, the largest Alpine glacier](#) and hike through one of the oldest high alpine forests, the [Aletsch Forest](#). The development of the stone pine (*Pinus cembra*) forest under climate change and the harsh environmental conditions will be discussed.



Figure 2. Irrigation system of the Long-term Irrigation Experiment in Pfyn Forest. (Foto: M. Schaub)



Figure 4. View on the Aletsch glacier from the Aletsch Forest (Foto: ©Pro Natura Zentrum Aletsch)

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Programme

Friday 11 June

14:00 Departure from WSL Birmensdorf

By bus or car (ca. 3 hrs):

WSL – Brünig – Interlaken – Lötschberg tunnel (car transport) – Leuk

By train (ca. 3 hrs):

Birmensdorf train station – Zurich – Bern – Lötschberg – Leuk

17:00 **Long-term Irrigation Experiment Pfy Forest**

19:00 **ICP Forests Level II plot, Visp**

20:00 [Hotel Good Night Inn](#), Brig

Saturday 12 June 2020

07:30 Departure from Brig

Brig – Mörel (cable car) – Riederalp – ½ hour walk to – Villa Cassel

09:00 **Aletsch Forest**

12:00 **Villa Cassel**

Villa Cassel – ½ hour walk – Riederalp cable car – Mörel

By bus or car:

Mörel – Lötschberg tunnel – Brünig – WSL – Zurich

By train:

Mörel – Lötschberg – Bern – Zurich

20:00 Arrival Zurich main station

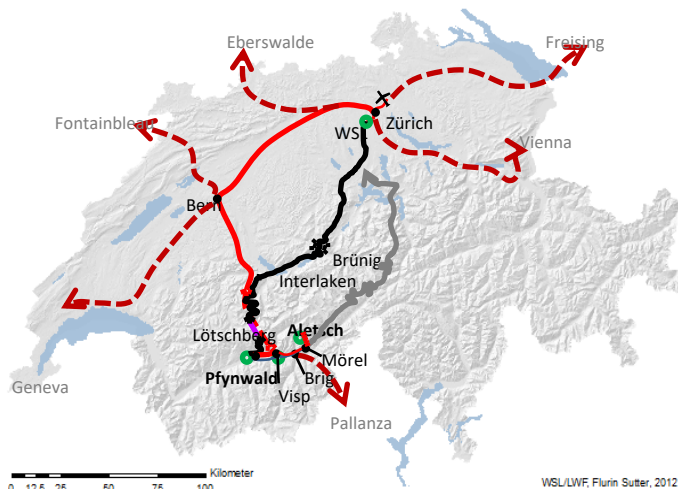


Figure 5. Map of excursion from WSL Birmensdorf into the Valais

Recommended equipment

- Hiking boots (for grade T2 paths according to [SAC](#))
- Backpack with extra cloths in case of cold and rainy weather, sun protection utilities, drinking bottle, specific personal first aid utilities.
- Separate luggage for overnight stay in hotel.



Figure 6. One of 9 scaffolds in Pfy Forest, allowing access to the top of the canopy for intensive measurements (Foto: C. Hug)

Travelling options & costs

The places for the excursion are limited to max. 25 participants. For costs and transportation, we offer the following options ([see registration](#)):

- Travelling by WSL bus: CHF 200.- (limited number of places)
- Travelling by train: CHF 150.- (train ticket Zurich – Visp not included)
- Travelling by own car: CHF 150.- (ticket for car transport Lötschberg not included)
- Additional costs for single room in Hotel Good Night Inn: CHF 50.-

Presenters

Peter Waldner, Arthur Gessler, Marcus Schaub, Esther Thüring, Martina Hobi and others

Contact

Peter Waldner

Email: peter.waldner@wsl.ch

Natel: +41 44 739 25 02

