

## CO-OPERATIVE SENSITIVE DIAGNOSIS ON RIVER FAOU

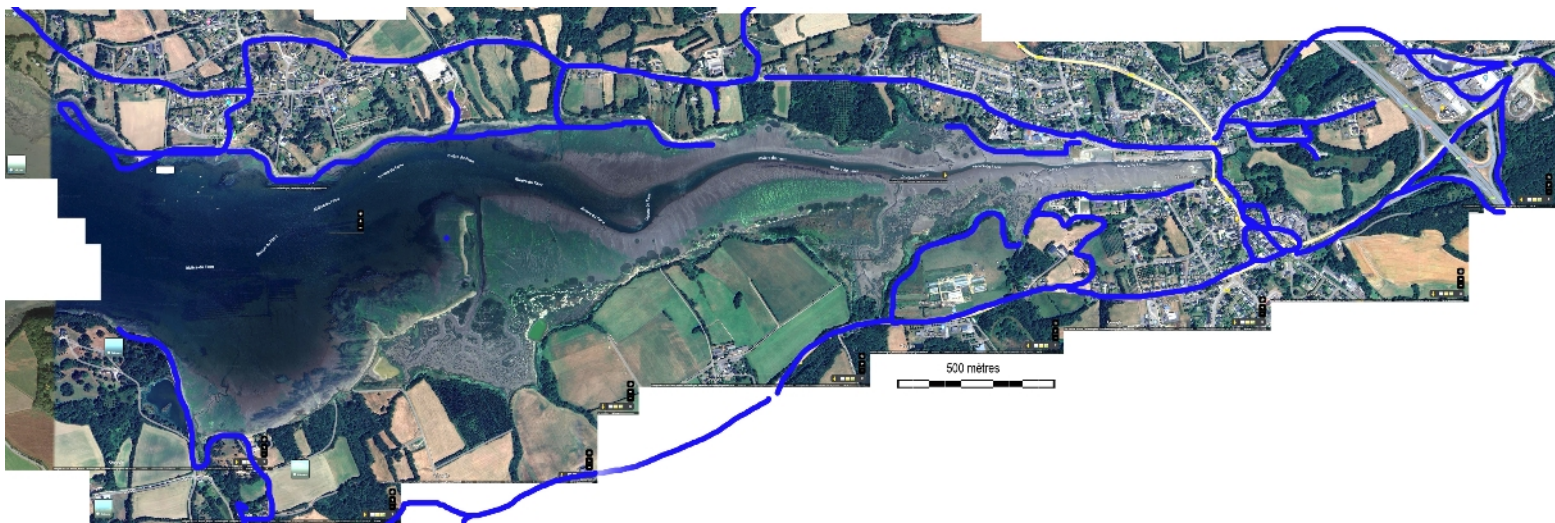
Wenesday 25th of June 2024 – Anne Le Mée

This is a record of an experiment guiding students (biology and geology) to a sensitive diagnosis of the river Faou in Finistère, Brittany. The river Faou is part of Aulne watershed, it is situated at the mouth of the Aulne, and is extremely polluted.

This is a short description of what I have shown to them, a compilation of observations shared together with them.

For this intervention, I spent three days before making an inquiry, walking and riding bike in the site.

This is a map of the area visited, and the trail (blue line) along the river and surrounds.



During the meeting with the students, here are the specific sites we have been visiting :



**Site N°1 :** The preserved zone, a place in its « oldness », beautiful and peaceful. I wanted to merge the participants in a place where nature is still talking to us, even if it is limited. considering the whole area and its condition.

When we all arrived there (by walk, from place N°2) everyone became silencious. The place was impregning with its majesty. I talked about the memory of a healthy planet, and how we (espacially young ones) have lost this memory, and that this is a big problem. So we need to relate ourselves *physically* to places like this one which testimonies harmony and wellness and provides them generously.





Facing this little cliff, early in the morning :



and later on :



The oak trees on the edge of the cliff:





A student found traces of coral fossiles in the rocks.

This place is very difficult to photograph, since it is a curve horizontaly and vertically.

Spending some minutes there, I asked the participants what they could see and what they could not see.

The revelation came that...there were no marine birds on the water, a constatation that remained all the path next to the water.

The professors evoques the fact that this place is extremely polluted with lead, coming from the Aulne river itself.

The clam they study and coming from there have difficulties to survive.

We came back to place 2 where cars were parked.

**Site 2** panoramic view, facing the river



The plague of Brittany is present : « green algae » (so called in french, Ulvae, scientific name for most of them) that spreads over the Brittany coast. Everybody in the group saw them, but nobody mentioned since it is now part of the normal sea coast view.

Since that moment I said that we are going to visit sites that show directly some of the causes of the degradation of the Faou river.

### Site 3

A « wild dump ».

I told then that such dump are made either by farmers or owners of the houses bording the foreshore. We can really see the way they did it : by pushing all this rubishes with a backhoe loader, till they fall down along the shore : « Out of my view », seems to be the message lying behind this act.



After two days visiting the site I can say that such dump exists everywhere residents don't walk. That means that some people clean the place and also that the amount of rubbish is huge.

Exemples elsewhere :





The anthropocene age (rubbish incrustated into the cliff !)





Here the mudd smells like motor oil and is ugly colored (but maybe it is micro-organisms)







and so on and on...

This place is « Zone Natura 2000 », it is considered a preserved area...

## Site 4

A cattle farm and its fields, overlooking the Faou River. From here we see that conventional agriculture radically transforms the landscape. The fields are very large, monotonous with only two types of crops: corn and wheat, alternating on the same plots each year.

Growing wheat requires between 10 and 20 treatments (herbicides, pesticides, fungicides, stem shorteners, rodenticides, fertilizers, etc.). Getting closer to the river, the fields are smaller and the trees much older, and some fields are natural meadows. This is what can be seen from the road.

But beyond that, it is rather this schema of Breton agriculture with large monoculture fields.

The water, going from top to bottom, carries all the by-products of this model: the chemicals and also the nitrogen products responsible for green algae... and the silt in the river, because there is a lack of hedges to slow down soil erosion and purify water.

What do we hear? the road in the distance. What can't be heard: the hoopoe, the chaffinch, the turtle dove, the cuckoo and all their poetry is gone. The oaks seem isolated and a little sick



These big fields can be seen from every hill top





Looking attentively to the farm installations, one can see that the discharge runs directly into the ditch which overlooks the river



## Site 5

An old mill bridge which closes the port from upstream of the stream.

When I first visited this site, it was raining so I could see the rain falling into a drain, itself letting go the rain directly into the river. Of course this rain is full of the street pollution.



And underneath :



## Site 6

The same problem can be seen in many places. Exemple here at the gazoil station, overlooking the Faou river



In that picture, the Faou river is at the trees in the background , and in between is nearly only tar, so the watter runs fast with all this chemicals, directly to the brook.



## Site 7

The water treatment station, just beside the shopping center. It is also a place where embankments are stored.



and wild dump as well...



The water treated in the station goes directly to the river, so that the river « finishes » the treatment.

Problem : the river here is very short before the see, and she is already overwhelmed with plastic, chemicals and muffled with bud coming from erosion of the fields.

Some of the pollution remaininig after the treatment (i.e drug molecules) goes directly to the see 5 kilometers far from this place.

This report is images and text, extracted from a vivid continuum experienced when walking.

When in the sites, the completion of the perception of ecological distress is total. The eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the kinesthetic sensations are simply overwhelmed with discordance, violence and disregard.