

The International Peat Society (IPS) is an international, non-governmental and non-profit organisation 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.

Signing of the Responsible Peatland Management Strategy

Dear Madam or Sir, dear colleagues,

During the previous nine months, the International Peat Society has, together with a large number of its partners and related organizations, formulated a Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management. The document was handled in two workshops and by broad e-mail consultation and distributed for final approval on 1 July 2009.

It is now planned to sign the Strategy during a special Seminar at the Renaissance Hotel Brussels on **28 October 2009**. All stakeholders, including different organisations dealing with peat and peatlands, but also with social, economic and environmental topics in general, are being asked for their endorsement and acceptance of the Strategy.

For detailed background information, the approval documents, and to register for the Brussels meetings please visit www.peatsociety.org/index.php?id=241. All those who sign the Accord Agreement, will receive a framed copy of the original document for their own use. Please respond at the latest by the beginning of next week, **5 October 2009**.

Besides the Seminar and Signing Ceremony for the Responsible Peatland Management Strategy, meetings of the **IPS Scientific Advisory Board** and the **Executive Board** as well as a meeting of **IPS Commission II** on the industrial use of peat and peatlands will also be held in Brussels. Other Commission meetings will be arranged on request. Please do not hesitate to contact us in case you need additional information.

The Strategy outlines objectives and actions for responsible management of peatlands as important ecosystems and peat as a valuable resource. It provides thereby guidelines for everyday work, as scientists, conservationalists, policy makers, journalists, peat producers or end user.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Jaakko Silpola

IPS Secretary General

Short Background to the Responsible Peatland Management Strategy

In 2007, a number of partners identified the need for a peatland certification system. The IPS put forward a proposal for a system which would be externally accredited and would be developed in conjunction with all stakeholders. Following discussions with potential stakeholders it was decided to proceed with the first part of the proposal - the development of a Responsible Peatland

Management Strategy. This first project was developed as a stand-alone exercise because it was agreed that such a Strategy would have value in itself.

The Strategy was developed at two meetings involving a wide range of stakeholders in Amsterdam and Belfast. Between the meetings and after the Belfast meeting further consultations took place by e-mail.

This process has resulted in the Strategy which is now proposed for signature during a special Seminar in Brussels on 28 October 2009. The Strategy defines key elements and strategic objectives for peatland management and lists actions to be taken to achieve these objectives. The Strategy includes a Vision which states that responsible peatland management involves a balanced stewardship of the environmental, social and economic values of peatlands and respects local, regional and global aspirations.

The full Strategy is contained in a document which has been circulated in preparation for the Brussels seminar and is available at the IPS website.

Following the completion of the Strategy development project it remains to be decided what further steps might be taken towards a full certification system.

Donal Clarke

IPS President

Last Call: Peatlands International 2/2009

We would like to remind you that there is still the possibility to submit articles for the next issue of Peatlands International. All reports in relation to peat and peatlands, especially summaries of research findings, book reviews, reports on conferences or news items must be sent to Susann Warnecke at [susann.warnecke \(at\) peatsociety.org](mailto:susann.warnecke@peatsociety.org) by **15 October at the very latest**.

We kindly ask you not to exceed 2,000 words, have your text checked by a native English speaker whenever possible and submit all photos and illustrations as separate files. The text should also list all captions and the names of the copyright holders as well as the full contact details of the author. The magazine will have a print run of 2,000 copies and be distributed to all IPS members and a number of other persons and organisations in December.

More information, detailed instructions for authors and the Media Kit 2009 for advertisers are available at www.peatsociety.org/index.php?id=55. The Editorial Board reserves its right to choose, shorten and edit submissions if necessary. We look forward to hearing from you! Also new advertisers are warmly welcome!

Fire Disaster Again in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

Borneo is burning once more as another El Niño affects the Pacific Region. The drought is making the vast peatland areas of Kalimantan fire prone and raging fires have broken out in Central Kalimantan in recent weeks. The Government seems to be powerless either to prevent or control this conflagration and it is left to voluntary groups such as the TSA (Tim serbu Api) organised by Suwido Limin of the University of Palangka Raya to do what they can. Suwido operates on an area of about 100,000 hectares in the upper catchment of the Sabangau River and in the north of Block C

of the failed Mega Rice Project area where there are several research facilities and community peatland restoration projects.

Suwido's team is working 24 hours a day and the work they are doing is very dangerous because of the flames, heat and smoke. Much has been destroyed, villages have been evacuated and Palangka Raya airport was closed. The main road to the next nearest city, Banjarmasin, became impassable. Unfortunately, the money that is given by the Indonesian Government to local authorities is not spent to fight the fires and none of it is given to the likes of Suwido and his six teams of volunteers (up to 10 persons in a team). He has to keep his fire fighting going by fund raising and donations. So far this month he has raised around \$ 20,000 but it costs at least \$ 25,000 a month in top up payments to the men who have to give up their normal jobs to undertake this dangerous task, much of it in the dark at remote places far from the nearest road.

If you want to learn more about this alarming situation then go to the Wildlife Direct web site at www.orangutanfoundation.wildlifedirect.org where there is also a facility to make a contribution towards the cost of saving this vast peatland area (leave a comment that it is for fire fighting in Kalimantan) or contact Jack Rieley at jack.rieley@btinternet.com for information.

British Government Invites Tenders to Monitor Horticultural Use of Peat

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan – Lowland Raised Bog Habitat Action Plan contains a target for the reduction of peat used in horticulture, which is expressed as “90% of the total market for soil improver and growing media to be peat free in the UK by 2010”. This builds upon the previous target of 40% peat free by 2005 which was achieved. Research is required to design a scheme to monitor horticultural use of peat to meet both the current target and a future target or measure which may be defined on a different basis than the current target. The project is made up of three tasks each with their own deliverables and deadlines:

1. Monitor the use of peat and alternatives based on sales in 2009 (deadline 30/04/2010)
2. Monitor the use of peat and alternatives based on sales in 2010 (deadline 30/04/2011)
3. Research on how to monitor the use of peat now and in the future (deadline 31/09/2011)

The project is expected to start in December 2009 and take 22 months at a maximum tender cost of £170k. It will include, amongst others, consideration of (a) spent mushroom compost, (b) classification of sources of peat in previous reporting, (c) peat use in imported pot plants, (d) the ability of producers to report data on sources of peat and sales (use) of peat to the country level within the UK and (e) the ability of producers to report data on sales of growing media to different subsectors within the professional grower sector, i.e. to different sectors within horticulture. Further information can be obtained from www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/science/funding/competitions.htm.

60 Years Finnish Peat Society – Celebration on 23 October

Suoseura, the Finnish National Committee of IPS is celebrating its 60th Anniversary this year. On this occasion, a broad range of activities has been arranged. After a successful spring seminar in Tikkurila in March, a bog art festival in Vihti in May and a three-day excursion to Satakunta and South-Ostrobothnia in September, the events will reach their peak on **23 October 2009** with a festive seminar at the House of Estates in Helsinki. Opened by Sirkka-Liisa Anttila, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, the day will feature eight lectures on different aspects of peatlands in Finland and close with a dinner at Restaurant Sipuli. The seminar is chaired by Riitta Korhonen, Chair of Suoseura and of IPS Commission VI. For more information please visit www.suoseura.fi.

Annual Assembly of Irish Peat Society in Abbeyleix on 20 October

The Irish National Committee of the International Peat Society will hold its Annual Meeting and Seminar at the Abbeyleix Manor Hotel, Abbeyleix on **20 October 2009** from 11:00 to 15:30 hrs. It is aimed to bring together organisations, including Government bodies, academic institutions, NGOs as well as forest, peat and energy companies and individuals with an interest in peatlands and peat. This year the Irish Peat Society will host a Field Workshop and Seminar in association with the AGM; this will essentially be a follow up to the Seminar held in Dublin last October 2009 on the topic of Turf-cutting on Natura 2000 sites - problems and solutions. The day will commence with the AGM, followed by a walk over the restored Abbeyleix bog area and discussion of some of the conservation and restoration challenges. After lunch there will be presentations on the site management plan and community perspectives to be followed by an open forum for discussion and knowledge share relating to relevant issues. For more information, please contact Pat Fitzgerald at e-mail pat.fitzgerald (at) bnm.ie or Catherine Farrell at catherine.farrell (at) bnm.ie.

Bord na Móna Celebrates 75 Years

On 18 September there was a half-hour Nationwide television programme in Ireland celebrating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Turf Development Board which became Bord na Móna in 1946. The programme covered history, social impact, restoration and conservation among its themes. Persons interviewed included Catherine Farrell, Pat Fitzgerald and Donal Clarke.

On 21 September the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, opened an exhibition in central Dublin celebrating the anniversary. Open at the Atrium, No. 51 St. Stephen's Green until 2 October; it will later travel to other locations around the country. The exhibition reflects Bord na Móna's technical, social and economic development since 1934 and its plans for a sustainable future. More information on the exhibition, the company's history and the new publication "Brown Gold" can be viewed by accessing www.heartland.ie. Happy birthday!

Wetland Conservation Conference in Slovakia

An international conference on the "Conservation of Wetlands in the Carpathians" will be held in Tatranska Strba, High Tatra Mountains, Slovakia on **16 - 19 November 2009**. The purpose of this seminar is to support exchange of information and best practices between the Carpathian countries to improve conservation of wetlands. The event is part of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative and the UNDP/GEF Project "Conservation, Restoration and Wise Use of Rich Fens in the Slovak Republic". Topics covered are policy issues and regional scope, identification of missing information and gap fulfilling for wetland protection, mire ecology, restoration management and studies with regard to the restoration of the hydrological regime of fens. In addition, a workshop for environmental education is scheduled. The official language of the seminar will be English and the number of participants is limited to 50. Please submit your abstracts by **15 October 2009**; the registration deadline was already on **15 September 2009**. For more information please visit www.imcg.net/09/slovakia_09.pdf and www.imcg.net/09/reg_form_wetlands_slovakia.doc.

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