

The International Peat Society (IPS) is a non-governmental, non-profit multidisciplinary organisation of scientific, industrial and regulatory members both individual and institutional. The mission of the IPS is to bring people and organisations together to foster the advancement, exchange and communication of scientific, technical and social knowledge and understanding for the wise use of peatlands and peat.

IPS Executive Board Meeting in Germany

The Executive Board of the International Peat Society has met during **25 - 26 October 2012** in Bad Zwischenahn, Lower Saxony, Germany to discuss current administrative matters and to meet stakeholders from the German National Committee (DGMT) and the German Horticulture Industry Association (IVG). At that meeting, the participants exchanged background information on all involved organisations and made suggestions for future cooperation. During the Executive Board sessions, most important items dealt with included a review of the International Peat Congress 2012 and a preview to Malaysia 2016, the bidding process for the Congress 2020, the status of IPS National Committees and industry associations, a set of rules for IPS proceedings and their publication as well as possible joint projects with our German members. The Board accepted new IPS members from China, Peru and the Falkland Islands. President Björn Hånell and Secretary General Jaakko Silpola had visited Beijing and Changchun in September to get familiar with Chinese peatland and peat research and use. With regard to IPS finances, the EB investigated membership fee payments 2010-2012 and the latest income statement as of 30 September. They also discussed how to organise IPS accounting after Mrs. Hyryläinen's retirement in 2013. To allow greater flexibility in attendance of meetings for our members, the EB will suggest a change to the IPS Statutes to the Annual Assembly 2013 to hold Annual Meetings up until 30 September of each year (now June). To further discuss IPS' tasks and how to deal with current peatland challenges, a special Strategy Meeting will be held in late **January 2013** in Amsterdam.

Lost Password for the IPS Website?

Since last year, all IPS members have the possibility to see and edit their member information on the IPS website, also if they have joined IPS via one of our 17 National Committees. You can also read and download many IPS publications and papers for free at our document database. Here is how to retrieve your password and ID (usually firstname.lastname) in case they got lost: Visit www.peatsociety.org/user/password and enter the email address to which we send Peat News. Please do not register/open a new account if you are an IPS member already, e.g. receive Peatlands International and Peat News. In case you are not sure about your membership status or need additional help, just contact [susann.warnecke \(at\) peatsociety.org](mailto:susann.warnecke@peatsociety.org). Much information on the IPS website is now available to members only, such as IPS conference proceedings, other publications, and the peat dictionary. There is also an open list of members that have unlocked their contact data by clicking the "show my information" box in their personal member profile. Have a look!

Award of Excellence 2013 Waiting for Applicants!

Now it is time to apply for the IPS Award of Excellence 2013. Individual persons, projects and groups carrying out peat and peatland activities can be nominated by letter, email or on the IPS website until **31 January 2013**. Neither the winner nor the applicants have to be IPS members. As in previous years, the Award consists of a framed scroll and €1,000 – this is a good opportunity to

receive funding for your projects! Applications should contain the contact details of both the applying person and the nominee plus an explanation why the Award should be given to that special person, group or project. This can be sent to the IPS Secretariat or be submitted via the website of the IPS at www.peatsociety.org/webform/nomination-ipsaward-2013. All proposals are reviewed by the IPS Executive Board in February/March and the Award is presented at the Annual Assembly in May/June. For more details, please also see www.peatsociety.org/about-us/award-excellence.

Bidding Process for the International Peat Congress 2020

All National Committees of the IPS are encouraged to consider hosting the International Peat Congress 2020 in their country. The Executive Board of IPS has confirmed the following criteria for the public competition:

The 16th Congress would be held in the summer of 2020 in a country active in research and utilisation of peat and peatlands as well as in the implementation of the Wise Use and Responsible Peatland Management concepts. The bids should include:

- a presentation of the congress city and venue
- a proposal for the theme and content structure of the event
- a draft budget including 15% commission of all registration fees to the IPS

Application deadline is **31 August 2013**, after which the Executive Board will hear presentations of the applying countries and make its recommendation to the National Representatives. Those will decide on the venue and organiser of the 2020 Congress at the Annual Assembly 2014. IPS Statutes, Internal Regulations and conference guidelines (being currently updated) will be applied. It is recommended to work together with a professional congress bureau in the process. International Peat Congresses are held since 1963 every 4 years and attract up to 700 experts from peatland research, the peat industry and others interested in bogs, fens and mires. We will contact all National Committees with more detailed information within the next few weeks.

In Memoriam: Leo Schipper (1949-2012)

Leo Schipper passed away on 8 September and with him we lost a friend and respected colleague. Leo is well-known in the world of peat. For almost forty years peat in all its disguises was his life. His character and willingness to share his profound knowledge made Leo welcome in many relevant organisations. He served from 1991 on as Director of Nevema BV, as President of the RHP norm commission, on the RHP supervisory board, and as organiser of Peat in Horticulture conferences. For 10 years, until 2009, Leo was the Chairman of the Dutch IPS National Committee, the Nederlands Veengenootschap. We are grateful for his national and international work, building a stable and well reputed Veengenootschap. We have lost more than a friend and a colleague. We wish his family all the strength to go through these difficult times. (*Board of the Dutch IPS*)

People and peatlands – Cultural & Society Studies in Finland

A seminar dealing with People and Peatlands – Cultural and Society Studies of Peatlands” (Ihminen suolla - soiden kulttuurinen ja yhteiskunnallinen tutkimus tänään) is held in connection to the Autumn General Meeting of the Finnish Peatland Society (Suoseura) on **20 November 2012**. The seminar is organised in cooperation with the Institute for Natural Resources, Environment and Society (LYY) and the University of Eastern Finland. Speakers are Kirsi Laurén, Minna Tanskanen, Annika Nyström, Suvi Silvennoinen, Anu Lounela, and Yrjö Sepänmaa. The presentations are given in Finnish. For the full programme, times and venue, please visit www.suoseura.fi.

70th Years Peat Research at Geological Survey of Finland

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of peat research at the Geological Survey of Finland, a seminar on “Peatlands in Finland’s nature and economy” is being organised for **28 November 2012**. A range of high quality presentations will be given on that day at the GSF/GTK research centre in Otaniemi, Espoo, Finland. On behalf of the IPS, Secretary General Jaakko Silpola will attend the event. For more information please see www.gtk.fi. (*Kimmo Virtanen*)

£ 500,000 Biffa Award Grant for Peatland Programme

The UK North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership has won a second National Award to support peatland restoration. The Biffa Award will allow the partnership to restore some of the eroding peat bodies in the North Pennines. The newly established charity, the Friends of the North Pennines, will be responsible for handling the finances while the AONB Partnership will coordinate the actual restoration work. Biffa Award is one of the leading landfill communities funding schemes. Since 2006, the AONB Partnership has restored over 250 km² of blanket bog in the North Pennines and this Award will allow the trialling of new bare peat restoration techniques. The North Pennines AONB contains the largest contiguous peat bog in England at over 1000 km². For more information, please see www.tiny.cc/6ubgnw.

IUCN UK Peatland Programme Briefing

According to information from the IUCN, the UK Government considers whether to account for Wetland Drainage and Rewetting in its national climate change targets. Doing so could give extra impetus for Government spend on peatland rewetting and would pave the way for business funding through carbon markets. This is potentially a vital new source of money that could directly support farmers and other land managers in often remote rural areas. The IUCN UK, Inquiry on Peatlands highlighted a shared desire across the land managing community to move away from the current situation where degraded and damaged peatlands result in loss of biodiversity, impact water supplies and release carbon. For many farmers and estate managers the erosion and gullyng of peatlands has direct impact on livestock and sporting interests. A key recommendation from the Inquiry was to secure new funds to help repair damaged peatlands, in a way that allows these areas to continue to be productive – for food, clean water, biodiversity, carbon sequestration and storage - through their sustainable management “allowing farmers to continue farming”. Please see the full briefing at www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/news/213. (*Rea Cris*)

New Substrate Works in Latvia Opened by HAWITA Group

On **2 October 2012**, the northern German substrate manufacturer HAWITA officially opened, according to their press release, one of the most modern substrate works in Europe in Cesvaine, Latvia, one of the richest peat regions in Europe. Amongst others, the German Ambassador, Andrea Wiktorin, and Andra Minkevica from the National Investment and Development Agency (LIAA) offered their congratulations on the investment of €12.5 million. Extraction is carried out directly on site so that transport distances are kept to a minimum. Together with its factory in Akniste, about 120 km away, HAWITA has about 3,000 ha of production areas, selling on average 600,000 cubic metres of peat and substrate products annually. HAWITA also assures the responsible and environmentally friendly handling of peat as a natural resource. Excavation will only be carried out in areas which are not subject to nature conservation and include nature restoration measures beyond the legally required minimum. To emphasise its social responsibility, a cheque amounting to 5,000 lats (about €7,200) was handed over to the Cesvaine town administration for the repair of the historic castle in the town centre. More info: www.hawita-gruppe.de/en/news.php?show=40.

Reed as Renewable Resource Conference in Germany

An International conference on the utilization of wetland plants “Reed as a Renewable Resource”, including common reed, sedges, reed canary grass and cattail, will be held at the University of Greifswald, Germany on **14 - 16 February 2013**. The utilization of wetland biomass offers promising new potential as renewable raw material and fuel. It may combine the substitution of fossil resources, sustainable land use, nature conservation and the maintenance of ecosystem services. Numerous research and development activities worldwide reflect the awareness of this potential. The international conference will bring together various parties from research, governance and practice in order to build networks, detect research demands and exchange experience and information. Currently abstracts are being reviewed and early birds should register until **30 November 2012**. The conference fee (early €60, late €100, students €50) covers snacks, coffee and the proceedings. An excursion is available for €40. For more info: www.rrr2013.de.

Windfarms on Irish Peatlands for UK Electricity?

There are proposals from Element Power to build more than 700 turbines and transport power of about 3,000 MW through two giant undersea cables across the Irish sea to customers in the United Kingdom. These plans were discussed in early October in Ireland and UK, including concerns over the high price of UK offshore windfarms, subvention criteria for foreign investors in Ireland and the impact of the turbines on rural communities. Such “green energy project” would help the UK in meeting its carbon emission targets, improve energy availability and in addition increase employment. At the moment, Ireland has some 1,100 wind turbines at 176 onshore and 7 offshore windfarms. The Bog of Allen foreseen for the project is a 958 km² raised bog in the centre of Ireland between the rivers Liffey and Shannon, where peat has been harvested for many years. For news on the topic and additional details, please see www.tiny.cc/rllgnw.

Awareness for Leyte Sab-a Basin Peatlands in Philippines

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Eastern Visayas, Philippines, has forged agreements with municipal governments to rehabilitate and preserve the Leyte Sab-a Basin peatlands. The 3,000 ha basin is one of the two project sites of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Peatland Forest Project in the Philippines. Under the agreements, the municipal governments of Alangalang and Sta. Fe will mobilize residents of the barangays within the Leyte Sab-a Basin to establish demonstration projects and rehabilitation of degraded peatlands. Each barangay will receive PHP 175,000 for the development of a one-hectare demonstration project and two-hectare rehabilitation project. The project also aims to create awareness and institute measures on the protection and sustainable use of areas surrounding the peatlands that allow cultivation for agricultural crops. Palo, Leyte was also the venue of the first National Peatland Summit and Mission Review in the Philippines on **24 - 25 October 2012**. For more information, see www.pia.gov.ph/news/index.php?article=1141350375340.

More News Snippets at IPS Facebook Page

Would you like to read about up-to-date IPS matters and peat-related news in your Facebook feed? Please go to www.fb.com/peatsociety and like our page – and preferably add it to your interest lists to get sure to receive all status updates. We are proud to have almost 200 likes on that page and of course we encourage you to invite your friends and colleagues to follow, too. Please note that links posted on the IPS Facebook page do not necessarily present IPS’s viewpoints as a balanced organisation, but serve as source of information on ongoing peatland matters worldwide.