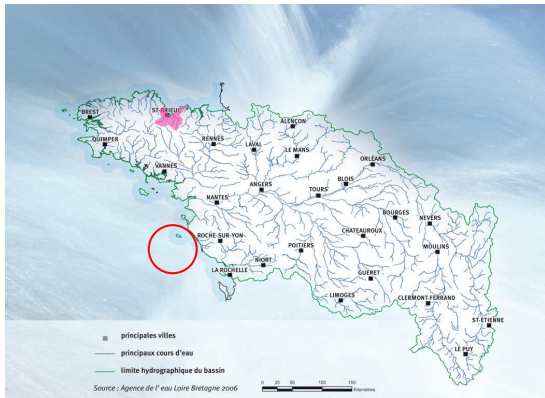


## A local French initiative for water management at the basin scale

Wilfrid Messiez-Poche<sup>1</sup> and Chantal Gascuel<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Syndicat Mixte du Pays de Saint-Brieuc, Plerin, France

<sup>2</sup> Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, Agrocampus, Rennes, France



The **Local Water Commission** (*Commission locale de l'Eau – CLE*) of the bay of St-Brieuc which gathers all the local stakeholders (administration, local politics, users, agriculture, industrial and environmental organizations) is in charge of building the *Schéma d'Aménagement et de Gestion des Eaux - SAGE* (Water Management Plan) that will program and fix the local rules of the management of waters on the catchment basin of the bay.

The main challenges of the DCE achievements deals with agriculture (nutrients flows of N, P generating eutrophication phenomena; this bay is the most important site in France for green algae proliferation). Waste waters also impact the bays: bacteriological pollution may severely impact seafood production. This 1 100 km<sup>2</sup> area is composed of 6 different catchment basin programs, which represent the operational scale for the management plan. We work on 3 main coastal rivers that run into the bay and feed it with high amounts of nutrients.

The local water commission (CLE) has been working for 3 years. The present step consists in building alternate scenarios (objectives, means, territorial organization), that will permit to achieve the European Water Framework Directive requirements, in their local transcription and consequences.

The CLE has until now developed a strategy on the identification, the preservation and management of wetlands. The diagnosis that lead to this strategy was based on the following items:

- the wetlands were still disappearing due to urban development and ignorance of their interests, characteristics and locations,
- no common reference was shared between the different stakeholders concerning their identification,
- their hydrological functions are essential to mitigate the nutrient fluxes: a high decrease of this fluxes is necessary to struggle efficiently against the coastal eutrophication,
- no particular or exceptional wetlands are identified for preservation, but numerous, small and tenuous parts of plots are disseminated in the landscape along streams and rivers which are often ignored on maps but have to be managed nevertheless.

This strategy consists in its main lines in:

1) calling the attention of planners (communities), first responsible for projects that may induce the destruction of wetlands. A map has been produced and validated, as precise as possible, of "areas with high probability of finding wetlands": in these areas, local rules have been decided: "projects cannot be drawn without precise localization (meaning detailed field investigations, following a validated method to inventory real (effective) wetlands"

2) building a method that can be used by local stakeholders to localize, describe and delineate precisely the wetlands, in order to preserve them from destruction, but also and mainly to improve their management by farmers, and to build, step by step, the complete wetland map over the entire basin. This action needs a correct understanding of their hydrological functions, linked to their position in the basin.

One of the main conditions in succeeding in this strategy is the skill improvement of all stakeholders (administration agents, communities and agriculture technicians, farmers, politics etc.).