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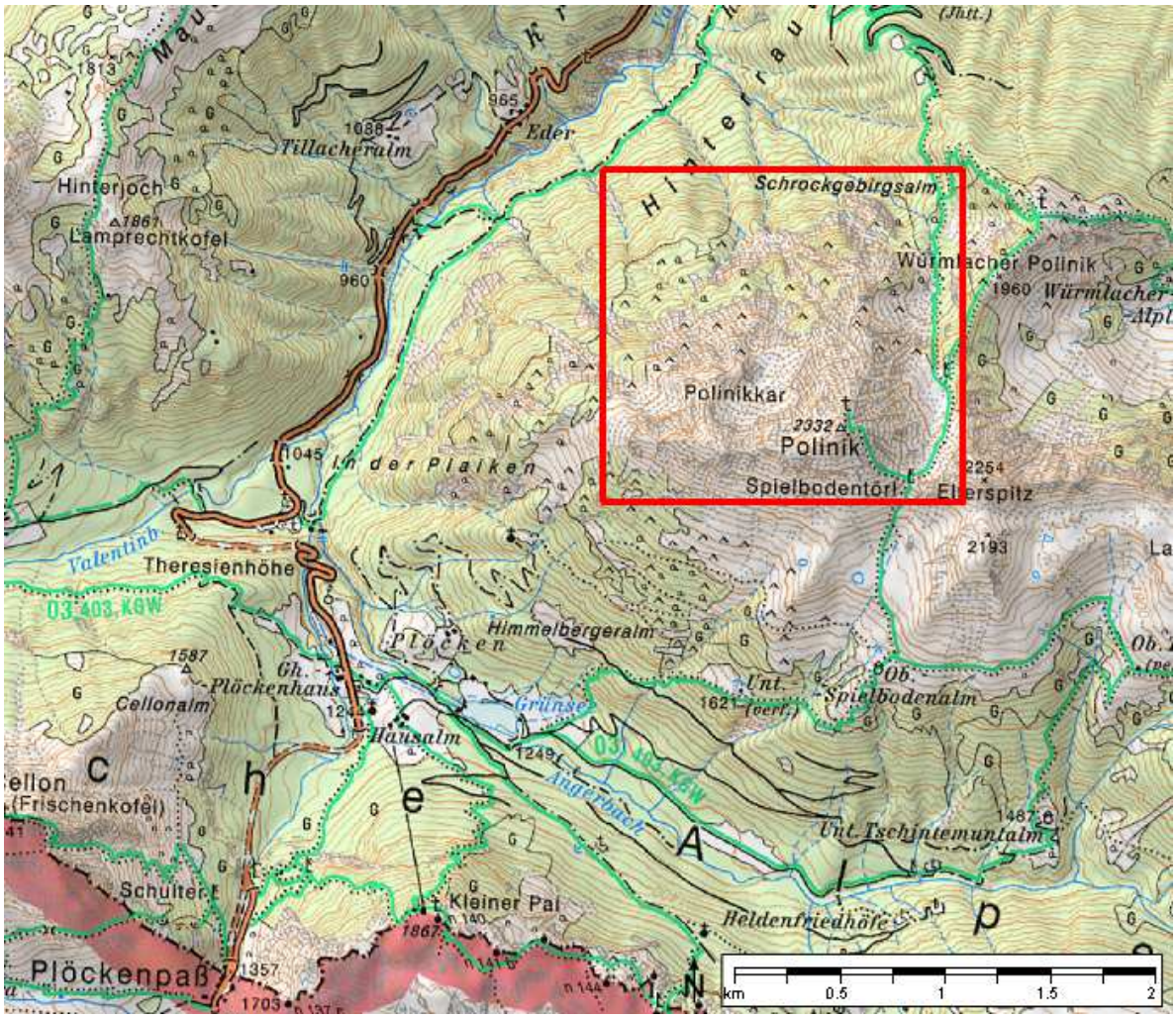
Geotope 58: Polinik Northern Cliff – A Promising View



Red square: location of the geotope; green tracks: hiking trails; ©BEV: Federal Office for Calibration and Measurement, 2005.

Access:

Mountain Polinik can be discovered either from the north starting at the village of Mauthen via Missoria or from the south at Plöckenhaus. Both tours are easy although a full day is needed.

Description of the Geotope

Mountain Polinik with the pyramid-like summit represents the landmark of the community of Kötschach-Mauthen. From its 2,332 m high summit an impressive panoramic view is provided.

View from the summit of Polinik to northwest with the mountains Cellon, Kolinkofel, Rauchkofel and Gamskofel.

The northern wall extends over some 300 m height and consists of well-bedded greyish and partly yellowish dolomitic rocks of Devonian age (420 to 360 m.y. BP). The whole summit is composed of these rocks which are visible not only at the top but also in the northern sun-protected kar formed by a local glacier at the end of the last Ice Age. In the vicinity of the top also blackish limestones, limestone breccias and dolomites with white calcitic veins are occurring.

Fossils, however, are rare except some crinoids, corals, stromatoporoids, brachiopods, snails and algae occurring in the debris.

This sequence of dolomitic rocks was formed in an intertidal environment of a tropical lagoon on the backside of a reef which was separated from the open sea by a marine bar. Temporarily the lagoon was flooded and lime-mud was supplied which was converted to dolomite. During the following desiccation wavy algal crusts were fragmented and embedded into the surrounding sediment. Then another cycle started.

For those who are interested in more details: By supply of magnesium limestones with the chemical composition $CaCO_3$ are converted during dolomitisation to dolomite [$CaMg(CO_3)$].