

The International Peat Society (IPS) is an international, non-governmental and non-profit organization of scientific, industrial and regulatory stakeholders. It is dedicated to fostering the advancement, exchange and communication of scientific, technical and social knowledge and understanding for the wise use of peatlands and peat.

Last Chance: IPS Convention in Belfast!

If you have not registered yet for the IPS Convention in Belfast, this is the last chance to do so. We will meet at the Holiday Inn Hotel at 22 Ormeau Ave for an excursion to peat and peatland sites on **24 April** (currently fully booked); and continue with a full-day seminar on Peatland Restoration in the British Isles and Southeast Asia, the Scientific Advisory Board meeting, an assembly of the UK National Committee and a joint dinner on **25 April** as well as meetings of the IPS Commissions, the traditional National Committee Round Table and the Annual Assembly of National Representatives on **26 April**. The next one and half days, **27 and 28 April**, are reserved for the second workshop to finalize the Global Peatland Management Strategy. The complete programme and all registration details can be found at www.peatsociety.org/index.php?id=241. So far, almost 70 peat and peatland experts have registered for the 2009 Convention – we look forward to meeting you!

Global Peatland Strategy: Consultation Draft Available

The first draft for a Global Peatland Management Strategy is currently available for public consultation at www.peatsociety.org/index.php?id=235. Please review the document and send all comments, if possibly by using “track changes” in Office Word, to susann.warnecke (at) peatsociety.org by **12 April 2009**. The document was collected by different peat and peatland stakeholders during a workshop in Amsterdam in mid February and will be further edited, based on the comments received, at the second workshop of the group in Belfast on **27 - 28 April**. The Global Peatland Management Strategy is aimed to give strategic guidelines for peatland management from social, environmental and economical points of view. It can also provide a basis for a peatland certification scheme if the parties involved decide to create such a system. The joint document would also show decision makers what kind of actions should be taken, and why, in order to use and conserve peatlands in a wise way. After the Belfast meeting, the Strategy document will again be distributed for comments until the end of summer and finally approved in autumn 2009.

Summary of Decisions - Executive Board Meeting 47 in Stockholm

On **4 March**, the Executive Board of IPS held its 47th meeting in Stockholm by invitation of Torvforsk and the Swedish Peat Producer’s Association. Technically this was a premiere for IPS as it was our first official video conference – EB member Paul Short was attending the meeting from his desk in Canada in the middle of the night. From screen to screen, the Board approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2008; the Plan of Activities, Work Program, Budget and Membership Fees 2009 as well as the frameworks for Budget and Membership fees 2010 for submission to the Annual Assembly. The Board also decided on the laureate of the IPS Award of Excellence 2009, evaluated the status of the Global Peatland Management Strategy and the Guidelines for Practical Application of Wise Use, updated the membership of the Editorial Board of Peatlands International and welcomed a new Associate Editor for the IPS-IMCG scientific journal “Mires and Peat”. Furthermore, the Board dealt with the membership of the National Committees of Belarus,

Russia, Lithuania and Malaysia, prepared for the Annual Assembly in Belfast and discussed the status of the competition process for the International Peat Congress 2016. A summary of all decisions “in a nutshell” will be circulated in early April. In addition, a meeting between the Organizers of the International Peat Congress 2012, the IPS Secretariat and the IPS President was held at the Torvforsk Office on **3 March** to exchange ideas and share experiences of previous events. The next Executive Board meeting will be held on **25 April** in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Peatland Restoration: Special Theme of Peatlands International 1/2009

Peatlands International 1/2009 will focus on Peatland Restoration, which is also the topic of the seminar in Belfast on **25 April**. We warmly welcome all those present in Belfast and all other IPS members who are dealing with the rehabilitation of peatlands, in theory and practice, to submit articles on their projects to the magazine. Please send your reports and photos as soon as possible, at the latest by **4 May** to susann.warnecke (at) peatsociety.org. Naturally, other news items and reports dealing with peatlands and peat are also welcome. The complete instructions for authors can be found at www.peatsociety.org/index.php?id=55. We also offer a number of pages to advertise your products and services; please see the Media Kit at the link above and contact Mrs. Warnecke if you are interested. All corporate members are warmly invited to use this opportunity.

Malaysia New National Committee of IPS

We are proud to announce that the Malaysian Peat Society was approved as the new National Committee of IPS. The organisation, chaired by Prof. Dr. Wan Sulaiman Wan Harun, has currently 49 individual and one institutional member. Prof. Wan Sulaiman can be contacted at the Faculty of Resource Science & Technology, University Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia, Phone: +60 82 582 951, Fax: +60 82 583 160, Mobile: +60 12 329 7954, E-mail: whwsulaiman (at) frst.unimas.my or wansul2000 (at) yahoo.com. We welcome all new Malaysian IPS members and hope to meet many of you at future events of the International Peat Society.

Tom Malterer New Honorary Member of IPS

At the EB Meeting in Stockholm, Dr. Thomas J. Malterer was elected Honorary Member of IPS following a proposal by the National Committee of the USA. Tom Malterer has been an IPS member for over 30 years. In the 1970's Tom prepared the first map that showed the location of all of the peatlands (three million hectares) in the State of Minnesota. Since 1980 Tom has attended all International Peat Congresses, served on the Board of Directors and as President of the Minnesota Peat Association and was IPS Council Member from 1990-1996. In his many functions, Tom has helped to bring scientists and peat business closer together and the IPS has always been an important part of his life. Tom will be retiring in early June 2009 from his position at the University of Minnesota, Natural Resources Research Institute – all the best for your future!

Peat at the European Geosciences Union General Assembly in April

The General Assembly of the European Geosciences Union in Vienna, Austria on **19 - 24 April 2009** comprises two different sessions on peatlands. Session SSS26 deals with organic soils: impact of land-use change on peatland degradation and is convened by Dr. Lech Szajdak from Poland, who is also Chair of IPS Commission III (Agricultural use of peat and peatlands), and Prof. Teodoro Miano of the University of Bari, Italy. Ten oral papers and 25 posters will be presented within this session, scheduled for **21 April**. The complete programme and all abstracts can be downloaded at <http://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EGU2009/session/959>. Session BG1.2 will discuss peatlands and the carbon cycle, chaired by Prof. Dr. Stephan Glatzel of the University of Rostock, Germany and

Dr. Fred Worrall of the University of Durham, UK. This session will include six oral and sixteen poster presentations to be held on **20 April**; full documentation can also be found online at <http://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EGU2009/session/166>. More information and registration details are in addition posted at the website of the European Geosciences Union, www.egu.eu.

Peatland Session at AGU Joint Assembly in May

The Joint Assembly of the American Geophysical Union (AGU), to be held in Toronto, Canada on **24 - 27 May 2009**, features a special session on Geochemical and Hydrologic Processes in Peatland Ecosystems. Peatland ecosystems are important global carbon reservoirs that influence local hydrologic and geochemical cycles. Predicting how these systems will respond to shifting environmental and climatic changes requires a detailed understanding of the hydrologic and geochemical controls on the biologic processes associated with peatlands. Presentations in this session will explore the physiochemical processes within peatland ecosystems and the implication these processes have from the watershed to global scales. Pre-registration and housing application deadline for the conference is **22 April**. More information can be found at www.agu.org.

Peatlands in Global Carbon Cycle in Prague in September

The 2nd International Symposium on "Peatlands in the Global Carbon Cycle" will be held in Prague, Czech Republic on **25 - 30 September 2009**. Focus will be on the response of northern peatland ecosystem structure and function to climate change and human/natural disturbances across time scales. Linking carbon balance in peatlands to global models of climate change will be one distinct highlight of the 2009 meeting. Also the rate of peat decomposition and the biogeochemistry of methane will be discussed. The event is being organized by PeatNet (Peatland Ecosystem Analysis and Training NETwork), an international, interdisciplinary collaboration among researchers, students, and professionals working in some capacity in northern peatland ecosystems. To attend the conference as early bird for €175, please register by **30 April**. More details can be found at www.peatnet.siu.edu.

No Highway through the Rospuda Valley

On **24 March 2009**, the Polish government announced that the highway originally planned to cross the peatlands of the ecologically protected Rospuda Valley in Northeast Poland will follow a new route outside of sensitive areas. The long and sharp debate between environmentalists, traffic planners and the citizens of the Augustów village had also concerned IPS. Together with IMCG a statement on the issue was sent to the Polish authorities in November 2006. Later on, the European Commission brought the matter before the European Court of Justice and thereby prevented the building of concrete pillars in the Natura 2000 area. The controversial part of the highway belongs to the Via Baltica, a heavy traffic transport corridor from Central Europe to Finland. The Rospuda Valley is said to be one of Europe's last pristine wetlands and home to many rare plant and animal species, such as eagles, wolves, lynx and wild orchids. More info can be found at www.rospudanews.notlong.com.

Rwanda Peat Electricity Project

The Minister of State in Charge of Energy and Water at the Ministry of Infrastructure of the Republic of Rwanda has contacted IPS with regard to the utilisation of the country's peat reserves for electricity generation. The project would include peat extraction as well as the development, financing, construction, operation and maintenance of a new peat-fired electricity plant. The aim is to improve and diversify the power supply of Rwanda's population. IPS would like to encourage interested parties to approach the Ministry; deadline for project proposals is **30 April 2009**. Please contact mininfrastr (at) rwanda1.com for the full concept note and more information.