

Lars J. Munkholm

In 2008 Hartemink¹ declared that soils were back on the global agenda due to increased attention of the role of soils in addressing global challenges such as climate change, food security, changing to biobased economy etc. About a decade later we can conclude that soils remain high on the global policy agenda. In September 2017, I attended the 6th International Symposium on Soil Organic Matter at Rothamsted Research, which included presentations and discussions on the French 4 per 1000 Initiative on carbon sequestration in soils. The 4 per 1000 Initiative was launched at the COP21 meeting in 2015 (<http://4p1000.org>). This initiative have spurred extensive discussion in policy arena as well as within the soil science community. Another very recent example of soils being high on the policy agenda is from the soil conference in Estonia “Soil for sustainable food production and ecosystem services” in October 2017. The conference was organized by the Estonian Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH) as part of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The President of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid, delivered a strong opening speech where she highlighted the fundamental role of soils for life on Earth. Please find full text of the speech here:

<https://www.president.ee/en/official-duties/speeches/13616-president-kaljulaid-at-the-conference-soli-for-sustainable-food-production-and-ecosystem-services/index.html>

The vital role of soils in addressing global challenges will also be on the ISTRO 2018 conference agenda. Updates on the conference are listed below. Please also pay attention to the possibilities of young researchers scholarships for the conference as detailed below.

☞ Updates on ISTRO Conference 2018



Just to remind you of the ISTRO Conference 2018 to be held between Monday the 24th and Thursday the 27th of September 2018. The conference has got a great logo-The conference website is now available: <http://istro2018.webistem.com>
The language of the conference will be English. The organizers have selected these conference topics:

1. Soil conservation
2. Soil compaction and structure remediation
3. Soil ecology and Ecosystem services
4. SOC sequestration and management
5. Biogeochemical processes in soils
6. Advances in soil structure characterization
7. Tillage and smart farming
8. Tires, tillage and seeding equipment design
9. Design and assessment of soil tillage strategies

Field trip on Wednesday the 26th (Fontainebleau Castle, Tillage equipment exhibition, Arvalis experimental centre).

Important dates:

Deadline for early bird registration: May 15, 2018
Deadline for abstract submission: March 1, 2018
Notification of abstract acceptance: May 1, 2018

Early bird fees:

ISTRO members: 500€; non-ISTRO members: 600€;
PhD students: 200€

¹ Hartemink AE (2008) Soils are back on the global agenda. Soil Use and Management 24 (4):327-330.

Venue of conference:

Cité Universitaire Internationale » at Paris
(www.ciup.fr).

Accommodation:

There are a huge number of hotels in Paris, with a very large range of prices. It is recommended to choose either a hotel near the « Cité Universitaire Internationale » or closer to the center of Paris, near to the RER B or Bus n° 21 line.

Visa Application

As a rule, unless you are exempted (i.e. if you are a citizen of Switzerland or a country belonging to the Schengen area) you are required to have a visa. For stays of less than 3 months, you need to apply for a short-stay "Schengen" visa. It must be applied for from the relevant French embassy or consulate in your country of residence.

If you apply for a tourist visa, which will allow you to attend the conference and sight-seeing, an official visa invitation letter will not be needed from the 21th ISTRO Conference organizers. If you do require an invitation letter for visa application, please email istroparis2018@gmail.com and provide the following information:

- Your full name (exactly as in your passport)
- Your gender (male/female) and date of birth
- Your nationality
- Your passport number, issue and expiry date
- The institute/university or other affiliation
- The details of your address

The visa application must be submitted at least three months before the entry date. Please note that processing times for visas may vary between countries and at worst may take a few months.

All relevant information about visa application can be found at:

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa/>

☞ Scholarships for ISTRO Conference 2018

Four Scholarships to participate in the 21st ISTRO Conference in Paris, 24-27 September 2018.

The ISTRO Board has again approved scholarships for young researchers who are ISTRO members to attend the triennial ISTRO conference. Young is defined under the age of 40 on 24 September 2018. We are sponsoring four scholarships to support attendance at the 21st Triennial ISTRO conference from 24-27 September 2018 in Paris, France. Scholarship candidates must be current (i.e. dues up-to-date) members of ISTRO themselves and be nominated by a current member of ISTRO and not previously been awarded a scholarship.

To ensure that you are eligible for scholarships, to vote and participate in the organization please ensure that your membership fees are up-to-date. *Branches* needs also to pay attention to this. If you are unsure about your membership status; simply email Treasurer Steve Prior (Steve.Prior@ars.usda.gov) and ask.

All scholarships will be valued at up to 2,000 Euros.

Travel should be a lowest cost (economy) fares. The Cees van Ouwerkerk scholarship is open to young researchers from any country. The scholarship will be awarded to an applicant who has demonstrated superior research accomplishments.

The other three scholarships are open to young researchers from all countries except those classified as being "high-income." Excluded high-income countries can be found in the XL spreadsheet at: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>. These scholarships will also be awarded to applicants based on academic merit and research accomplishments taking into account the location of the young researcher at the time of application and on the geographic spread of applicants.

Nominations including supporting material documenting their research activities (e.g. two recent journal or conference publications), a curriculum vitae listing education and all

publications, presentations and teaching activities, and the Abstract for a paper to be presented at the 2018 ISTRO Conference must be submitted to the Assistant Secretary- General (Lars Munkholm) by December 31, 2017.

The scholarship selection committee comprises three elected members of the ISTRO Board (who are not office bearers). After the selection, all applicants will be informed by the Assistant Secretary-General who will also notify the Conference Organizers to help make the final arrangements. Applications should be emailed to Lars Munkholm:

lars.munkholm@agro.au.dk

Note: Without exception, applicants must be current ISTRO members and meet the age criteria.

⌘ Nominations for Board positions

Nominations for two Board positions for a period of 6 years are now being accepted from all ISTRO members in good standing. If a member wishes to nominate a colleague or even themselves, please send the name, a brief biographical statement outlining the candidate's qualifications for an ISTRO Board position, and an affirmation that the candidate is willing to be on the ballot and to serve if elected to Secretary General Blair McKenzie on or before November 1, 2017. Please use the email address blair.mckenzie@hutton.ac.uk for this communication.

Depending upon the number of nominations received, the current ISTRO Board members will identify four potential Board candidates. A ballot will be prepared and distributed to members in good standing around December 1, 2017. ISTRO members elected to these positions will assume their new positions following the 21st Triennial Conference in Paris, France in September 2018.

General requirements for Board members are to serve for a period of 6 years (2018 – 2024), to be available to attend pre- and post-conference Board meetings as well as a mid-congress Board meeting at the location of the 2021 and 2024 Triennial conference sites, to serve in various liaison positions to ISTRO Branch and/or Working Groups, and to actively participate in discussions and email exchanges associated with ISTRO business. Although funds for travel to ISTRO Board meetings

are available, it really helps the Organization if the candidate has some mechanism to help cover a portion of their travel expenses so that ISTRO dues can remain at their very modest level.

If you have any questions about any of these opportunities, please contact Blair McKenzie (Blair.McKenzie@hutton.ac.uk) or Lars Munkholm (lars.munkholm@agro.au.dk).

Note that at the last ballot, Dr Ranjan Bhattacharyya was elected for 3 years to cover for the transfer of Dr Jean Roger-Estrade from board member to President. Dr Bhattacharyya is eligible to stand in this ballot.

⌘ Report from ISTRO Visual Soil Evaluation Workshop in Ireland

The ISTRO Working Group on Visual Soil Evaluation (VSE) held a hands-on workshop in Counties Carlow and Kilkenny, Ireland in conjunction with the Soil Science Society of Ireland from August 28-29, 2017. The workshop commenced at the Teagasc Crops Research Centre, based at the Teagasc Headquarters in Oak Park Co. Carlow, with a focus on VSE of arable soils. Following introductory lectures in the morning, field demonstrations of SubVESS, VSA, Le Profil Cultural, as well as the newly developed Extended VESS method and Le Profil Cultural spade test version took place at two sites with contrasting soil texture but similar cropping history. This provided plenty of hands-on activity and discussion, with all participants having the opportunity to try the methods and learn from expert practitioners. The second day, held at Shankill Castle, Co. Kilkenny, focused on VSE of grassland soils. Several new VSE techniques were demonstrated including a teaching method for landscape architects, GrassVESS and a VESS mobile phone App. In addition, the first ever deployment on Irish soils of the Australian technique, SOILpak. The workshop finished with all participants testing the VSE method of their choice on two sites on the same soil treated to have different soil water contents. The 35 participants from all over the world, enjoyed unusually dry weather for Ireland, and could engage in extensive debate, learning in the field and social interaction, capped by an evening garden party and tour of Shankill Castle. The event was a great success and the organisers wish to thank all of those who attended and contributed to what was a most

enjoyable workshop. As a result of the workshop, it was agreed that ISTRO would take action to advance and promote VSE methods internationally.

Here are a few snapshots from the workshop:



Drs. Hubert Boizard and Jean Roger-Estrade discussing the newly developed Extended VESS method



Delegates trying out the new VESS mobile phone App presented by Dr. Alice Johannes



Dr. David McKenzie demonstrating the Australian method, SOILpak.

☞ Upcoming Meetings and Events

November 2017

Pan African Society for Agricultural Engineering Conference 2017. The Pan African Society for Agricultural Engineering and its partners will host its Annual Conference under the theme “*Engineering and Technology for Agriculture Transformation in Africa*” in Nairobi, Kenya, on November 19-21, 2017.

Webpage: <http://afroagengnairobi2017.org/>

January/February 2018

TERRA ENVISION Conference - Scientific solutions for societal issues. January 29- February 1, 2018 in Barcelona, Spain:

Webpage: <http://terra-envision.weebly.com/>

March 2018

Intersol 2018: Polluted Sites and soils: A challenge for major urban projects! March 27-29, 2018 in Paris, France.

Webpage: <http://www.intersol.fr/accueil.php>

August 2018

21st World Congress of Soil Science (WCSS) on the theme: “Soils to feed and fuel the world”. August 12-17, 2018 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Webpage: <http://21wc.org/>

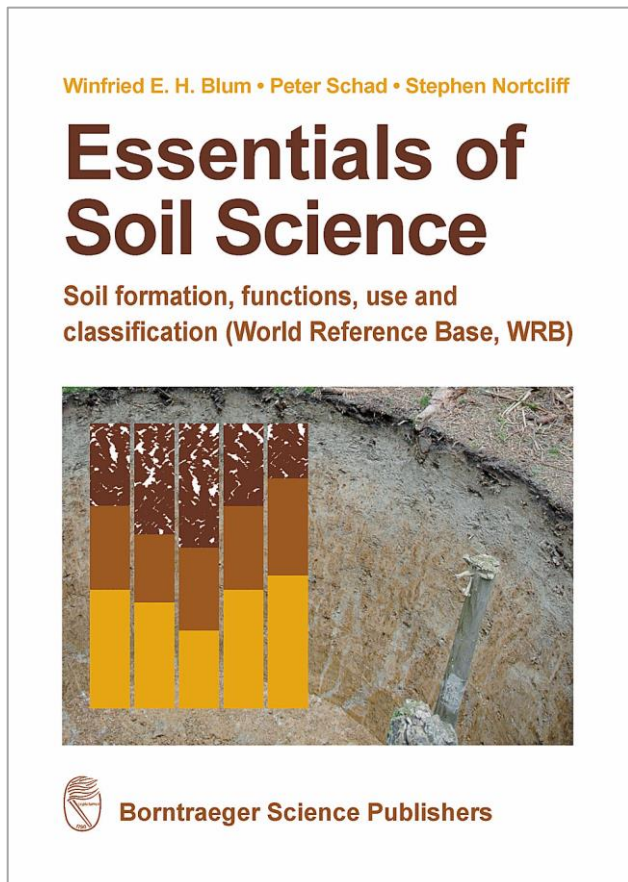
🌀 New Book

Essentials of Soil Science: Soil formation, functions, use, and classification (World Reference Base, WRB)

Authors: Winfried Blum, Peter Schad, Stephen Nortcliff

More information about this book:

<http://www.publish.csiro.au/book/7811/#author>



This book is an introduction to soil science and describes the development of soils, their characteristics and their material composition as well as their functions in terrestrial and aquatic environments. Soil functions include the delivery of goods and services for human society, such as food, clean water, and the maintenance of biodiversity.

ISTRO INFO is the newsletter of the **International Soil Tillage Research Organisation**. (www.istro.org).

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