

ABSTRACT NO: 154

## Peatland strategies and programs in Finland

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Finland has about 10 million hectares of mires and peatlands, which is a third of the land area. 52% of the area of mires has been drained for forestry, 13% is protected, and 60,000 hectares/yr are used for peat production. Multiple needs and values therefore relate to the use of peatlands.

Finnish National Strategy for Mires and Peatlands was submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in February 2011. The aim was to create common understanding of the sustainable and diverse use of mires and peatlands. Practical questions were: 1) what to do with drained unproductive peatlands, 2) where to direct peat production, and 3) what are further peatland protection needs. At the same time when the National Strategy was completing, planning of local peatland programs with similar sustainability aims and target questions were launched. In Northern Ostrobothnia, the peatland-richest region in Finland, a large interdisciplinary research project was launched as a part of the local peatland program to give information on the biodiversity state, economical impacts, and social values of peatlands. Local stakeholders were involved in the project through interviews and questionnaires. Based on existing data, tens of new high biodiversity areas outside protected areas were found. Peatlands were found to be an essential source of living for people, but depending on their occupation, either pristine or managed peatlands were preferred. Conflicting opinions revealed by the questionnaires indicate that the peatland programs will face strong arguments regardless the suggestions. Further results will be discussed in the congress.