

The International Peatland Society (IPS) is an organisation of corporate and individual members dedicated to the responsible management and Wise Use of peatlands and peat. Our mission is to serve all those involved in peatlands and peat through the promotion, gathering, exchange and communication of knowledge and experience, by means of events and projects which address key issues, including climate change, biodiversity, the need for responsible use and restoration. Currently the IPS has 1462 individual, corporate, student and institutional members from 43 countries.

Dangerous Peatland Haze in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia is currently suffering from major peatland fires and haze mainly in Indonesia, and especially the island of Borneo. The fires are the result of forest clearance, poor land use practices, and a very strong El Niño. Smoke from the burning areas causes widespread public health problems and premature deaths in the countryside and cities. According to news reports, there have been nearly 100,000 active hot spots in Indonesia in 2015. It is estimated that the fires this year have emitted an estimated 1 billion tons of CO₂ equivalents, which is higher than the average annual emissions of Germany. Daily emissions this autumn exceeded daily emissions from the entire U.S. economy. Indonesia's President Joko Widodo is calling for restoration efforts but so far with little success. Slash and burn agriculture by small farms and large companies are one of the causes of the fires, in addition to widespread drainage of the peat swamp forests. Fires can smolder underneath the surface for weeks. The Global Forest Watch tool shows that 50 to 60% of the fires in Indonesia are happening outside of land devoted to agriculture, even in pristine and protected areas. This situation is especially dangerous for the endangered orangutans of which 1/3 is under threat now, but also for children, the elderly, and the overall economy. For more information, see <http://ow.ly/UyCn5>.

Sign up for the International Peat Congress 2016!

Remember that the abstract deadline for the International Peat Congress 2016 is **30 November 2015**. Now you can also register already for the conference at <http://ipc2016.com>. We warmly welcome you to attend and invite your co-workers to come along. The 15th International Peat Congress is held in Kuching, Malaysia during **15 - 19 August 2016**. This will also be the venue of the IPS Annual Assembly. If you do not want to fully register yet, you can sign up for the Congress mailing list at www.ipc2016.com/mailling.php or go viral on your social media networks for instance by attending www.facebook.com/events/442705769217025. The Congress is organised by the Malaysian Peat Society in partnership with IPS, and supported by the Sarawak Government, the Malaysian Society of Soil Science, the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO), the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), the Peat Society of Indonesia and Sarawak Convention Bureau.

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IPS Executive Board to meet in Düsseldorf

The Executive Board of the IPS will hold its next meeting in Düsseldorf/Ratingen at the office of the German Garden Industry Association (IVG) during **23 - 24 November 2015**. On the agenda will be the development and implementation of the Strategy 2016 - 2020, finances and membership fees of the IPS, preparation of the 2016

Congress and other peatland symposia, and the Global Peat Resources, the Peat Dialogue and the Sphagnum Farming projects. The Board will also discuss IPS support for the scientific journal Mires and Peat, contents and finances of Peatlands International and plans for a new website for the Society. Furthermore, the Allan Robertson Grants 2016 are in train, and we should decide on which events of global importance to attend during the next months. Note that in 2016 also elections for presumably six Executive Board seats are coming up. We will keep you informed.

Peatlands in Land Use Planning - Seminar in Helsinki

Suoseura is holding its annual autumn meeting and seminar at the House of Science and Letters in Helsinki on **25 November**. The seminar will deal with "Peatlands in land use planning" and include the following presentations:

- 13:20 Peatlands and peat - peatlands as an example for holistic land use planning, Santtu Kareksela, Metsähallitus/University of Jyväskylä
- 13:45 Peatlands in land use planning, Ismo Karhu, Council of Oulu Region
- 14:30 100 Mire types – a new publication, Veli Saari ja Eero Kaakinen <http://ow.ly/UtcJF>
- 14:55 From the Azores to Spitzbergen and the Urals – a new guide for European Sphagnum mosses to be published, Harri Vasander, University of Helsinki, and Jukka Laine

Please register by **20 November** by email to [suoseura49 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:suoseura49@gmail.com) or text message to +358 50 465 9324. More information on the programme (in Finnish) can be found also at www.suoseura.fi.

250 Participants at German Peat and Humus Day

The 50th Torf and Humustag in Bad Zwischenahn, Germany had a record attendance of 250 participants on 15 October. At the seminar, attendees got information on the current season and latest market trends, including the development of alternative resources. Consumers put increasingly emphasis on sustainable products but are not always ready to pay for these or take additional efforts in their own habits. Latest news were introduced on the certification system "Responsibly Produced Peat (RPP)" which will have the first decisions within the coming weeks. Following that the guests travelled back in history to see the different development of the peat industry in the Eastern and Western part of Germany. In addition, information on bark and on thermo-mechanic bioextrusion were shared. The next German Peat and Humus Day will be held on **29 September 2016**. More info: www.ivg.org.

COP 21: Soils for Food Security and Climate

The "4/1000 Initiative: Soils for Food Security and Climate" aims to ensure that agriculture plays its part in combating climate change. It consists of a voluntary action plan under the Lima-Paris Action Agenda (LPAA), backed up by an ambitious research programme. A 4/1000 annual growth rate of the soil carbon stock intends to show that even a small increase in the soil carbon stock is crucial to improve soil fertility and agricultural production and contributes to achieving the long-term objective of limiting the temperature increase to +1,5/2°C. The official launch of the initiative will take place at UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris on **1 December 2015**, with the signing of a joint declaration between all stakeholders. The 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be held in Paris with the objective to achieve, for the first time, a universal and binding agreement to efficiently combat climate change and stimulate and accelerate the transition towards resilient and low-carbon societies and economies. You can find more information at <http://newsroom.unfccc.int> and www.ag4climate.org.

Highland Projects for RSPB Award

Several peatland-related projects are in the finals of the RSPB Scotland's Nature of Scotland Awards 2015. This includes peatland restoration efforts in the Cairngorms National Park for the Innovation Award, where new techniques have led to 20 kilometres of peat hags and the equivalent of 20 football pitches of bare peat being restored. For the Species Champion category, the Cairngorms Capercaillie Framework focusing on addressing conflicts between recreation management, development planning and conservation; and the Marsh Fritillary project, that works with land managers to enhance habitats, are nominated. For the Sustainable Development Award, peatland restoration at Blacklaw and Whitelee Windfarms are listed. The winners of the Awards will be announced on **19 November** in Edinburgh. For a list of all projects see www.rspb.org.uk/whatwedo/scotland/natureofscotland.