

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.

Thanks to all - Successful International Peat Congress “Peatlands in Balance”, Stockholm, Sweden 3 - 8 June 2012

The 14th International Peat Congress was a great success! Having been held at the City Congress Centre in Stockholm on **3 - 8 June 2012**, the Congress attracted 615 mire and peat researchers, peatland managers and exhibitors, enthusiasts and artists from 35 countries for a week of scientific sessions, workshops, meetings and excursions. Altogether 420 oral and poster presentations on 10 different themes were held, ranging from pristine peatlands in the Nordics via growing media and energy production to tropical peat swamp forests, mountain peatlands and peat balneology.



The most eager participants had been exploring Swedish peatlands already during the weekend before, at two Pre-Congress tours, one for peat producers and one for students. On Sunday, registration for the Congress started and the first meetings of the IPS Executive Board (EB), Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and Commission II (industrial use) took place. A beautiful Peat Art exhibition with sculptures of Dioni ten Busschen was formally opened by IPS President Donal Clarke. In the evening, the newly arrived guests had the opportunity to meet new and old colleagues during the enjoyable icebreaking party at the Cabaret restaurant of the Congress venue. Monday was the day of the opening ceremony and two keynote speeches, by Prof. Jack Rieley from

the United Kingdom and Dr. Norbert Siebels from Germany. Their thoughtful introductions were followed by the first scientific sessions in seven rooms in the afternoon, and an evening welcome reception at Stockholm City Hall, opened by Ulf Fridebäck, Vice President of the Stockholm City Council. This place became famous for instance as the venue of the Nobel Prize banquet.

On Tuesday, Nigel Roulet held the morning keynote speech, and plenty of oral and poster presentations were given during the day. Especially popular were the RHP workshop and the Latvian Peat Art exhibition opening. The late afternoon was reserved for meetings of all nine IPS Commissions. Many participants took afterwards the chance to see the horses at the Royal Mews.

On Wednesday the school yard of Norra Latin, right opposite of the Congress venue, was full of cheerful participants, who did not only celebrate the Swedish National Day, but were also looking forward to their field trips on 15 different topics. Afterwards we heard that beautiful mires, the stunning archipelago, diverse uses of peat, some sheep and cows, and even peat beer had been included in the packages wrapped by the Swedish organisers – and all could be followed at Facebook and Twitter where some travellers shared their photos and experiences almost real time.

For Thursday, State Secretary Anders Flanking from the Swedish Ministry of the Environment gave the fourth keynote speech of the Congress, focusing on special local topics in worldwide surroundings. After that it was time for the final presentations, to buy the latest peatland publications or Congress Crew T-shirts, to have a talk with the many exhibitors and poster presenters, and to discuss IPS National Committee matters, before the crowd headed for the marvellous Congress Dinner to Restaurant Solliden at Skansen.

Early Friday morning was reserved for the important review session for the Strategy for Responsible Peatlands Management (SRPM). IPS President Donal Clarke and Scientific Advisory Board Chair Jack Rieley gave basic background information before a panel discussion chaired by Paul Short, IPS Executive Board member and President of the Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association, went deeper into the Strategy. The audience discussed its tasks and implementation nationally and internationally, and identified future challenges of responsible peatland management.

Finally, the IPS held its open Annual Assembly and General Assembly of Members with the election of major key persons for the coming years. After that the Malaysian National Committee took the stage to welcome all Stockholm participants to the next International Peat Congress, to be held in Kuching, Malaysia in 2016. Last but not least, two smaller groups met for the post-congress tours to Västerbotten. More mires, wild rivers and very young coastal peatlands were indeed worth being seen!

We hope that you enjoyed this busy, exciting and fun week and we would be glad to see you again at one of our international events in the near future. The IPS sends its best regards and big thanks to all participants of the Congress - and especially to all speakers, organisers and the 58 sponsors and 24 exhibitors for their valuable work and input!

Resolution from the 14th International Peat Congress

The following resolution was published on 8 June, the final day of the Stockholm Congress: “The 14th International Peat Congress ‘Peatlands in Balance’ provided an excellent opportunity for 600 delegates to discuss current knowledge under ten themes, related to the economic, social and environmental attributes of peatlands. The presentations and discussions contributed to a better understanding and awareness of the values of our tremendous peatland resources worldwide. The

Congress provided an opportunity to dialogue on these challenges ranging from issues related to better growing medium, crops and trees to global climate change. A clear outcome of this Congress is that while the peat family shares many common interests, not all values are in balance. In order to respond to these concerns, IPS commits to:

- *strengthening communications to all members and between all interest groups associated with the advancement of peatland knowledge and practical cooperation*
- *a purposeful outreach targeting emerging peatland resource institutions, economic development structures and societal bodies from our global community*
- *a critical review of our internal corporate structure and its ability to meet the collective challenges*
- *an overview of international conventions related to social, economic and environmental values affecting peatlands*
- *providing peatland policies based on scientific knowledge to be used, as appropriate, in national and international decision-making*

The way forward on these tasks will be an undertaking by the IPS Executive Board over the next four years. We will empower our agencies, and call upon our members, to advance the interests expressed at this Congress in the development of responsible peatland management worldwide.

IPS is grateful for the commitment and the energy of the Swedish National Committee and the Congress Organizing Committee, the sponsors and all volunteers in achieving an outstanding Congress. The balancing of different interests, views and values was enabled in an open and stimulating atmosphere. We thank all participants and organizers, once again, on behalf of all members of the IPS peat family.”

Signed by: *International Peat Society, Executive Board*

New Executive Board of the IPS 2012-2014

The Annual Assembly of National Representatives in Stockholm on 8 June elected a new Executive Board for the IPS by secret ballots. We warmly welcome Professor Björn Hånell, the new President of the IPS, and the other members of the new Executive Board for the next two/four years and wish them success for their work for the Society:

Function	Name and country	Term of office
President	Björn Hånell, Sweden	2012 – 2016
1st Vice President	Guus van Berckel, Germany/Netherlands	2012 – 2016
2nd Vice President	Jack Rieley, United Kingdom	2012 – 2016

Ordinary members (2-6)

Valerijs Kozlovs, Latvia	2010 – 2014
Erki Niitlaan, Estonia	2010 – 2014
Lech Szajdak, Poland	2010 – 2014
Donal Clarke, Ireland	2012 – 2016
Paul Short, Canada	2012 – 2016
Samu Valpola, Finland	2012 – 2016

The full contact details of all IPS Executive Board members can be found at www.peatsociety.org/about-us/executive-board.

New IPS Commission Chairs and Scientific Advisory Board

The following persons were elected IPS Commission key persons for the next four years. We wish them every success for their valuable work in the IPS. All Commission Chairs are automatically members of the IPS Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) until 2016.

C1: Stratigraphy, inventory and conservation of peatlands

Chair: Lars Lundin

Vice Chair: Maria Strack

C4: Chemical, physical and biological characteristics of peat

Chair: Jürgen Schoenherr

Vice Chair: Maris Klavins

C7: Ecology and management of forested peatlands

Chair: Sakari Sarkkola

Vice Chair: Sylvain Jutras

C2: Utilisation of peat and peatlands for horticulture, energy and other economic purposes

Chair: Gerald Schmilewski

Vice Chair: Pat Fitzgerald

C5: Restoration, rehabilitation and after-use of peatlands

Chair: Catherine Farrell

Vice Chair: Roxane Andersen

C8: Cultural aspects of peat and peatlands

Chair: Michiel Gerding

Vice: Marie Kofod-Hansen

Secretary: Ilze Ozola

C3: Agricultural use of peatlands and peat

Chair: Barbara Kalisz

Vice Chair and Secretary will be proposed later on.

C6: Peat balneology, medicine and therapeutics

Chair: Leena Larva

Vice Chair: Riitta Korhonen

C9: Tropical peatlands

Chair: Jack Rieley

Cross-Commission Standing Committee on Peatlands and Climate Change

Chair: Mats Nilsson

If you are interested in the Vice Chair or Secretary positions, please contact the Commission Chair directly. The full contact details of all newly elected persons are available at the IPS website at www.peatsociety.org/about-us/commissions-and-working-groups.

IPS Award of Excellence to Prof. Dr. Piotr Ilnicki

The 2012 IPS Award of Excellence was conferred to Professor Piotr Ilnicki from the University of Life Sciences in Poznań, Poland. According to the nomination by the Polish National Committee, “the entire life of Piotr Ilnicki has been associated with peat and peatlands as a scientist, expert, reviewer, lecturer and teacher of new generation of peat scientists. His professional interests lie in physical properties of peat, processes in organic soils during amelioration and subsidence, and agricultural use of fens and wetlands ecology. Moreover his research focuses on grassland management, soil science, carbon sequestrating in peatland, eutrophication of rivers, and landscape ecology. Professor Piotr Ilnicki has published more than 320 scientific papers. In 2003, he received the award of Polish Ministry of Education for publishing the book on “Peatlands and Peats”, which was named the best academic handbook. In the same year Piotr Ilnicki and Leon E. Parent from Canada published a book on “Organic soils and peat materials for sustainable Agriculture”. Professor Piotr Ilnicki has played a prominent and active role in the work of numerous international scientific organizations and scientific journals. He has been active both in the Polish Peatland Society (President 1993-1998, Vice-President 1998-2002, Chair of Commission III 1983-1992) and in the International Peat Society (member since 1968, Chair of Commission III 1995-2000, Executive Board Member 1988-1996, Vice President 1996-2000, Honorary member 2004). Piotr Ilnicki has been a member of editorial boards in a number of scientific journals. He has also played

a crucial role in organizing many wetland/peatland meetings with excursions in Poland and abroad, for instance in 1967 Warsaw - Białystok; 1970 Nowy Sącz; 1971 Warsaw; 1974 Gdańsk; 1976 5th International Peat Congress, Poznan; 1995 Warsaw - Biebrza; 1997 Saint Malo, France; 1999 Jokioinen, Finland.” We wish Prof. Ilnicki all the best for his future career!

New IPS Honorary Members

During the Congress Dinner in Stockholm on 7 June, honorary membership of the IPS was conferred to Jean-Yves Daigle from Canada and Juhani Päivänen from Finland for their long-lasting voluntary services to the Society. In addition, the honorary certificate was given to Thomas Malterer from the USA who had received honorary status in 2009. Earlier during the week, a special prize had been given to Don Grubich from the USA who was recognised as one of the IPS members who had attended all IPS Congresses since 1968. Our warmest congratulations on behalf of the IPS!

Canadian Stephen C. Zoltai Awards

During the 14th International Peat Congress, the Canadian Society for Peat and Peatlands and the Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association presented the Stephen C. Zoltai Award to two students for their distinguished presentation of an oral and a poster paper related to peatland science. The winners are:

- Oral presentation: Christian Klingenfuss for his paper entitled: Relations between the decomposition of peat and SOC in fens of Northeastern Germany
- Poster presentation: Peter Raabe for his paper titled: Testate Amoebae reflect present environmental conditions in restored cut-over bogs. A new tool for evaluation and monitoring?

The organisers are grateful to Tord Magnusson, Chair of the Scientific Committee, and the members of the evaluation team for their cooperation in the evaluation process.

Peatlands International 1/2012 in your Mailbox

Issue 1/2012 of Peatlands International was largely available at the International Peat Congress in Stockholm. All IPS members also receive their personal copies by post during these weeks: Members in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Norway, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and from countries without a National Committee get their magazine directly from the IPS Secretariat in Finland. This is also the case now for our members in Germany. The National Committees of Canada, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and USA continue to organise the distribution in their own countries. If you want to participate in one of the next issues, please contact [susann.warnecke \(at\) peatsociety.org](mailto:susann.warnecke@peatsociety.org) as soon as possible. Simple instructions for authors are available at www.peatsociety.org/publications/peatlands-international and the submission deadline is **30 September**. Also additional advertisements are very welcome.

Event Cooperation with ISHS Continues

During the IPS Commission II (Utilisation of peat and peatlands for horticulture, energy and other economic purposes) meeting in Stockholm on **3 June**, the contract for cooperating in conference organisation between the IPS and the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) was confirmed for the following years, and signed by President Donal Clarke on behalf of IPS and Bill Carlile on behalf of the ISHS. This is an important achievement for both organisations, bringing their members and joint interests with regard to growing media closer together. We look forward to

working together with our horticulture colleagues for many years to come! The next joint ISHS-IPS conference will be held as “Symposium on growing media, hydroponics and composting: Water Efficient Horticulture World Wide (GroSci2013)” in Leiden, Rotterdam, the Netherlands on **17 - 21 June 2013**. More information is available at www.ishs.org and www.grosci2013.nl.

New Brochure “About the IPS”

An almost sparkling new 14 x 14 cm brochure on “All about the IPS” was launched at the Stockholm Congress. The brochure can still be ordered from the IPS Secretariat, susann.warnecke (at) peatsociety.org, to be used at peat and peatland events during the coming months. The four-pages brochure contains basic information on the structure and work of the IPS and a form for new members. You can also download and share it as PDF file at www.peatsociety.org/news/new-ips-flyer. Please invite your friends and colleagues to become part of the peat family!

IPS Statement on Turf Cutting on SAC sites in Ireland

At the Stockholm Congress, the IPS Executive Board noted a letter from Andrew Jackson, Friends of the Irish Environment, on the status of the designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) areas on which turf cutting continues despite EU regulations and recent intervention. The Board thanked Mr. Jackson for bringing this matter to its attention. It congratulated them on their initiative in conducting an aerial survey and deplored the continued illegal turf cutting on Natura 2000 protected sites, and supports the work of the Irish Peatlands Council to seek a resolution on this issue.

IPS and Responsibly Produced Peat Certification

The Executive Board of IPS (EB) evaluated a proposal regarding a Responsibly Produced Peat Foundation. The EB expressed the view that such a foundation should be truly independent so that it would be seen to be transparent in its proceedings and have credibility and transparency in providing certification to peat producers. The development and administration of a certification scheme should be handled by an arms-length independent third party. The EB agreed that IPS should continue with its previous decisions in this matter. Specifically the IPS should:

- Be neutral, not endorsing one certification scheme over another.
- Call for any certification scheme to follow the Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management.
- Encourage mutual recognition by the various schemes.
- The EB agreed the possible engagement by the IPS or its representatives on the proposed stakeholder council may achieve these outcomes.

More information on the proposed Dutch/European scheme can be found at www.rdeman.nl/site/peat.html. A comparison with the Canadian Veriflora scheme was provided at the SPRM-session at the Stockholm Congress on **8 June**.

Moving and Summer Holidays of the IPS Secretariat

The IPS Secretariat has moved to its new address at Kauppakatu 19 D 31. Currently the services of the Secretariat are somewhat limited due to rearranging and the annual holidays of the IPS staff. Secretary General Jaakko Silpola is mainly out of office until **30 August** (new contract with IPS as of early September), and Communications Manager Susann Warnecke and Intern Celia Zanin will be away **9 July - 12 August**. Accountant Birgit Hyyryläinen can be reached once a week after 1 August at her new email: birgit.hyyrylainen(at)peatsociety.org. We look forward to cooperating with you at full speed in early autumn - and wish you a sunny, relaxed and enjoyable summer.