

# A history of the case concerning « quarrying in Montmaurin »

(A non- exhaustive list of the administrative documents, actions and appeals made by the associations of Entre Save et Seygouade and Adaq Vie)

*The plan to open a quarry in the village of Montmaurin, in the lieu-dit "Coume day Hourquat Garriga and Gausere" was the subject of a request for authorisation made on behalf of Dragages Garonnais for open cast extraction of limestone starting in 2007.*

*The prefectoral permission given for quarrying in Montmaurin from 10 April 2009 allows for extraction of 150,000 tonnes per year of limestone and the setting up of a crushing plant to operate for 30 years.*

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| 22 January 2007: | Following debate in the village council (11 present, 10 votes in favour) M Gaspin , mayor, was authorised to make the necessary arrangements so that the Giuliani - Dragages Garonnais company could open the new site of "Coume day Hourquat Garriga and Gausere" in Montmaurin (instead of the Coume Robert site).   | December 2008:    | The working out of a departmental scheme for quarrying in the Haute Garonne, DRIRE, which had not existed up till then.   |
| 6 April 2007:    | Tripartite agreement for quarrying in the commune's forest at the Coume day Hourquat Garriga and Gausere site: signatures from the commune of Montmaurin, the ONF and Messrs Pascal and Bruno Giuliani on behalf of Sarl Dragages Garonnais.   | 15 January 2009:  | Departmental committee of quarries at the prefecture : favourable opinion   |
| 14 April 2007:   | Closure of the Cointre quarry, absorbed by the Dragages Garonnais company after several years extracting 15,000 tonnes of limestone per year. Reason for the closure: the classification of the Coume Robert/Coupe Gorge site because of its archaeological richness and its classification as a historic monument.  | 28 January 2009:  | The departmental General Assembly gives an unfavourable opinion on the project and requests a new quarry committee.   |
| 13 August 2007:  | Order made by the prefecture and the DRIRE (regional committee for industry, research and the environment) ratifying the restoration of the quarry to conditions which would secure the safety of the site and its integration into the countryside. Visitors to the site, 10 years after the closure, can confirm the scar on the landscape thanks to the total absence of any integration. | 10 April 2009:    | Prefectural order concerning the opening of a quarry in Montmaurin.   |
| 11 January 2008: | Prefectural order 08-153 concerning a request for permission to open a limestone quarry and instal a crushing plant in the village of Montmaurin, at the lieu-dit "Coume day Hourquat Garriga Gausere" and the opening of a public enquiry starting on 4 March 2008  | 4 June 2009:      | The Association Entre Save et Seygouade lodges a request with the Administrative Tribunal of Toulouse for the cancellation of the prefectoral order authorising the quarry.   |
| 17 January 2008: | Prefectural order requiring an archaeological analysis made by the Prefet of the Midi-Pyrenees region - DRAC service.  | 21 July 2009:     | Order 2009/225 concerning modification of the order 2008/16 ordering an archaeological analysis, from DRAC Midi-Pyrenees (the analysis to be phased according to the development of the quarry).  |
| 4 March 2008:    | Start of the public enquiry with sessions on the 12, 18 and 28 March and 4 April 2008 and a fortnight's extension obtained till the 17 July 2008.  | September 2009:   | General Meeting of the Adaq Vie association decided to go to court to contest the setting up of a quarry in Montmaurin.   |
| 10 March 2008:   | Prefectural decision concerning a request for permission for land clearance.   | September 2009:   | The General Meeting of the Nature Comminges Association decided to take up a position against the opening of a quarry in Montmaurin via a statement of intervention.  |
| June 2008:       | Report from the Enquiry officer: a favourable opinion mixed with reservations and recommendations, amongst which was the reduction of the amount of extraction (from 200,000 to 150,000 tonnes per year); monitoring of bats (chiropteres) on the planned site, lowering of noise pollution resulting from the activity...   | September 2009:   | The Association Entre Save et Seygouade submitted an appeal concerning order no 2009/225 modifying the order 2008/16 requiring an archaeological analysis to be done within the confines of the authorisation of quarrying (prefectural order 10/04/2009)   |
|                  |  |                   | Reply from DRAC Midi-Pyrenees - Dominique Paillarse, regional director of cultural affairs: "you will realise, in the light of what has gone before, that everything has been done according to the law and duly informed by scientific information leading to the belief that there are elements of archaeological heritage, in the order no 2009/225. Under these conditions it is not possible for me to agree to a settlement leading to cancellation of this order". |
|                  |  | February 2010:    | The statement of intervention by Nature Comminges Association was lodged with the Administartive Tribunal.  |
|                  |  | 21 February 2010: | Conference / debate led by Marcel Delpoux, honorary professor of vegetative ecology at the Laboratoire de Botanique of the University of Paul Sabatier, Toulouse, and by Jean-Marie Pallier, emeritus professor at the university of Toulouse-le Mirail "The bio diversity of the area  |

- between the rivers Save and Seygouade and its immediate surrounding area at the level of the Gorges de la Save".
- The conference followed six months of study of the land about which a brochure was produced by the Association Entre Save et Seygouade and then by the Academy of Sciences – Inscriptions Belles Lettres of Toulouse, in 2014.
- 22 March 2010: The SRA (M. Douche), INRAP (team of four archaeologists), the council of Montmaurin, the Giuliani company, the woodfelling company and the Association Entre Save et Seygouade met on the site to locate the investigative work being done.
- 23 March 2010: Beginning of the occupation of the access to the quarry by those opposing it.
- 29 March 2010: Visit from M Bernard Bahut, vice prefect of St Gaudens, who came to the site to negotiate the carrying out of bush clearance instead of the order for total land clearance (10 March 2008).
- Victory for the Association Entre Save et Seygouade: clearance to ground level will not be carried out over the 2 hectare area representing the first section of archaeological analysis.
- 16 May 2010: Conference led by Isaure Gratacos, professeur d'Etat (anthropology): " Montmaurin- Lespugue; Why is the archaeology of the Save and Seygouade valleys unique in the world?" A cultural event organised in Montmaurin within the framework of the safeguarding and conservation of heritage and humanity.
- This conference followed on the first investigations in the area, a brochure of which was published by the Association Entre Save et Seygouade then in the magazine of the Societe des Etudes de Comminges.
- 10 June 2010: Members of the Academie des Sciences, Inscriptions Belles Lettres of Toulouse took up a position in favour of the protection of Montmaurin's heritage and voted unanimously against the opening the quarry.
- 8 November 2010: Full meeting of the Conseil Regional Mid-Pyrenees where a majority voted against the quarry project.
- February 2011: Publication of the report by INRAP following investigations: "Montmaurin – Haute-Garonne, Le Castet, phases 1, 5 and 6" under the direction of Marc Jarry.
- 18 June 2012: A symposium organised at the Academie des Sciences Inscriptions Belles Lettres of Toulouse on the subject of "Montmaurin-Lespugue: 200,000 years of human occupation in the Gorges of the Save and its surroundings, a threatened heritage."
- 24 October 2013: Conclusions of the Administrative Tribunal of Toulouse which cancelled the original prefectoral order of 10 April 2009.
- 27 December 2013: The developer Dragages Garonnais lodges an appeal against the decision of the Administrative Tribunal of Toulouse at the court of appeal in Bordeaux.
- 15 December 2015: Decision by the Appeal Court in Bordeaux to cancel the decision of the TA of Toulouse. The conservation societies Entre Save et Seygouade and Adaq Vie had their case dismissed but the Tribunal reduced the appropriated land of the quarry by a not negligible amount.
- 12 February 2016: The associations bring an appeal before the Conseil d'Etat. The committee rejects the appeal which will not even be heard and brings the conclusions back to those of the Tribunal in Bordeaux.
- 8 February 2017: Prefectural order no 2017/081 requiring an archaeological survey of the complementary phases 2, 3 and 4 of the quarry area "Coume day Hourquat Garriga and Gausere" in Montmaurin..