INTERNATIONAL MIRE
CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

issue 2002/2, June 2002

The International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG) is an international network of specialists having a particular interest in mire and peatland conservation. The network encompasses a wide spectrum of expertise and interests, from research scientists to consultants, government agency specialists to peatland site managers. It operates largely through e-mail and newsletters, and holds regular workshops and symposia. For more information: consult the IMCG Website: http://www.imcg.net

IMCG has an elected Main Board of 15 people (14 since the death of Chairman Ton Damman) from various parts of the world that has to take decisions between congresses. Of these 15 an elected 5 constitute the IMCG Executive Committee that handles day-to-day affairs. The Executive Committee consists of a Chairman, a Secretary General, a Treasurer, and 2 additional members.

Viktor Masing (†), Hugo Sjörs, and Richard Lindsay have been awarded honorary membership of IMCG.

Editorial

The IMCG General Assembly (July 2002, Besançon, France) is rapidly approaching. This highest decision making organ of the IMCG will take major decisions with respect to IMCG policy, including the adoption of an IMCG Strategy and Working Plan (see the draft in the previous Newsletter). This Newsletter includes more documents for the General Assembly.

Because only 13 candidates have applied for the 15 Main Board member vacancies, all these 13 candidates are automatically elected. Therefore no complicated election process with ballots is necessary. Congratulations to the new Main Board!

For all the other decisions (see agenda and documents in this Newsletter), we ask all members to actively involve in the discussions and decisions. Read about the proposals in this Newsletter and react to the secretariat or to the special email-adress **IMCGsecr@web.de**, on which you can write your ideas, proposals, and criticism until the very day of the Congress.

We thank all IMCG members and other contacts from all over the world, who enabled us in the past years to prepare the Newsletters and we hope to be able to serve you also in the coming years. Please keep sending in material on anything happening regarding mires. Also for information or other things, contact us at the IMCG Secretariat. Address updates should be send to Jan Sliva (sliva@weihenstephan.de). In the meantime, keep an eye on the frequently updated IMCG web-site: http://www.imcg.net

See you on the Field Symposium or General Assembly in France, or just send us a mail.

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IMCG Biennual report IMCG August 2000 – Mai 2002

1. Introduction

This is the first biennual report of the International Mire Conservation Group. According to the IMCG constitution, adopted at the IMCG General Assembly in Quebec 2000, the IMCG Main Board shall present a biennial report on the state of affairs in the Society and on its policy at the biennual General Assembly. As no financial flows have been running directly via IMCG during the time covered in this report, no balance sheet and statement of profit and loss is submitted to the General Assembly.

2. Organisation

2.1. General Assembly

The resolutions on British Columbia and South-Africa adopted during the IMCG General Assembly in Quebec (2000) were send to the relevant governments and institutions.
The General Assembly 2002 (Besançon) was prepared.

2.2 Constitution

As the constitution is only one year in force, it is too early to evaluate it in extenso. One item, however, has raised discussion already in the first meeting of the Main Board in Quebec, just after the constitution was adopted: Should the *chairman* be elected by the Main Board (as is according to the Constitution) or by the whole membership? Two discussion papers on the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches were included in IMCG Newsletter 2001/4.

2.3 Main Board

A Main Board (MB) consisting of Tom Damman, Kath Dickinson, Piet Louis Grundling, Ron Hofstetter, Rodolpho Ituraspe, Hans Joosten, Philippe Julve, Elena Lapshina, Xian Min Meng, Tatiana Minaeva, Faisal Parish, Jan Sliva, Michael Steiner, Barry Warner and Leslaw Wolejko was elected in Quebec (August 2000). The MB had its first and only meeting in person on the 10th August 2000 in Quebec City (with 9 MB members present). During the remainder of the report period the MB exchanged views and made decisions by email.
The following decision making procedure was adopted: The Executive Committee has to put proposals for significant decisions before the Main Board. Members of the MB must lodge any objections against a decision proposed within 4 weeks after receipt of the proposal. If no objections are received within this period, it will be taken that the proposal is approved. (see further Constitution art. 10.3.b).

2.4 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee was finally elected on October 23, 2000. Ton Damman was elected as Chairman, Hans Joosten as Secretary General, Philippe Julve as Treasurer, and Tatiana Minaeva and Jan Sliva as additional members. The EC is responsible for the day to day management of IMCG.
The EC held 5 meetings:
December 2000 (virtual)
29 March 2001 in Wageningen (Netherlands)
5 and 7 August 2001 in Tamsweg (Austria)
30 November and 1 – 2 December 2001 in Wageningen (Netherlands)
17 April 2002 in Den Haag (Netherlands)
Reports on these meetings were published in the IMCG Newsletters.

2.5. Chairmanship

The sudden death of our chairman Ton Damman on December 27 2000 shaked the whole IMCG. Because of the short period until the next General Assembly and the unavailability of appropriate candidates within the Main Board, it was decided to proceed without chairman until the next MB elections in France 2002.

2.6 Secretariat

The secretariat was moved from London (UK) to Greifswald (FRG). Membership administration and website management were organized in Weihenstephan and Kiel respectively.

2.7 Membership

In order to formalize the membership, the 7 different address lists rotating in London and Greifswald were cleaned and integrated. On these lists a total of 447 persons and 10 organisations were included, but many data were altered and tens of persons were featuring twice or even three times on the list because of mixing up of surnames and first names.
The constitution adopted in Quebec City requires that members are admitted to the IMCG by the IMCG's Main Board. A procedure for that purpose was developed. Membership requests are send for approval to the IMCG Main Board within two months of their receipt. MB - members then get 4 weeks to bring up objections. When no objections are made within these 4 weeks, the individual will be admitted. In case motivated objections against admission have been made, all MB-members are informed on these objections within 4 weeks. A decision on the admission will then take place by ordinary majority vote by the MB within 4 weeks after receipt of the request to vote. MB-members that have not voted within this period, will be considered to have voted in favour of admission. It is a lengthy procedure but necessary, if we take the constitutional requirement of MB-involvement serious. Jan Sliva manages the procedure and regularly sends updated membership lists to the IMCG-EC members.
In August 2000 IMCG had only 65 registered members and 2 supporters. Per 1 July 2001 IMCG had 148 official members from 40 countries, covering all continents (except Antarctica). A lot of "old

members", however, long overlooked the registration procedure (and several still do!). These were actively approached. On 21 Mai 2002 IMCG had 256 registered members, including 15 supporters, from 46 countries of the World. Their distribution over various continents is as follows

Africa	20
Asia	12
Australia	6
Europe (incl. total Russia)	186
North America	13
South America	4

The registered membership in Europe is distributed as follows:

Albania	1
Armenia	2
Austria	3
Belarus	6
Belgium	4
Croatia	1
Czech Republic	5
Denmark	2
Estonia	11
Finland	9
France	5
Georgia	2
Germany	19
Greece	4
Hungary	2
Ireland	5
Italy	1
Latvia	5
Moldova	1
Netherlands	14
Norway	5
Poland	7
Slovak Republik	3
Slovenia	1
Spain	3
Sweden	6
Switzerland	11
Turkey	1
U.K.	28
Ukraine	3
Serbia	1
Russia	15

The data show, that IMCG has succeeded to increasingly attract members from outside "Western European", but a strong European bias is still obvious.

2.7 Official registration

On July 7th 2001 IMCG was officially registered in France under the law of 1901. The association has been declared at the "Prefecture du Nord, Lille, France" under number 1587. This has been published in the Official Journal of the French Republic n°27, p. 3051, July 7th 2001. This date will therefore be the official birth date of the registered association.

Soon after also the first IMCG bank account was opened.

2.8 Strategy and Working Plan

The unexpected death of Ton Damman, who had started conceptualising it, was a severe drawback in the development of a strategy to provide continuity in goals and approaches of IMCG. With support of several members in and outside the Main Board the strategy and working plan was developed and published in Newsletter 2002/1.

3. Contacts with other organisations

3.1 Wetlands International

Already for a longer time, IMCG has been considering to become an Expert Group of Wetlands International (WI). Exchange of ideas on the Terms of Reference or a Memorandum of Understanding took place with Doug Taylor, the WI Specialist Group Coordinator. We decided to wait with pursuing the WI Expert Group status until WI has sorted out its financial and organisational problems. Another consideration is becoming an official member of WI.

3.2 Scientific and Technical Research Panel of Ramsar

The IMCG representation in the Peatland Working Group of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention was provided by Richard Lindsay, Andreas Grünig, and Michael Steiner (the latter on behalf of the Austrian government). There was, however, limited feedback to the EC and MB.

Important issues discussed in the STRP were the Draft Guidelines for the Identification and Designation of Peatlands as Ramsar sites and the (Guidelines for) Global Action for Peatlands (GAPP / GGAP).

3.3 European Habitat Forum

The Habitat Forum (EHF) is a federation of NGOs in Europe to put pressure on the European Commission in relation to the Habitat Directive and Natura 2000. The European Commission discusses only via the Forum, not with single NGOs. Important for IMCG is the direct contact with other major NGOs within the EHF. Richard Lindsay and Philippe Julve represented IMCG in the EHF. As Richard stopped his activities and also Philippe wishes to hand over to someone else, another representative for IMCG in EHF is being sought.

3.4 International Peat Society

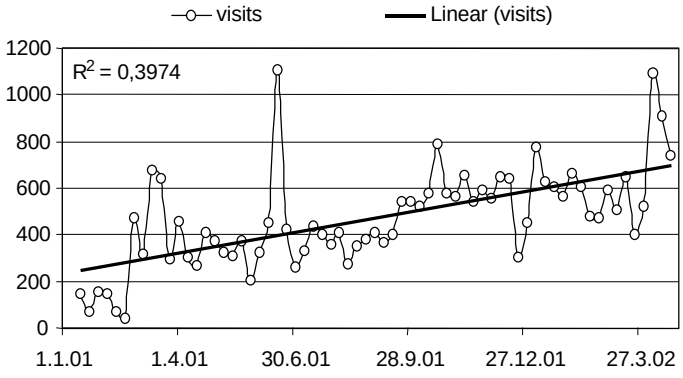
Close cooperation took place with the International Peat Society (IPS), especially with respect to the development of the Global Action Plan for Peatlands (GAPP), the Wise Use Guidelines, and the Global Peatland Initiative (GPI) (see chapter 5). Joint meetings of the Board and other members of IPS and IMCG took place in August 2000 in Québec (Canada), in December 2000 in Heathrow (England) and in March

2001 in Wageningen (Netherlands). Additional meetings also happened in the framework of GPI meetings.

3.5 Society of Wetland Scientists of America
Closer cooperation was discussed with the Society of Wetland Scientists of America (SWS) and a draft Memorandum of Understanding was formulated.

3.6 IUCN Ecosystem Management
Because of the rapid changes in the chairmanship of the IUCN Commision on Ecosystem Management this commission, little progress was made in the cooperation with this commission. Contacts have now been made with the new IUCN Ecosystem Working Group Chairman Dr. Hillary Masundire (Zimbabwe/Botswana) to discuss further cooperation, also in relation to our South-Africa meeting in 2004.

4. Public Relations
4.1 Web site
The Website was moved from London (Richard Lindsay and Germain Mesureur) to Kiel, where Michael Trepel manages the site. The new IMCG website (www.imcg.net) was launched in January 2001. On the mainpage, headlines inform about latest news, updates and changes. The navigation bar on top of the page, leads the visitor easily to the newsletter, calendar or contact page.
The site concept is to present basically information with low graphics to allow all users an acceptable fast access.
The attractiveness of the IMCG website shows a significantly growth. Time series analysis show a significant increase in site access measured in number of different computers per week, number of pages viewed per week or access number per week.



Development of weekly numbers of visits to the IMCG website from January 2001 to April 2002.

In the period march 01 to march 02, the number of computers accessing the site has nearly doubled:

Mean monthly number of different computers accessing the imcg web site per week.

Month	Year	
	2001	2002
1	16	155
2	22	157
3	88	156
4	83	184
5	86	
6	96	
7	84	
8	97	
9	106	
10	148	
11	147	
12	116	

Highest access rates are observed regularly after announcing a new newsletter on the page (June '01). However, the first electronic delivery of the newsletter was related with some technical problems, especially the pdf-file was not readable or printable for everyone. This problem seems to be solved.
Besides the IMCG newsletter, the IMCG mire calendar for mire related conferences, meetings and workshops is the most updated website. On the GAPP site, all previous versions of the global action plan for peatlands are presented including the important RAMSAR resolutions. This is important to show the long and persistent role of IMCG in the development of the Action Plan.

Due to the increasing amount of pages the webspace rented from a commercial provider was updated in April 2002 from 2MB to 75 MB.

4.2 Newsletter
During the report period, the Secretariat in Greifswald (John Couwenberg / Hans Joosten) produced 7 Newsletters: 2000/4 (Dec. 2000), 2001/1 (March 2001), 2001/2 (June 2001), 2001/3 (October 2001), 2001/4 (Dec. 2001), 2002/1 (March 2002), and 2002/2 (June 2002) with a total of 200 pages (www.imcg.net/imcgnl.htm).
Many members contributed to the Newsletter with up-to-date, divers, and relevant information. Many positive reactions were received.
Starting with issue 2001/2, the Newsletter was – as far as possible –distributed via the Internet (in close collaboration between Jan liva and Michael Trepel) to increase distribution velocity substantially. People, who cannot (easily) receive the newsletter via the internet, are still provided with a hard copy (thanks to Margrit von Euw and the generosity of the WSL/FNP, Mario Broggi in Birmensdorf, Switzerland). Hard copies are furthermore being distributed among governmental agencies dealing with nature conservation, national Ramsar focal

points, and the national and international offices of the major NGOs.

5 Activities

IMCG activities take place as actions (smaller activities within a limited timeframe), projects (larger activities within a limited timeframe), and working groups (larger and continuous activities).

5.1 Peat: ecolabelling

IMCG and its members effectively intervened in the European Union process of revising ecolabel policy. This led to the Commission Decision of 28 August 2001 on the Community eco-label for soil improvers and growing media (2001/688/EC) to include the following criteria:

- "A product shall only be considered for the award of an eco-label if its organic matter content is derived from the processing and/or re-use of waste materials."
- "Products shall not contain peat or any products derived from peat."

5.2 Incidental Symposia

IMCG supported the organization of symposia in Moscow (Russia January 2001, Strategic Action Plan for Conservation and Wise Use of Peatlands in the Russian Federation), Noyabrsk (Siberia, August 2001, West Siberian Peatlands and Carbon Cycle), Nanjing (China, September 2002, Wetland Restoration), and Silute (Lithuania, Octobre 2002, Between conservation and utilization: C.A. Weber and the Augstumalmoor).

5.3 IMCG Biennial field symposia and conferences

The proceedings of the Kushiro Japan 1996 Conference are still in preparation. The EC decided that it will not publish proceedings more than 2 years after the concerning event.We decided to leave it to Richard Lindsay's responsibility to publish the Kushiro proceedings.

No proceedings will be made of the IMCG Quebec 2000 conference.

The Field Symposium and Conference in France (2002) is being prepared (Philippe Julve at al., see www.imcg.net/docum/france.htm). First preparations were also made for the South Africa (2004) meetings (Piet-Louis Grundling, Georg Bredenkamp, Jan Sliva).

5.4 Central European Peatland Project

The Central European Peatland Project, with Wetlands International (www.imcg.net/imcgproj.htm#a7), aims at the preparation of a peatland conservation and wise use strategy for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Czech Republic, Sloval Republic, and Ukraine. The closing workshop of this project was held in April 2001 in Lepanina (Estonia). Because of problems in WI, the final reports have not yet been produced. As a follow-up, the various countries have developed / are developing new projects for other funding (GEF, GPI, etc.).

For this project, Hans Joosten created an overview of criteria for identifying mires of international importance for biodiversity conservation (www.imcg.net/docum/criteria.htm). Thomas Heinicke and Colin Bonfield compiled a database with data on the occurrence and red list status of plant and animal species in all European countries (www.imcg.net/docum/redlists.htm). These lists will, however, not be updated, because IUCN has changed its criteria to such extent that it is impossible to keep things compatible.

5.5 European Mires Book

The European Mires Book Project (www.imcg.net/imcgproj.htm#a6) aims at the preparation of an internationally integrated compilation and publication of data with respect to peatland distribution, status, and policies with active participation of groups from all countries of Europe. has been slow.

Funding for the project was found through GPI. The large majority of manuscripts was submitted and a full manuscript will be ready at the end of June 2002.

5.6. Wise Use

The Wise Use Background document (www.mirewiseuse.com), aims at the development of a set of guidelines for the wise use of mires and peatlands, was discussed between IMCG and IPS (with participation of Wetlands International) during a meeting in Wageningen (NL) in March 2001. A new and final draft, that takes into account the suggestions made at that meeting as well as numerous suggestions submitted in writing both before and since the meeting, was put on the website in May 2002 for a final consultation round. Subsequently it will be published as a book and made widely available.

The meeting in Wageningen was also the birth place of the IPS/IMCG Wise Use Statement (www.imcg.net/docum/wiseuse.htm), that eventually has been adopted by both organisations in March 2002.

5.7 Global Action for Peatlands (GAPP/GGAP)

The Global Action Plan for Peatlands (www.imcg.net/docum/gapp.htm) is a product of the continuing collaboration amongst IPS, IMCG, Wetlands International, and others, focused on the Ramsar process. The draft GAPP was send to the Ramsar Contracting Parties for comment in 2000. 18 Contracting Parties and many other bodies reacted and the STRP Peatland Working Group has since improved and streamlined the GAPP text.

Since the GAPP will be approved as a Ramsar document, the GAPP has been rewritten in "Ramsar language" and renamed in "Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands" (GGAP). This was adopted in the meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee in December 2001 and will be submitted as a resolution

on the Ramsar Conference of Parties in Valencia, November 2002. The GAPP/GGAP process has increased awareness of peatlands in the world significantly and will facilitate IMCG work in the coming years substantially.

5.8 Global Peatland Initiative

A major achievement in the report period was the foundation of the Global Peatland Initiative (GPI, www.wetlands.org/projects/GPI/default.htm), a platform programme, which promotes the identification and development of projects for the wise use and conservation of peatlands and facilitates their funding. The GPI channels the results of these to international policies and conventions. IMCG founded the GPI together with IPS, WI, IUCN Netherlands, and Alterra (Wageningen). A first grant of 700.000 EURO was received from the Dutch government for the period until 30 June 2002. This enabled the start of peatland projects all over the world with involvement of many IMCG members. Tatiana Mineava represents IMCG in the GPI Steering Group. IMCG-EC stimulates and coordinates project proposals from IMCG members.

Further funding from the Dutch government was confirmed in June 2002. Other funders are being sought. IMCG stresses the need of the development of a long-term GPI strategy and of clear section and evaluation criteria.

5.9 Classification and Terminology Project

The IMCG Global Peatland Classification and Terminology Project aims at the development of internationally accepted and globally valid peatland typologies and terminology.

In the report period, Jan Sliva took over the coordination of this work. His first product will be a chapter on European mire and peatland classification for the IMCG European Mires Book. The terminology aspects will remain the responsibility of Ron Hofstetter (cf. http://fig.cox.miami.edu/~rhofstet/bil538/hygrogaia-1.html).

In August 2001 a successful Workshop on mire regionality was organised by Michael Steiner in Tamsweg (Austria) (see IMCG Newsletter 2001/3). Michael Steiner and Tania Minaeva are currently also working on a Prodromus of mire plant communities.

5.10 Mire species lists

The Mire Species List project (http://perso.wanadoo.fr/philippe.julve/imcgproj.htm) coordinated by Philippe Julve collects ecological and distributional data on mire and wetland species. At first limited to the Holarctic, the list are currently expanded to include Tropical and Austral areas.

IMCG General Assembly (Besançon 21 July 2002)

As on the IMCG General Assembly (Congress) on Sunday 21 July 2002 in Besançon (France) only limited time will be available and only a limited number of IMCG members will be able to attend, we plan to arrange (part of) the discussions and decisions by (e)mail. Please send your contributions, amendments, etc. to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

Please refer to the previous Newsletter, where you will find a draft IMCG Strategy and Action Plan, put to the Congress for approval by the current IMCG Main Board.

For those who will not be attending the General Assembly in person, you can send your remarks, concerns, and votes in writing to the secretariat before 5 July 2002 or as email to IMCGsecr@web.de. Emails can be send until the day of the General Assembly itself on 21 July.

Participate in the further growth and development of YOUR IMCG!

Agenda IMCG General Assembly, France 21 July 2002

1. Opening and Welcome
2. Minutes of the General Assembly of 6th August 2000 in Quebec
3. Biennial report on the state of affairs in the IMCG and on its policy
4. Balance sheet and the statement of profit and loss
5. IMCG Corporate Strategy and Action Plan
6. Membership fee
7. Election of Main Board
8. Conference resolutions
9. Agreement on next venues – 2004 and 2006
10. Any Other Business

The new Main Board

On our General Assembly (Congress) in France we would have had to elect a new Main Board. In order to guarantee an effective democratic election process involving *all* members, nominations had to be submitted to the Secretariat before the first of June 2002, so that ballots and other General Assembly Documents can be sent out in/with this Newsletter and would reach everybody in time.
Twelve candidates presented themselves in the previous Newsletter. We received only one additional nomination of Olivia Bragg:

Olivia Bragg (UK)
Peatland ecohydrologist; have worked under the titles "biologist" and "consultant" and am now a geographer. Have participated in IMCG Field Symposia and Congresses since 1992, was a member of the precursor Main Board (DMG) from 1996 to 2000, and attended some of the meetings with IPS in 2000/2001.
Academically interested in combining physics with biology, first got involved in a peatland project at school and never really looked back. Earned a doctorate in Scotland for a study of how plants and water work together in the acrotelm; led a research team investigating how bogs construct themselves and function as hydrological units; then applied the principles advising mostly UK nature conservation agencies on management and monitoring of many natural and disturbed peatland ecosystems. I still do this type of work, where and when it is needed and sometimes a long way from home. Have visited mires from western Canada to Japan and from Lapland to a few degrees south of the equator, but there are lots of gaps and half a world still to see.
Since the mid '90s I have been centrally involved in developing, administering and delivering the Peatland Biodiversity Programme (PBP) for central and eastern Europe (Darwin Initiative funding 1998-2002), which is about enabling people to develop peatland conservation initiatives that fit their own national and local situations. I have also contributed to Wetlands International's policy-oriented Central European Peatland Project (CEPP) and am a member of the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Peatland Campaign committee. Last year, combined this with work to assist one of the responsible UK government agencies (SEPA) in implementing the new European legislation known as the Water Framework Directive, which aims to minimise the ecological impacts of water use; and managed to fit in a return visit to Kalimantan to assess the results of the "million-hectare" experiment in alternative peatland hydrology. Currently compiling a book about the PBP project.
I am willing to stand for election to the IMCG Main Board and, if elected, to take on other responsibilities if needed. I would like to see (and help) IMCG move forward from a slightly shaky start as an "official organisation", to build on the industry and achievements of both its first Main Board and their predecessors. It was unlikely that we would manage to constitute ourselves robustly at the first attempt, and obviously some organisational points needs to be clarified. Another chore is waiting, in that it really is time to complete some of the long-running projects and publications. And wondering what it will be like to be part of this global force rather than a biennial bus-load of "mire friends", I find myself hoping that we'll still be able to make everybody feel they belong, to support and encourage each other, and to value every person's individual contribution. Of course we have to influence global policy; and it's necessary to find the peatlands in whole uncharted continents if we are to have the information to state our case with conviction. But, especially where finance and infrastructure are sparse, there can be a big gap between policy and its effective implementation on the ground that can so easily be filled by opportunistic destruction. So it's important to draw attention to the potential of multi-level approaches that also empower the people whose livelihoods depend directly upon mires to work towards their own viable futures. Finally, we should not forget central and eastern Europe, where so much momentum has been built up by the PBP and CEPP projects that a little proactive consolidation under the IMCG umbrella could yield big returns for mire conservation.
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As there are only 13 candidates for 15 Main Board positions and in accordance with article 9.1 of the constitution no voting will be necessary and all candidates are included in the new Main Board.

Congratulations to the new IMCG Main Board!

The main board may co-opt additional members to fill vacancies (article 9.4). The main board will discuss this in view of the goals set out in the Strategy and Working Plan.

Below you may find a listing of all 13 Main Board members and how to contact them.

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Call for Resolutions

It has become a tradition at the biennial IMCG General Assembly (Congress) to adopt a series of resolutions that address current topics in mire conservation worldwide. These resolutions are addressed to relevant authorities, e.g. governments and international organisations. Many resolutions have had an important effect on mire conservation in various countries.
On previous congresses, the resolutions have been drawn up by IMCG members present at the Congress in a rather hectic process. In order to improve the making of resolutions to be adopted at the IMCG General Assembly (Congress) in France 2002, we should - as far as possible - prepare them in advance to give ample opportunity for discussion and editing. If you want to submit a resolution for your country or region on the congress, you are, therefore, invited to prepare a sketch or a complete draft resolution in advance. For format consult resolutions on the web: (http://www.imcg.net/docum/norway/trondheim.htm) Contact your IMCG secretariat for support.

The IMCG-EC meeting Den Haag on 17.04.2002

1. GPI progress and perspectives.
Prior to the EC meeting the CBD side event of GPI was held, which was followed by a discussion of the GPI steering committee and other interested persons present on the structure of the GPI and a draft inception report for phase two.

2. Conference and Symposium France
Philippe reported that he had been able to find funds for the participation of 10 people. Funding is still sought for another 10. With respect to the criteria on the basis of which people should be selected for (limited) funding, it is necessary to consider long term IMCG priorities (geography, cooperation with other organisations). Funding should then coincide with the IMCG strategy and planned activities.

3. General Assembly (Congress)
Technicalities of voting were discussed, with following observations and resulting implications:
- Only approved members may vote
- A voting ballot will be send out with the next Newsletter with the instruction to send it in a double envelop to Besançon.
- There will be an election commission to count the votes. This will consist of people not standing for Main Board.
- There will also be a "live" voting in Besançon
- Tanja will distribute and collect ballots in Russia as postal service abroad is very slow.
- If there are not more than 15 candidates for Main Board no voting is necessary

The General Assembly will factually open with the sending of the ballots (see Constitution). Therefore all candidates must stand before 1 June 2002. After 1 June 2002, no new candidates will be accepted.
There are some problematic paragraphs in the Constitution regarding voting procedures and the General Assembly. These will be collected and will be presented as a discussion paper together with other proposals for improvement of the Constitution.

With respect to the agenda of the General Assembly (France 21 July 2002) the following was discussed/decided:

1. *Opening and Welcome*
2. *Minutes of the General Assembly of 6th August 2000 in Quebec*
3. *Biennial report on the state of affairs in the IMCG and on its policy*
   Hans will prepare a report and send it for comment to the Main Board. The corrected report will be published in the next Newsletter.
4. *Balance sheet and the statement of profit and loss*
   Philippe will make a balance sheet
5. *IMCG Corporate Strategy and Action Plan*
   Published in Newsletter 2002/1
6. *Membership fee*
   The proposal to continue without membership fee was accepted. The technicalities of donations will be worked out by Philippe (international money transfer, credit card, cash). In the next Newsletter a call for donations will be featured also encouraging people to donate cash when they attend the meeting in France.
7. *Election of Main Board*
   The question whether the EC should stimulate people to stand candidate was discussed. As every member may stand candidate, there is nothing against directly approaching other members to stand. Because there are still less candidates than positions, some members will be directly approached. Some discussion on a possible future chairman of IMCG was held.
8. *Conference resolutions*
   There has been a call for resolutions in the Newsletter. This will be repeated.

9. *Agreement on next venues – 2004 and 2006*
   The 2004 Symposium and General Assembly will be held in South Africa. It will be a joint meeting with IAVS. The necessity to soon start fund raising was stressed.
   For the 2006 Symposium and General Assembly a South American venue is envisaged.
10. *Any Other Business*
    There not being any other business and some people being in a hurry, the meeting was closed.

Wise Use Document

The final consultation draft of the Wise Use document is now available on www.mirewiseuse.com.
The drafters would be very grateful for any comments by 28th June. After that date the document will be revised, taking into account all the comments and suggestions received, and it will then be published.
For more information contact Hans Joosten:
joosten@uni-greifswald.de

Economically feasible targets in fen peatland restoration

by Wendelin Wichtmann, Achim Schäfer & John Couwenberg

The use of fen peatlands as meadows is generally accompanied by high environmental impacts and the loss of species biodiversity. With increasing milk output per cow, the quality of peatland hay or silage becomes insufficient. As a consequence, fodder production is more and more deflected to arable land. Alternative land use concepts need to be developed for abandoned peatland sites, when possible involving restoration of the natural hydrological conditions.

Currently the aim of rewetting of fen peatlands is mainly to either restore natural values (biodiversity) or to accommodate aspects of landscape (hydrology) and environmental (climate, water quality) benefits. Within the framework of these aims, however, peatlands may be developed for many kinds of use (recreational lakes, fish ponds, wet meadows, pastures). The main factors are the physical constraints of restoration, mainly dependent on water availability, and liquid funds.

Management of undrained (and rewetted) peatlands may be necessary to avoid or mitigate indirect effects of human activities in the surroundings like nutrient inputs by intensive land use or animal husbandry and drainage activities. This may lead to changes in the vegetation that require management.

Vegetation management is normally connected with removal of biomass to take away excess nutrients or to prevent vegetation succession in unwanted directions. Very wet conditions often make grazing unrealistic and mowing is the alternative. Such harvesting, however, often leads to additional costs for machinery, work, and for the removal and disposal of the biomass, as utilisation of the harvested biomass is often secondary or neglected.

Taking the economic situation stronger into account, more attention should be paid to the production and utilisation of peatland biomass. Examples for the material use of peatland biomass are roofing material, form bodies, paper pulp, furniture, and basic material for the chemical industry. Energy uses include direct combustion or production of fermentation gases and so called sun fuels. Artificial introduction of habitat adapted plant species under peat forming conditions that meet higher biomass quality demands may be a feasible alternative to natural developed stands after rewetting.

Rewetting is the only possible option for drained fen peatlands in the long run (by human activity or after abandonment). The question whether they will be managed mainly depends on their potential yields and available financial resources. The natural values and environmental benefits of managed rewetted peatlands are much higher than those of drained pastures or meadows and may compete with those of undrained unmanaged sites.

DUENE e.V. c/o Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität, Botanisches Institut, Grimmer Strasse 88, D-17487 Greifswald wicht@uni-greifswald.de

Transboundary wetlands in the Polesie region -- Belarus, Poland, Ukraine

By Tobias Salathé

On 22-24 May 2002, about 140 specialists from Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and other countries, including representatives of several international organisations and conservation NGOs, gathered in Minsk, the capital of the Republic of Belarus, for the second international conference on the ecology and conservation of floodplains and lowland mires in the Polesie region, exactly five years after the first conference on this topic in May 1997. The Polesie region is shared among Belarus, Poland, and Ukraine - the Pripyat river forms its central artery, flowing eastwards to enter the Dniepr soon after crossing the Ukrainian border near ill-starred Tchernobyl. While more than one million hectares of the Polesie area were drained between 1966 and 1990, large parts of the Pripyat floodplain are still exposed to the natural flooding regime. This created habitats such as alluvial oak forests, wet meadows, and lowland fen mires. The land is used for haymaking, pasture and fishing and is extremely rich in biodiversity. The floodplains of the Pripyat and its tributaries hold the largest part of the remaining population of the aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*), a small, globally threatened, wetland songbird. To illustrate the extent and importance of the Pripyat floodplain, it can be safely said that it comes second in Europe only to wetland areas such as the Danube Delta or the Waddensea.

In 1995, a first Belarus-German ornithological expedition explored the vast floodplain, most parts of which are only accessible by helicopter during flood events, and put the Pripyat on the conservation map. APB-BirdLife Belarus (created in 1998) joined up

with specialists of the National Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus. They have since been supported by RSPB, the BirdLife partner in the UK, and the United Nations office in Belarus. The UK Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species and the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection (Germany) provided financial support to prepare, amongst other activities, management plans for three fen mires that are now ready for implementation.

Belarus joined the Ramsar Convention in 1999 and has since declared three Ramsar Sites: the Sporovo fen mire in the Yaselda floodplain (a tributary to Pripyat), the Olmany mires, and the Mid-Pripyat landscape protected area, covering together over 200,000 ha. In his opening statement, First Deputy Minister Vasily Podolyako announced that another three wetland sites are ready for Ramsar designation in 2002. With the help of OMPO, the Paris-based NGO supporting conservation projects along the migratory bird flyways in the Western Palearctic and West Africa, the Institute of Zoology of the National Academy of Sciences identified yet another 15 potential Ramsar Sites in Belarus. One of them is Kotra mire, adjacent to the Lithuanian Ramsar Site Cepkeliai mire. Together with other transboundary wetland areas in Belarus, Lithuania and Kaliningrad (Russian Federation), these sites are currently benefiting from a Ramsar Small Grants Fund project, managed by the OMPO office in Vilnius, to prepare for efficient transboundary management.

During the conference, several UNDP-GEF projects were presented as well. First, the project to conserve the globally significant biodiversity in the Pripyat floodplain through wetland management and protection of key sites, as a follow-up to the current Darwin Initiative project. Then, the project for the ecological rehabilitation of the Dnipro/Dniepr basin, linking conservation actions with hydrological rehabilitation and extending the local approach in the Pripyat floodplain to the wider Polesie region. UNESCO's Man and Biosphere programme is developing a transboundary eastern European model of a regional ecological network for the trilateral Polesie region, in view of its integration into the Pan-European Ecological Network. The GEF projet for the conservation, restoration and wise use of degraded peatlands in Belarus addresses yet another important issue, namely, Belarus's vast area of peatlands - exploited, degraded or still nearly pristine. Professor Michael Succow, of Greifswald University (Germany), made a thought-provoking reflection on the global importance of mire conservation. He presented ideas for sustainable use of mires that should replace current damaging drainage and exploitation schemes. Alder trees (*Alnus*), reed (*Phragmites, Typha, Schoenoplectus*) and grasses (*Glyceria, Phalaris*), growing on restored mires, can provide sustainable resources (3-25 t/ha) for furniture, fuel, insulation, and livestock grazing. Advanced peatbog restoration techniques allow now regular yields of white peat (Sphagnum mosses) that can be sustained. Experiments are being conducted to these ends in eastern Germany on an area of 150,000 ha.

A highlight of the conference was the launch of the book "*Treasures of Belarusian Nature*" presenting with clear text (in English and Belarusian) conservation data and numerous brilliant photographs of 24 areas of international significance for the conservation of biological diversity in Belarus (obtainable from APB-BirdLife Belarus, dimago@mail.ru). Another highlight was the first showing of the nature film "*Pripyat - the Radiant River*" by Professor Mathias Freude from Germany. After adopting a resolution and a seven point action programme for the conservation of the Polesie floodplains and fen mires and the closing banquet, on 25 May, the conference participants traveled south to visit the Mid-Pripyat Ramsar Site during a 5-hour boat trip on the meandering river between Turov and Mokrovo with a few stopovers in the extensive grazing meadows. Despite a looming thunderstorm, exciting the numerous mosquitos and midges under the heavy sky, the participants were happy to grasp at least a small glimpse of the impressive landscape. The partners in wetland conservation in the Polesie region, from Belarus and abroad, are to be congratulated for their impressive achievements in little time, their efficient cooperation, and the organization of this perfect meeting.

INTERNATIONAL MIRE
CONSERVATION GROUP

Vasyugan: Preparation of a new mire conservation area in Siberia.

By Lena Lapshina

A group of about 35 administrators, scientists and land users from Tomsk and Novosibirsk Oblasts met May 28 2002 in a workshop in Tomsk (Western-Siberia) to discuss the possibilities to establish a mire conservation area in the largest mire complex in the world: the Great Vasyugan (GPI Project WGP1-07 / GPI_33). The mire stretches over a length of more than 400 km on the border between Tomsk and Novosibirsk (and Omsk) Oblasts and forms the water divide between the Ob and Irtysh Rivers. It has a contiguous area of appr. 57.000 km², consisting for 18.000 km² of open bog and 20.000 km² of open fen, whereas the remainder is forested mire. This single mire complex comprises almost 2 % of the total peatland area of the world.

Next to impressively large populations of globally rare animal and plant species, the complex is characterized by a large diversity of surface patterns. In this and in its location on the ecotone between boreal forest and steppe, the Great Vasyugan resembles the famous Red Lake Peatlands in Minnesota, with one major difference: its much larger extent. This magnitude has enabled the development of impressive macropatterns on a scale that can only be really appreciated from satellite images.

Because of their omnipresence (> 50% of Western-Siberia is covered with peat), peatlands in Western-Siberia are still largely considered as wastelands, as only deposits of peat, or as just nothing. In combination with the presence of oil and gas resources in the surroundings this leads to a rapid "consumption" of wilderness in the Great Vasyugan mire. As the workshop showed, in Novosibirsk Oblast only 4.000 km² of the mire is not yet carved up by oil exploration and other licenses.

All participants acknowledged the globally important biodiversity and regulation functions of the Great Vasyugan and support the establishment of a new large conservation area. In particular, P.T.Tukhvatulin from Tomsk Oblast administration and A.I.Petrik from Novosibirsk Oblast administration stressed the willingness to rapidly proceed with its preparation. The different land users (e.g. mining of peat and mineral resources, oil exploitaion, forestry, hunting, collection of berries and Pinus cembra seeds) saw no major objections. The discussions focussed on the type of protection status, the most suitable areas, and on whether to include existing and future oilfields in the protected area and its bufferzones.

The Ecological Committees of Tomsk and Novosibirsk Oblasts will continue the preparation of a large "Federal Zakaznik" in the Great Vasyugan. As a subsequent step the designation of the area as Ramsar Site and as a World Heritage Site will be prepared. This will give the Great Vasyugan the official status of what it truly is: the greatest mire on Earth.

VISIT THE IMCG HOMEPAGE AT

http://www.imcg.net

International Bog Day, 28th July 2002.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust, in association with the International Mire Conservation Group is requesting your help and giving you the opportunity to unite with the mire community world-wide and celebrate the value and diversity of mires to mark **International Bog Day, on Sunday 28th July.**

Our aim is simple, to raise the profile of mires worldwide. To mark this special day we hope to bring together people from every corner of the mire world, experts and enthusiasts alike, highlighting the plight and wonder of these unique habitats and to celebrate their place and contribution to our global biodiversity.

The mission is a clear one – to demonstrate there are people all over the world who think mires are worth saving and are willing to do something about it. This year the message is more important than ever as our politicians and policy makers meet in Johannesburg to consider the progress made since Rio ten years ago.

Joining in is simple. All you need to do, is gather together a group (could be a family, community group, organisation or even an individual) of like-minded mire lovers and take a photograph. We want pictures of people, standing in a line, holding hands across a bog, in as many different countries and locations of the world as possible. The pictures will be posted on our website with links to as many other mire sites as we can find, with the caption: 'Global mire conservation – Joining hands around the world".

To coincide with International Bog Day and posting of the photographs we will issue a press release highlighting the key issues of global mire conservation.

If you would like to take part please follow the simple instructions below:

Send us an e-mail to campaigns@swt.org.uk telling us you intend to take part and where you are from

Between now and the 7th of July take your picture and send a copy to:

Digital picture: e-mail to campaigns@swt.org.uk, include details of location and group

Photograph: post to Gill Calder, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Cramond House, Cramond Glebe Road, Edinburgh, Scotland. EH4 6NS. Include details of location and group.

We will do the rest.

So, what better excuse is there to get yourself, friends, family and colleagues out onto a mire and join in with like minded people from all over the world to celebrate these special places. I hope you will find the time and make the effort.

With best wishes

Gill Calder, Campaigns Assistant
Tel: 00 44 (0)131 312 4762 (Direct Line)
gcalder@swt.org.uk

REGISTER

Please fill out the IMCG registration form.

Surf to http://www.imcg.net or contact the secretariat.

Regional News

News from British Columbia, Canada

Compiled by Karen Golinski with contributions from Rose Klinkenberg, Lawrence Brown, Will MacKenzie, and Sharon Hartwell

There's lots happening on the mire conservation front in British Columbia! Much is being done by volunteers, including lobbying for the protection of mires in urban areas, initiating education programs, conducting inventories, and doing hands-on restoration work. While the future of mire research being done by provincial government employees is uncertain as a result of drastic cuts to research funding, work on a province-wide classification project continues. South-of-the-border in Washington State, the first part of a comprehensive report on low elevation *Sphagnum*-dominated mires was recently completed. Here are the details:

British Columbia Wetland and Riparian Classification Project

The British Columbia Wetland and Riparian Classification Project is a government-funded, province-wide classification of wetland ecosystems and plant associations. Project results will provide base-line information on wetlands for land-use management, rare ecosystem identification, mapping, and inventory. The program was initiated in 1995 by the Research Section of the Ministry of Forests. Field relevé sampling and data classification is still on-going with final publication expected in Spring 2003. Draft reports can be found at:
http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/prupert/wetlands.

Burns Bog

Two years after the completion of an extensive evaluation of the conservation significance of Burns Bog (see http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/special/home.htm for a full report), the southernmost large raised bog on the west coast of North America is still not protected. The Burns Bog Conservation Society (http://www.burnsbog.org/) continues to lobby all levels of government. A comprehensive guide to Burns Bog and accompanying teacher's manual are in the final stages of review and should be available soon. Excellent photos of Burns Bog can be found on photographer David Blevins' web site:
http://persweb.direct.ca/blevins/burnsbog.htm

Camosun Bog

Restoration efforts are on-going at Camosun Bog. The small depression bog located in the City of Vancouver was protected in 1989 as part of Pacific Spirit Regional Park. Since 1930 the bog deteriorated significantly because hydrological conditions were disrupted by housing development on its periphery. This led to a low water table in summer and subsequent invasion by western hemlock trees *(Tsuga heterophylla).* Restoration work began in 1989 with the removal of 150 large trees. More intensive restoration was started in 1996 by the Camosun Bog Restoration Group. Competing vegetation was removed from parts of the bog with remnant *Sphagnum* moss coverage, while in areas without *Sphagnum* a thin layer of soil was removed to expose the underlying peat and effectively increase the water table. Plugs of *Sphagnum* were planted, covering about 10% of the surface. After 2–3 years there was essentially complete coverage of *Sphagnum*, and other bog plants had started to move in spontaneously. So far about 30% of the 2 hectare "core area" of the bog has been restored and the CBRG hopes to complete the restoration in 2–3 years time. (For more information surf to:
http://www.naturalhistory.bc.ca/CamosunBog/)

Blaney Bog

Blaney Bog is unique because it is the only mire in the Vancouver area with a substantial population of *Sphagnum subnitens*. It was recently acquired by the Greater Vancouver District Regional Parks. A report summarizing known information is currently being compiled. (For more4 information surf to: www.geocities.com/pittpolder2000/blaney.html)

Rithet's Bog

Rithet's Bog is a small raised basin bog dominated by *Pinus contorta* var. *contorta, Ledum groenlandicum* and *Gaultheria shallon*. It is the last remaining bog in the Greater Victoria area of southeastern Vancouver Island. Starting in the late 1800s it was subjected to extensive agricultural disturbance, and over the past 20 years the surrounding upland has become urbanized. Rithet's Bog was donated to the municipality of Saanich by the Guinness family in 1994, and it is now a municipal park. The Rithet's Bog Conservation Society (RBCS) serves as a management advisory body, making recommendations for conservation, research, interpretation, education and operation of the Bog. Its major goal is to promote scientifically informed restoration work, with rehabilitation of the rare central *Sphagnum* bog community as the primary objective. Volunteer activities include fund raising, invasive weed removal, production of educational material, tree planting in surrounding upland areas, monthly butterfly surveys, and community liaison work. The rare vascular plants have been surveyed and mapped by the B.C. Conservation Data Centre. A series of reports by University of Victoria and Camosun College students include an inventory of

plant species and assessments of hydrology and water quality.

Local government, the RBCS, Ducks Unlimited, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada have formed a partnership to undertake rehabilitation work at the Bog. This spring, a temporary weir was installed on the outlet stream to try to reduce water level fluctuations as a first step to restoring the central *Sphagnum* community. If the trial is successful, a permanent weir will be constructed this fall. The ultimate goal is to re-integrate the Bog into the surrounding Colquitz River watershed. Future possibilities include increasing the extent of the central *Sphagnum* community via planting of *Sphagnum* plugs. For more information: rithetsbog@hotmail.com

Lulu Island Bog

Lulu Island Bog is located in the City of Richmond, near Vancouver. Approximately 80 hectares of the bog are protected within Richmond Nature Park. The non-profit Richmond Nature Park Society, founded in the early 1970s, provides educational programming, and works in partnership with the City. Current conservation activities focus on a comprehensive biophysical inventory of remnant portions of the bog located within the Nature Park and on adjacent land owned by the Dept. of National Defense (http://www.geog.ubc.ca/richmond/city/inventory2002.htm). The inventory is being undertaken by a group of expert volunteers and covers a variety of organisms including: vascular plants, bryophytes, lichens, fungi, lepidoptera, odonata, breeding birds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Plant communities are also being classified and mapped, and hydrological studies have been initiated.

South of the Border

Part I of a comprehensive report describing low-elevation *Sphagnum*-dominated mires can be downloaded from:
http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/dss/sphagnum-bogs.htm.

News from Indonesia: Oil palm & Dutch banks

Three of the biggest banks in the Netherlands - ABN AMRO, Rabobank and Fortis - have agreed to stop or substantially restrict financing for oil palm development in Indonesia on environmental and social grounds.

In 1997/8 forest fires destroyed 10 million hectares of Indonesian forestland. The haze that covered the continent for several months affected the health of some 70 million people in Southeast Asia. Instead of calling for greater fire fighting capacity in Indonesia, environmental NGOs sought a fundamental solution to combat the fires. The NGOs went after the financial backers of the oil palm plantation industry in Indonesia, the sector that was widely held accountable for causing the forest fires.

All major Dutch banks have financial ties with several of the main plantation company groups in Indonesia and these banks are frequently in a solid position to influence the environmental policies of their clients.

Last October 31, the three banks declared that they subscribe to the investment criteria as put forward by the NGOs. Oil palm plantation companies submitting investment proposals to these banks should:

- Not be involved in burning forestland
- Not be clearing tropical rainforest
- Respect the rights and wishes of local communities
- Respect Indonesia's law and relevant international conventions.

The decision of the banks is a landmark break-through in NGO efforts to engage business in forest conservation and management. It is comparable to the decision of the major Do-It-Yourself chains such as B&Q (UK), Intergamma (Netherlands) and Home Depot (USA) to phase out the sales of non-certified timber. The decision of the banks is also timely, as many experts believe that the drought of El Niño and subsequent forest fires will hit Indonesia again in 2002.

Sawit Watch, the Indonesian NGO-network that is campaigning against large-scale expansion of oil palm plantations, called upon all banks in the world, including Indonesian banks, to follow the steps taken by the Dutch banks.

News from Malaysia: Demonstration Project at Batang Berjuntai, Selangor

by David Lee,

The recent outbreak of forest fires has raised a lot of concern among the local and international scientists on how to safeguard these valuable resources. Fires have destroyed or degraded over 1.5×10^6 ha of peatlands in Southeast Asia since 1997. Peatlands are best left untouched to allow such systems to perform their specific and unique functions. A concerted effort to combat the susceptibility of peatlands to fire hazards is urgently needed between the various agencies nationwide as well as between the affected countries in the region. In this respect, GEC is working with other parties to develop follow-up activities such as demonstration sites for fire control/rehabilitation and awareness information exchange activities.

This project is being carried out primarily to determine the best alternative land uses that can be implemented in the property owned by P.K.P.S. at Batang Berjuntai. In addition to this, the project hopes to achieve a set of targets identified in the workshop held earlier in March. These targets are:

1. Strengthen interagency cooperation to facilitate integrated, multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approaches to prevent and control peatland fire, as well as the sustainable use of peatland resources.
2. Develop a comprehensive set of guidelines/manuals that will help prevent and control peatland fires, including developing fire danger index, fire management plans, water management strategies, early warning systems and fire control strategies.
3. Prepare fire management plans for all peatlands with fire risk to include risk assessment; implementation strategies; cooperation with other agencies; allocation and training of human resources; provision of appropriate tools/equipment; development of operating procedures; and strengthening of legislation and regulations.
4. Elaborate further the concept for the establishment of Buffer zones around peatland areas in which development and land use activities may be controlled to minimise risk of fire.
5. Formulate and implement water management strategies for previously drained peatlands to improve water tables and thereby enhance fire control and preventive measures, as well as support rehabilitation efforts.
6. Develop and document techniques, and promote rehabilitation of degraded peatlands by restoring water regimes and forest cover to reduce fire risk and enhance biodiversity and socio-economic benefits.
7. Establish demonstration projects to test and promote approaches on fire prevention and post-fire rehabilitation in the overall context of sustainable management of peatland resources.

For more information contact David Lee, Global Environment Centre, david@genet.po.my

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News from Lithuania: "Between conservation and use: C.A. Weber and the Augstumal Peatland"

The symposium with that title will be held from 2 – 6 Octobre 2002 and is jointly organised by the German Peat Society (DGMT), the International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG), scientists of Vilnius University, and the administration of the Nemuno Delta Regional Park (Lithuania).

On the occasion IMCG will publish the English translation of the Weber 1902 Austumal monograph (currently very rare and only available in German) together with a new Weber biography (by Jürgen Schwaar), and an overview of the importance of Weber for mire science (by Paul Glaser).

For further information about the symposium and for registration contact Hans Joosten: Joosten@uni-greifswald.de

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News from the USA: Army Engineers Issue Permits to Expand Limestone Mining in the Everglades

On April 12, the US Army Corps of Engineers issued permits that will allow mining in 5,409 acres in the Everglades for the next 10 years, more than doubling the amount of limestone quarries in the protected wetlands.

The 10 companies who receive the permits will pay about $46 million in fees that will be used by the federal government to purchase and improve another 7,500 acres of wetlands near the Everglades, officials said.

Mining industry officials said the extra mines are needed to ensure enough affordable crushed stone for Florida's highways, bridges, and roads. Rock from the Everglades quarries generates 40 percent of the aggregate used in cement in the state.

The recently approved Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan is part of an $8 billion program to protect and restore the vast Everglades wetlands that have suffered from a century of pollution, water diversion, and habitat loss. But now the US Army Corps of Engineers actually allows miners to destroy large areas even before restoration efforts begin.

The mining industry stressed that the additional mining is compatible with the restoration plan and that most of the permits are concentrated around existing mines. Environmentalists are afraid the expanded mining could endanger drinking water and harm efforts to restore the Everglades.

The 10-year permits issued to the limestone mining industry are just the first phase: the project would eventually open up a 30-square-mile hole in the middle of the Everglades. The Corps argues that, in theory, decades from now some of the pits could be used as water reservoirs for the Everglades. But experts question whether the pits would be built in such a way as to safely or cost-effectively function as reservoirs. Environmentalists and the Department of Interior also object to the large areas of unique wildlife habitat that would be destroyed, the harm the pits would have on restoring water flows in the Everglades, and the contamination threat the mines pose to adjacent drinking water supplies.

Studies are currently underway that explore these threats, possible solutions, and alternative ways to store and deliver additional water to the Everglades. But the Corps is inexplicably proposing to allow mining to go forward before the studies are completed.

(source: www.nrdc.org)

New and recent Journals/Newsletters/Books/Reports

Tyrlyskin, V.N. & T.Y. Minaeva, 2001. Experience and prospects of integrating protected areas in a regional context of social and economic development of Russia. WWF Russia. 130p. (in Russian)

This booklet describes the achievements of three years of work on the development of regional networks of protected areas within the framework of modern life. It discusses social, economical, and legislative problems of integration of protected areas in regional context.
For more information contact Tatjana Minaeva: tminaeva@wwf.ru

6 th draft Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008

Copies of the printed Draft Strategic Plan 2003-2008 are available to the general public; please write to Ms Valerie Higgins (higgins@ramsar.org) and specify whether you wish English, French, or Spanish.
HTML, PDF, and Word versions of the Plan can be found in the three languages on the Ramsar Web site, as COP8 document DR-25, at
http://ramsar.org/cop8_docs_index_e.htm
(_f for French, _s for Spanish).
The form entitled "Towards a Ramsar Convention Work Plan 2003-2005: Establishing global targets from provisional national targets identified by Contracting Parties" can be downloaded in Word format from
http://ramsar.org/cop8_dr_25_targets_e.doc
(_f for French, _s for Spanish).

Rieley, J.O., Page, S.E. & Bambang Setiadi. 2002. Peatlands for people: Natural resource functions and sustainable management. Proceedings of the International Symposium on tropical Peatlands, held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 22nd and 23rd August 2001. 274 p.

The proceedings of the International Symposium on “Tropical Peat: Peatlands for People”, that was held in Jakarta on 22 – 23 August 2001, have been published. The proceedings are available on request from the IPS Secretariat at a cost of EUR 25 plus postage. Orders from Indonesia should be addressed to Dr. Bambang Setiadi, Chairman of the Indonesian National Committee of the IPS, Fax +62 2132 4255. You can find the full address at our homepage. The price is 100,000 IRP plus postage. The table of contents of the proceedings will be published at
http://www.peatsociety.fi/publica/publicat.htm

Treasures of Belarussian nature. Areas of International Significance for Conservation of Biological Diversity. Belarus, Minsk. 160 p. (in Belarussian and English)

This publication presents 24 key sites of Belarus that have an outstanding international value for conservation of biological diversity. Among these are many impressive peatlands, like those of the Pripyat and Berezinski parks. The many beautiful pictures of plant and animal life and landscapes dominate the short explanatory texts.
For more information contact APB-BirdLife Belarus, dimago@mail.ru

Fremstad, E. & Moen, A. (eds.) 2001. Threatened vegetation types in Norway. - NTNU Viten-skapsmuseet Rapp. bot. Ser. 2001-4: 1-231. (in Norwegian)

The report surveys the types of vegetation considered to be endangered in the short and long term. 71 types of vegetation and 68 subtypes of these are described with respect to their ecology, species composition, occurrence of Red List species of vascular plants and bryophytes, regional and local subtypes, threats, changes and declines, and other factors such as their need for management and their representation in protected areas. The vegetation types and subtypes are described in varying detail, partly depending on the knowledge available about them. They are arranged in 10 groups: woodland vegetation, scree, rock and woodland border vegetation, anthropogenous grassland vegetation (including four complex types), coastal heath vegetation, mire vegetation, spring vegetation, freshwater shore and aquatic vegetation, pioneer alluvial vegetation, alpine vegetation and seashore vegetation. The threats facing each type and subtype are evaluated using the categories of threat employed by the IUCN. Significant variations are found within each group, from types that are critically endangered (CR) or endangered (EN) to those in the vulnerable (VU) or in the lower risk (LR) categories. Descriptions and assessments are based on published and unpublished material, and 18 Norwegian botanists have supplied the "existing knowledge". Satisfactory documentation of regional and local subtypes, distribution and current trends is lacking for many types and subtypes. More knowledge about some groups is urgently needed, particularly anthropogenous grasslands, and this can be achieved in part by compiling existing, largely unpublished, information. Twelve types and subtypes of vegetation are considered to be critically

endangered in Norway, three times as many are endangered, and the majority are either vulnerable or in the lower risk category.
For more information contact:
asbjorn.moen@vm.ntnu.no

Elkington, T., N. Dayton, D.L. Jackson & I.M. Strachan, 2001. National Vegetation Classification: Field guide to mires and heaths. JNCC, Peterborough. 120p. £ 10

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has recently published the National Vegetation Classification field guide to mires and heaths - the second in its new series of guides to the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). The 120-page book is a practical field guide for surveyors and ecologists, to help them use the NVC when studying mires and heaths in Britain.
This new guide, based on *British Plant Communities*, gives a detailed account of the 38 mire communities and 22 heath communities in Britain together with information on their composition, structure and distribution. It also includes keys to help surveyors to distinguish the different types, and relates the variation in vegetation to factors such as climate, soils and water chemistry.
Since its development in the 1980's, the NVC has become the standard method for describing vegetation in Britain, and has been widely welcomed as providing a much-needed common language in which the character and value of the vegetation of Britain can be understood. Not only has the NVC been accepted as a standard by the nature conservation and countryside organisations, but also by forestry, agriculture and water agencies, local authorities, non-government organisations, commercial and academic sectors.
The book can be ordered from www.nhbs.com or downloaded as a PDF file from:
http://www.jncc.gov.uk/communications/pubcat/publications/mires/Mires_Heaths.pdf

Kokorin, A.O., A.V. Kozharinov & A.A. Minin, 2001. Climate change impact on ecosystems – Nature protected areas in Russia: Analysis and long-term observations. WWF Russia. 180 p. (in Russian, partly English)

This book presents 13 original articles all based on long-term observations from various ecosystems in a changing climate. There is a 30 page general review of the results and trends. This review, as well as summaries of the original papers have been reproduced in English in the back.
For more information contact Tatjana Minaeva:
tminaeva@wwf.ru

Parent, L.E. & P. Ilnicki (eds.), 2002. Organic Soils and Peat Materials for Sustainable Agriculture. 312 p. CRC Press. $99.95.

While organic soils have the potential to contribute greatly to agricultural production, the irreversible processes that occur from draining organic soils need to be managed with caution. The wise use of peatlands must include the avoidance of unacceptable ecological effects on the contiguous and global environment. This book provides detailed information from a worldwide perspective on the degradation process of peatlands used for agriculture. It documents the best management practices and defines and quantifies soil quality indicators and pedo-transfer functions for organic soils and peat materials.
Co-published with the *International Peat Society*, this reference is the first to integrate the physical, chemical, and biological aspects of organic soils and peat materials for sustainable agriculture and horticulture. It details the principles and indicators behind positive action in sustainable management. The book presents a complete analysis of how peat works chemically, physically, and ecologically. It quantifies the moorsh-forming, or peat degeneration, process in tables and figures, provides conversion equations among pH determination methods, and supplies a novel diagnosis of N and P release. In addition, the book revisits water, pesticides, phosphorus, and copper sorption characteristics of organic soils. The authors provide up-to-date information in order to define quality indicators for the optimum use of organic soils. With detailed information and a global perspectivethe book aims to promote a shift from the current paradigm of input-based unsustainable use to a new knowledge-based approach.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2002. Global Environment Outlook-3. Earthscan, London. 410 p. + annexes.

The flagship report on the state of the global environment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The study takes a look at the policies and environmental impacts of the past 30 years. It then outlines four policy approaches for the next three decades and compares and contrasts the likely impacts on people and the natural world.
GEO-3 is an authoritative publication that provides a well-organised reference point for environmental issues at regional level.
The book is available from Earthscan Publications:
http://www.earthscan.co.uk or can be downloaded as PDF file from http://www.grida.no/geo/geo3/

Pawlaczyk, P., Wolejko, L., Jermaczek, A. & Stanko, R. 2001. Poradnik ochrony mokradel. Wydawnictwo Lubuskiego Klubu Przyrodników, Swiebodzin, 272 p.

A complete handbook on the practical conservation and management of wetlands with extensive information on wetland types, wetland vegetation, wetland functions, research and monitoring methods, causes of wetland degradation, practical methods and legal instruments for wetland conservation, awareness raising and education, and financial aspects with glossary, reference list and index.
For more information contact: Leslaw Wolejko: botanika@agro.ar.szczecin.pl

Kulzer, L., Luchessa, S., Cooke, S. , Errington, R. & Weinmann, F. 2001. Characteristics of the low-elevation Sphagnum-dominated peatlands of western Washington: a community profile.
This document can be downloaded from:
http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/dss/sphagnum-bogs.htm

A compilation of information and data about Sphagnum-dominated peatlands from existing local sources, most of which are unpublished. In addition to presenting primary data, the relationship to key literature from other regions and countries is discussed.
Chapter 1, Introduction, summarizes the unique characteristics of peatlands, classification, terminology and how peatlands in the report were identified. Chapter 2 presents the physical properties of peatlands in general, but particularly emphasizes the characteristics of western Washington peatlands and their watersheds. Chapter 3 presents the chemical properties of peatlands. Data from four local peatlands in King County are given. In addition, data characterizing the chemistry of other environmental waters, such as precipitation, groundwater and other wetland types, is given for contrast. Chapter 4 explores the nature of Sphagnum moss itself, presenting general information as well as specific information about western Washington species. Chapter 5 features information about peatland vegetation communities of two bioregions in western Washington: the Olympic Peninsula and the Puget Trough. The work includes a glossary, appendices with background information, draft management guidelines, draft research needs, an overview of all the Sphagnum-dominated peatlands in western Washington by county, a bibliography, and a draft key to the Sphagnum species of western Washington.

UPCOMING EVENTS

See for additional and up-to-date information: http://www.imcg.net/imcgdia.htm

IMCG Biennial Symposium, Congress & Conference
France, 10-22 July 2002
See previous Newsletter or visit:
http://www.imcg.net/docum/france.htm

VIII INTECOL Congress: Ecology in a changing World
Seoul, Korea, 11-18 August 2002
See IMCG Newsletter 2001/2 or contact:
farina@intecol.org; http://www.intecol.org

IPS Symposium: Future Utilisation of Peatlands
Bremen, Germany, 22 – 24 August 2002
See IMCG Newsletter 2002/1 or contact:
Joachim.Blankenburg@bgr.de

3rd European Conference on Restoration Ecology
Budapest, Hungary, 25-31 August, 2002
"Challenges of the new millennium - our joint responsibility". For more information:
http://www.altagrabusiness.hu/confer3.html

The Third international Symposium on the Biology of Sphagnum
Norway and Sweden, 13-23 August 2002
Surf to: http://www.vm.ntnu.no/sphagnum2002

Peat In Horticulture – Quality and Environmental Challenges
Pärnu, Estonia, 3-6 September 2002
See IMCG Newsletter 2002/1 or contact:
raiko_g@mv.parnu.ee, or surf to:
http:// www.peatsociety or www.mv.parnu.ee/-bdc

Asian Wetlands: Restoration of Structure, Function and Values
Nanjing, China, 08-13 September 2002
See Newsletter 2001/3 or surf to:
http://www.sws.org/china

Land Management and Biodiversity in Southeast Asia
Bali, Indonesia, 17 – 20 September 2002
Organised by the Hokkaido University, Japan and the Research Center for Biology at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. Serious disasters in the area, like the forest fires of 1997/1998, have increased the awareness of problems of mismanagement of peatland and human impact on the natural habitats, which cause changes even in the global environment. As Southeast Asia is seen as a major area of development in the 21st century, wise use and sustainable management of peatlands should especially be applied here. Pre-registration deadline for the event is 15 May; abstracts should be submitted by 15 June 2002. The full second circular can be viewed at www.peatsociety.fi/events.

The Role of Wetlands in Biosphere Reserves.
Czech Republic 13-18 October 2002
See previous Newsletter or contact: Eva Jelinkova, Secretary Czech MAB National Committee, Narodni 3, CZ - 110 00, Prague 1, Czech Republic. mab@kav.cas.cz

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands COP8
Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002
For more information contact: Ramsar Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland; Tel: +41-22-999-0170; ramsar@ramsar.org; http://www.ramsar.org

Peatlands - archaeological sites - archives of nature - nature conservation - wise use
Hanover (Germany), 17. - 21. September
For more information contact Andreas Bauerochse, Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege – Paläobotanik, Scharnhorststr. 1, 30175 Hannover, Germany, Tel. +49/511/925 5350, Fax +49/511/925 5296; andreas.bauerochse@nld.niedersachsen.de

International Symposium "Between conservation and use: C.A. Weber and the Augstumalmoor"
Silute (Lithuania), 2-6 October 2002
See regional news in this and previous Newsletters; for further information and preliminary registration contact Hans Joosten: joosten@uni-greifswald.de

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http://www.imcg.net