

## Brief report on Grächen

### A visit to the water channels and traditional irrigation systems in Grächen

Representatives of the International Centre for Traditional Irrigation (IZTB), the Musée valaisan des Bisses, the municipalities of Naters, Ayent and Grimisuat, the Wässermatten Foundation and the Swiss Landscape Conservation Foundation visited the water channels and traditional irrigation systems in the municipality of Grächen (Canton of Valais, Switzerland) on 26 June 2026, a hot summer's day. Under the expert guidance of Yannick Andenmatten, a member of the Grächen Municipal Council who has been responsible for the water channels since 2025, we were able to explore the Bineri, Drieri, Chilcheri and Eggeri water channels and learn about their history and the challenges they face today. For example, due to changes in the surrounding area, the Bineri water channel no longer carries water continuously. This is of great importance. The maintenance of the water channels (a communal undertaking) is still reliably carried out in May by the farmers who need water to irrigate their meadows, other local residents, as well as second-home owners and visitors. However, the workload is being shouldered by an ever-smaller number of people. The municipality is therefore currently considering how to organise irrigation, maintenance work and collaboration, and how to finance the work ahead. One promising approach under discussion is to organise and carry out the work through a voluntary association. This calls not only on the dedicated experts, but also on future generations!



The Grächner water channels are also valuable features of the landscape  
(Photo: K. Liechti)



A lively discussion on the future of irrigation  
(Photo: K. Liechti)



Exemplary restoration work  
(Photo: K. Liechti)

Traditional irrigation in Grächen is part of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage! This inclusion on UNESCO's Representative List raises the profile of traditional irrigation systems and contributes to the preservation and further development of traditional irrigation in all its forms. Further information can be found at [www.iztb.org](http://www.iztb.org)

On 5 September 2026, a traditional irrigation day will take place in Grächen. In addition to the Bineri, Drieri, Chilcheri and Eggeri irrigation channels (see also 'Village Walk' at [www.graechen-kultur.ch](http://www.graechen-kultur.ch)), the event will focus on the irrigation of the meadows below the Eggeri – in the Egga district. Further information will follow on [www.graechen.ch](http://www.graechen.ch)