

# Soil Alliance News

**Newsletter** of the European Land  
and Soil Alliance (ELSA),

Soil and Land Alliance of European Cities, Districts and Municipalities



## EUROPEAN LAND & SOIL ALLIANCE

ELSA

## Issue 4/2023

Dear members and friends of the European Land and Soil Alliance,

Floods, a natural event, arise from the increase in precipitation. The amount that seeps into the ground or runs off on the surface varies depending on the properties of the soil, the degree of sealing and the topography of the surrounding area. The nature of the soil, its compaction and the vegetation also influence how much water can be absorbed per unit of time.

Straight, canalized waterways and intensive soil sealing favour rapid runoff at the surface. The effects of floods manifest themselves above all in areas where humans have settled in the original flood zones. When floods meet human settlements or industrial areas, the resulting damage can be devastating - the potential for destruction is considerable.

By restoring natural river courses, rewetting wetlands and reforesting semi-natural forests, we can improve the infiltration capacity of soils and better adapt to climate change. At the same time, reducing sealing and building in floodplains and promoting water-sensitive land use instead of further soil compaction helps to strengthen this protection. In this way, we protect our soils and ourselves from the devastating effects of flood disasters.

The Board

Soil Alliance News is published regularly. We welcome your suggestions and criticism. In addition, you have the opportunity to spread news, projects, events etc. here. Simply send us an [e-mail](#).

### Top Topic: Soil and flood (protection)

**Soils as water reservoirs:** Functioning soils are an essential element in the water balance. They can absorb rainwater quickly, store large quantities of it and later make it available to plants as well as ensure groundwater recharge. The position paper of the Soil Protection Commission at the Federal Environment Agency (KBU) clearly summarizes the importance of our soils in the water balance.

[More information](#)

**Flood protection needs space:** Renaturalized floodplains with fertile soils are a strong flood protection. However, much more emphasis is placed on technical protection and the separation of rivers from their floodplains. NABU offers a clear overview of why

healthy floodplains, soils and natural retention areas are so important for flood protection.

[More information](#)

**Pollutants in soils after flood events:** Heavy rainfall and flood events often release pollutants as a result of erosion and flooding of facilities, industrial and commercial areas, public and private properties as well as sewer systems and wastewater treatment plants. The Federal Environment Agency (UBA) provides a factsheet on this topic.

[More information](#)

**Flood protection starts with the soil:** Soils in many intensively farmed regions of Europe and Germany are suffering from increasing compaction. These soils no longer hold the water in the area. The BUND information booklet provides background knowledge on the subject.

[More information](#)

**Questions and answers on flooding:** UFZ experts from the fields of hydrology, climate science and floodplain protection answer questions on flooding in short statements and highlight the importance of soil.

[More information](#)

**Why does dry soil absorb less water?** If it suddenly rains more heavily again after a long period of drought, the soil cannot absorb as much water at once and cannot store it either. As a result, the water quickly runs off the surface during heavy rainfall. The SWR Wissen article explains why this is the case.

[More information](#)

**Forest soils as water reservoirs:** The forest soil - soil of the year 2024 - is immensely important in flood protection. Countless corridors and endless pores perforate the dark, nutrient-rich soil. Huge amounts of moisture can be stored in this way and protect against floods. The article in GEO magazine provides more information.

[More information](#)

**SoilTalk "When the rain begins to fall":** The episode of the soil podcast "Soilcast" deals with how floods occur and what happens to precipitation when it hits the ground.

[More information](#)

## More messages

**Soils are the most biodiverse habitats in the world:** Caroline Heinzel from the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) gives insights into the state of soils, the importance of soil protection and the current situation at European level in an interview with the German Nature Conservation Ring (DNR).

[More information](#)

**Soil burnout:** All four chapters of the Greenpeace Magazine report have been published since January 2024 ("Bodenlos", "Ausgelaugt", "Grüne Revolution 2.0", "Wiederbelebt"). Farmers, researchers, agribusiness lobbyists and politicians were visited over the course of a year. Always with the question: How do we save soils?

[More information](#)

**How wastewater becomes drinkable:** The funded DBU project supports a start-up in the development of a plant that produces clean drinking water from wastewater. The plant works without chemicals, can be powered by renewable energy and is recyclable - thus protecting soil and water from the harmful effects of chemicals that are often used to treat drinking water.

[More information](#)

**Logist.Plus: Sustainable development of commercial sites - recommendations for local authorities.** In order to strengthen the sustainable development of commercial sites and to preserve and protect soil functions in accordance with the Federal Soil Protection Act, thus also supporting climate impact adaptation, local authorities have the option of influencing the design of new commercial or logistics sites via specifications in regional, land use and development plans as well as design statutes, in addition to the preferential designation of brownfield sites. The design recommendations developed with four different fields of action are intended to serve as a guide for municipalities on the way to sustainable development of logistics locations.

[More information](#)

## Publications

**Soil Atlas 2024:** The Heinrich Böll Foundation has published the Soil Atlas for the second time. The current soil atlas presents data and facts about the importance and condition of land, soils and arable land in Germany and Europe.

[More information](#)

**All soil or what?** Methods for dealing with soil as a resource for the production of everyday objects. Soil serves us humans in many ways as the basis of life and as the basis for countless products. This method is about identifying the components of various everyday objects and finding out whether soil is required for their production.

[More information](#)

**Soil protection in floodplains neglected in watercourse restoration worldwide:** Floodplains and their soils provide a multitude of ecosystem services for nature and humans. At the same time, however, these ecosystems are among the most degraded in the world. The article and the review by scientists from the University of Osnabrück show the importance of floodplains and their soils and the current situation in Germany.

[Article](#)

[Review](#)

**IUSS Bulletin 143:** The International Union of Soil Science (IUSS) has published a new bulletin, which can now be downloaded from the website. Among other things, it contains information on World Soil Day 2023, the IUSS Centennial 2024 and the reports of the international societies.

[More information](#)

**Citizens' recommendations for the development of a precautionary climate adaptation strategy - results from five regional dialogs:** The Federal Government is currently developing the German Adaptation Strategy from 2008 into a new, precautionary climate change adaptation strategy. The cross-regional core messages on

climate adaptation and the underlying recommendations from the five regions are presented.

[More information](#)

## The Soil Idea

**Information about soil:** Soil scientist and author of "The Voice of Soil" Sonja Medwedksi provides comprehensive information about the latest news and interesting facts about soil on her LinkedIn page. If you follow her, you will be provided with exciting facts and interesting information!

[More information](#)

## News from the Climate Alliance

**International Passive House Conference 2024:** Offers for Climate Alliance members. On April 4, 2024, the Passive House Institute is offering local authorities an exclusive opportunity to learn more about the implementation of public building projects to the Passive House Standard or as EnerPHit refurbishments. Participants will learn specific strategies for the successful, highly energy-efficient implementation of their building projects. The workshop will take place before the International Passive House Conference in Innsbruck (AT).

[More information](#)

## Soil Alliance internal

**New members:** Stadtgemeinde Bad Leonfelden (AT) and Gemeinde Attersee am Attersee (AT). A warm welcome!

**Board meeting:** The next meeting of the Board will take place on April 12, 2024, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., following the online workshop, via Microsoft Teams.

## Event information

**The soil-sensitive city - sustainable use of municipal areas,** 3-part webinar series, start April 9, 2024, online

[More information](#)

**Prevention of soil erosion through pre- and post-care soil protection,** advanced training seminar, April 10, 2024, Kraichtal-Gochsheim (GER)

[More information](#)

**Holistic water management in urban and rural areas,** online workshop series "Soil and Climate" by the European Land and Soil Alliance and Climate Alliance, April 12, 2024, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

[More information](#)

**Current principles for the treatment of contaminated sites and harmful soil changes in Baden-Württemberg,** advanced training seminar, April 16, 2024, University of Stuttgart, Campus Guest (GER)

[More information](#)

**Soil health and climate protection**, 3-day conference, May 6 to 8, 2024, Protestant Academy Loccum, Rehburg-Loccum (GER)

[More information](#)

**Making soil good! Impulses for soil protection & sustainable land management in municipalities**, May 16/17, 2024, Schwerte (GER)

[More information](#)

**Congress of the International Union of Soil Sciences**, May 19 to 21, 2024, Florence (IT)

[More information](#)

**Environment Week 2024: Expert program, discussions and exhibition in the park of Bellevue Palace**, 4/5 June 2024, Berlin (GER)

[More information](#)

**Bundeskongress NaturErlebnisRäume**: 2-day event with lectures, workshops, working groups, panel discussions and excursions, June 6/7, 2024, Hamburg (GER) and online as a hybrid event

[More information](#)

**World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought**, 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), June 17, 2024, Bonn (GER)

[More information](#)

**Resolving the Global Nitrogen Dilemma - Opportunities and Challenges**, International Workshop, June 17 to 21, 2024, Aarhus (DK)

[More information](#)

**Soils and climate in transition**, Marktredwitz Soil Protection Days, October 16 to 18, 2024, Marktredwitz (GER)

[More information](#)

## Impressum

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