

Soil Alliance News

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



Issue 3 / 2021

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

The devastating floods in recent weeks have demonstrated that the effects of climate change can no longer be ignored. Massive rainfall in one area and heat or drought in another will no longer be the exception in the future.

In cities, soil is playing an increasingly important role in urban planning when it comes to regulating water levels. 'Sponge cities' for regulating extreme water levels have become an important target. Nowadays, there are many exciting and targeted approaches on how our cities and municipalities can respond to the challenges in order to remain 'rain-proof' and safe!

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 and (flood) water

Online conference 'Sponge city – dealing with too much and too little water': The joint event of Soil Alliance, Climate Alliance and Bundesverband Boden e.V. (German Federal Soil Association) including all presentations is now also available online. The next event in the 'Soil and Climate' series will take place on Friday, 26/11/2021, from 10 to 12 AM.

[More information](#)

Position paper on flooding: In 2005, the European Land and Soil Alliance already released a comprehensive position paper in which they called for increased soil protection to prevent flooding. The paper has not lost any relevance to this day.

[More information](#)

Sponge City Guide for Municipalities and Planners: Climate-adapted planning and building are becoming increasingly important to ensure safe and liveable housing in the future. This guide by the Bavarian State Ministry for the Environment and Consumer Protection contains proposed solutions on how a blue-green infrastructure can be implemented in settlement areas.

[More information](#)

Berlin Rainwater Agency: The agency wants to activate, animate and motivate citizens, urban planners and developers, city administrations as well as companies and housing associations to create an interactive network with focus on making cities more 'rain-proof' and climate-adapted.

[More information](#)

Flood and flash flood prevention: The Bundesverband Boden e.V. (German Federal Soil Association) is calling for more preemptive soil protection to prevent floods and flash floods.

[More information](#)

Rain Gardens: Private gardens can also be included in the conversion to a sponge city. For example, a campaign was launched in the greater Seattle area to create 12,000 'Rain Gardens'.

[More information](#)

Additional reports

EU Mission Soil Health and Food: With a total of five planned missions, this one is intended to raise awareness of the importance of soils. The results will have an impact on the success of the European Green Deal and its quest for progress on climate, biodiversity and sustainable food.

[More information](#)

Soil Care Network: The network is a global community of scientists, researchers as well as members of civil society with diverse backgrounds. It is intended to be a place where soil scientists and people interested in soil research can meet and exchange constructive and creative ideas.

[More information](#)

SOILGUARD: The project is striving to create a future in which soil biodiversity conservation as well as ecological, economic and social well-being can be assured. A key challenge is to fill existing knowledge gaps regarding biodiversity and the ecosystem services provided by soil.

[More information](#)

Climate-friendly agriculture: The New York State Senate passed the Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Act. The goal is to reduce the impact of agricultural practices on climate change through greater adaptation and soil conservation.

[More information](#)

Joint Associations Paper 'Restarting Transport Planning': Various environmental associations joined forces to issue a paper demanding action from the German government: an immediate moratorium on new construction and expansion of motorways and adoption of a federal mobility law at the beginning of the next legislative period.

[More information](#)

Publications

Farming for 1.5°: A new report entitled 'Farming for 1.5' endeavours to help Scotland achieve net-zero agriculture by 2045. The purpose of the study was to identify a consensus on the best way for Scottish agriculture to cap global warming to 1.5 °C.

[More information](#)

Soil Protection Report: The German Federal Cabinet has approved the 5th Soil Protection Report of the Federal Government. The report reflects developments in the period from 2017 to 2021 at federal and state level as well as in the European and international domains.

[More information](#)

German Federal Council adopts the 'Mantelverordnung' Ordinance: For the first time, the 'Mantelverordnung' (ordinance regulating ground water, substitute building materials, landfill and soil protection) is applied to the use of mineral waste such as construction rubble, slag or railway ballast throughout Germany. In order to protect soil and nature, the ordinance establishes uniform rules for backfilling of surface excavations, such as former gravel and sand pits.

[More information](#)

German Peatland Protection Strategy. The German Federal Ministry for the Environment has published a National Peatland Protection Strategy for the first time. It contains the principles, goals and measures needed for successful peatland protection at the federal level.

[More information](#)

Soil improvement – Looking for supporters

Soil4Life is looking for supporters: The Soil4Life Manifesto was originally established in 2019 and calls for better treatment of soils. It is a call to action for global and local decision makers. Stakeholders are currently petitioning for people to sign the manifesto. The Manifesto will be presented to UNESCO, FAO and the EU in 2022.

[More information](#)

News from the Climate Alliance

Climate Alliance members adopt forward-looking charter: Climate Alliance members adopted the new charter of the city network at the annual General Assembly on 8 September, renewing their commitment to ambitious climate protection measures at the local level. The charter outlines what equitable climate protection can look like locally. It also provides a target range to assist municipalities in their efforts for more ambitious emission reduction targets in the future. The charter emphasises the importance of figuring out how to combat global warming. From climate neutrality and 100% renewable energy to the introduction of a carbon price – the network uses the charter to provide its members with specific recommendations on how to drive sustainable and equitable transformation at their respective locations.

[More information](#)

Soil Alliance internal news

Annual Conference 2021 Post-briefing: '(Micro-) Plastics in Soil. Challenge for Soil Protection?!' The conference took place online on 11 June 2021. The post-event review is now also available online.

[More information](#)

Save the date! (Online) Workshop 'Sponge City in Practice' (working title): 26 November 2021, 10 AM to 12 PM, online. The workshop is part of the 'Soil and Climate' event series.

[More information](#)

Save the date! Annual Soil Alliance Conference 2022: The conference will take place on 19–20 May 2022 in Bolzano (IT).

Board meeting and strategy workshop: The next board meeting and annual strategy workshop will take place on 18–19 November 2021 in Osnabrück (DE).

New members: District of Hildesheim (DE, Municipality of Marchtrenk (AT), Market Town of Natternbach (AT). A warm welcome!

Event information

'Soil and Climate – Can Earthworms Really Mitigate Climate Change?', 29 September 2021, online

[More information](#)

Symposium on the 'Perception and Evaluation of Soils in Society', 29 and 30 September 2021, Stuttgart (DE)

[More information](#)

World Soil Day 2021, symposium of the Commission for Soil Protection at the German Federal Environment Agency 'No false bottom: How soil protection secures the future and protects our climate', 2 December 2021, Berlin (DE)

[More information](#)

Save the date! Soil of the Year 2022, festive event on the occasion of the 'Soil of the Year 2022' announcement, 3 December 2021, Berlin (DE)

Legal notice

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