

Commission and National Committee Reports 2018

Reports and Contact Details of Commissions

Peatlands and Environment

CLIMATE

As of December 2018, 28 peatland researchers representing all climate zones and a wide range of peatland disciplines had agreed to be part of the Peatlands and Climate Change EG. During 2018, no requests were received from the IPS for specific information, although Dr David Wilson contributed to the IPS workshop in Amsterdam in February. It is hoped that the EG will become more active in 2019 and seek to actively engage with its members to ascertain potential points of mutual interest (e.g., meetings, workshops, symposia, publications). In October 2018, Dr Wilson stepped down as coordinator of the EG and was replaced by Dr Gerald Jurasinski of the University of Rostock.

The level of research into peatlands and climate change continues to remain very high, and annual publications in this field have increased again since dropping for the first time in 2017. (Note: the results are from a Google Scholar search of the scientific literature, which was carried out before the end of the 2017 calendar year). Similarly, research into rewetted/restored peatlands and climate change has increased steadily over the last decade, reflecting the increased funding directed at this important climate change mitigation topic, and reinforcing the importance of cross-cutting issues within this Commission.

BIODIVERSITY

Achievements in 2018

Over the last year, the Peatlands and Biodiversity (Ecology, Hydrology, Geology) EG, along with the other groups in the Commission, has been working to formalize the involvement of experts within the Commission and within the IPS in general. We have developed the Requirements for Expert Group Members, along with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Reviewing Documents. The former provides information on what you can expect if you get involved as one of the IPS' experts, while the latter details the process of reviewing a document for the IPS. We are currently trialing the SOP and will be rolling it out in 2019, along with recruiting new members. The IPS aims to have the capacity to provide expert responses to enquiries on peatland matters, in addition to providing an official statement on peatland issues of local and global importance. We have also designed the template for a fact sheet which can be populated with information on key peatland themes by EG members, as required, to provide educational information to the general public and other audiences.

At the IPS Jubilee Symposium in Rotterdam on September 13, 2018, six speakers presented at our session on Peatlands and Biodiversity (Ecology, Hydrology, Geology). The talks were thoroughly engaging and covered a range of topics, from the sustainability of Sphagnum farming to the specifics of satellite monitoring, with research on peatland environments from Ireland to Indonesia.

Plans for 2019

Along with other EGs, we plan to finalize and formalize the SOP and the Requirements for Expert Group Members so that the EG coordinators know on what terms to liaise new EG members. We also plan to trial the SOP in a 'real-life' activity and establish it as a protocol, which all EG Chairs and coordinators will be familiar with and easily apply when opportunities arise. I hope this will encourage more engagement by the IPS in international issues and the provision of responses 'from the experts'! Within this EG and others of the Commission, it would also be good to establish some joint goals for the year ahead, e.g., key information/fact sheets for the public, convening a session at an international conference, or other activities which raise our profile and enable us to contribute to international peatland science and responsible management.

RESTORATION

Roxane Andersen was on maternity leave from December 2017 until June 2018, where she did not take part in any activities relating to the EG. Following her return, Roxane attended the Society of Ecological Restoration (Europe Chapter) in Reykjavik, Iceland, between September 9 and 12, 2018, where she was invited to make a presentation to a session entitled "Promise and Perils of Peatland Restoration in the Climate Change Era", led by Paddy Woodsworth and Catherine Farrell. The meeting was excellent, attended by over 400 participants and provided a global perspective on the direction of the field of restoration ecology.

Unfortunately, the IPS and the Society of Ecological Restoration meetings were both organized on the same dates – this has been a repeated issue in the past and has often forced a choice between attending one or the other. Despite the clash, Roxane still proofread the abstracts relating to restoration for the IPS Annual Meeting in Rotterdam and supported the organization of the restoration session.

In January 2019, Roxane resigned from the "Lead Expert" position for the Restoration EG because of personal circumstances. Following her resignation, she organized a handover meeting with Pete Whittington to ensure a smooth transition. She remains available to support Pete in the future and will contribute as appropriate to the EGs, subject to availability.