

The IPS is an organisation of corporate and individual members dedicated to the responsible management and Wise Use of peatlands and peat. It promotes the gathering, exchange and communication of knowledge and experience. The Society serves all those interested in peat and peatlands including the scientific, industrial and commercial, and regulatory communities. It respects the economic, social and environmental values of the peatland resource. Currently the IPS has more than 1,400 individual and institutional members from 42 countries.

IPS Award of Excellence to Professor Harri Vasander

The IPS Award of Excellence 2013 was handed over to Professor Harri Vasander from the University of Helsinki, Department of Forest Sciences, during the dinner of the IPS Annual Meetings in Leiden on **19 June**. Prof. Vasander was been nominated by the Finnish National Committee:

“... for his long carrier as a scientist, expert and lecturer promoting the wise use of peatlands throughout the world. His research area includes mainly mire ecology, carbon gas balance on peatlands and their sustainable utilisation, covering not only the boreal peatlands in Europe, Russia and North America, but also tropical peatlands. His studies on mire ecology and especially mire plants have given him broad grounds and expertise to understand the function of mire ecosystems. His work has been widely cited and internationally highly recognized. Harri has also been a planner and leader in many large international research projects carried out in the EU, Canada, Russia and Southeast Asia, and he has established very wide international cooperation networks. For instance, Harri is one of the pioneers in the research of tropical peatlands, and his studies have essentially contributed to fact that the significance of the tropical peatlands on the world’s biodiversity and climate change has become one of the most burning questions in the world.

Harri Vasander is well liked by his students and he is an enthusiastic academic teacher and lecturer in mire ecology and peatland forestry. Harri Vasander was appointed to the current position of Professor in Peatland Forestry at the University of Helsinki at the beginning of 2006. He has actively participated in the development of education in the University, and successively used the most modern and effective education methods in his teaching. In addition, he has been actively involved in organizing scientific conferences such as the IPS Congress 2004 in Tampere, Finland. He has worked actively in the Finnish Peatland Society (Suoseura), where he has acted as long-term Chairman and Treasurer as well as Chief Editor of *Suo - Mires and Peat*. In addition, he has the gift to be able to dispassionately and objectively listen and examine and deal with all current issues concerning peatlands; either their commercial use or the conservation of mires and peatlands. He has always had very wide knowledge on different use of peatlands and very much enthusiasm to promote the sustainable use of these areas not only in scientific committees but also in public discussions, not forgetting artistic and cultural aspects.” *(Finnish Peatland Society’s nomination)*

All the best to Harri and his future career and private life! The IPS Award of Excellence is presented annually for a distinguished contribution by a single person, group or project in any sector of peatland activities. The Award comprises a framed scroll and a cash prize of total € 1,000. Applications can be sent to the IPS Secretariat by **31 January** of every year, and the decision on the winner is taken by the Executive Board. More information can be found at: www.peatsociety.org/about-us/award-excellence.

Future Projects for the IPS

During the recent Annual Meetings in Leiden the Executive Board (EB) and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) have discussed, in addition to our current services, the following projects for the future:

- Updated inventory of world peat resources
- Global peatland rehabilitation/restoration guidelines
- Practical Guidelines to supplement the Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management (SRPM)
- Provide a databank of national peatland policies and their implementation

- Policy and action plan on Climate Change, including interface with IPCC and the REDD process
- Assess the potential for producing educational materials and the feasibility of seminars and courses for

- bodies regulating and affecting peat and peatland matters, and all others interested
- Provide basic information about peat and peatlands on the IPS website
- Digitalization of the IPS archives and proceedings
- Investigation of external funding options

- Conservation and management of peatlands in emerging nations
- Peatlands and indigenous and local people(s)
- Ensure that the organization and its structures help with the organization of activities
- Pilot projects to examine the feasibility of IPS meeting specific research needs of member organizations

These major projects and many other smaller tasks are focused either short-term tasks, long-term or Secretariat tasks, and set the future direction for the IPS. Currently, these projects are being discussed and considered in Committees and Working groups, and funding will be sought for from different sources. We value any contribution from all of our members, so if you have any ideas and would like to support us with any of these issues you are very welcome to contact the IPS Secretariat or the members of the EB and SAB!

226 Growing Media Specialists in Leiden

The ISHS-IPS "International Symposium on Growing Media and Soilless Cultivation - Water Efficient Horticulture World Wide" attracted some **226** Participants from **36** countries. Among these were **51 IPS members**, from Burundi, Canada, China, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. In addition to the main conference, the IPS Executive Board and Scientific Advisory Board held a special strategy session at the HagenHort Wassenaar hotel a short drive from Leiden (21 attendees).

On Thursday, **20 June** the following presentations were given during a special session on peat and peatlands:

- Johannes Welsch, Germany: Importance of peat for today's substrate industry (keynote)
- Gerald Schmilewski: Producing growing media responsibly to help sustain horticulture
- Paul Alexander: Defining sustainable growing media for sustainable UK horticulture
- Hans Verhagen: RHP potting reference, a basic tool for application of growing media
- Bill Carlile: Water uptake and release in peat-based growing media containing green compost

In the afternoon, IPS held the National Committee Round Table, the Commission II meeting on industrial matters and the official Annual Assembly of National Representatives. Slides and minutes of these can be downloaded (if accepted by their author) at www.peatsociety.org/events/ips-convention-leiden-2013/presentations-leiden. For more information please see the IPS programme at www.peatsociety.org/ipsleiden2013 and data on the symposium at www.grosci2013.wur.nl. The Annual Assembly 2014 will be held in Riga, Latvia in late **August 2014**.

National Representatives Move Forward

The IPS Annual Assembly 2013 in Leiden was attended by nine representatives of the IPS National Committees, namely from our member associations in Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland and United Kingdom. At the National Committee Round Table, they discussed current matters, such as the IPS project proposals, fundraising, communications and the structure of the organisation more casually. After that, during the formal Annual Assembly, the representatives approved the Annual Report, Balance Sheet and Auditor's Report for 2012 and granted discharge to the Executive Board. The Plan of Activities, Budget and membership fees 2013 were accepted, as well as an interim budget and membership fees for 2014. The Assembly also elected the Auditor for IPS for 2013. In addition, the representatives approved a change in the IPS Statutes that allows the Annual Assemblies to be held if needed until 30 August instead of 30 June, making the coming Assemblies in **Latvia in August 2014** and **Malaysia in August 2016** possible. We wholeheartedly thank all who travelled to participate and look forward to hearing from all member associations with new endeavours and projects!

Sign up for the IPS Commissions!

As you know, membership and cooperation in the nine IPS Commissions and the Standing Committee on Climate Change is open to all IPS members interested in the subject. Therefore we would like to ask you to mark once again

those Commissions and their working fields that interest you the most so that we can add you to their mailing lists. Like this you will get all the information about their current activities and stay in touch with the other members of the Commission. To sign up, please visit www.peatsociety.org/about-us/commissions-and-working-groups and follow the link to our special sign up form. Note that you need to be a member of the IPS to participate. (Sandra Lubinaite, IPS)

Call for Articles: Electronic Peatlands International

Peatlands International will be published for the first time as electronic magazine in two issues in this autumn, the first issue in early October and the second in December 2013. This is a trial to speed up the editing and publishing process and to better allocate the increasing printing and distribution costs. As forwarding and sharing will be easier, we expect to significantly increase the readership of the magazine. We invite you already now to submit:

- Articles and news for the magazine, **max. two pages (1000 words)** in Arial pt 10, in English (proofread if possible) on all kind of current peat and peatland matters: news, reports and updates on your work
- Events for 2013-2016 together with a link to their website

Submission deadline is **30 August**. A basic article specimen, further information and most previous issues of Peatlands International are posted at www.peatsociety.org/publications/peatlands-international.

Advertisements for the new magazine are also very welcome. There are many different sizes available, e.g. € 830 for A4, € 50-115 for logos, see the original [Media Kit 2013](#) – and these prices are valid for both issues together. We will also achieve a higher circulation now within companies and institutes, so more persons will see your ad. Practically you will receive **two advertisements for the price of one** until the end of 2013.

Please do not hesitate to contact [susann.warnecke \(at\) peatsociety.org](mailto:susann.warnecke@peatsociety.org) in case you have further questions or ideas for our future magazine. We will also give you further details later this summer.

Proceedings of IPC 2012 now at IPS Website

The IPS Secretariat has successfully uploaded the Proceedings of the International Peat Congress 2012 in Stockholm, Sweden to the document database at the IPS website. The database can be accessed by all IPS members using their personal user IDs and passwords at www.peatsociety.org/publications/documentbank. All submitted extended papers and abstracts that were distributed on a memory stick during the Congress, are accessible now on a list and via headline, key word and author search. The summary of each paper is open to all website visitors, whereas the full papers can be downloaded as PDF files only by logged in IPS members, or persons that have bought online reading rights. The project was coordinated by IPS summer intern Sandra Lubinaite from Lithuania. Further IPS proceedings are being added continuously. The next International Peat Congress will be held in August 2016 in Malaysia.

Changes in IPS Commission Chairmanship

IPS Commission V on the **Restoration, Rehabilitation and After-use** of Peatlands will be chaired by Vice Chair Dr. Roxane Andersen during the upcoming maternity leave of the current Chair Dr. Catherine Farrell. She can be reached at Environmental Research Institute, North Highland College, University of the Highlands & Islands, Castle Street, Thurso, Scotland KW14 7JD, United Kingdom, e-mail: [roxane.andersen \(at\) thurso.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:roxane.andersen@thurso.uhi.ac.uk). For more information on the Commission and their restoration map, visit www.peatsociety.org/about-us/commissions-and-working-groups/c5-restoration. In addition to that, the IPS Cross-Commission Standing Committee on **Peatlands and Climate Change** announces vacant positions of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary after their Chair Professor Mats Nilsson stepped down in June 2013. For more information see www.peatsociety.org/about-us/commissions-and-working-groups/standing-committee-climate-change. Proposals for these positions can be sent to the IPS Secretariat.

IPS Communication Survey Results

Between 15 May and 6 June 2013, the International Peat Society has conducted the first ever IPS Communications Survey. The viewpoints of IPS members are very valuable to the organization. Are we on the right track? What are the wishes and expectations of our members?

The survey has been sent to all members by email and handled nine different topics. These included the member's background information, the general perception of IPS' communications, their own media usage, and views on the Peatlands International magazine, Peat News newsletter, the Mires and Peat online journal, the IPS website and the usage of social media.

The survey got 127 responses: 50% of the responders are researchers. 71% are between 35 and 64 years old, 25% of the responders come from Finland, 19% from Germany, 8% from the UK and 7% from Sweden. Some of the key findings of the survey:

- The IPS website, magazine, newsletter, events and journals/books are highly valued among members; social media, videos and local press are perceived less important.
- Members expect to get a newsletter (20%), electronic magazine (17%), print magazine (15%), journal (15%); and this every month (51%), every two month (18%) or every week (18%).
- Important topics among members are: the membership, tropical peatlands, contributors, the organizational structure and involvement, and cross multimedia.
- Visitors of the IPS website come to find out more about peat, peat events and the IPS organization.
- Logged-in members use mostly the document database, the peat dictionary and the member list.

For more detailed information about the survey and its results, please see the PowerPoint presentation on the topic we gave in Leiden at the National Committee Round Table: www.peatsociety.org/events/ips-convention-leiden-2013/presentations-leiden. (Mark Swarts, IPS)

Finnish Peatland Society visiting Central Ostrobothnia

Suoseura, the Finnish National Committee of the IPS will travel to the mires of Finland's west coast this autumn during **16 - 17 September 2013**. According to the preliminary schedule, the excursion starts in Kokkola at the local office of the Geological Survey and after that heads to the still raising areas near the sea where new mires are being formed. The guests will visit the research station of the Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla) in Kannus and get familiar with different peatland forestry studies carried out for instance the after-use of cut-over production areas for wood biomass production, ash fertilization and reforestation measures, and drop by at an energy peat production site of Alholmens Kraft in Kaustinen. During the second day of the excursion, the large conservation areas of Kotkanneva and rehabilitations measures there, as well as the Pilvineva mire protection site will be seen. Part of the programme are also the power station itself of Alholmens Kraft, and reditching and sulphate issues at Hömossdiket before the group returns to Kokkola. For updated information and to sign up, please see www.suoseura.fi/fin/toiminta2013.html#retki and contact Suoseura's Secretary Jenni Simkin, [jenni.simkin \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:jenni.simkin@gmail.com), phone: +358 50 357 5337.

German NC Annual Meeting in Freising in September

The Annual Meeting and Excursion of the German Peat Society, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Moor- und Torfkunde e.V., will be held in Freising, Germany, on **25 - 27 September 2013**. Venue is the Bildungszentrum Kardinal-Döpfner-Haus and the DGMT is cooperating with the Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf (HSWT) in organising the event. Deadline for proposals for oral presentations from all sections of the Society was already **1 June**, but posters can be announced until **31 August 2013**. The registration fee amounts to € 130 for DGMT members plus € 35 for the final excursion. The field trips are directed to Freisinger Moos and Mooseurach/Tschechenfilz. Please register before **20 August 2013** by filling in the registration form at www.dgmtv.de/veranstaltungen.html. The final programme will be published soon.

UK Peat/Sustainable Growing Media Stakeholder Update

Towards the end of 2012 the UK Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published the Government's Response to the Chairman of the Task Force's Report and Roadmap for phasing out the use of peat in growing media in England by 2030. DEFRA has now issued an update on actions taken since then.

1. Growing Media Panel: This has been established with 14 representatives of the horticulture industry and trade associations, retailers, Government, landscapers, Royal Horticulture Society and Friends of the Earth. It is chaired by Sir Alan Knight who chaired the Task Force. It held its first meeting on 11th March 2013. The Terms of Reference are to finalise, adopt and monitor the Roadmap and its delivery; provide co-ordination between

actions under the Roadmap and report annually to DEFRA ministers; advise Government on progress to feed into the policy review in 2015.

2. Sustainable Horticulture in Partnership Project (SHIP): DEFRA, in partnership with the Royal Horticulture Society, is providing £100,000 to increase the use of sustainable growing media (i.e. peat free) in Britain in Bloom and Your Neighbourhood activities over the next two years.
3. Annual Industry Meeting: The 2013 horticulture industry meeting is planned to take place on Tuesday 8th October at which progress in implementing the Roadmap to reduce the use of peat will be discussed, co-ordination facilitated and feedback received from stakeholders. Those wishing to attend should Email GrowingMedia@defra.gsi.gov.uk by Wednesday 31st July 2013.
4. DEFRA R&D Project on detecting and measuring the peat content of growing media: The Report has been published presenting a literature review and assessment of three potential methodologies for detecting peat in a bag of growing media - chemical biomarkers, DNA analysis and 14C dating. DEFRA does not plan to take the findings of this research forward at this time and will prioritise resources to support other actions within the Roadmap. The report is available at: <http://bit.ly/13qHvJ2> (Jack Rieley, UK Peat Society)

Torbjörn Claesson new Chair of Swedish NC

Mr Torbjörn Claesson was recently appointed Chair of the IPS National Committee in Sweden. You can contact him at Neova AB, Arenavägen 33, 121 77 Johanneshov, Sweden, e-mail [torbjorn.claesson \(at\) neova.se](mailto:torbjorn.claesson@neova.se), phone: +46 703 734 802. Claes Rülcker of Torvforsk remains Secretary of the organisation. More information on the IPS Swedish National Committee: www.peatsociety.org/about-us/national-committees/sweden and www.torvforsk.se.

Vapo invests in continuous Water-Quality Measuring

Metso Oyj, a global supplier of technology and services to customers in the process industries, is announcing that "Vapo, a key player in Finnish energy generation is continuing its investment in the transparent monitoring of the effects of peat production on bodies of water. Vapo has ordered a service from Metso which includes 30 continuously-operating water-quality measuring stations, the service and maintenance of the measuring stations, and certified measurement results. The first five measuring stations are to be installed and calibrated during this coming summer in production areas located in Alajärvi, Ähtäri, Kitee, Taipalsaari, and Tammela. All 30 continuously-operating measuring stations will be in use by the summer of 2015. The service also includes the public reporting of measurement data. The continuous measuring stations will be located in different areas of Finland, in peat-production areas of different ages and sizes, in order to acquire as comprehensive and transparent real-time data as possible to compare with the monitoring data obtained with the manual sampling method used currently. In addition to flow, the measuring stations will also provide data on the concentrations and load of suspended solids and dissolved organic carbon (DOC), chemical oxygen demand (COD), and total organic carbon (TOC) in the water. The continuous measuring service to be delivered to Vapo provides new and more detailed data on the environmental effects of peat production for both Vapo as well as for the public. The service enables Vapo to develop its peat production in an even more responsible manner." For additional information, please see the full press release at both companies' websites: <http://bit.ly/14P1b7h> and <http://bit.ly/17SU1E3> (Jussi Ollila, Metso Oyj).

ICSA Conference in Germany in September

A special session of "Sustainable Wetland Management" will be held during the International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture for Food, Energy and Industry in Developing and Industrial Countries on **5 - 7 September 2013** in Vechelde, Germany. The program of the conference consists of plenary lectures, keynote speeches, delegate papers, poster presentations, discussions with scientists, policy planners, representatives from international organizations, industry, agriculture, food processing, consumers, producers and NGO's. Official languages will be English and German and the registration fee amounts to € 150 before **31 July 2013**. For the full announcement, please see http://ifeed.org/index_EN.html. (Hendrik Segah, University of Palangka Raya)

Northern Forests in a Changing Climate in Iceland

A Nordgen Forest conference will be held in Hallormsstaður in eastern Iceland on **17 - 18 September 2013**. The conference theme is Northern Forests in a Changing Climate. The conference will focus on possible developments in

northern forest ecosystems in a changing climate and the potential influences on forestry practices. A special emphasis is on how a changing climate may influence our choices of tree species and provenances, now and in the future. The conference location is situated in one of the largest birch woodland and afforestation areas in Iceland. Short field trips are included in the program of both conference days. Further details can be found at www.nordgen.org/index.php/en/content/view/full/2248.

9th SER Europe Conference in Finland in 2014

The Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla) invites all IPS members interested in peatland rehabilitation to the 9th European Conference on Ecological Restoration, which is going to be organized in Oulu, Finland on **3 - 8 August 2014**. The SER2014 European Conference will provide an international forum to discuss the restoration of Ecosystem Services, and the ecological, economic and socio-cultural values of restoration. The Conference aims at increasing the link between restoration and land use policies, and it points to issues discussed continuously at international, EU and national levels. The event will consist of conference sessions, as well as field trips. More information about the conference, programme and registration can be found at www.ser2014.org. (Sandra Lubinaite, IPS)

Turf-cutters and Government's Dispute in Ireland

Peat producers in Galway and Roscommon Counties, Ireland, are denying the Government's decision to end turf cutting in several bogs, which were formally designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the EU Habitats Directive. The bog owners and the Turf Cutters and Contractors Association insist on continuing cutting turf in accordance with tradition and age-old right to harvest peat. Although many accepted special compensation packages offered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Government, these were also rejected by many, claiming that they had not been offered alternative turf cutting sites. During the last few days, more than 100 bog owners and supporters gathered to protest against the Government's decision to protect bogs and peatlands. On the aforementioned SAC sites turf cutting bans were imposed in September 2011 following the EU Habitats Directive that was agreed in 1992. For more information follow news on the subject e.g. at <http://bit.ly/14q0xwV>. (Sandra Lubinaite, IPS)

Haze from Peatland Fires in Sumatra, Indonesia

One of the biggest peatland fires of the decade has hit Sumatra Island, Indonesia in June 2013 and as a result thick haze covered the skies of Malaysia and Singapore. According to the news, thousands of hectares of peatlands were burned and almost 300 families evacuated. Indonesian residents and scholars in Riau province say the haze has been caused by spontaneous peat fires owing to high temperatures, however other sources blame foreign palm oil, pulp and paper companies. International NGOs are also involved in the dispute claiming that palm oil companies are ultimately responsible for creating conditions that drive fires, including large-scale forest clearing and drainage of peatlands. The Indonesian government has started investigations using satellite images try to find the causes of the fires and to evaluate the actual damage done to Indonesian peatlands. However, regardless of the origin, the haze is polluting, dangerous to locals, and peatland fires are difficult to extinguish; therefore continuous fires and haze are a major issue for the international community. For more news, see <http://bit.ly/19WMBAn>. (Sandra Lubinaite, IPS)

Australia's REDD Project in Kalimantan Finishes

The Australian government's aid agency, AusAID, has practically ended its \$100 million project to reforest and rehabilitate peatlands in Indonesia although not fully completing it. The main aim for the project was to reduce carbon emissions and restore drained peatlands. The Kalimantan project was first launched and promoted in 2007 following an agreement by then Foreign Minister of Australia and the Indonesian President. The project had originally aimed to re-flood 200,000 hectares of dried peatland at the "Mega Rice Project", protect 70,000 hectares of peat forests, and plant 100 million trees in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. However, after some setbacks and difficulties the project was quietly suspended, although the Australian Government still plans continue some of the community and monitoring work at the site for another year. Please see e.g. www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/australianindonesian-carbon-project-abandoned-20130702-2p98w.html for more detailed information. (Sandra Lubinaite, IPS)

→ Please note that the IPS Secretariat is having holidays from 11 July to 5 August 2013. In urgent matters, please contact our National Committee and Commission Chairs as well as the Executive Board members.