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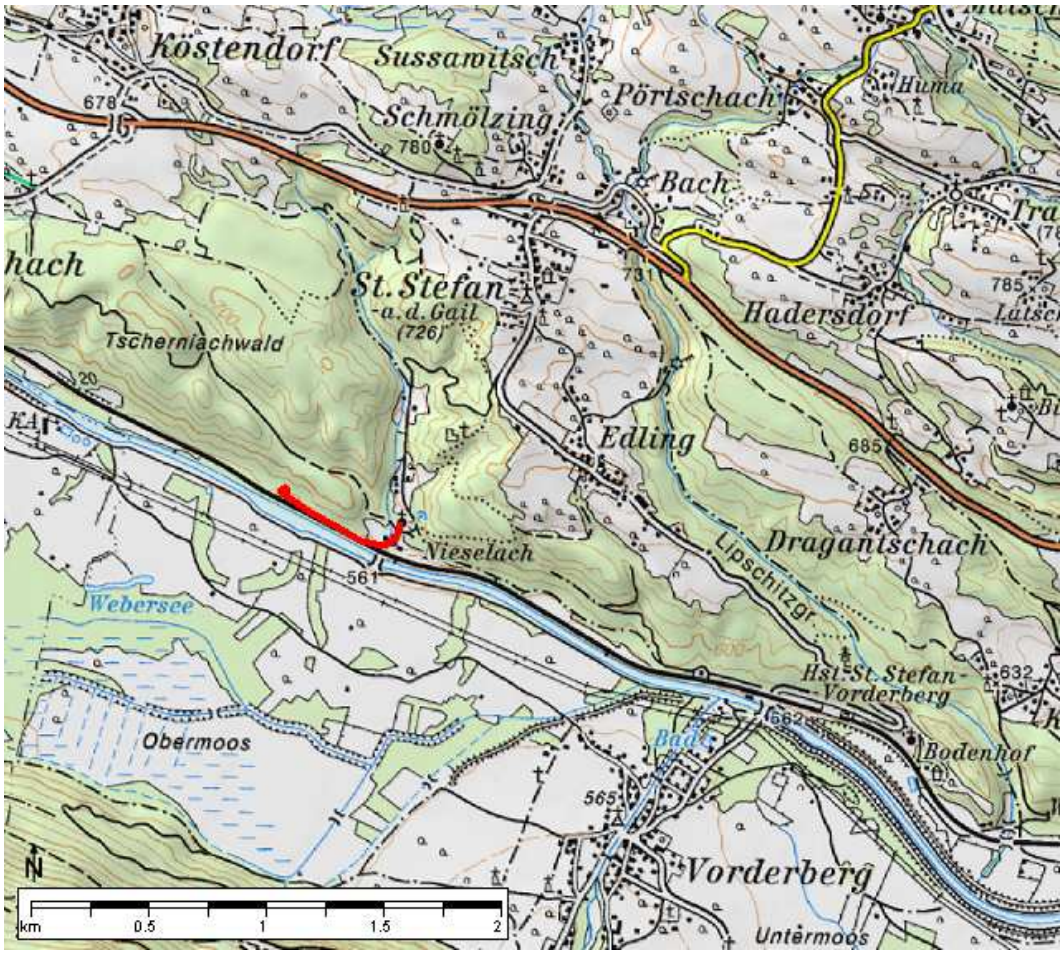
Geotope 22: Nieselach – Coal for Time of Need



Red marking: Hiking route according to advance description; green tracks: hiking trails; ©BEV: Federal Office for Calibration and Measurement, 2005.

Access:

The locality is difficult to assess. In the small village of Nieselach the railroad tracks must be crosses and the unpaved road must be followed to the west. After some 400 m another bridge and the tracks must be transversed and the alluvial forest crossed.

Description of the Geotope

Lignite horizon of Nieselach, overlain by thick gravel deposit.

The 12m thick lignite horizon (= woody brown coal with well preserved wood structure) has an age within the Eem Interglacial separating the two last major Ice Ages, i.e. the Riess and Würm Ice ages which lasted from 230,000 to 130,000 and 115.000 to 11,000 years BP, respectively.

During the Interglacial in the Gail Valley a mild and humid climate prevailed with rich vegation. Once the coal seam represented a low moor with many trees and wood remains which document an original lowland forest and waterplants growing in the silty abandoned channels and meandering loops of the Gail. Remarkable is the coal occurrence 7 to 8 m above the present valley floor. This indicates that in warmer times the floor was seemingly higher compared with today.

During the 19th century and after the two World Wars the coal was mined and used as fuel. Today only the collapsed hole head is reminiscent of that time.

For those who are interested in more details:

Generally two types of moores are subdivided. A low moor is formed by a high groundwater level and aggradation of standing or slowly flowing water. Typically this type contains sedges, reed and wood remains.

The high moor is located outside the influence of groundwater. The water supply is controlled by rainwater and other kinds of precipitation and consists of bog mosses.

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