



GREIFSWALD
MIRE
CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



July 2018

1. Introduction

The Greifswald Mire Centre (GMC) is a cooperation between the University of Greifswald, Michael Succow Foundation, and the Institute of Sustainable Development of Landscapes of the Earth (DUENE e.V.). The GMC was founded in early 2015, based on a Memorandum of Understanding.

This annual report summarises the development of GMC during its third year of existence: It chronologically lists mile stones of the year, outlines the current structure and gives an impression of selected external assessments of the GMC.

January

Tropical peatland agriculture is devastating: Evidence published by 139 peatland scientists

10/01/2017 After the International Peat Congress 2016, held with over 1,000 participants in Kuching (Malaysia), articles in leading regional newspapers reflected a general consensus and summary of the conference claiming that current agricultural practices in peatland areas such as oil palm plantations do not have a negative impact on the environment. Now a global alliance of 139 peatland scientists published their opinion in [Global Change Biology](#): There is overwhelming evidence that business-as-usual management is not sustainable for tropical peatland agriculture. Failing to recognize the devastating consequences of the current land use practices on peat soils could mean that the next generation will have to deal with an irreversibly altered, dysfunctional landscape where neither environment nor society, globally or locally, will be winners. Open access has been facilitated by Greifswald Mire Centre and Department of Forestry Sciences, University of Helsinki.

February

Our activities on World Wetlands Day: Excursion and cattail-harvest

03/02/2017 With two events the Greifswald Mire Centre raised attention for the importance of healthy wetlands and how they help us to cope with extreme weather events at World Wetlands Day 2017 on 2nd February. Just outside of Greifswald the Karrenderfer Wiesen (Karrendorf Meadows) provide a splendid example: During floods this coastal flood peatland serves as wave breaker. Its vegetation slows erosion of the shore zone and promotes sedimentation. Peatlands like this contribute to the stability of the flat coasts all around the Baltic Sea. After flooding, natural waterways ensure rapid drainage. In addition, coastal flood peatlands are significant carbon sinks and therefore important for climate protection. The Greifswald Mire Centre offered a public excursion to the Karrenderfer Wiesen. Some 25 people joined the tour in this fascinating peatland at a frosty temperature.

Moreover, the Greifswald Mire Centre is proud of a little premiere: the first mechanical cattail (*Typha*) harvest in Western Pomerania! The demonstration also took place at World Wetlands Day 2017 on 2nd February. Cattail was harvested on an agriculturally used peatland, where a cattail stand had spontaneously established. In cooperation with local reed harvesters, the mechanical harvest was tested with a Seiga (an amphibious vehicle with low ground pressure). After the successful trial, there was a fruitful exchange on possibilities of cattail cultivation on agriculturally used rewetted peatlands in the region.



Peatlands in the EU's policy framework: New report published

15/02/2017 The project 'Peatlands in the EU Regulatory Environment' analysed the impact of political and legal framework conditions of the EU on peatlands and organic soils in the Member States. Poland and Estonia served as exemplary Member States and the effects were assessed in much detail in two case studies. The concluding report is now available for download from the website of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). It has been prepared by Jan Peters (Greifswald Mire Centre) and Moritz von Unger (Silvestrum). Further information on the project is offered on the website of the German Environment Agency (UBA).

March

30 good reasons to safeguard peatlands! - New Ramsar peatland portal with GMC contributions

30/03/2017 "30 good reasons to safeguard peatlands!" are freshly assembled in a Ramsar Convention policy brief. It compiles the results of the international workshop "Peatland Conservation and Wise Use in the Context of Climate Change" held at the International Academy for Nature Conservation on the Island of Vilm (Germany) in September 2016. Moreover, all presentations of the workshop, including four contributions by the Greifswald Mire Centre, and an extensive workshop documentation are now available on the new peatland web portal of the Ramsar Convention, highlighting the importance of peatlands.

April

Mandatory accounting for managed wetlands: New policy brief with Wetlands International and Birdlife International

05/04/2017 Wetlands International European Association, Greifswald Mire Centre and Birdlife International jointly stress the need for a regulation which takes into account all land use categories to reflect what "the atmosphere sees". Thus it is of utmost importance to agree for a mandatory accounting for managed wetlands. The European Parliament and Council currently debate on how to include greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) into the 2030 EU climate and energy framework. Read the full paper at <https://europe.wetlands.org/publications/mandatory-accounting-managed-wetlands/>.

The power of peatlands (German title: „Macht der Moore“) - a TV production

07/04/2017 The planet.e documentation produced by the German ZDF showcases the importance of mires and peatlands for climate protection. The German version of this documentary is available on the channels homepage (zdf.de). The importance of near-natural peatlands for carbon storage is shown at the German Sernitz lowland, a fen about 100 km north-east of Berlin. Michael Succow, scientist and laureate of the Right Livelihood Award, explains the history of this fen. Closing the ditches allowed fen vegetation to recover. The site is now in the ownership of the Michael Succow Foundation. Additionally, the film shows research of the Greifswald Mire Centre on Sphagnum farming in a pilot study in Lower Saxony, north-western Germany. Sphagnum farming aims at peat moss cultivation in paludiculture for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by rewetting degraded bogs and substituting raw material for horticultural substrates.

Take-off to excellent research: public presentation of WETSCAPES in Rostock

20/04/2017 On the 19th of April, the official kick-off meeting of the WETSCAPES project took place in Rostock, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (northeast Germany). For a period of four years (until 2020) the joint project of the universities of Rostock and Greifswald and the German Aerospace Center (DLR) is funded within the excellence research programme of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania . The project focuses on studying the biogeochemistry of drained and rewetted peatlands in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. The kick-off was opened by the rectors of both universities, followed by presentations Nicole Wrage-Mönnig and Hans Joosten presenting background information and highlighting the importance of the project.

May

Day of Renewable Energies in the heating plant of Malchin, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

01/05/2017 On this special day dedicated to the chances and potentials of renewable energies (29th of April), the GMC project MoorDialog ("Peatland Dialogue") invited the public to the heating plant of Malchin. This regional heating plant run by Agrotherm GmbH is the world's first heating plant that uses hay from a rewetted fen for combustion. It has been honoured with the German local prize for sustainability ("Deutscher Lokaler Nachhaltigkeitspreis").



Snowshoeing over peatmosses: Information day in Hankhausen



05/05/2017 Win win win thanks to peatmosses - in cooperation between the Greifswald Mire Centre and the peat company Torfwerk Moorkultur Ramsloh within the projects 'MoorDialog' and 'MOOSWEIT'. The general public was invited on the 5th of May to the study site in the peatland Hankhauser Moor close to Oldenburg,

northwestern Germany. The cultivation of peatmosses can increase the income in rural areas and has a double benefit for the climate by converting conventional bog grassland into a climate friendly paludiculture. Additionally, harvested peatmosses can substitute peat in horticulture. The Sphagnum farming field in the Hankhauser Moor is a good example that Lower Saxony is one of the pioneers in sustainable peatland use, paludiculture and climate protection.

Global Peatlands Initiative at Climate Conference: Side event in Bonn

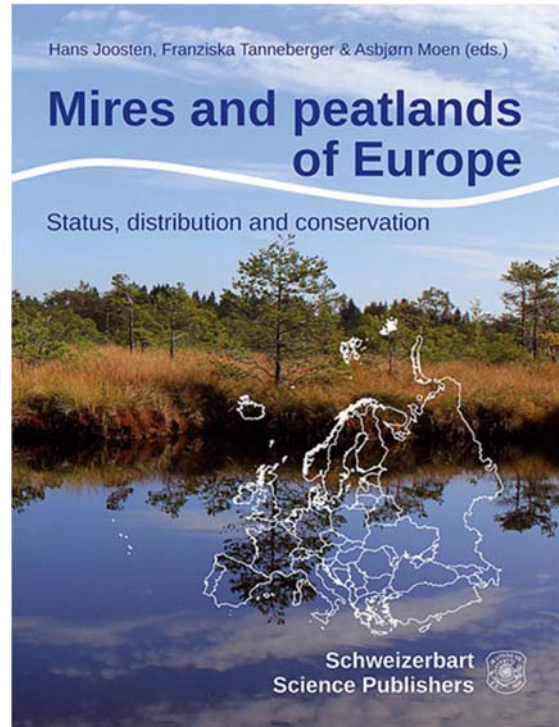
09/05/2017 The book 'Mires and peatlands of Europe' came hot off the press when it was launched at the side event of the Global Peatland Initiative (GPI) at the Climate Change Conference in Bonn 9th May 2017. The side event provided an opportunity for governments, institutions, stakeholders and partners to exchange on advancing efforts to protect peatlands and was jointly organised by UN Environment, FAO, the Ramsar Convention, Wetlands International and GMC. The three editors of the book - Hans Joosten, Franziska Tanneberger (both GMC) and Asbjørn Moen - handed over the first copy of the book to Nur Masripatin, Director General for Climate Change for the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia, highlighting major lessons from Europe how to deal wisely with peatlands to avoid further degradation. This feeds perfectly into the vision of enhanced south-south-north exchange under the GPI, discussed during an interactive panel discussion chaired by Hans Joosten. Especially 'newcomers' in the peatland community like panel member Joseph Badevokila, national focal point to the UNFCCC of the Republic of Congo, were delighted by the vast experience and knowledge among the partners of the GPI. The side event paved the way to the upcoming negotiations in the land use sector under the UNFCCC and the upcoming Global Landscape Forum: Peatlands matter in Jakarta on 18th May.

Greifswald Business Award to SoTaMed: Sundew project builds a bridge from science to practice

16/05/2017 Transferring scientific knowledge into practice - this is what SoTaMed pursues! For the cultivation and utilisation of common sundew as a medical plant to treat respiratory problems such as asthma or bronchitis, SoTaMed was awarded with the Greifswald Business Award, organised by the Greifswald University Club (GUC). On the 13th of May the award was handed over by Harry Glawe, Minister of Economy, Labour and Health of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. The award is endowed with 1.500 Euro. Meanwhile SoTaMed has expanded into the PaludiMed GmbH.

Brand new and all about Europe's peatlands

10/05/2017 After more than 25 years of preparation, the long expected book 'Mires and peatlands of Europe' is now available. This book provides – for the first time in history – a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of mires and peatlands in biogeographic Europe. Written by 134 authors, the book describes mire and peatland types, terms, extent, distribution, use, conservation, and restoration individually for each country and integrated for the entire continent. Complemented by a multitude of maps and photographs, the book offers an impressive and colourful journey, full of surprising historical context and fascinating details, while appreciating the core principles and unifying concepts of mire science.



The publication of this book was coordinated for the International Mire Conservation Group by the Greifswald Mire Centre. The publication was co-sponsored by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), University Museum, Trondheim, Norway.

Peatlands matter! - Focus on peatlands at Global Landscape Forum

19/05/2017 On 18th May the Global Landscape Forum was fully dedicated to peatlands! With the slogan "Peatlands matter!" the event aimed to bring together local and global policy-makers, stakeholders and private sector interests in order to identify landscape-level solutions. It also intended to accelerate measurable action on the ground in negotiating conflicting land use demands in these vital ecosystems. The international audience discussed ways of peatland conservation, restoration and sustainable use in paludiculture. The event had 425 people attending in Jakarta as well as over 1,000 views of the event livestream and 5,000,000 people reached through Twitter. Peatlands matter and they must be wet!

Start of MOOSzucht: breeding of productive peatmosses in a bioreactor

31/05/2017 Within the MOOSzucht project scientists of the Greifswald Mire Centre work with partners on the selection of highly productive peatmosses and methods to breed them in photobioreactors. To substitute peat used in horticulture, the use of cultivated peatmosses is a promising alternative. *Sphagnum* propagules for the installation of *Sphagnum* farming sites are hardly available, as peatmosses are protected and rare. The project aims at mass propagation in a photobioreactor. To get high yields and to push *Sphagnum* farming

to economic efficiency, the scientists aim to identify the most productive peatmoss proveniences and to understand their genetics. Under the lead of the University of Greifswald, in this joint project the Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg, the Institute of Technology of Karlsruhe (KIT) and the Niedersächsische Rasenkulturen NIRA GmbH & Co. KG are working together. The research project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) in a programme for renewable resources with 1.1 million euro.

June

First field campaign of the REPEAT project: research from Wales to eastern Poland

17/06/2017 In June the first field campaign within the joint EU project 'REPEAT' started. At close to 100 study areas along a climate gradient from Wales to the east of Poland peat accumulation in fens is studied (www.repeat-project.com).



PeNCIL included in Digital Library of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

19/06/2017 The Peatland and Nature Conservation International Library (PeNCIL) of the Greifswald Mire Centre became part of the collective and central digital library of the federal state Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and thereby of the cultural goods of the federal state. The digital library of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania presents collections of archives, libraries, museums and universities and provides all sources of cultural as well as historical importance for both, private and scientific use for free. Currently already eleven archives, eight libraries, two museums and a couple of scientific collections including almost 30,000 objects and around 3.2 million digital pages are included in the digital library.

July

Kick-off for CLEARANCE: Estimating values of wetland buffer zones

12/07/2017 Evaluating costs and benefits of Wetland Buffer Zones including market and non-market values is one task of the recently started interdisciplinary EU project CLEARANCE. Wetland buffer zones are wetlands located between the agricultural land and aquatic ecosystems, capturing nutrient-rich run-off water before it reaches rivers and lakes to reduce nutrient loads in surface waters at water-land interface. Consortium partners are, together with Greifswald University, Kiel University, two universities in Warsaw (Poland), Aarhus University (Denmark), Nijmegen University (the Netherlands) as well as the Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB) Berlin as well as a German and a Polish NGO. From 2017 until 2020 scientists will assess values related to recreation, biodiversity, nutrient removal, biomass utilisation, etc. on catchments in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland. CLEARANCE will deliver knowledge on multifunctional wetland buffer zones and raise awareness in all partner countries.

Nine times new: Leaflets about paludiculture - as a free download or print

13/03/2017 To inform about peatlands and to bring the topic into public discussions - this is what the 'MoorDialog' project is about. To allow everybody who's interested to join the discussion, people need to be informed about the state-of-the-art at peatlands, land use options, and about their climate value. This is why nine new flyers dealing with paludiculture on bogs and fens in general, specific information about selected plants such as common reed, reed canary grass, cattail, and peatmosses and about water buffalos are offered printed or for download at www.moorwissen.de.



New push for Aquatic Warbler conservation

13/07/2017 The beginning of July could symbolically be called a new beginning for Aquatic Warbler conservation. Experts from six countries met in Zuvintas (Lithuania) to discuss practicalities of a new method for Aquatic Warbler conservation - translocation. As Martin Flade, chairman of international Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team (AWCT) pointed out, there is much more good quality habitat than area occupied by the species. In some areas the population is so small that it cannot recover itself naturally. During a currently running LIFE project, it is planned to transfer Aquatic Warbler juveniles from Belarus to Lithuania. According to Zymantas Morkvenas, director of Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania and project manager of the LIFE project, the main goal is to test the technique that could help to save other small populations in other countries in the future. The Scientific Advisory Board includes representatives of the Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team (AWCT), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), University of Cambridge, Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP), Greifswald Mire Centre (GMC), "Earthmind", Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve Directorate, and Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania.



From A like azolla to W like water mint: a walkabout to 40 plants in the paludarium of Greifswald



23/07/2017 Food, fodder, green fuels and building materials - all of this can be delivered by plant species growing on wet peatlands. At the same time they help to protect the climate and provide biological diversity. Using common reed for thatch roofs is a well-known example. Less common or almost unknown is, for example, that cotton grass suites to fill pillows, that sundew helps to treat respiratory diseases, that peatmosses can replace peat used in horticulture or that the seeds of the water caltrop can be used to produce flour. All of this is part of the new exhibition 'Paludiculture – production on wet peatlands ("Paludikultur - Bewirtschaftung nasser Moore"). During the opening on the 23rd of July 40 people used the chance of a guided tour by biologist Susanne Abel (GMC).

August

Big mile stone for mire restoration reached: VCS methodology online

05/08/2017 The Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) is the world's leading voluntary programme for the certification of greenhouse gas emission reduction projects. The methodology outlines procedures to estimate the reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions resulting from project activities implemented to rewet drained peatlands in temperate climatic regions. It uses ground vegetation composition and water table depth as proxies for peatland greenhouse gas emissions, known as the 'GEST' approach (GEST: Greenhouse gas Emission Site Type), which has been developed at the Greifswald Mire Centre. The development of this methodology was funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) within a peatland restoration project of the International Climate Initiative, the University of Greifswald, Partner in the Greifswald Mire Centre, and Silvestrum Climate Associates. Authors of the methodology are Iginio Emmer (Silvestrum Climate Associates) and John Couwenberg (Greifswald University, Partner in the Greifswald Mire Centre).

September

DISCOVER workshop: reconstruction of vegetation by pollen data

11/09/2017 From 7th – 10th September the Greifswald Mire Centre offered the 2017 DISCOVER workshop on methods of quantitative land cover reconstruction from pollen data. The workshop introduced and discussed these methods and focussed then on implementation of the methods in the open-source software package R. Following an introduction, Martin Theuerkauf (GMC) explored the capabilities and critical parameters of each method.

Reed in kettles, cattail in walls: Exhibition at the Federal Environmental Agency

22/09/2017 From 18th of September to 6th of October, the mobile exhibition "Peatlands, climate protection and paludiculture" ("Moor, Klimaschutz und Paludikultur") was presented in the lobby of the Federal Environmental Agency in Dessau. In this context the Greifswald Mire Centre offered guided tours for school children on the 4th of October.



RUMOOREN! – Arts meet peatlands: Peat sculptures and cattail cushions

25/09/2017 The art exhibition RUMOOREN! offers unusual perspectives on peatlands. Organised by the Greifswald Mire Centre in cooperation with the Caspar-David-Friedrich-Institute of Greifswald University, exhibits by 19 artists are presented, e.g. peat installations and cattail cushions. The art pieces are intended to promote wider public perception of peatlands, climate protection and sustainable use. The use of peat in art is critically reflected. About one hundred art and peatland lovers attended the opening on 24th September. RUMOOREN! is part of the international paludiculture conference week 'Renewable resources from wet and rewetted peatlands' 2017.



Paludiculture for the planet! Conference week RRR2017 started

27/09/2017 There is power in peatlands! The first RRR conference on the utilisation of wetland plants (paludiculture) was held in 2013 in Greifswald. At the International Paludiculture Conference RRR2017 - Renewable resources from wet and rewetted peatlands 27th-29th September in Greifswald scientists, practitioners and politicians discussed how to tap their potential for climate protection, alternative agriculture and saving great socio-economic costs. Almost 200 participants joined RRR2017 to promote this promising and necessary concept. The conference week included a national conference "Paludiculture in Germany", excursions, an international conference on paludiculture and an international workshop on Sphagnum farming.



October

What everybody agreed on: The RRR2017 final statement

04/10/2017 The concluding statement of the 2nd International Paludiculture Conference “Renewable resources from wet and rewetted peatlands (RRR2017, Greifswald 27-29 September 2017)” boils down on 4 pages what some 200 peatland scientists, practitioners and activists agreed on: Urgent action needed – stop drainage, rewet, implement paludiculture large scale! That’s because drained peatlands hamper the achievement of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Damages include enormous economic and environmental losses through greenhouse gas emissions, peat fires, loss of biodiversity, water pollution, soil degradation and desertification, and subsidence followed by an eventual loss of productive land. Thus peatlands have to be kept wet and productive! Paludiculture offers the solution to mitigate climate change and to adapt to effects of a changing climate such as sea level rise, droughts, and floods.

Winner of 2017 UN Climate Solutions Awards: Peatland restoration in Russia

13/10/2017 The Greifswald Mire Centre was most happy to hear this: Our project 'Restoring peatlands in Russia' is one of 19 winners of the United Nations 'Momentum for Change' Climate Solutions Awards 2017! The project is spearheading the restoration of peatlands in Russia, thus reducing the incidence of fires in peatland areas and the resulting CO₂ emissions and smoke particulates. Michael Succow Foundation and Greifswald University, both partners in the GMC, are strongly involved. Out of 460 applications 19 ground-breaking initiatives from around the world will be honoured at the UN Climate Conference (COP23) in Bonn in November.



Peatlands for Paris - PNAS article favours peatland restoration

31/10/2017 A recent paper Natural climate solutions published by the National Academy of Sciences of the USA (PNAS Oct. 2017; vol. 114 no. 44) examines how much nature can contribute to climate mitigation and holding global warming below 2 °C. The authors considered 20 land management actions. Their result: Avoiding peatland emissions and restoring drained peatlands is a priority to achieve the Paris Agreement. Data of the Global Peatland Database provided a basis for this assessment.

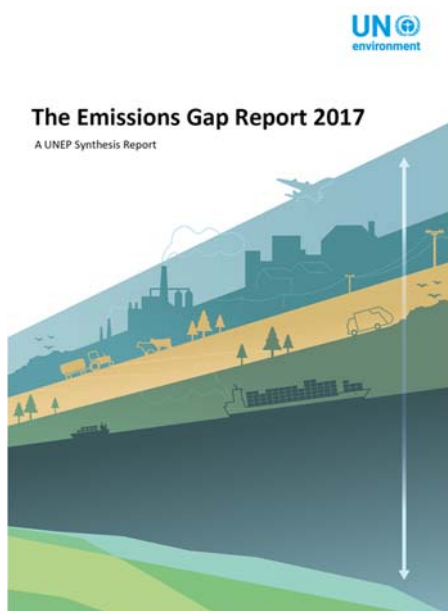
November

What stops paludiculture from its breakthrough? - A new survey

08/11/2017 Even though plant material from paludiculture keeps up with classical resources according to use it as a fuel or building material, it is still a big struggle to place products like common reed, sedges and other plants from peatlands on the market. The

Institute of Climate, Energy and Mobility (IKEM e.V.) has published an analysis and a summary of legal guidelines to the energetic use of paludicultures. On the one hand paludiculture is challenging some legally barriers as some of the plants are not classified as agricultural crops yet, which means that farmers do not get any subsidies for cultivating them. On the other hand, the positive ecological effects of paludiculture are not well considered as they are not put into a direct economic value. Therefore the IKEM recommends to include fuels and building material produced in paludiculture into a modified statute on energy and buildings (German: Gebäudeenergiegesetz GEG) and calls for further incentives for using paludiculture biomass for heating.

UN reveals emissions gap: GMC contribution to UN report kicking off world climate conference



08/11/2017 Published at the beginning of the world climate conference (COP23), the recent 'Emissions Gap Report' of UN Environment summarises current national mitigation efforts and the largest potentials for improved climate protection. This year the report addresses not only the gap in 2020, but also necessary trajectories for later years, especially 2025 and 2030. A key element of the report is an overview on how to close the global emissions gap, for example by peatland restoration. The report has been produced by UN Environment with an international team of experts and with support by the German government. Prof. Hans Joosten's (Greifswald Mire Centre) contribution as a co-author is based on data of the Global Peatland Database.

GMC at the COP23 – 1st week: Bringing peatlands into the focus

11/11/2017 During the UNFCCC COP23 the Greifswald Mire Centre is contributing expertise on peatlands in several side events to raise awareness on their potential for climate protection. On 6th November Franziska Tanneberger (GMC) talked about peatlands as sinks for carbon and sources for carbon emissions at the side event 'Towards a new compact on peatlands for climate protection'.



The side event was organized by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) together with FAO, UNEP, NABU and others, and started at 10.00 am at the German Pavilion. On 10th

November at 4.45 pm GMC and Wetlands International are stressing the ‘Urgent need for local action to sustain peatlands globally’. Beside multi-national corporations, communities are key players in peatlands. They need to be supported towards adapted management of their land. Jan Peters (GMC) presents ‘Strategic environmental dialogues on Caribbean coastal peatlands’, a project promoting coastal peatlands as protection against extreme weather events in the Caribbean. In the 2nd week of COP 23, GMC contributes to a high-level side event of the Global Peatlands Initiative on 15th November.

GMC at the COP23 – 2nd week: UNFCCC lighthouse activity



09/11/2017 Restoring peatlands in Russia is one of the largest on-the-ground peatland restoration projects in the world. It is successfully preventing peat fires and subsequent health damages to local people and simultaneously reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The UNFCCC has chosen it to be one of 19 initiatives receiving the United Nations Momentum for Change Climate Solutions Award as lighthouse activities. Wetlands International and the Michael Succow Foundation, partner in the Greifswald Mire Centre, will present the joint project at a roundtable event within the Focus on Planetary Health on Monday 13th November from 13.00-13.45 pm. A special Showcase Event will feature the 19 winners of the 2017 Momentum for Change Award at 14th November from 6.15-8.00 pm. At 15th November the GMC is part of a high level event ‘Good peatland governance to strengthen economic, social and ecosystem resilience’ organised by the Global Peatlands Initiative. It will be the launch of the Rapid Response Assessment on peatlands at 4.45.



Smoke on Water presented on COP23 - Rapid Response Assessment against peatland loss and degradation

15/11/2017 Titled Smoke on Water – countering global threats from peatland loss and degradation the Global Peatlands Initiative (GPI) presented the „UNEP Rapid Response Assessment“ at COP23. The report describes how to localise, manage and conserve the remaining peatlands worldwide. The Greifswald Mire Centre – founding member of the Global Peatlands Initiative – contributed substantial expertise e.g. data and pictures of the Global Peatland Database. Presenting the report at the high level side event, Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment, said that it is absolutely crucial that peatlands are protected and that the carbon is kept safely in the ground. Tim Christophersen (UN Environment), Ibrahim Thiaw (UN Environment Deputy Executive Director) and Siti Nurbaya Bakar (Minister of the Environment of Indonesia) stressed the significance of intact peatlands for climate protection and the importance of rewetting. Hans Joosten of the Greifswald Mire Centre put it in a nutshell: "Keep peatlands wet, if drained rewet them, if you use them, use them wet!"

New peatlands discovered in the Caribbean

17/11/2017 After mapping the potential distribution area of peatlands in the Caribbean, scientists of the Greifswald Mire Centre went to the region to explore the peatlands of Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and Cuba. They discovered some so far completely unknown coastal mires. As another step workshops and dialogues were organized to get in touch and inform the local policy makers, conservationists, indigenous people and scientists about the importance of these mires and their ecosystem services on biodiversity and for climate protection and adaptation.



December

Setting course for EU peatland policies - CINDERELLA workshop in Brussels

13/12/2017 'Setting the course for EU policies on peatland climate mitigation' was the topic of a workshop 6th December 2017 in Brussels. Jointly organised by the projects CAOS (Thünen Institute) and CINDERELLA (Greifswald University, partner in the GMC) it was another step to better integrate peat soils into the EU policy framework. With representatives from farmers' associations, NGOs, research, European Commission (both DG Agriculture and DG Environment), business sector and national administration there were diverging positions. Some participants stressed the importance of peatland utilisation for food production and sovereignty. The GMC representatives pointed out effects and perspectives of EU policies on peatlands, underlined that greenhouse gas emission reduction is currently insufficiently addressed, and promoted alternative paludiculture crops like cattail for building materials.

Global Landscape Forum - Side event hosted by UN Environment and GMC

13/12/2017 Peatlands are vital for the global landscape but extremely threatened by degradation. Peatland experts such as Alue Dohong (Indonesian Peatland Restoration Agency), Tobias Salathe (Ramsar Convention), Lera Miles (WCMC), Hans Joosten and Franziska Tanneberger (both GMC) shared their knowledge at a side event of the Global Landscape Forum in Bonn at 19th December 2018. Under the title „Smoke on water – Countering global threats from peatland loss and degradation“, findings and recommendations from the recently launched Global Peatlands Initiative report 'Smoke on water' were presented. The Greifswald Mire Centre hosted the side event together with UN Environment at the World Conference Center Bonn (Landscape Pavilion) at 9:00-10:30 am.



First paludiculture strategy - Minister and GMC present strategy for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

13/12/2017 Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania) is pioneering in peatland conservation for decades and more than 26,000 ha have been rewetted in this federal state in Northeast-Germany. Now the state has also a strategy for the implementation of paludiculture on agriculturally used peatlands. The strategy builds on the peatland conservation strategy (2009) and summarises state of the art knowledge on paludiculture, a selection of particularly well suited forms of paludiculture for this region, and necessary next steps for implementation. Maps depicting peatland areas suited for paludiculture are globally unique. The strategy has been prepared by DUENE, partner in the Greifswald Mire Centre in collaboration with representatives from agriculture and nature conservation and was launched by minister Dr. Till Backhaus 12th December 2017 in Schwerin.



Myth, Mire fire, Malaria: new literature evenings in the Peatland Library

13/12/2017 The holy spirit, certificate trading - doesn't sound to have anything to do with peatlands? Well, both of it does as Hans Joosten (GMC) has shown during the third cycle of the literature evenings at the Peatland and Nature Conservation International Library (PeN-CIL). Inspired by the four elements of the ancient world and the bible he glimpsed on the genesis of peatlands as a territory in between water and soil in different creationism myths. Mentioning the historical connection between fire and mire, he talked about Tierra del Fuego at the most southern edge of South America and more recently about Indonesia. As well as about the earlier day's assumption that mist from peatlands would cause diseases as malaria, while today's people are buying carbon certificates of rewetted peatlands.

2. Structure of GMC

In 2017, about 70 people worked under the umbrella of the GMC. Along with the fast growth, many questions about its future direction and structure appeared. Thus, in March 2017 an internal written evaluation of GMC took place, followed by a strategy workshop on the Island of Vilm with about 30 representatives of all three partners. As a result of this, a strategy document for the period of 2018-2022 was developed and intensively discussed within GMC and its Advisory Board.

The focus of GMC and its existential base are third party funded projects carried out by the partners individually or in cooperation. The GMC funding interface has proven itself as a central contact point for funding acquisition. Its tasks include scanning of peatland- related tenders, presenting open calls to the GMC at the monthly meetings, and giving advice on applications as well as supporting them both content-related and technically. Thanks to this, about 4.15 million Euro of peatland related third party funding were granted to GMC for projects starting in 2017.

Furthermore, and the public representation and communication are essential to reach the GMC's goals and to establish the brand 'Greifswald Mire Centre'. Extensive databases such as the Global Peatland Database (GPD), the Databases of Potential Paludiculture Plants (DPPP), the internet platform www.moorwissen.de and the Peatland and Nature Conservation International Library (PeNCIL) are the expertise basement and continuously modified and coordinated at the GMC.

3. Outlook

During the year of 2017 the Greifswald Mire Centre, according to its goals, developed further towards a locally and globally active interface between science, practice and politics in all peatlands related questions. The development of a strategy for the time period 2018-2022 was largely finished by the end of the year, which now represents the base for concrete work scheduling. Continuous priority has the establishment of project-independent core financing for the GMC management as well as the (currently not financially secured) development of the peatland data bases as a unique feature and the establishment of a permanent peatland sciences professorship in Greifswald.

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