



## **Volcano Park Mosenberg near Bettenfeld / Eifel: A new concept of geological renaturation**

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Mining of the lava deposited in the area of the Mosenberg volcano near the village of Bettenfeld in the Eifel ended in 1993. The German mining law calls for an operating plan for a closed mine. In many cases, the mines are simply backfilled and planted. Such filling hides many interesting geological outcrops forever. Geological outcrops are windows into the earth, they tell us fascinating stories about the origin and evolution of the rocks and landscape. Mining the Mosenberg exposed volcanic chimneys filled with solid basalt, lapilli beds of different grain sizes and scoria welded into cinder layers, offering a perfect and large cross-section through a cinder cone. The unique sight at the closed mine at the Mosenberg volcano group was, together with the Meerfeld maar, included in the 2006 list of the 80 best "Geotopes of Germany".

In 2000, the community of Bettenfeld, the municipality of Manderscheid and the Maarmuseum Manderscheid started discussions on how to enable access to these pits and open them to geotourism. The "GeoRoute Vulkaneifel around Manderscheid" as well as the "Eifel" and "Lieser" hiking trails pass nearby the former lava mine which facilitated the connection of the outcrops to existing tourism routes. Eventually, the relocation of the "GeoRoute" into the pit and the development of safe pathways there to make the lava pit safe and accessible for visitors, combined with geological information boards was developed. The term of "renaturation" was redefined in the project for the first time and implemented as "Geological renaturation".

Subsequently, funds from the European Union and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate to support the development of the pit were sought. In 2009, the European Union and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate granted supported for the project as part of their structural development programs (LEADER / PAUL). Their contribution consisted of half of the construction cost. The other half was covered by the municipality of Manderscheid because of the regional importance of this site for tourism.

Construction in the former mine began in late 2010. The bottom of the pit was leveled, the slopes secured with big magmatic rocks and some of the pathways were laid as barrier-free routes with grass pavers. In addition, a little trail with the volcanic rocks of the Eifel and an outdoor classroom were set up. Together they create the unique volcano theme park Mosenberg ([www.vulkanerlebnis-mosenberg.de](http://www.vulkanerlebnis-mosenberg.de)), a unique window into the Eifel volcanism!