

Reconstructing vegetation changes around the city of Bern

Sometimes exciting research projects lie just outside your own front door. The small lake Egelsee, located in the city of Bern, contains a sediment record that goes back to the Late Glacial period. By reconstructing vegetation changes based on pollen and plant macrofossils, we can trace the evolution of the landscape from pristine forests to today's urbanized area. A previous MSc thesis already analyzed changes in vegetation and land use since the Late Middle Ages to the early 20th century, when modern farming practices and increasing urban spread transformed the landscape (Stevanon et al. 2024). But many more interesting research questions remain: How did the foundation of the Medieval city of Bern impact the vegetation? When did human impact start and how did it change the vegetation? What was the effect of past climatic changes on the lowland forests of the Swiss Plateau? This exciting MSc project would allow you to travel back in time in your own back yard.

Methods: pollen, macrofossil and charcoal analysis, numerical techniques

Contact persons: Willy Tinner, Erika Gobet, Christoph Schwörer



The small lake Egelsee, in the city of Bern, was cored in 2011 by our group. Picture: Christoph Schwörer