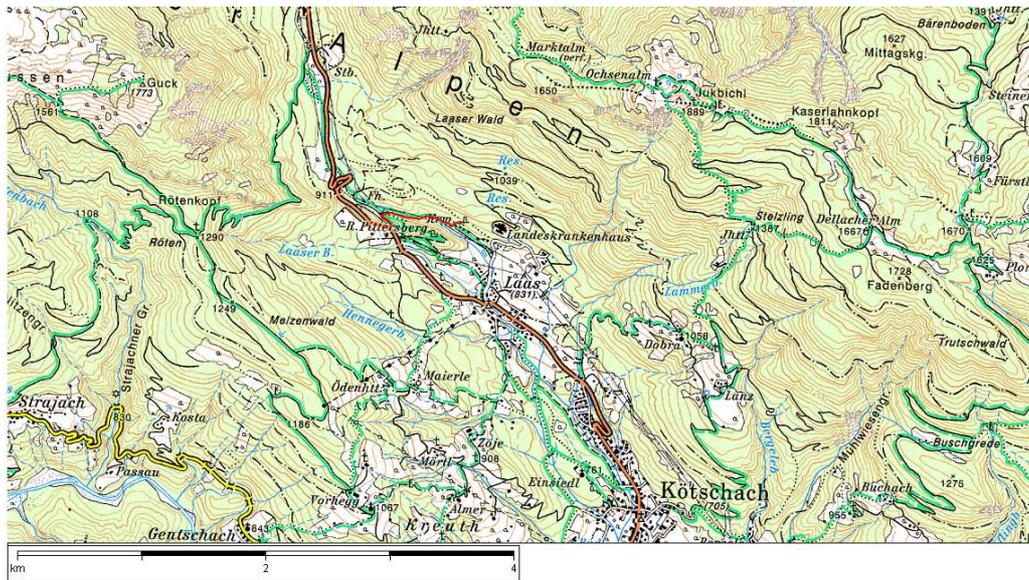


## ***Geotope 42: Laas – The Petrified Forest***



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

### Access:

There are two possibilities to access this locality. The first one is from the small village of Laas following the road to the hospital but deviating from it to the left at half the distance; the second one is the trail west of Pittersberg towards east to the small electric power station. A few steps to the east a marked trail leads to the main petrified tree.

## Description of the Geotope

At the beginning of the 30ies of the last century during construction of the water pipeline for the power Station the first tree was found which was declared as Natural Monument in 1960. During the following time several others, although smaller trees were discovered. The fourth big one was excavated during road construction in the 1960s some 1 km northwest of the hospital. Since the year 1990 some more trees were added to the old ones which render this site to a real “petrified forest”. The oldest excavation is a 8 m long trunk which represents the biggest plant fossil in Austria with an age of 280 million years in the Lower Permian. It is embedded on greyish and greenish-reddish pebble-bearing coarse-grained sandstones named the Laas Formation. The plant-bearing sandstones are deposits of alluvial fans caused by extreme weather conditions of an arid climate prevailing in the Lower Permian. All tree remains are seemingly reworked and were transported by water or mudflows to their present position. The petrified tree belongs to the forerunner of the needle-trees, the Cordaites. They were up to 30 m high trees with a branched crown.



Two out of a dozen of petrified trees of Laas.