



THE CENTRAL SCOTLAND REGIONAL GROUP OF THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Notice of event: Thursday 9th February 2017
Smith Art Gallery & Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling FK8 2RQ

6:00 pm for 6:15 pm
Tea, coffee & biscuits available from 6:00 pm.

Sustainable Use of Soils – A Scottish Perspective

Soils have often been described as the Cinderella of environmental policy being '*Out of sight and out of mind*'. Unlike water and air pollution which have dedicated policy frameworks, many facets of soil protection are found in different policies and regulations. Soil governance is therefore fragmented across a wide range of actors, different sectors of economic activity and different organisations. Combined, this has limited the overall effectiveness of policies protecting soils and the functions that soils support. Building on the momentum of the 2009 [Scottish Soil Framework](#), soils are becoming increasingly recognised as a vital part of our economy, environment and heritage, to be safeguarded for existing and future generations. In doing so, it is clear that future management of soils should encompass the need to adapt to pressures under a changing climate.

Soils are a bridge between geological and biological systems. The geochemical and physical properties of soils control many natural processes such as water infiltration and runoff, structural stability of slopes, and directly impact on issues such as erosion, flood risks and freshwater quality. Soil biodiversity is of special importance as it is the engine to biochemical processes essential to sustain healthy ecosystems. We have come to rely on the multiple functions provided by soils to human populations that act across this bridge including as a medium for plant growth, carbon storage, biodiversity, and as a platform for development of our built environment. With limited specialist knowledge, practitioners who need access to reliable information to make informed decisions are often faced with difficulties in finding the right data and information to make good decisions for land management.

This talk will explore how our understanding of soils and the keys pressures they face are helping formulate effective soil policy and contextualise the needs for effective access to soil information. The talk will illustrate how comparing the needs of both practitioners and policy developers together, and considering their different approaches to collecting and using soil data, is helping the development of new data tools and information gateways. This will help to develop informed decision making on how to assess the potential impact of activities on soil, to maintain, use or restore soils for long-term future.

More information on the Central Scotland Regional Group can be found on our [webpage](#).



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Presenter

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Dr Patricia Bruneau is a soil science advisor within Scottish Natural Heritage. She has experience of soils across many regions world-wide. She was awarded her PhD in soil science from the University of Paris VI, working on water and nitrogen movement in agricultural catchments in France. She joined Silsoe Research Institute to work on the dynamics of soil surface degradation and to model the soil and water-use in agricultural systems including sites in Zimbabwe.

Moving to Scotland in 1999, she undertook research as part of the NERC thematic programme "Biological diversity and ecosystem function of soil" at the University of Stirling before moving to SNH in 2003. She is presently working on a range of environmental and land use issues aimed at promoting better understanding of the multiple functions, conservation and sustainable use of soils in Scotland. She co-edited the State of Scotland Soil report, the State of Scotland Peatland report and has been involved in soil policy development and guidance. Other recent work covers the development of the Scotland soil monitoring action plan and the Scotland Soil website.



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