

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,

In the face of advancing climate change, soil is increasingly being recognised as an important natural carbon sink. Peatlands are of particular importance here. With the enormous amounts of carbon that they bind and permanently store, they are indispensable for natural climate protection. Although they only make up three to four per cent of the world's land area, they store around 600 billion tonnes of carbon worldwide - twice as much as all the world's forests combined. At the same time, degraded peatlands currently emit around two billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalents. This corresponds to around four per cent of all global man-made emissions. It is therefore extremely important to protect them and rewet areas that have been drained.

The principle of how bogs work is simple: the plants that grow here, especially peat mosses, utilise carbon from photosynthesis. As long as the moors remain wet, the carbon in the dead plants is also stored in the absence of oxygen. However, if peatlands are drained, this carbon, some of which is thousands of years old, is released into the atmosphere as CO₂.

Most peatlands are located in Asia and North America, followed by Central and South America, Europe and Africa. In Germany, over 95 per cent of peatlands are drained. Only 50,000 hectares of the total 1,280,000 hectares of moorland in Germany are currently considered intact. This means that they are still forming peat or are doing so again. This makes peatlands one of the most heavily degraded ecosystems in Germany.

The "Soil and Climate" webinar series by the Soil & Land Alliance and Climate Alliance began on 24 November 2023 with the importance of protecting peatlands, which is also the top topic of the newsletter.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a good start to the New Year 2024!

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: Peatlands

Our wet climate protectors: The Heinrich Böll Foundation has produced an explanatory video on the topic of "The moor explained: How moors protect our climate".

In just under five minutes, it impressively explains what moors can do and why their protection is so important.

[More information](#)

Moor for future! Climate rescue from the bogs - plan b documentation: Bogs provide unique habitats for rare animals and plants. They also store large amounts of carbon and remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. Despite this, wetlands are still being destroyed worldwide. This 30-minute ZDF documentary is dedicated to the moorland habitat.

[More information](#)

This is how harmful CO₂ emissions from dry moors are: NDR programme with up-to-date information on moors in Germany and their role in the fight against climate change.

[More information](#)

Wet peatland utilisation on the way to the market: New model and demonstration projects on peatland soil protection and the utilisation of growth have been launched in Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Lower Saxony. In the overarching PaludiZentrale project, the University of Greifswald, the Michael Succow Foundation and the Thünen Institute are coordinating and networking the joint projects, analysing their results across the board and taking care of knowledge transfer in addition to the respective joint projects.

[More information](#)

Halving the use of peat in the cultivation of vegetable seedlings: Practical farms are now trialling peat reduction in the production of young vegetable plants as part of the ToGeP project. Green waste compost, wood fibres and coconut pulp are to be used as peat substitutes. Findings from previous projects are already available here, which the ToGeP farms are now testing in horticultural practice.

[More information](#)

ARGE Klimamoor - climate protection with moors: The Klimamoor project is a pilot project designed to provide the first positive examples of how future agricultural use in low moorland areas can succeed without releasing greenhouse gas emissions and drying out the landscape.

[More information](#)

Moor conservation database: The "MoorNet" project offers a new information and networking service for moor conservation stakeholders in Germany. At its heart is a database of projects, institutions and funding programmes for moorland protection in Germany. The website also provides information on upcoming events from the MoorNet project and beyond.

[More information](#)

Peatland soil monitoring: Establishment of a Germany-wide peatland soil monitoring programme for climate protection. By May 2025, the Thünen Institute will establish a monitoring network comprising a total of 250 sites on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture.

[More information](#)

"Monas": Listening to moors. Interdisciplinary sound and video art projects that aim to incorporate the natural and plant world, such as moors, into artistic work.

[More information](#)

Appeal for a peatland protection strategy in Europe: In order to draw attention to the importance of and threats to peatlands in Europe, the BfN has published a strategy paper together with several organisations such as the Succow Foundation and the UNEP Global Peatlands Initiative.

[More information](#)

Understanding peatland soils with WIKIMoos: The knowledge and mapping indicator set MoorSubstrate, developed by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, helps to explore the interior of peatland soils and record their current condition. The core elements of this project are a field book and a series of explanatory videos that provide easy access to relevant pedological knowledge and practical skills for anyone involved in the management and protection of peatlands.

[More information](#)

More messages

Soil of the Year 2024 "The Forest Soil": On 5 December 2023, the "Soil of the Year 2024" was chosen at the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) in Berlin.

[More information](#)

plan b „The Miracle of Soil - Foundation of our Lives“: The ZDF documentary series "plan b" dedicates an episode to soil and its many functions, for example as a food source and CO₂ reservoir. The documentary can be viewed in the media centre until 2025.

[More information](#)

SWR documentary on the subject of land consumption: If we utilise the land already available in villages and towns, we can create the living space we need without sealing off fields, meadows and forests at the same time. The 45-minute film shows where and how new housing can be created on old land.

[More information](#)

"Six Inches of Soil" Official trailer: The documentary tells the inspiring story of young British farmers who are rebelling against the industrial food system and changing the way they produce food - to heal the soil, heal our health and feed local communities.

[More information](#)

Soil burnout: Greenpeace Magazine publishes a multimedia report in four chapters to mark World Soil Day 2024. Farmers, researchers, agribusiness lobbyists and politicians were visited over the course of a year. Always with the question: How do we save soils? Chapters 1 ("Bodenlos") and 2 ("Ausgelaugt") have already been published. Chapter 3 will be published on 23.12.23, chapter 4 on 01.01.24.

[More information](#)

Spade test SoilDok: How is my soil doing? With the new method, the condition of the soil structure can be determined quickly and easily. The spade test guides you through

the observation of soil layers, aggregates, colour, odour and other properties that reveal the condition of the soil.

[More information](#)

Publications

Monitoring Report 2023 on the German Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change: As part of the German Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (DAS), the Federal Government is presenting the third Monitoring Report 2023 on the German Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change, which reports on climate impacts and adaptation every four years.

[More information](#)

Healthy forests could store much more carbon: In the major international study "Integrated global assessment of the carbon potential of natural forests", a team of more than two hundred researchers analysing satellite and ground data worldwide presents new estimates of the storage potential. The current study was published in the scientific journal "Nature".

[More information](#)

Handbook "Cooperation for Biodiversity in Municipalities": Concrete concepts are needed to make better protection of urban nature a reality in municipalities. This handbook is intended to encourage full-time and voluntary nature conservation stakeholders to approach their local authority and initiate a biodiversity strategy.

[More information](#)

Sewage sludge - nutrient source and pollutant sink: Sewage sludge plays a key role in the purification process at sewage treatment plants, as it accumulates both incompletely degraded organic pollutants and heavy metals and, in particular, phosphorus as a nutrient. In this position paper, BUND calls for a sustainable circular economy in harmony with health and environmental protection.

[More information](#)

The Soil Idea

Soilbook, the special book: a digital, continuously growing soil book for anyone interested in soils. The book aims to raise awareness of the diversity of soils, but also the threats to them.

[More information](#)

Soil Alliance internal

New members: Marktgemeinde Eberschwang (AT), Aberndorf in der Riedmark (AT), Stadt Waidhofen an der Ybbs (AT) und Sonja Medwedski (DE). A warm welcome!

New logo: After more than 20 years, the European Land and Soil Alliance has got a new logo! This also brings us closer to the logo of our partner organisation, the Climate Alliance. We are gradually converting our media to the new logo.

Board meeting: The next meeting of the Board will take place on 12 January 2024, 09:00 to 10:30 via Microsoft Teams.

Event information

ITVA Contaminated Sites Symposium, March 20 to 22, 2024, Kassel (GER)

[More information](#)

International Day of Forests: March 21, 2024

[More information](#)

Impressum

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