

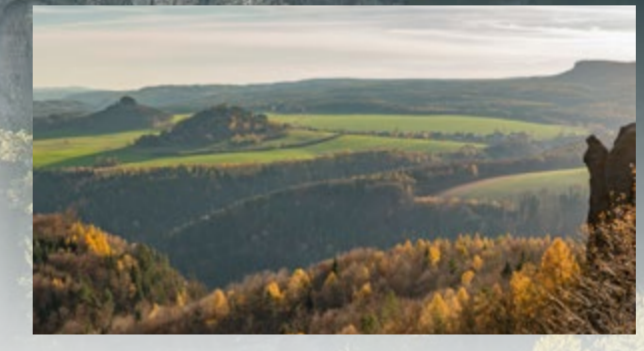
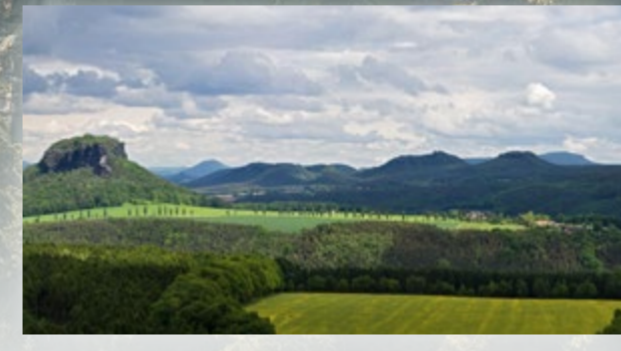
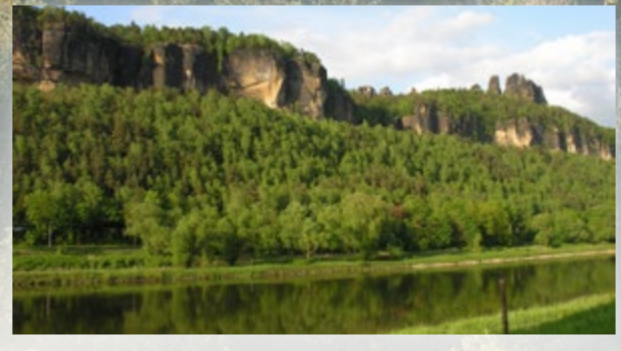
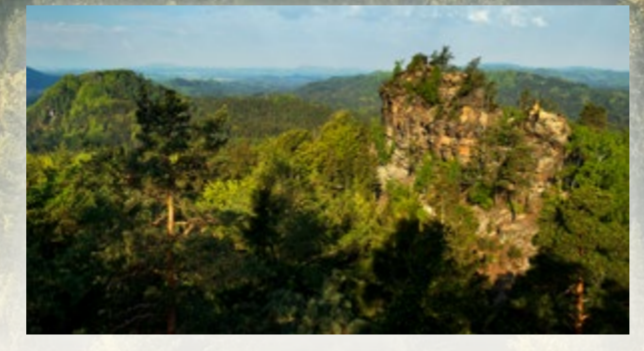
● Sächsische Schweiz
● České Švýcarsko

Let nature be nature

Welcome to the transboundary region of the Elbe Sandstone Mountains! Two national parks and two conservation areas have been established for the protection and development of this erosion landscape that is unique for Central Europe. The highest international protection category of National Park highlights the responsibilities that Saxony took over in 1990 and the Czech Republic in 2000 to protect this rocky landscape. Inside the two national parks, making up a total area of 172 km², nature should be able to develop undisturbed by human intervention. By using public transport, you too will help preserve and protect this unique landscape.

Welcome to the National Park Region Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland

- Basalt Cones
- Canyons
- Rock Towers and Walls
- The Elbe Valley
- Rocky Plateaus and Mesas
- Planes



The basalt peaks are a result of the volcanic activity of the Tertiary. They rise above the sandstone region of Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland. The now solidified magma of the volcanic vents has worked its way through the sandstone all the way to the surface. Basalt is much more durable than sandstone and makes up for some of the highest peaks of both national parks.

The weathering of the basalt rock is creating more nutritious soils than those created from sandstone. Thus, this is where you will find more diverse forests like the herb-rich beech forests. On some of the slopes of the former volcanoes, the weathering of the glacial period has generated outwash plains ("stone seas"), harbouring a remarkable variety of organisms.

Small and large streams and rivers are continuously cutting their paths into the sandstone creating a maze of canyons in Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland. While it is warm and sunny at the top, there is a typical cellar climate at the bottom of the canyons with little sunlight and cool moisture. Thus, one can come across plant species in these canyons that would otherwise only appear in much higher regions.

Such specialists include the spruce, as a typical species of moist, cold high mountains, and the twoflower violet, which is actually native to Arctic regions. The latter has survived here since the last ice age, among a number of invertebrate species that love the cold. Also mosses, ferns and mushrooms are contributing to the biodiversity of the cool and moist canyons.

The bizarre rock towers and walls provide a romantic setting. Hardly anywhere can you find so much variety on such a small ground. Rugged sandstone boulders, rock gates and windows, vertical walls, craggy peaks, sandstone honeycombs and ledges, they all make up for the unique charm of Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland.

The inaccessible rock formations remain islands of unspoiled nature. They provide safe nesting grounds for rare species of birds. On their summits the original relic pine forests have survived until today. Resistant moss and lichen species are growing on the narrow cliff ledges. Peculiar species, such as the marsh tea, can be found in shady places with access to water. It only occurs in marshes otherwise.

While this majestic river has cut a deep canyon of up to 300 m into the sandstone on the Czech side (the largest of its kind in Europe), it has created a slightly broader valley with giant meanders on the Saxon side. The entire stretch of the river from Děčín to the North Sea has been preserved in its natural course, its passability and its permanently changing water levels. That is why rare plant species adapted to flooding can be found here. Some moist alluvial meadows and remnants of alluvial forests still exist too. Migratory birds use the Elbe valley for orientation purposes. The Elbe River and its tributaries are also home to up to 20 species of migratory fish.

Close to the river you can find nutrient-rich soils on which the original debris-lime-hornbeam forests grow.

When sandstone disintegrates it forms rocky slopes containing boulders of all sizes: so-called boulder fields. Originally, these were ideal places for submontane fir and beech forests. Extensive cave labyrinths with wintering grounds for bats can also be found here.

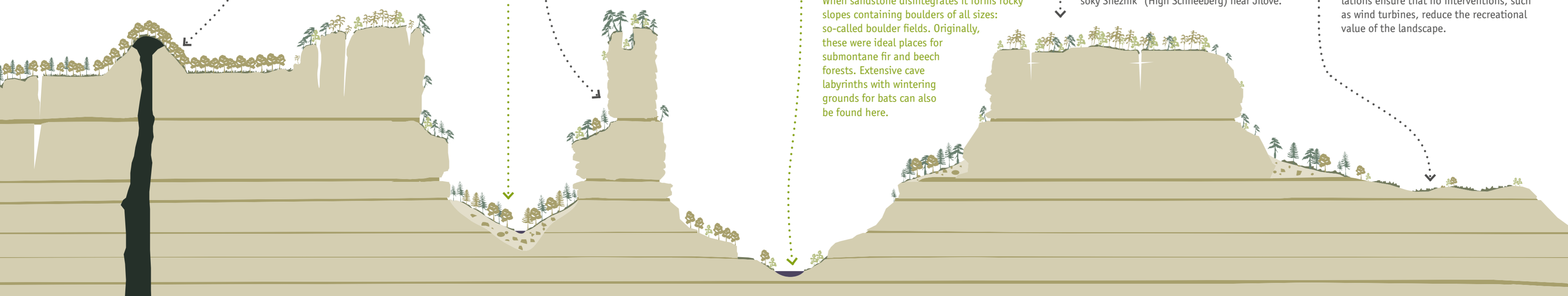
The rocky plateaus are relatively dry thanks to the permeable sandstone layers. Only very rarely can small-scale swamps with a unique flora and fauna be found at sites where the rock is impermeable. Much of the land up here is still covered with its original pine-oak forests. However, people have used even these trees which are difficult to reach and later planted mostly tree species unfit for these sites. The goal of both national parks is to allow the natural mixed forests in these areas to emerge again or actively initiate their development with measures of forest management.

The mesas, rising some 100 metres above the rest of the landscape, are silent witnesses to the geological formation of Saxon and Bohemian Switzerland. All of them, except Lilienstein, are found left of the Elbe River. The highest of them and the only one on the Czech side is the "Vysocký Sněžník" (High Schneeberg) near Jílové.

The flat and open landscapes, typical of both conservation areas, have undergone dramatic changes in the past. Very fertile loess-loam soils were formed here during the Ice Age.

The first settlers took advantage of these conditions and cleared the original deciduous forests for farming. They used the valleys for meadows and pastures. Step by step, smaller cities and roads emerged, followed by small towns later on. The remaining primeval forests were converted into uniform spruce forests due to the high demand for wood.

Today the area is characterised by large fields and cultivated landscapes with charming villages and traditional architecture worth protecting. Conservation regulations ensure that no interventions, such as wind turbines, reduce the recreational value of the landscape.



Basalt Cones Rock Towers and Walls Canyons Rock Towers and Walls The Elbe Valley Boulder Fields Rocky Plateaus and Mesas Boulder Fields Planes

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Landscape conservation area

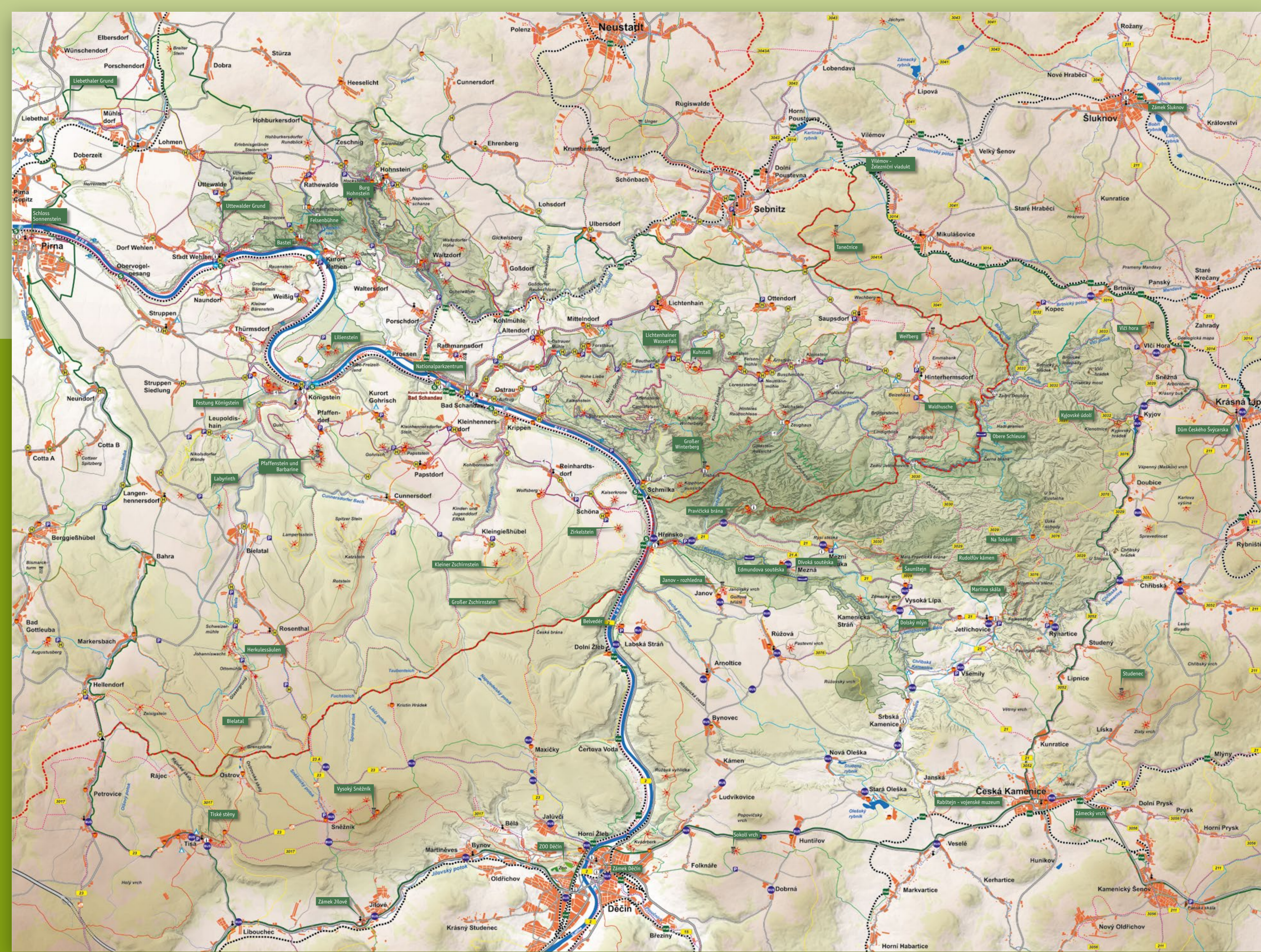
Together with the national park the landscape conservation area forms the National Park Region. Around here, diverse habitats between the Elbe Valley and the mesas offer animals and plants as well as people room to unfold in the National Park Region. While national parks focus primarily on the dynamic development of nature, landscape conservation areas are devoted to cultural landscapes. These cover an area of almost 540 km² of the Elbe Sandstone Mountains on both sides of the state border. Some of them have existed in part for more than 60 years. Traditional structures – like meadows and rural settlements – which were created by people over a long time, lay at the centre of conservation and design efforts.

Imprint

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Editor: Nationalparkverwaltung Sächsische Schweiz
Staatsbetrieb Sachsenforst
An der Elbe 4, 01814 Bad Schandau
Text: R. Nagel, S. Klingner, H. Mayr
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Legend

-  Public way
-  Nonpublic way
-  Railway line
-  Creek, stream, river
-  National park area
-  National park core zone
-  Locality
-  Landscape conservation area border
-  State border
-  Signposted hiking paths
-  Bicycle path, cycling route
-  Cycling route "Elberadweg", "Femradweg Erzgebirgskamm"
-  Elbe Sandstone Mountains Malerweg trail
-  Local train station, Regular train station
-  Bus stop
-  Tram station
-  River stop for steam boats, cruise ships
-  River ferry across the Elbe
-  Barge ride
-  Car park
-  Crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists
-  Crossing point for motor vehicle
-  Camp ground
-  National Park Information Centre
-  Tourist information
-  Church
-  Observation tower
-  View point
-  Castle
-  Rock castle, Ruin
-  Mountain Rescue Station
-  Restaurants (selection)

Emergency calls

-  Mountain Rescue Saxon Switzerland
International emergency call **112**
-  Mountain Rescue Bohemian Switzerland **112**




-  **Cycling routes** – Cycling is only permitted on especially marked lanes. Respect hikers.
-  **Camping and outdoor overnight stay** – only permitted in solid buildings. Exception: approved sites outside the core zone
-  **Fires and smoking prohibited** – fire endangers nature - not only in case of dry vegetation
-  **Pets must be restrained on a leash** – take care for wild animals, plants and other visitors

Marked Trails and Borderless Hiking



Inside the national parks you must stay on the provided trails. The core zones may only be accessed on marked trails. Transboundary hikes are possible on four marked trails in the area of Hinterhermsdorf. The trails of Rabensteine and Khaatal are also cycling tracks.

Outside of the national parks basically anyone at any time and at any point can cross the border. Please remember your ID card.

Signposted hiking paths

-  **HIKING PATH**
Signpost and/or coloured milestone
Mostly well developed.
-  **MOUNTAIN TRAIL**
Mostly difficult trail, Surefootedness when walking essential – watch your step.
-  **CLIMBING ACCESS**
No hiking path! Trail for mountain climbers; leads to climbing rocks.

Caution! Nature also means danger!

-  Dying and dead trees will only be removed in case of immediate danger. So please be prepared for toppling trees and tree parts breaking off.
-  As a part of nature the entire erosion landscape of the Elbe Sandstone Mountains is subject to falling rocks and landslides at any time.

The Free State of Saxony takes no responsibility for the dangers present in the forests of the national park. You therefore enter the park at your own risk.

