

## **First Board**

Welcome

As you let your gaze wander, it leads you ahead through the Blankenburg Natural Heritage Forest. This forest, spanning nearly 2,200 hectares, is a National Natural Heritage (NNE). This means that nature conservation takes precedence here.

The Natural Heritage Forest is under the care of the Foundation for the Environment, Nature, and Climate Protection of the State of Saxony-Anhalt (SUNK). Our goal: Process protection. We're glad you're here!

What is Process Protection?

With few exceptions, the Natural Heritage Forest is allowed to develop naturally. However, sometimes interventions are necessary for nature and species conservation. In the Natural Heritage Forest, trees age, die, and decay, remaining in the natural cycle. This benefits numerous animal and plant species that depend on old and dead wood. Please step a little to the right and discover some examples.

### **[Caption (for the two photos)]**

Does it look messy? It's supposed to! Old and dead wood are extremely important components of the forest ecosystem. Both standing and lying – each serves very different functions in the forest.

## Second Board

### Discover the Hidden

“What is essential is invisible to the eye,” the fox explained to the Little Prince<sup>1</sup>. And here in the Blankenburg Natural Heritage Forest, many treasures are hidden from our view.

For example: Even today, old tunnels bear witness to the forest's past. Until 1969, mining was conducted here. But what became of the abandoned tunnels? They still exist, but they are hidden from us. Not so for bats: they find a valuable habitat here.

Complex relationships and dependencies exist between the animals and plants. Because only a small part of the entire naturally developing forest ecosystem is visible to humans, we have set up this three-part board. So take your time to enjoy the ‘view through the keyhole’ created by Halle artist Lucie Nichelmann.

Have you already spotted the young wildcat?

#### 1: Flying Architect

##### Black Woodpecker

The Black Woodpecker builds its nest in old deciduous and coniferous trees. Every year it moves to a new breeding and roosting cavity. Other animals like Tengmalm’s owls and bats become the new tenants.

## 2: Tenant Wanted

### Tengmalm's Owl

The Tengmalm's owl is a nocturnal bird of prey. For hunting, it needs open areas. It finds daytime rest primarily in tree cavities abandoned by Black Woodpeckers, where it nests.

## 3: Walking on Velvet Paws

### Wildcat

The very shy wildcat is almost never seen. For raising its young, it prefers large deadwood trunks lying on the ground.

## 4: Loner and Large Landowner

### Lynx

The lynx prefers large contiguous forests with a high density of game. It is a loner and cleverly uses deadwood: as a protective hiding place or for cover while hunting.

## 5: Dead Wood

### Dead and Yet So Alive

Contrary to its name, deadwood is the beating heart of the Natural Heritage Forest. Both lying and standing, it enriches the structures of deciduous and

coniferous forests. It is indispensable for many crawling, wood-eating, flying, stalking, resting, or nesting animal species.

## 6: Circular Economy

### Wood-Destroying Fungi

Wood-destroying fungi decompose leaves and dead wood, thus releasing nutrients back into the environment – they operate a natural circular economy.

## 7: Prefers Old Vintages

### Xylobiont Beetles

Do you know what humus is? It's a mixture of decomposed wood and insect excrement. Xylobiont beetles live in tree cavities filled with humus. Their larvae bore tunnels into old dead wood for up to five years before pupating and developing into beetles.

## 8: Rain Men in the Forest

### Fire Salamander

After rainfall, pregnant females come out of their hiding places during the day, against their usual habit, and can be seen in the Natural Heritage Forest on their way to one of our clean water bodies to lay their gill-bearing larvae.

## 9: Six-Legged Typesetter

### Bark Beetle

The Bark Beetle is also known as Typesetter in Germany. It is named for its feeding pattern under the tree bark, which resembles an open book with printed lines. Its pupae and larvae are a delicacy for the Black Woodpecker.

## 10: Blooming Splendor in Spring

### Wood Anemone and Yellow Anemone

In spring, the Natural Heritage Forest is adorned with many different seas of blossoms. For example, the yellow anemone and the wood anemone shape the spring appearance of the forest. Insects find the first rich buffet after the harsh winter months in these flowers. In early summer, the rare purple Turk's cap lily also blooms.

## 11: Night Owls Underground

### Greater Mouse-Eared Bat

Until 1969, mining was conducted in the Natural Heritage Forest. The abandoned tunnels, with their constant temperatures, offer the perfect habitat for bats.

## Third Board

### Duties and Responsibilities<sup>2</sup>

The forest is both refuge and home for countless animals and plants. For humans, it is a gem of inestimable value, a green guarantee of peace and relaxation. But it is much, much more than that – it plays a crucial role in our global ecosystem. It sequesters carbon, influences local weather, stores water, regulates temperature, and provides fresh air as an oxygen producer. Considering everything, the forest is a complex, powerful system, a climate regulator that not only affects our immediate surroundings but also plays a decisive role in the global ecological balance. Protecting and nurturing it is of enormous importance for the health of our planet.

[Icons for the rules]

Keep nature untouched | Beware of falling branches | Keep dogs on a leash |  
Leave no trash behind | Stay on hiking trails

We thank you for your consideration and wish you a wonderful time in the Blankenburg Natural Heritage Forest.

For more information about the Natural Heritage Forest and us, visit:

[www.sunk-lsa.de](http://www.sunk-lsa.de)

*[SUNK Logo]*

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*Text + Photos + Editorial: SUNK*

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*[Footnotes]*

*1) Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The Little Prince 1943.*

*2) according to the Federal Nature Conservation Act*