

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.

## Peat Production Up in Canada, Far Below in Europe

The IPS Secretariat has collected peat production data from its member associations. The presented figures are outcome percentages from the production targets of each country. The data was collected in mid September, after which production may have continued depending on the weather conditions in different countries. By that time, the following shares of targets were reached:

- Canada: western part 90-100 %, eastern part 110-120 %
- Estonia: around 50 to 60 %
- Latvia: 50-60 %
- Lithuania: horticultural peat about 65 %, energy peat about 75 %
- Germany: from 70 to 100 % depending on area
- Ireland: around 35 %
- Sweden: around 50 %
- Finland: around 45-50 %

From other countries no data was available. We thank our partners for their cooperation in sharing this information. (*Jaakko Silpola*)

## Final Report of UK DEFRA Sustainable GM Task Force

The UK Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has published the final report of the Sustainable Growing Media Task Force. This group was established in October 2011 following publication of the Natural Environment White Paper, which contained the requirement to phase out the use of peat in English horticulture by 2020 in the amateur (gardening) market and by 2030 for commercial horticulture. The name of the Task Force was changed from 'Sustainable Peat' to 'Sustainable Growing Media' but the terms of reference remained the same, namely, 'how to achieve the goal of phasing out peat use in the plants and growing media (and other bagged retail products) sold within England'. The Final Report was published in June 2012 with a period of commenting until 30 September after which the UK Government issues its further policy and actions by the end of this year. The report is preceded by a four-point summary:

1. The horticulture industry over relies on peat. The more it argues the economic case for peat, the more it exposes the inherent risk in having an industry that is too reliant on peat to compete. It is in the economic interests of the industry to develop more choices and alternatives in the raw materials for growing media.
2. All growing media regardless of origin must be competitive, perform to agreed standards and have proven sustainability credentials. Consensus is needed amongst the key stakeholders on what those credentials are and the degree of third party auditing required to show compliance.
3. The environmental movement needs to restate its rationale for zero peat use in horticulture and be consistent in the delivery of that message, not just across the UK but also across the EU and

- beyond. It also needs to balance its narrative on peat in horticulture with other uses of peat.
4. Government should continue to show bold leadership on this issue, but should seek ways to, and be seen to, support a prosperous UK horticulture industry that not only uses sustainable growing media but creates a sector that supports Government's wider sustainability and economic ambitions. Further information can be found at [www.defra.gov.uk/peat-taskforce/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/peat-taskforce/) (*Jack Rieley*)

## CSPMA Launches Revised Website

The Canadian horticulture peat industry after seventeen years has initiated the upgrading of its website. This is being carried out to improve the communication and outreach of the industry with key stakeholders and to take better advantage of the technology available through social media.

The CSPMA (Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association) states: "As an industry we have advanced the knowledge around responsible peatland management, and the sustainability of our industry. We have committed to the principle of science-based policies and programs. We intend to fulfill our environmental, social, and economic accountabilities in not only meeting our needs, but the needs of our clients, and stakeholders. The industry has benefited greatly from our current site and is looking forward to a better engagement with our new version." (*Paul Short, Doris Reeve*)

## Indonesian Peat Association (HGI) Workshop and Congress

The Indonesian Peat Association held a Workshop and Congress on **12 September 2012** in Novotel, Bogor, Indonesia the day prior to the JICA-JST Fire and Carbon Management Symposium. The main theme was 'Responsible Peatland Management' and it was attended by around 150 peatland scientists from all parts of Indonesia.

Professor Jack Rieley conveyed greetings to the participants from IPS Executive Board and delivered a keynote address on "The Strategy for Responsible Peatland management – What is it and what is it for?" He traced the development of the strategy since 1997 until its launch in 2010 and showed the many ways in which it was being used by stakeholders for the wise use of peat and peatlands.

He suggested how the strategy could be incorporated into company and nature conservation management plans and strategies in Southeast Asia and informed the audience of the IPS intention to extend its activities and membership in tropical and developing countries.

During the Workshop Jack Rieley was presented with a 'Certificate of Appreciation' in recognition of his 25 years of research and capacity building on tropical peatland in Indonesia (Photo: Bambang Setiadi and Suwido Limin presenting the Certificate of Appreciation to Jack Rieley, left to right). Following the workshop 60 participants joined in the Congress of the Indonesian Peat Association during which new office bearers were elected.



The new Chairman is Professor Supiandi Sabiham of the Bogor Agricultural University. Bambang Setiadi remains on the Committee. The new committee has the important job of re-structuring HGI and instituting a fees structure in order to become more effective and influential in Indonesia. It will also consider establishing a federation of semi-autonomous HGI branches in those Indonesian Provinces with important peatland resources, e.g. Sumatra, West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan and Papua. (*Jack Rieley*)

## Symposium on Wild Fire and Carbon Management

The International Symposium on Wild Fire and Carbon management in Peat-Forest in Indonesia, organised jointly by the Japan International Collaboration Agency (JICA) and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) in collaboration with a range of Indonesian Government sponsors and the University of Hokkaido, was held in Novotel, Bogor, Indonesia on **13-14 September 2012**. It was attended by 264 participants from various institutions (NGO's, academia/universities, governments, research institutes, journalists, local/group communities, and private companies). The presentations covered a wide range of issues including:

- Knowledge of past, present and future trends relating to wildfires and carbon management of peat-forest;
- Information on the possible impacts of climate change, as well as guidance for stakeholders in the area of planning, implementation and scenarios (REDD+, MRV, etc.)
- A roadmap that provides a short- to long-term vision of research needs (capacity building, networks, etc.)
- Professor Jack Rieley of the University of Nottingham, UK and Second Vice President of the International Peat Society was guest keynote speaker on the topic 'Tropical Peatland in Southeast Asia – Burning Issues'. (*Jack Rieley*)

## News from Commission 8: Cultural Aspects of Peatlands

By happy coincidence IPS Commission VIII was able to convene at the Baltic Peat Producers' Forum in Tallinn, Estonia in the first week of September. The Commission meeting was attended by the Chair Michiel Gerding (Netherlands), the Vice Chair Marie Kofod-Hansen (Sweden), the Secretary Ilze Ozola (Latvia) and member and former Chair Anne Jelle Schilstra (Netherlands). Written contributions were received from Andreas Bauernochse (Germany) and Kirsi Lauren (Finland). A number of initiatives were discussed and agreed upon:

### *Rights and traditions of local communities regarding peat and peatlands*

This theme was formulated during the last International Peat Congress in the SAB meeting by Paul Short as one of the points of the Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management which needs further elaboration. Commission VIII is prepared to take up this challenge. We aim to stage sessions on this subject at the Peat Technology Conference in 2014 in Riga (Latvia) and the IPC in 2016 in Malaysia. The chair will write a position paper on the subject, the first draft to be ready in December of this year. Furthermore a questionnaire will be composed for the IPS members, National Committees and further afield to get a clearer picture of, for instance, government policy regarding peatlands on a national regional and local level, vis-a-vis local traditions, property rights, nature conservation, industrial policy. We hope we can count on the National Committees of the IPS to help us in gathering the information.

### *Peat Museums*

In Latvia and Estonia there are initiatives to create specialised peat museums. In other IPS countries such museums are already well established, for instance in Germany (Emsland Moormuseum) and the Netherlands (Veenpark). Some have professional staff, others are driven entirely by volunteers. The Commission VIII would like to stage a meeting of as many peat museums (and initiatives) as possible in the fall of 2013 in the Netherlands and/or Germany. The aim would be to share knowledge and experience and build a network within the IPS. We call upon the National Committees to provide us with names and addresses of relevant parties in this respect.

*Peat Art*

In Stockholm we witnessed two great examples of what artists can do with peat as their main material. In Latvia the project 12 sculptures, 12 artists, 12 months is ready to travel the (peat) world. Commission VIII will support these initiatives where we can.

*Webpage*

Commission VIII had its own webpage up till now with Marie Kofod-Hansen as moderator. We will incorporate that in the official IPS website soon. (*Michiel Gerding*)

## Call for Abstracts: Weather & Climate for the Energy Industry

The Scientific Committee of the 2nd International Conference Energy & Meteorology - Weather and Climate for the Energy Industry is calling for papers. The conference will be held in Toulouse, France during **25 - 28 June 2013**. The special theme for ICEM 2013 is: "Improving Weather and Climate Capabilities for Enhanced Energy Strategies". A Pre-Conference seminar on "Uncertainty in meteorological data for the energy industry" will be held on Monday **24 June 2013**. The Committee is inviting papers to be submitted, among others, for the following conference sessions:

- Weather and climate capabilities for energy strategies (ICEM 2013 Theme)
- State-of-the-science and challenges in weather and climate for the energy sector
- Combined meteorological and power monitoring systems
- Wind and solar forecasting for energy operations
- Climate change impact on energy resources, investments, demand and production
- Bioenergy and Biofuels: meteorological issues
- Energy demand modelling
- Weather and climate data to inform energy finance and insurance
- Weather and climate capabilities for smart grid and grid storage technologies
- Data visualisation and web applications for energy and meteorology
- Energy and meteorology outreach activities
- Experiences in training energy and meteorology specialists
- Major international projects/network in energy and meteorology

The deadline for abstract submission is **20 December 2012**. Abstracts submitted can be for oral or poster presentations. The Scientific Committee reserves the right to accept or reject abstracts. For additional information see [www.icem2013.org](http://www.icem2013.org). (*Francis Child*)

## Moss "Beads" Airlifted to Restore UK Peatlands

The Moors for the Future Partnership has airlifted 150 million 'beads' of Sphagnum moss to help bring life back to the Peak District and South Pennine moors since **24 - 25 September**. MoorLIFE, one of the largest conservation projects in the UK, is re-introducing this key peat-forming moss in a huge landscape-scale operation covering 2400 acres (980 hectares) across the hills of Northern England. In the first operation of its kind, Sphagnum gel beads known as BeadaMoss™ are airlifted by helicopter in five-litre tubs, starting on Black Hill in the Peak District National Park. This work, developed through the Sphagnum Propagation Project and funded by the Co-operative Foundation and Natural England, started with an original small source of local Sphagnum which was grown-on and multiplied in the laboratory and finally placed in special gel beads. For more information, please visit [www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk](http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk). (*Louise Turner*)