

The International Peatland Society (IPS) is an organisation of individual and corporate members dedicated to the responsible management and Wise Use of peatlands and peat. Our mission is to serve all those involved in peatlands and peat through the promotion, gathering, exchange and communication of knowledge and experience, by means of events and projects which address key issues, including climate change, biodiversity, the need for responsible use and restoration. Currently the IPS has 1486 individual, corporate, student and institutional members from 35 countries.

## Apply now for the Allan Robertson Grants 2017

Young peatland researchers and young industry employees (normally under the age of 30) can now again apply for the IPS Allan Robertson Grants for Research Students and Young Professionals in Peatland Management. The grants were established in memory of Allan Robertson, First Honorary President of the IPS, in 2015. They can be used for research or practical work in managing peatlands or peat industry, for your project work, for equipment or travelling. Depending on the amount of sponsors, IPS will give out at least 2-4 grants this year. Undergraduates are ineligible. Please fill in and submit the application form at <https://goo.gl/forms/5HQz4PosVYjUdJup2> by **20 February**. The winners of the grants will be announced at the Annual Convention of the IPS in Aberdeen, **28 - 31 May 2017**. Payment will be made by bank transfer after that event. Successful applicants must agree to provide a report on their project or work that will be published in the IPS magazine Peatlands International and/or give a presentation of it at an international IPS event at the latest 12 months after the grant funding has been paid to them. For more information visit also: [www.peatlands.org/about-us/allan-robertson-grants](http://www.peatlands.org/about-us/allan-robertson-grants).

## Pre-Registration open for IPS in Aberdeen 2017

We are constantly updating the programme for the IPS Annual Convention in Aberdeen, Scotland on **28 - 31 May**. You are now welcome to pre-register and sign up for our mailing list for the event. To sign up as potential participant, please visit <https://peatlands2017.net/registration> or follow us on FB and LinkedIn. We will shortly launch the First Circular; a call for Contributions for the sessions and an appeal to potential sponsors were sent out last week to all IPS members. The Annual Convention will deal with Peatlands and the Environment, but also contain hours of interesting information on latest developments in the industry, in horticulture and energy; in peatland restoration, especially in Scotland; on conservation of peatlands, governance and politics and many other topics. We look forward to welcoming you to Aberdeen! Visit us also regularly at [www.peatlands2017.net](http://www.peatlands2017.net) to stay tuned!

## Join the Force - IPS Commissions and Expert Groups

Probably you have read already our call for new active members of the IPS Commissions and Expert Groups. IPS would appreciate further nominations for the open positions. Please read, suggest someone you know or apply yourself:

Active peat and peatland experts are key to the success of IPS as an international NGO. We are aware of the outstanding expertise of our longstanding members but in particular invite our "Young Peat Minds" to actively participate in our new Commissions and Expert Groups. We now encourage all members to nominate experts or apply as candidates for the position of **1st Vice Chairs** of each Commission. The IPS **Asian National Committees** (NCs) are invited to nominate especially candidates for the position of **2nd Vice Chairs** of each Commission.

We also ask all members to nominate candidates for the positions of **Coordinator of the new nine Expert Groups**. You can freely name more than one candidate. The Executive Board and Scientific Advisory Board will appoint our experts starting from their meeting in Lund, Sweden on **2 March**.

Membership in IPS Commissions and Expert Groups is open to all those who are interested in the subject. Send your suggestion by **20 February 2017** to samu.valpola (at) gtk.fi or contact your National Committee. Please include a short description of the person/yourself (200 words) with your nomination.

Our new Commissions and Expert Groups:

**Peatlands and Economy, Chair: Guus van Berckel, Netherlands, vanberckel (at) griendtsveen.de**

WANTED: 1st Vice Chair, 2nd Vice Chair (Asia), Expert Group Coordinators:

- Peatlands for agriculture and forestry
- Peat extraction & harvesting techniques and technology
- Peat for growing media and energy

**Peatlands and Society, Chair: Marie Kofod-Hansen, Sweden, marie.kofodhansen (at) gmail.com**

WANTED: 1st Vice Chair, 2nd Vice Chair (Asia), Expert Group Coordinators:

- Peatlands education, communication and publicity
- Peatlands culture, human well-being and balneology
- Peatlands and governance

**Peatlands and Environment, Chair: Bernd Hofer, Germany, hofer (at) hofer-pautz.de**

WANTED: 1st Vice Chair, 2nd Vice Chair (Asia), Expert Group Coordinators:

- Climate and peatlands
- Biodiversity of peatlands (incl. ecology, hydrology and geology)
- Restoration & after-use of peatlands

**Background**

The IPS is an organization of over 1400 individual, corporate, student and institutional members from 36 countries. Our new strategy and structure were adopted during the 15th International Peat Congress in Malaysia in August 2016.

Our Vision is to be the leading international organization promoting the responsible management and wise use of peatlands and peat. We have a mission to serve all those involved in peatlands and peat through the promotion, gathering, exchange and communication of knowledge and experience, by means of events and projects which address key issues, including climate change, biodiversity, the need for responsible use and restoration.

Expert groups can be established under each of the new three Commissions to provide advice, stimulate ideas for events and projects and monitor, follow-up and report on developments in their field. Each expert group will have a coordinator with a key role in communication, answering questions and co-operating with SAB. We look forward to hearing from you!

## World Wetlands Day 2017 – Map your activities!

Today, on **2 February**, we will, as in the years before, celebrate World Wetlands Day to raise global awareness about the value of wetlands for humanity and the planet. This year's theme is "Wetlands for Disaster Risk Reduction" and of course the topic involves especially mangroves, rivers and floodplains, inland deltas, coral reefs and peatlands. The Convention on Wetlands was adopted on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Since 1997, the Ramsar Secretariat provides outreach materials to help raise public awareness about the importance and value of wetlands.

"Wetlands play an important role in reducing the impact of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and cyclones. Wetlands act as a natural sponge, absorbing and storing excess rainfall and reducing flooding. During the dry season, they release the water stored, delaying the onset of droughts and reducing water shortages. The frequency of natural hazards has more than doubled; the majority are climate and weather related." (Ramsar Secretariat)

This year, you can for instance participate in a youth photo contest (18-25 years, the prize of which is a Star Alliance flight to any Ramsar site), map your wetland event at [www.worldwetlandsday.org/map](http://www.worldwetlandsday.org/map), print posters and guidelines and see on social media what others are up to. Have a look!

## 23<sup>rd</sup> GRET PERG Symposium in Québec

The Peatland Ecology Research Group (PERG) is pleased to invite you to its 23<sup>rd</sup> Symposium that will be held at Université Laval in Québec City, Canada, on **21 February 2017**. The workshop will focus on the latest results about peatland restoration and management. More than 20 presentations are scheduled. Presentations will be in English. For the complete programme and to register, visit [www.gret-perg.ulaval.ca](http://www.gret-perg.ulaval.ca).