

# Soil Alliance News

Newsletter of the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA),  
Soil and Land Alliance of European Cities, Districts and Municipalities



## Issue 4 / 2019

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

Once again, an eventful year is drawing to a close. Confronting climate change, limiting global warming to a maximum 1.5°C and shaping the future of energy provision in an affordable, environmentally sustainable and thus soil-supporting way – we are facing some great challenges! This relates not only to the expansion of renewable energies and therefore the associated interventions in the earth, but also to the dismantling and modernisation of older or defective facilities. Land use requirements and therefore the pressure on agriculture are becoming ever greater. We need innovative solutions here!

We would also like to draw your attention to our next annual conference, which will take place on 14 and 15 May in Bolzano, Italy. For the 20th anniversary of the Soil Alliance, we are returning to the place where the idea for a common European alliance was born in 2000. We would be very happy to meet you there!

We wish you and your families a pleasant and peaceful Christmas season. Best wishes for the new year!

The Board

Soil Alliance News is published regularly. We appreciate your suggestions and criticism. In addition, you have the opportunity to disseminate news, projects, events, etc. Just send us a short [email](#).

## Featured topic: Soil protection and the energy revolution – the construction and dismantling of facilities

**Resource-conserving dismantling of wind power facilities:** This study by the German Federal Environment Agency summarises framework conditions for the dismantling of wind power facilities in a way that preserves the soil and offers guidelines for operators, companies and monitoring authorities entrusted with dismantling and recycling.

[More information](#)

**Soil protection during construction – a guide for authority enforcement in Lower Saxony:** The Lower Saxony State Agency for Mining, Energy and Geology (LBEG) has published a guide for pedological construction supervision. In the coming years, Lower Saxony will face the particular challenge of having to provide land and therefore soil for the expansion of the network and the cabling required for the energy revolution. The guide sets out the issues involved in precautionary soil protection on construction sites, explains technical aspects, lists existing data bases and recommends actions for enforcement. A significant component is the presentation and explanation of the geoscientific data available in Lower Saxony. A template Test Booklet with a checklist is also included.

[More information](#)

**Agrivoltaics:** Changes in the climate are making it difficult to grow food in many places. Food production may be in competition with energy generation at the same time as population growth is increasing the demand. In many countries, agrivoltaic projects are being tested, where agricultural use is combined with photovoltaic installations. Find out more about various projects all over the world.

[More information](#)

**Effects of minimum distances between wind energy facilities and settlements:** Sites for establishing wind energy facilities on land are a scarce resource. The current study by the German Federal Environment Agency is analysing the effects of the minimum distances between wind energy facilities and settlements that are currently under discussion.

[More information](#)

## Soil improvement – Looking for supporters

**European Citizens' Initiative "Save bees and farmers":** This initiative calls for the European Commission to introduce draft proposals for withdrawing the use of synthetic pesticides by 2035, for re-establishing biodiversity and for supporting farmers through these transitions.

[More information](#)

## Additional reports

**Soil of the year 2020 "Tidal mudflats":** On 4 December, the Commission for Soil Protection at the German Federal Environment Agency in Berlin selected tidal mudflats as the soil of the year 2020. The formation of these mudflats is influenced by the tides. Flooding and drying of the soil happens several times per day. Plants and soil organisms are subjected to constant changes in the mudflats. Surprisingly, the species in the mudflats are many and varied. A large number of rare and often very specialised plants and animals have found their ecological niche in the mudflats and need the constant change.

[More information](#)

**Exhibition "Experiencing and understanding tidal mudflats" in Hamburg:** This special exhibition presents a varied and sensitive ecosystem. Together, the Environment and Energy Authority (BUE), the Centre of Natural History (CeNak) and the Institute of Soil Science at the University of Hamburg have designed an exhibition and excursions that investigate the tidal mudflats landscape within Hamburg and on the North Sea and shed light on the exciting world between the grains of sand. It is open from 12 December to 31 May 2020 at the Zoological Museum in Hamburg.

[More information](#)

**Swiss soil of the year 2020 "Water meadow":** Since 2011, the Soil Science Society of Switzerland has also been naming a "soil of the year" for Switzerland. This year, the water meadow was selected. Water meadows are found in river valleys and are very dynamic natural spaces; periodic high water levels lead to a change in deposits and the erosion of sediments. The river frequently changes its course and floods areas that were previously dry. This dynamic generates a great variety of species and habitats that are subject to constant change.

[More information](#)

**Land usage in Germany:** Although in Germany new land continues to be adopted for settlement and traffic purposes, the adoption of new land has fallen since 2000. The daily increase in settlement and traffic areas from 1997 to 2000 averaged 129 hectares (ha) per day. By contrast, the average daily increase from 2014 to 2017 dropped to just 58 ha. However, it is by no means certain that this trend will continue.

[More information](#)

**Farming in times of global warming:** In its recent study, WWF Germany presents suggestions for a viable path towards more sustainable agriculture. The proposed measures should offer low-threshold solutions that can be incorporated into practice and do justice to the heterogeneity of German agriculture as well as contribute to the public and political discussion about the future shaping of agriculture.

[More information](#)

**Alpine Soil Forum – Final Links4Soils conference & Alpine soil exchange meeting:** In mid-October 2019, over 100 people from the Alpine region took advantage of the Alpine Soil Forum in Innsbruck to meet and exchange information about sustainable soil management. Over three days, current prospects for the future management of soil in the Alps were presented and discussed during excursions, lectures, exhibitions and in various discussion formats. The project results of the multi-regional Alpine Space project Links4Soils were the focus of the second day, and opportunities for collaboration in the Alpine Soil Partnership – an important outcome from Links4Soils – were discussed. The Alpine Soil Forum was a cooperative event run by the Links4Soils project partners, the Austrian Soil Forum and the Austrian Soil Science Society.

[More information](#)

**Local earthworm variety greater in Europe than in the tropics:** Within the context of the scholarship programme of the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU), scholarship receiver Marie Sünemann has investigated the effects of climate change on the ecological functions of soil in agricultural and grassland areas. Initial findings are now available.

[More information](#)

**Soil functions in climate change:** Within the context of the scholarship programme of the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU), scholarship receiver Marie Sünemann has investigated the effects of climate change on the ecological functions of soil in agricultural and grassland areas. Initial findings are now available.

[More information](#)

**Land and soil in Europe:** The European Environment Agency has issued a publication that shows the status of land and soil in Europe and highlights why we must use these vital and limited resources sustainably.

[More information](#)

**Demands for climate protection and climate strike:** The environmental and conservation associations organised under the umbrella of the German Nature Conservation Association (DNR) are supporting the immediate measures required for an effective climate strike. These requirements are summarised in the paper "Climate crisis: what must be done now". They were presented to the Climate Cabinet on 20 September.

[More information](#)

## The Soil Idea

**SOILAssist – sustainable securing and improvement of soil function through intelligent land management:** The interdisciplinary research project SOILAssist deals with agricultural soil protection by inspecting arable land and pursues the objective of promptly identifying and averting negative changes to soil structure and functionality. Appropriate management should maintain and improve a more favourable soil condition.

[More information](#)

## Soil Alliance Internal News

**Reserve the date in your diary! ELSA conference 2020 – 20 years of Soil Alliance:** The next ELSA conference will take place on 14 and 15 May 2020 in Bolzano (IT). For the anniversary year “20 years of Soil Alliance”, the ELSA conference returns to the place where the idea for the European Land and Soil Alliance was born in 2000.

**New members:** On 1.1.2020, Salzburg becomes the third Austrian federal state after Upper and Lower Austria to join the Soil Alliance. The market town of Ampflwang (AT) is also a new ELSA member. A warm welcome!

**Managing Board meetings:** 17 January 2020 in Munich (DE)

## Event information

**Conference “Peat reduction” by the Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture,** 18/19 February 2020, Berlin (DE)

[More information](#)

**Advanced training “Pedological construction support for authority representatives”,** 26 March 2020, Osnabrück (DE)

[More information](#)

**ELSA conference 2020 – 20 years of Soil Alliance,** 14/15 May 2020, Bolzano (IT)

**“Pedological Site Support Certification Course” 2020,** in Osnabrück (DE) and in Stuttgart (DE)

[More information](#)

**ITVA Contaminated Sites Symposium 2020,** 18 to 20 March 2020 in Berlin (DE)

[More information](#)

**Eurosoil 2020,** 24 to 28 August 2020, Geneva (CH)

[More information](#)

## Legal notice

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