

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 1,500 individual and institutional members from 44 countries.

Register for the IPS Convention in Tullamore 2015

Registration for the event of the year – **Peatlands - A New Conversation** - is now open. The Irish Peat Society is organising the event which will be held in Tullamore during **7 - 11 June 2015**, in connection with the IPS Annual Meetings. Please visit www.irishpeatsociety.ie to read all about the meeting and register. Please note that **Early Bird** registration closes **3 April!**

Organised under the auspices of the International Peat Society (IPS) this leading international conference will adopt an entirely new approach to the peat debate. Through an **innovative conference structure** Tullamore 2015 will ensure that issues will be thoroughly discussed and debated. From Wise Use to responsible use, from sustainability to eco-system services the many and varied perspectives and viewpoints will be asked to come together to have a real conversation about the way forward.

To open the event we will have two distinguished Keynote Speakers - Marcel Silvius of Wetlands International, and Marian Harkin MEP. Both are familiar with the importance and scale of the issues relating to peatland management - at the local and international impact levels. This will be followed by a lively and **Interactive Poster Session** where we will bring the posters out of the shadow and highlight their valuable contribution. After that we will break from the traditional conference style of presentations and focus on engaging the participants in a series of 'learning by doing' classes and field trips.

A series of expert-led **Masterclasses** on key topics (such as developing peat certification systems and engaging the public in peatland education programmes) will be held in conjunction with related **Field Trips**. Each day will culminate in tailored 'fireside' discussions which are central to our **Social Programme** and will allow for discussion on key issues in a relaxed and inspiring setting. The core objective of Tullamore 2015 is to ensure that each of us will have the opportunity to challenge our own thinking by learning from each other and advance a mutual understanding of these issues.

This conference will be different. It will be new and exciting, breaking from traditional conference models. Above all it will be enjoyable! The Irish Peat Society welcomes you to Tullamore in June 2015. For more info and to share:

www.irishpeatsociety.ie and www.facebook.com/events/665566623563847/?fref=ts.

Finnish Peatland Society Spring Seminar “Enough peatlands?”

The Finnish Peatland Society will hold its annual spring meeting in connection with a seminar on **18 March** at 12:15 - 18:00 hrs at the House of the Estates in Helsinki, Snellmaninkatu 9-11. The programme under the theme “Do we have enough peatlands – mid evaluation of the Finnish peatland strategy” contains:

- Welcome speech, Suoseura's Chair Raija Laiho
- Land use history of peatlands in the Netherlands, Anne Jelle Schilstra, the Netherlands (IPS)
- General aspects on the amount & scale of Finland's peatlands, Kimmo Virtanen (Geological Survey of Finland)
- The state of nature in peatlands, Aira Kokko (Syke, Finnish Environment Institute)
- The status of peatland conservation, Aulikki Alanen (YM, Ministry of the Environment)



- Commenting Risto Sulkava (SLL, Finnish Association for Nature Conservation)
- How is IPS related to the peatland strategy? Hannu Salo (IPS)
- Monitoring of the implementation of the peatland strategy, Jaana Kaipainen (MMM, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry)
- Peatland strategy and forestry use of peatlands, Jaana Kaipainen (MMM, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry)
- Commenting: Markus Nissinen (MTK Metsälinja, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners)
- Agricultural use of peatlands, Kristiina Regina (Luke, Natural Resources Institute Finland)
- Commenting: Urpo Heikkinen (MTK:n ympäristövaliokunta, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners)
- Use of peat in Finland, Jouko Rämö (Bioenergy Association of Finland)
- Commenting: Antti Vilkkuna (Kanteleen Voima) & discussion

To sign up for the event, please contact [tuula.larmola \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:tuula.larmola@gmail.com), phone +358 50 319 9481 by **13 March**. You can also share the conference on social media: www.facebook.com/events/360790517461225.

New deadline for Peatlands International 1.2015

The IPS Executive Board will hold its spring meeting next week, **16 - 17 March 2015** and so the IPS staff will be travelling. We have therefore decided to extend the deadline for the spring magazine to **23 March**. Please send your texts and photos as separate files to [susann.warnecke \(at\) peatsociety.org](mailto:susann.warnecke@peatsociety.org). Short instructions can be found at the IPS website, www.peatsociety.org/publications/peatlands-international.

Raija Laiho new Chair of Finnish National Committee

Professor Raija Laiho was elected new Chair of IPS' National Committee in Finland. She can be contact at Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), Kaironiementie 15, 39700 Parkano, Finland, mobile: +358 50 395 2078, email: [raija.laiho \(at\) luke.fi](mailto:raija.laiho@luke.fi). New Secretary of the Finnish Peatland Society is Tuula Larmola. Her address is University of Helsinki, PL 27, 00014 University of Helsinki, Finland, mobile: +358 50 319 9481, email: [tuula.larmola \(at\) helsinki.fi](mailto:tuula.larmola@helsinki.fi). We wish all best luck to our new cooperation partners. More info: www.suoseura.fi.

Second Workshop: Fens after Drainage – Landscape and Soil

IPS Commission III Agricultural use of peatlands and peat is organizing an international workshop "Fen peatlands after drainage – landscape and soil" on between **6 - 10 July 2015** in Olsztyn, NE Poland. The workshop will take place at the most beautiful campus in Poland – the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn. The workshop will be devoted to the problems of organic soil classification, role of peatlands in the landscape, agricultural use of peatlands as well as restoration and protection of these wonderful areas. The workshop will be divided into discussion panels (oral session) and field trips (field session). The field session will take place at peatlands developed on gyttjas (lacustrine deposits) and parts of restored peatlands. For more information, contact [barbara.kalisz \(at\) uwm.edu.pl](mailto:barbara.kalisz@uwm.edu.pl).

EPAGMA and CSPMA Sign Memorandum of Agreement

In January 2015 the European Peat and Growing Media Association (EPAGMA) and Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association (CSPMA) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which established a working relationship to ensure the continued health and function of peatland systems; and the promotion of responsible resource-based industry practices at the national member state and international levels. Pat Fitzgerald; Chairman of EPAGMA Executive Board stated " That since both agencies share core values including innovative and ethical management practices, respect for people and cultural traditions and ecosystem-based responsible development it was considered important that we work together to advance these interests." Challenges to the responsible management of peatland resources and development of the peat industry are both local as well as global in their reach. According to Paul Short, President of the CSPMA "It is essential that policies that impact the peatland resource and industry are developed based on sound science, social acceptance and responsible management. A joint approach is important to ensuring unified understanding of issues and successful outcomes to common concerns." The MOA will be in effect for 5 years. During this time specific joint research projects, operational trials and best resource and management practices will be identified in order to address policies, regulations and directives arising from International Conventions and

Agreements or Canadian, US and European Union legislation. EPAGMA will take leadership in addressing these elements within the European Union, the CSPMA will take leadership on other relevant International Conventions and Agreements as well as US and Canadian policies.

National Award for Abbyleix Bog Project

The Abbyleix Bog Project has won a joint-third prize in the Get Involved Awards, which promote voluntary sustainability initiatives throughout Ireland. The project was one of 22 entries from 18 counties. They were presented with a € 500 bursary and a special award certificate. The Get Involved Awards is the focal point for the Get Involved project, a sustainable community initiative and competition established by two local newspaper associations, NNI Local and Local Ireland. The third place was shared between the Abbyleix Bog Project and Transition Kerry. Following negotiations with Bord na Móna, a lease was signed in 2010 that handed over the bog to the local community to manage for a period of 50 years, with a primary focus on conservation. The project is using a community-based Natural Resource Management approach, a Conservation Management Plan and Business Management Plan, to maximise the ecological benefits to the local community in terms of education, employment, income and recreation. For more info see: www.laois-nationalist.ie/2015/03/03/bog-project-in-the-winners-circle-at-national-awards.

Registration for Ramsar COP12 in Uruguay

The Ramsar Secretariat announces that the preregistration process is now open for the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, to be held at the Conrad Hotel, Punta del Este, Uruguay from **1 to 9 June 2015**. The preregistration process will close on **15 May**. Access to online preregistration and other practical information about COP12 are available on the Ramsar Convention web site at: www.ramsar.org/about/cop12-punta-del-este-uruguay-1-9-june-2015. In addition to official delegations from the Contracting Parties, eligibility to participate in the COP as observers is extended to delegations from the governments of non-Party states and to representatives of inter-governmental organizations, recognized non-governmental organizations working in the field of wetland conservation and sustainable use, and government agencies which are not part of their country's official delegation.

New Guide: Life and Climate Change Mitigation

The latest LIFE Environment Focus publication takes an in-depth look at LIFE's work till now in support of climate change mitigation. The 88-page brochure gives an overview of EU climate policy and provides a host of best practice examples from more than 200 featured projects from across the European Union. It contains interviews with representatives of DG Climate Action and with NGOs active in the field, highlighting the climate mitigation challenges ahead and LIFE's role in the transition to low-carbon agriculture. The LIFE climate change mitigation project examples are divided by theme, with e.g. chapters on agriculture and forestry; the role of peatlands and wetlands as carbon sinks; and projects involving enterprises. To download the brochure, visit www.ow.ly/K62BC.

New Peatland Rewetting Animation in the Netherlands

The Dutch environmental organization, Landschap Noord-Holland, is launching an animated film about peatland rewetting and the opportunities for ecosystem restoration and paludiculture. Their intention is to raise awareness about the negative effects of peatland drainage for agriculture and inspire land managers to choose sustainable solutions. They hope it will be an inspiration for the various stakeholders involved in these restoration processes. See here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIPVbxnFNnM&feature=youtu.be.

Experts wanted for Horizon 2020

The European Commission DG for Research & Innovation welcomes applications from individuals with a view to establishing a database of independent experts who could be called on in connection with e.g. Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020). Experts will be asked to advise on or assist with: evaluation of proposals; monitoring of the implementation of actions carried out under Horizon 2020 as well as of previous research and/or innovation programmes; implementation of research and innovation policy or programmes etc. To apply, visit <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/experts/index.html>.