

Explore forests and meadows with all your senses: "Nature Houses" offer adventures in every season

Saxony-Anhalt is rich in diverse natural landscapes, including the UNESCO Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve and the Harz National Park. In so-called "Nature Houses," knowledge about natural relationships and sustainable development is imparted in a sensory and practical way. The "Brocken House," the "Auen House," the "House of Rivers," the ZÖNU (Central German Nature Reserve), and the "House of the Forest" offer attractive experiences for target groups of all ages.

"Brocken House" – Harz National Park

Harz National Park stretches from the southern edge of the low mountain range near Herzberg across the highlands to the northern edge near Ilsenburg. It is part of the European "Natura 2000" protected area system. From the 1,141-meter-high Brocken peak, you can enjoy a sweeping view of the countryside and the Harz National Park in good weather.

The [Brocken House](#) has stood on the Brocken plateau for over 25 years. "Our modern exhibition inspires visitors from near and far and offers surprising insights into history for everyone," says Christoph Lampert, Managing Director of Brockenhaus GmbH, pointing out that the tours can be individually tailored to thematic requests and age groups. Topics include: the origins of the Harz and Brocken mountains, the geology of the Harz Mountains, famous Brocken hikers from Goethe to modern times, the history of the Brocken Railway, radio and television history on the highest mountain in Northern Germany, the Brocken during World War II and the military occupation after World War II, intelligence activities in the Harz and on the Brocken, the Brocken after reunification, the peaceful liberation of the Brocken on December 3, 1989, the renaturation of the Brocken summit and the establishment of the High Harz National Park, flora, fauna and their habitats in the Harz National Park, and the "Natura 2000" project. Tours last between 45 and 60 minutes. The Brockenhaus director requests advance registration.

"After our guests have experienced the exciting exhibition, we like to invite them to our cafeteria, Hexenflug," says Christoph Lampert. He offers a variety of lunch options, as well as coffee and cake, while gazing through the panoramic window. Speaking of which: From the open roof terrace, visitors can enjoy a 360° panoramic view of up to 200 kilometers in good weather.

Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve

The Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve is part of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Elbe River Landscape, recognized in 1997. It stretches 303 kilometers along the Elbe River, past beaver lodges and floodplains. Rare species such as the Elbe beaver, white-tailed eagle, iris, and water chestnut live here. The Elbe beaver is the symbol of this landscape. The "Auenhaus" information centers in Oranienbaum-Wörlitz and the "Haus der Flüsse" (House of Rivers) in Havelberg are ideal starting points for exploring the biosphere reserve. Interactive exhibitions provide playful information about the diverse nature, the people, and the special features of the Middle Elbe. Admission to both museums is free.

"Auenhaus" – in the home of the Elbe beaver

In the [Auenhaus](#), visitors can learn interesting facts about the protected area, the special features of the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve, and its significance as a model region for sustainable development. Here, you can view an elaborately designed beaver lodge and get active at the multimedia stations.

"After a guided tour of the Auenhaus, visitors can explore the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve on our floodplain trails. The independent hike leads along the four-kilometer-long Kapenniederung floodplain trail," says Andrea Winger, head of the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. She also recommends the "Digital Scavenger Hunt." The interactive rallies can be played for free with the [Actionbound](#) app both in the Auenhaus and on the floodplain trail.

Further [recommendations](#) include the ranger-led hike into the Mulde floodplain near Möst on October 11; and on November 3, World Biosphere Reserve Day, a conservation assistant will invite you to the floodplain house and explain how ants can be relocated.

"House of Rivers" – Natura 2000 Information Center

Since 2015, the ["House of Rivers"](#) in Havelberg has served as the information center for the northern part of the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. Resembling a giant piece of driftwood, the wooden structure sits on the banks of the Havel. Visitors can learn about the unique natural landscapes of the Elbe River and the "Lower Havel Lowlands" river landscape, as well as the biosphere reserve, on two floors. The multimedia exhibition is dedicated to the Elbe-Havel river system and its floodplains. The outdoor area features environmental education stations centered around the theme of "The River and its Floodplains."

Those interested in a guided tour of the exhibition are asked to register in advance, says Jella Schnirch, supervisor at the "House of Rivers." Visitors of all ages are also invited to events and excursions where they can learn interesting facts about the biosphere reserve's unique features. The digital scavenger hunt – such as the Wolf Rally or the Beaver Rally – can also be conducted here.

"We, the staff of the biosphere reserve administration and regional partners, offer year-round and seasonal excursions and lectures," says Jella Schnirch, citing a few examples: This year, on German Unity Day, October 3, 2025, a guided bike tour will run along the "Green Belt." Unusual stops along the 28-kilometer tour include the inland dune near Bömenzien, the Bahlsten Foundation observation tower near Nienwalde, the open-air town church in Gartow, the open-air village church in Holtorf, the fruit avenue near Holtorf, the Schnackenburg Borderland Museum, and the NABU birdwatching tower in Stresow. No registration is required.

On October 5, a canoe tour on the Aland River will lead through the softwood floodplain. The guided canoeing tour goes from Pollitz to Schnackenburg, where the Aland River meets the Elbe. Registration is required: contact@elements-nature.com. On October 25th, a guided crane observation tour will be offered. With the arrival of winter in the northern and northeastern European breeding grounds, the cranes begin their migration to their wintering grounds. Register at: hausderfluesse@biore.sachsen-anhalt.de.

On November 21st, the "House of Rivers" will be transformed into a herbal workshop. With the cold season approaching, it's helpful to know something about the powerful world of herbal antibiotics. Registration at: <https://susannehackel.de/21-november-pflanzliche-antibiotika/>

Further information about these and other events can be found at www.haus-der-fluesse.de/veranstaltungen/veranstaltungen

ZÖNU – Center for Ecology, Nature and Environmental Protection

The [ZÖNU](#) Center for Ecology, Nature and Environmental Protection is an environmental education facility located in the Elbe-affiliated community of Buch, in the heart of the transnational "Elbe River Landscape" biosphere reserve. The two barns include outdoor areas with a herb and dye garden, demonstration plots of heirloom vegetables and fruit varieties, tips on nature conservation around the house, and a natural playground. Furthermore, the International Elbe Cycle Route R2 passes directly by the ZÖNU.

"The future of nature is also the future of our children" is the guiding principle of all ZÖNU activities. Group travelers, school classes, families, nature enthusiasts, as well as cycling, horseback riding, and water tourists are warmly welcome.

The rustic half-timbered barn houses a hayloft with 30 hay beds and 10 beds. Additional accommodations and beds in guesthouses and vacation apartments in the Rolanddorf village of Buch are available through the Tangermünde Tourist Office. <https://tourismus-tangermuende.de/>

The centerpiece of the ZÖNU is the "Stork Cabinet." Here, in the Elbe-Landmuseum, guests can learn about storks and, in spring, watch the breeding season of the "house stork" via live broadcast.

"The dynamic floodplain landscape is one of the most fascinating adventure spaces. Here, on nature trails and from nature observation towers, you can discover how exciting a day in the biosphere reserve can be. Experiencing the Elbe up close – that's a highlight and my personal recommendation," says Peter Neuhäuser from the ZÖNU, referring to the offerings: "We're all in the same boat here. Whether by dinghy, canoe, or large fishing boat, you can explore the charming river landscape along the Elbe. Depending on the season, storks and beavers, eagles, swans, geese, and cranes can be observed here." Of course, you can also explore by bike (including multi-person bikes) or on foot.

The ZÖNU also offers attractive excursions and guided tours, such as "Beavers, Bismarck, Brick" or "Stork Land on the Elbe Beach," as well as organized tours to the crane and goose migration in the autumnal Elbe floodplain of the UNESCO Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. Advance registration is required, please contact rezeption@elbetourist.de or www.natur.app or <https://zoenu.de>

"Haus des Waldes" – Environmental Education Facility of the State Forest Center

The ["Haus des Waldes"](#) – the central forestry environmental education facility of the State Forest Center in Saxony-Anhalt – is located in the northern complex of Hundisburg Castle near Haldensleben. Using the forest as an example, the museum demonstrates ways for the sustainable use of our natural resources in a practical and engaging way. The term "sustainability" was coined by German forestry 300 years ago. The focus of the projects, offerings, and exhibitions at the "Haus des Waldes" is therefore on managed forests.

The main attraction is the exhibition "Streitfall Wald?" (Forest Dispute?), featuring the 17-meter-high biomachine "Baum" (Tree), located in the castle's north tower. The three protagonists Flora, Waltraud, and Waldemar will guide visitors through the exhibition. They provide visitors with entertaining information about the sometimes conflicting demands placed on the forest by ecology, the economy, and society. The exhibits in the forest history exhibition are grouped chronologically around a ten-meter-long timeline.

The "House of the Forest App" is a multimedia complement to the exhibition. It offers the opportunity to familiarize oneself with the

exhibition even outside of the environmental facility. All exhibition stations can be accessed in German and English. The "House of the Forest App" is available for free download from the Google Play Store and the App Store.

Other offerings include the "Wild Boar Rally," "Treasure Hunt," "Children's Birthday Party," and the "Forest Mobile." These experiences are aimed at people of all ages, primarily children and young people. Further information and dates can be found on the website.

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Additional assets available online: [Photos \(3\)](#)

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