

Results of a Single Storm

In summer of 2014, a week and a half after the wheat harvest, field burning, and plowing, the region was hit by numerous torrential rainstorms. This has been the pattern the last decade or more. It is a pattern that is to increase under the senereo of global warming. The summer of 2016 the mud of this storm was still evident on the road.



Environmental Imperative

Resulting Deteriorating Landscape:

1) Accelerating destruction of agricultural land resulting from climate change and poor agricultural practices, and the pressure from absentee landlords to maximize production by farming extreme locations

2) Destruction of local infrastructure, in particular roads, which are not being repaired because there is little money coming from the government for this repair. I have traveled damaged roads which have been untouched for five years.



Soil Erosion in the Basentello Valley



Last interglacial rubified soils exposed above the Basentello River near the San Felice villa site (people at left and insets). The Spinazzola fault scarp is visible in the distance. The Vignari Masseria is at the left in the valley.

FIRE!!!

Field burning after the harvest has been practiced for thousands of years in southern Italy. However, recently uncontrolled field burning has become a major problem. Spring drought dries trees, shrubs, and grasses. Wheat is harvested in June – July, and then the chaff is burned to plow under. Traditional field burning is no longer followed. Young farmers are impatient, pour gasoline on the stubble, and light it from where it spreads to the dry hillslopes and vegetation next to the fields. They intentionally burn riparian vegetation areas and also the macchia on the steeper slopes. The behavior is almost arsonist. During the summer of 2017 huge areas from Mt Vesuvius at the edge of Naples southward burned. The skies were smoke-filled for months.

