



# Perspectives of historical waterways in times of structural changes

The project “Timber Rafting Ditch Elsterflossgraben“ as a possible example for succesful revitalisation and sustanaible use

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# Topics



- 1. The development of the “Weißelsterflöße” as the energy pipeline for the region**
- 2. A short inspection of the Great and Small „Elsterfloßgraben“ in the present**
- 3. "Revitalisation and Sustainable Use" – a volunteering and professional project in the Structural Change of our Lignite Region**



# The Timber Rafting System „Weißelsterflöße“



**Main construction period:  
1575-1610**

**Period of use: 1580-1864**

**More than 200 km long**

**Supply of the cities of  
Halle and Leipzig as well  
as neighbouring  
communities with  
firewood and  
construction timber by  
log floating**





The so-called " Weiße Elster-Flöße" was the most important energy pipeline of the past, not only in our region, also at our continent.

The system connected the river "Weiße Elster" with six watercourses. In addition, there were two artificial ditch systems, incl. in Muldenberg (Vogtland) and the " Großer and Kleiner Elsterfloßgraben".

Until 1864, millions of logs were transported there as firewood to Halle/Saale and Leipzig.

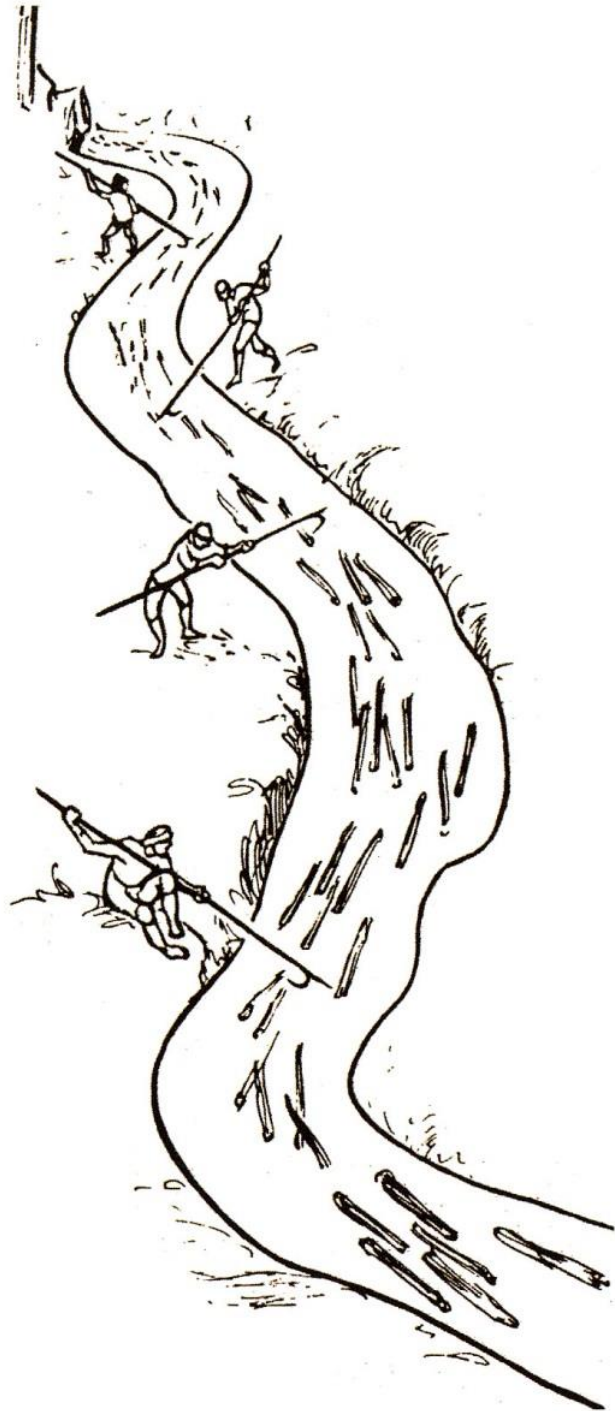
Historical map of the "Elsterfloßgraben" from 1748 (Wikipedia)



# Log timber rafting in the region

Fire wood:  
logs of 1, 2 or 3 m length

High manual effort



*Brennholztrift auf der Weißen Elster bei Crossen ca. 1860*



*Die Holz-Flosse zu Waldheim um 1800*



## End point 1 of the „Weißelsterflöße“: Log Yard of Halle (Holzplatz Halle) in 1715

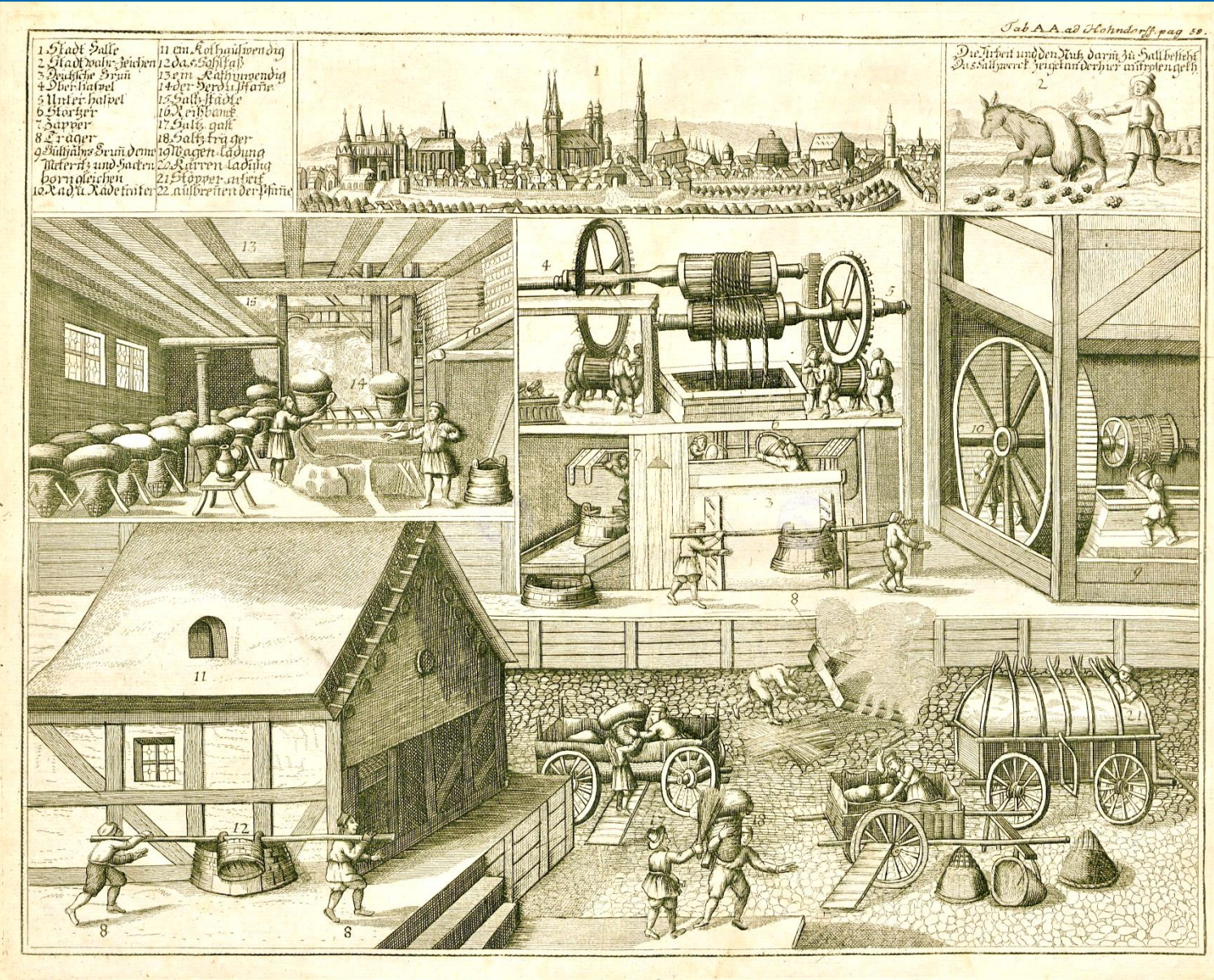


The first contract for firewood between Electoral Saxony and the city of Halle was concluded on 17.12.1582.

The "large" contracts were agreed for a term of 15 years each until 1778, for the delivery of wood from Thuringian and Vogtland forests.



# Supply of wood to the salt works around Halle (export) – Supply of salt to Electoral Saxony (import)



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**Leipzig – Painting  
from Adolph Eltzner**

**ca. 1850**

**Log Yard, Bavarian  
Railway Station  
Castle „Pleißenburg“**

SLUB Dresden KS B7753

**End point 2 of the „Weißelsterflöße“: Log Yard of Leipzig (Leipziger Floßplatz)**



## End point 2 of the „Weißelsterflöße“: Log Yard of Leipzig (Leipziger Floßplatz)



Der Leipziger Floßplatz 1864, Vogelschau von Adolph Eltzner, Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig



## The End of the Firewood Transport in 1864



With the increasing use of lignite as fuel and the development of the railway system, timber rafting became less important.

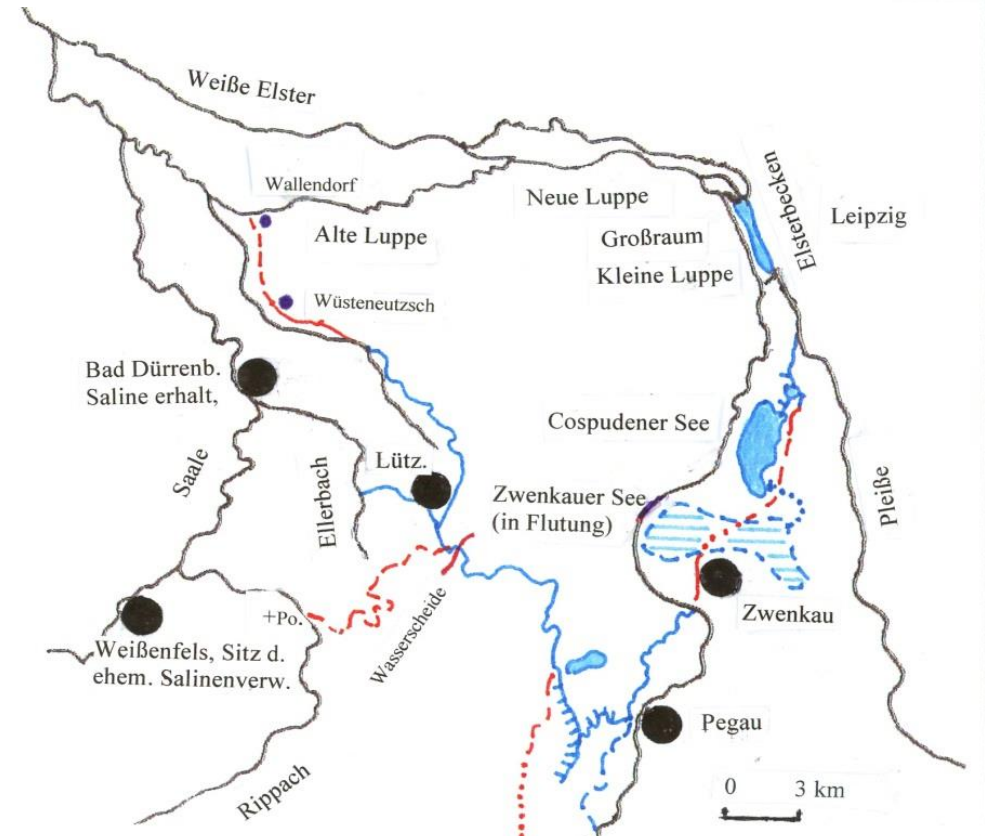
In the following decades the ditch system was used as a driving force for mills and for irrigation. The craftsmanship of timber rafting was forgotten.

With opening of new open-cast mines, important parts were destroyed in the 60s and 70s of the 20th century.

However, a lack of financial resources led to a neglect of the necessary maintenance measures, resulting leaks and the water stream must be stopped.



# The system of „Elsterfloßgraben“



- natürliche Fließgewässer
- alter Floßgraben mit Wasser
- neuer Floßgraben gespeist mit Grubenwasser über Rohrleitg. oder aus Cosp. See
- Mühlgraben mit Wasser
- neuer Graben, z. Zt. noch trocken
- alter Floßgraben erhalten
- alter Floßgraben im Offenland beseitigt
- alter Floßgraben im Grubengelände beseitigt
- K Kötzschau, T Teuditz, P Poserna Dörfer mit ehemaligen Salinen

Historical book from 1924

Sächsische Wanderbücher „Rund um Leipzig“

Actual Painting from Max Linke



# Inspection of the Great „Elsterfloßgraben“



The first kilometers - The dam and the old raftsmen house in Crossen (Thuringia) and technical facilities near Pötewitz (Saxony-Anhalt)



# Inspection of the Great „Elsterfloßgraben“

## A Watercourse without Water- the “Green” Technical Monument

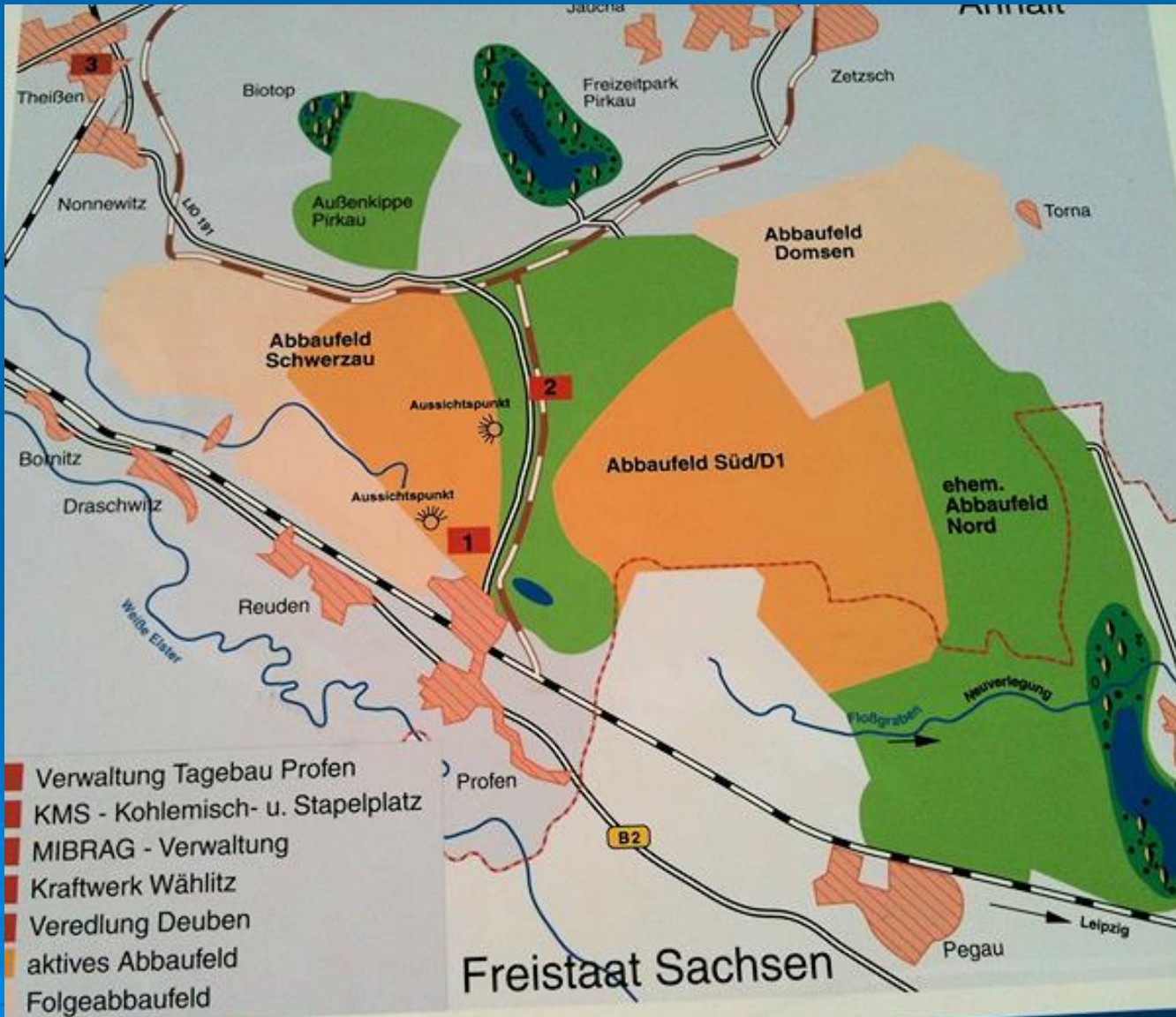
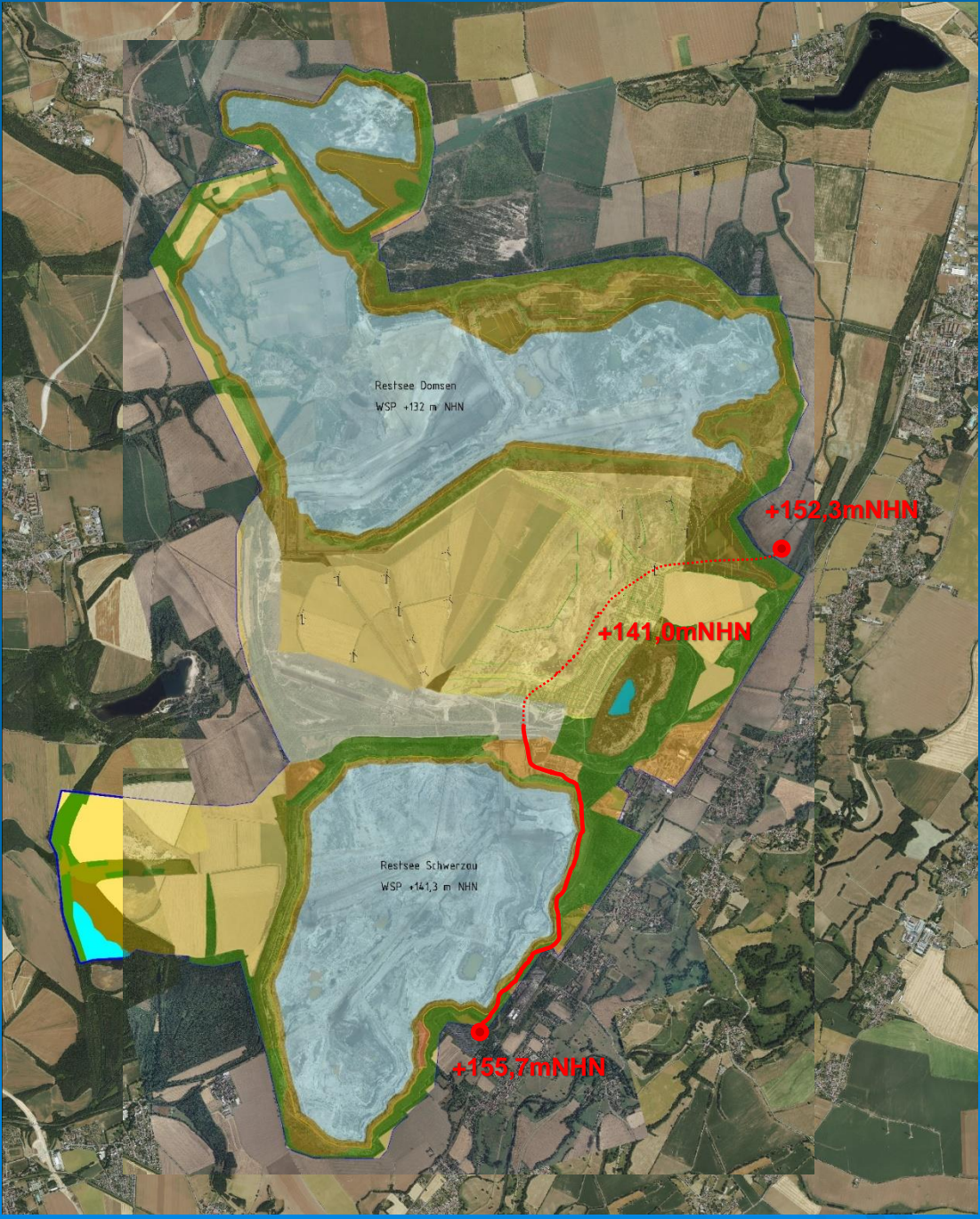


The „Elsterfloßgraben“ is classified as a supraregional technical monument of surveying, water management, hydraulic engineering and transportation.

Zeitz: oldest bridge in Saxony-Anhalt (1696)



# Interrupted course through Profen/Schwerzau opencast mine





## Inspection of the Great „Elsterfloßgraben“

**Why? If the connection through the open mine is not completed, this source will dry up in 2030.**



**The open mine owner will stop this inflow in 2030 in order to flood the new lake "Schwerzau".**

**And the monument and biotop will be destroyed the next 40 km (and the previous 25 km also).**

**Responsible?  
The owners of the  
„Elsterfloßgraben“:**

**Federal states Saxony  
and Saxony-Anhalt  
because idleness!**

**New spring near Elstertrebnitz (Saxony) - setting the course for the future of the whole system.**



# Inspection of the Great „Elsterfloßgraben“



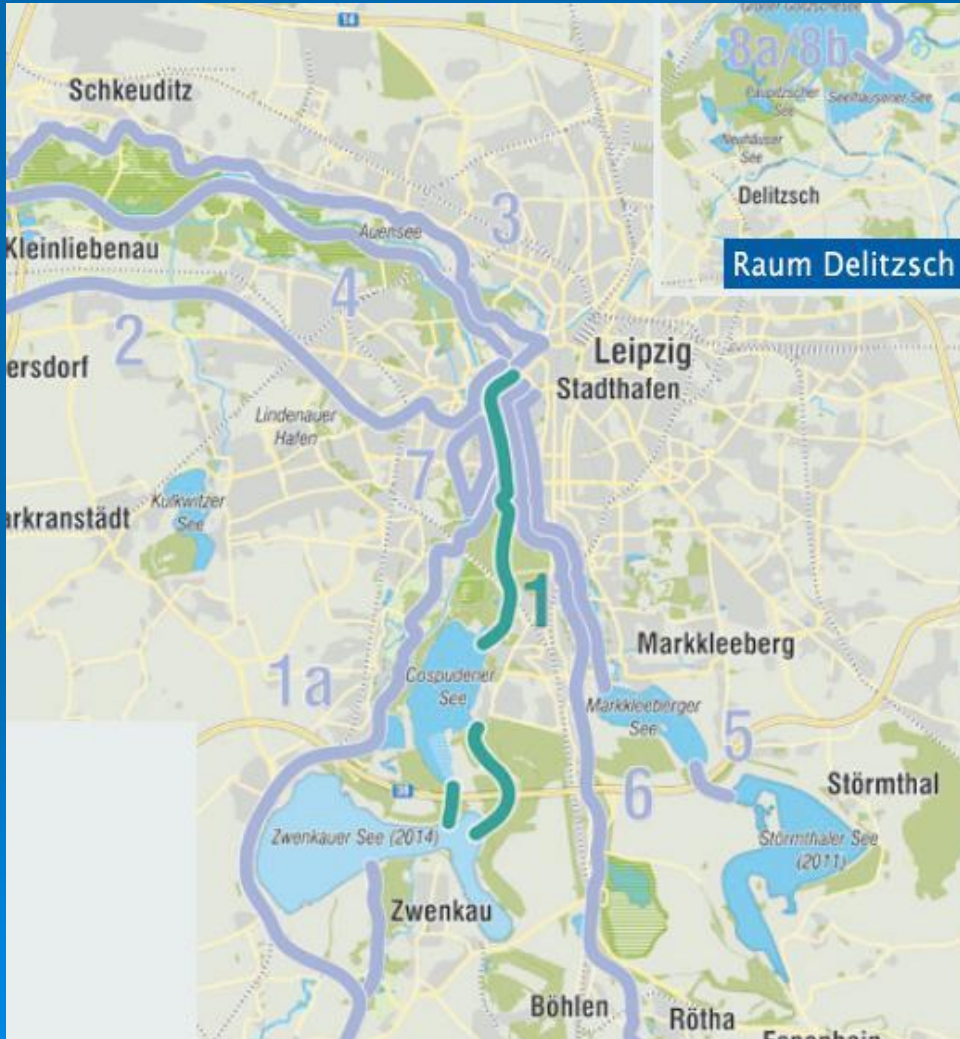
## Temporary end point in Saxony-Anhalt - The reservoir near Schladebach (after 75 km)





# Inspection of the Small „Elsterfloßgraben“

Part of Leipzig's tourist water network

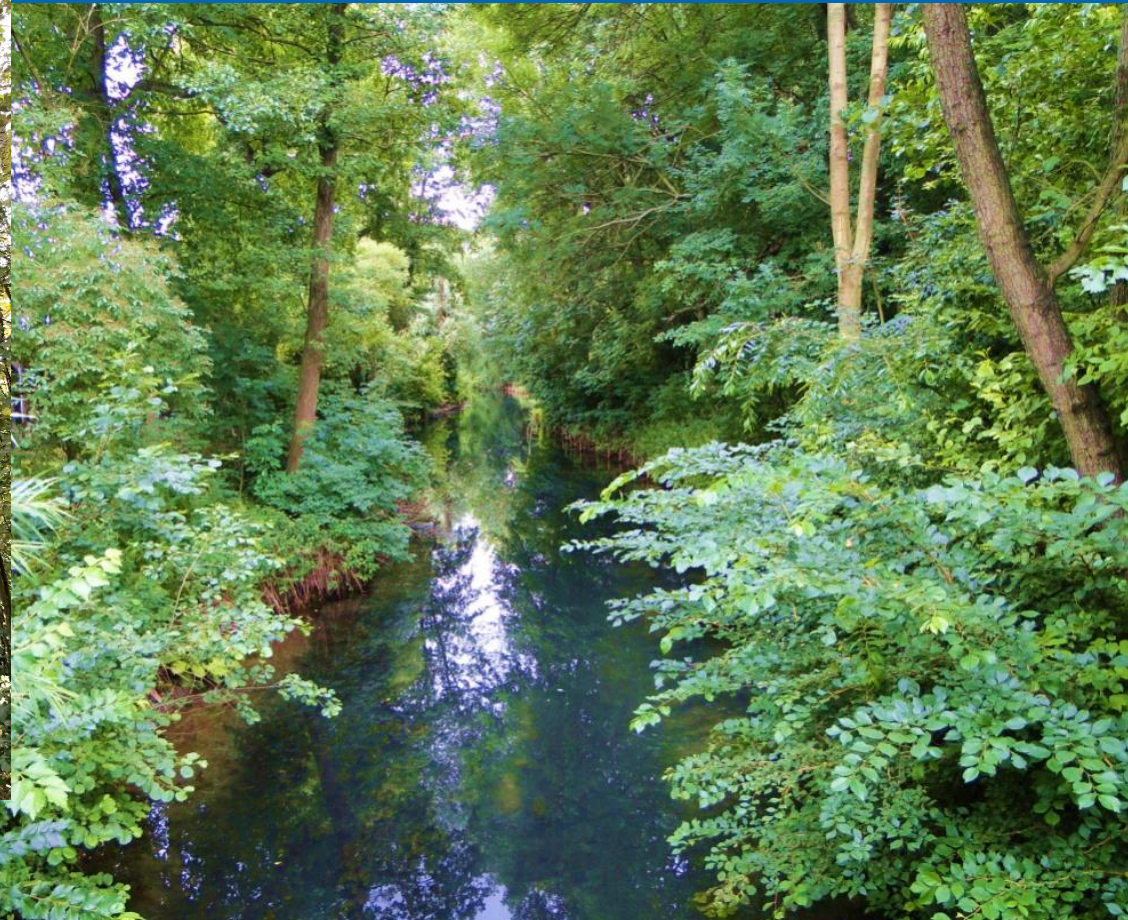




# Inspection of the Small „Elsterfloßgraben“



Course in the Leipzig floodplain forest “Auewald”





# Inspection of the Small „Elsterfloßgraben“



The former Log Yard from Leipzig- Future memorial site for log rafting?





## Structural Development Program

# STRUKTUR- ENTWICKLUNGS- PROGRAMM

Mitteldeutsches Revier Sachsen-Anhalt

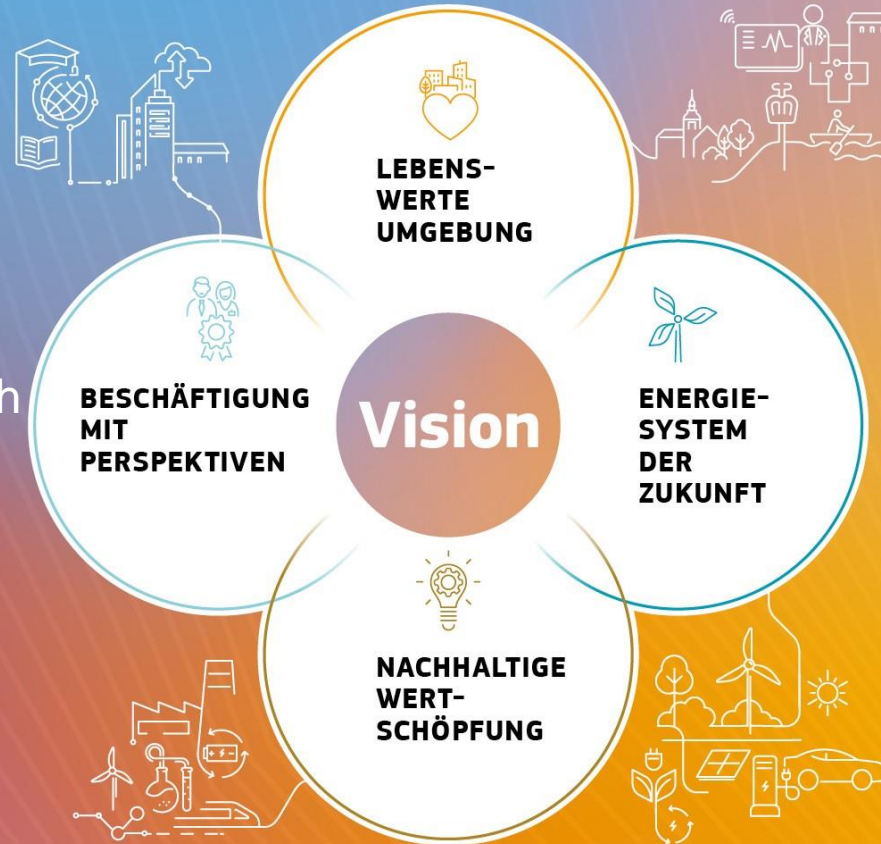
4,8 Billion € are planned alone in  
Saxony-Anhalt – we want of this  
0,625% - 30 Mill. €.

SACHSEN-ANHALT #moderndenken

STRUKTUR  
WANDEL  
MITTELDEUTSCHES  
REVIER SACHSEN-ANHALT

Employment with  
perspectives

Liveable environment



Energy  
system of  
the future

Sustainable added value



Every free-flowing body of water is of great importance in the present and future under the conditions of sustainable climate protection. Water in a cultural and industrial landscape is also a connecting element, not only between places but also between people.



# „Elsterfloßgraben“ =

## Monument Route + Conservation Path + Recreation Trail



Timber rafting is nominated by Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, Latvia, Poland and Spain to UNESCO as "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity"



A biotope or eco-service provider that has existed for 435 years must not disappear!

Maintain / develop habitat for protected flora and fauna of the region!

- Improve the quality of life by living near the water,
- Establish a network of tourist attractions in the region,
- Connecting cycling and hiking routes in the region via the timber rafting trail
- Experience and feel the fascination of "water",
- Sensing the water as a source of energy







DER HISTORISCHE ELSTERFLOßGRABEN



Holzplatz und Saline-  
Museum Halle?

Borlach-Museum

Floßplatz Mühle Kötzschau

Floßplatz Nempitz

Floßplatz Bad Dürrenberg

Schlossmuseum Lützen

Dorfmuseum Großgörschen

Floßplatz Pegau-Lützen?

Seegeler Heil- und Wunderbrunnen?

Stadtmuseum Pegau?

Floßplatz Zeitz?

Heimatstube Aue-Aylsdorf

Neuhaus Salsitz?

Floßplatz Schkauditz

Floßplatz Crossen

- Legende
- Elsterfloßgraben
  - - - nicht mehr vorhandene Floßgrabenabschnitte
  - - - neu entstandene Floßgrabenabschnitte
- Quelle: Buch „Der Elsterfloßgraben“  
Grafik: MZ Satz GmbH



Floßplatz Leipzig?



"Actors-Places  
Timber rafting".

Unique selling point  
in the Middle  
German region!

IGEK VG Droyßiger- Zeitzer Forst

ILEK Crossen



Legend:  
Green existing museums  
Yellow planned places  
Lightblue possible places in the future





**Structural change will not only be successful with new railways, energy and data lines, additional commercial space and roads. The quality of life of those living here in the district also includes: an intact environment, places for pleasure, relaxation or education.**

- **All these tasks cannot be accomplished by volunteer work alone. After all, round about 30 million Euros must be invested in this project over the next 20 years. A large part of this will be invested in the restoration of a continuous watercourse - “Healing the damaged wounds” of mining.**
- **However, projects for tourist usage must also be developed, as well as projects for monument protection, nature conservation and education. Modern communication channels are to link the various adventure sites along the “Elsterfloßgraben”, also with hotspots for modern information technologies such as augmented reality.**
- **The main part here is volunteer work, the engagement of inhabitants and actors.**



## Which message for the future would be suitable for the presentation of the “Elsterfloßgraben” at the “World Canals Conference” 2022 in Leipzig?



"The energy carriers of the past, wood and coal, were given permanent monuments in the region. In this way, the art of engineering and human manpower in the winning, transport and converting of both renewable and fossil fuels found their merited recognition and can be passed on to future generations in an emphatic way. And the kilometre-long ecological interconnected system of the timber rafting ditch “Elsterfloßgraben” offers the image of a living oasis for flora and fauna at any time of the year, where people find their place of recreation and discovery in a very special manner."

N.N to the 450th anniversary of “Elsterfloßgraben” in 2037 (☺)





Thank you for your attention

and the saying of the log rafters of our region with you on your way:

**„Imm‘r ä weng Wosser unner‘m Scheit!“**  
(“Always some water under the timber raft of your life!”)

