



Historical Vegetation Ecology WG

Information letter n°1 – January 2019



Back to 2018...

July 2018: the Historical Vegetation Ecology working group of the IAVS was officially created

On Tuesday 24th July 2018, during the IAVS Symposium in Bozeman, the IAVS Council officially approved the formation of a new Working Group (WG) for “Historical Vegetation Ecology”. This new WG aims at providing an interdisciplinary forum to all scientists interested in historical aspects of vegetation, including all temporal and spatial scales. “Understanding the present

as an interpretative model of the past and interpreting the past in the present context” could be the motto of the new WG. The main objectives of the Historical Vegetation Ecology WG are:

- promoting cross-disciplinary studies, at the frontier between vegetation science and human sciences, especially history and archaeology

- stimulating and facilitating international research collaborations
- compiling and distributing information about historical ecology in general
- organizing special sessions at the IAVS annual symposium and dedicated meetings

If you are interested in participating in the activities of the IAVS Historical Vegetation Ecology WG, you are much welcome! New

membership can be declared anytime, and is not restricted to the IAVS members only. The IAVS members will be able to express their willingness to join the WG within the IAVS membership annual renewal. ■

July 2018: the special session “Historical ecology in vegetation science”

At the IAVS Symposium in Bozeman, a special session was organized by Guillaume Decocq and Radim Hédli on Thursday 26th July, which was dedicated to Historical ecology in vegetation science. A total of 10 oral presentations were given at the morning and afternoon sessions, on very contrasted but fascinating topics. All

contributors have been invited to submit their contribution as an original article to assemble a special issue of *Journal of Vegetation Science*, which will be prepared during 2019. A similar special session will be proposed for the 2019 symposium in Bremen. ■



Buffalos grazing in the prairie (Yellowstone National Park) during the IAVS pre-symposium excursion: an example of how big herbivores maintain open habitats in otherwise forested landscapes. Historical ecologists wondered whether the same story used to apply to Medieval European lowlands... (Photos: G. Decocq).

October 2018: election of the first Steering Committee (2019-2022)

From 19th September to 19th October 2018 took place the voting period for the election of the Steering Committee (2019-2022) via an electronic ballot. At that time, 130 IAVS members had joined the working group

(according to the bylaws, the 32 non-IAVS members who had joined the WG could not vote). Fifteen members were candidates for the election. Of the 130 voters, 72 (55.4%) have effectively voted.

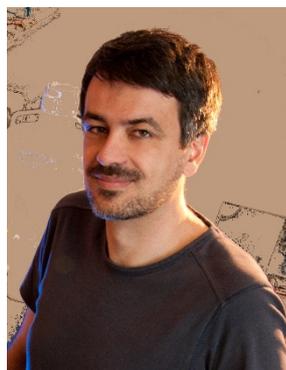
Based on the results of the ballot, the five following candidates have been officially elected as members of the Steering Committee (Fraction of votes): Guillaume DECOCQ (83.3%), Radim HÉDL (61.1%), Peter POSCHOLD (36.1%), Péter SZABÓ (51.4%), and Kris VERHEYEN (45.8%). Guillaume DECOCQ and Radim HÉDL

were subsequently elected as Chair and Deputy chair, respectively, during the first meeting of the newly elected Steering Committee (14th November 2018). Below are short biosketches of the Steering Committee members. ■



Guillaume DECOCQ, France (Chair) is a full professor of plant sciences at the Jules Verne University of Picardie, in Amiens (N France) and head of a CNRS research group devoted to the ecology and dynamics of human-impacted ecosystems. After his PharmD, he got a PhD thesis in botany and phytosociology in 1997. Since that time, he mostly works in the field of forest ecology with a special focus on long-term impact on plant community diversity of management, land-use and past human activities, plant invasions, and global changes. He is mostly experienced with temperate forest ecosystems but occasionally worked in afrotropical and mountain forests. He has long been interested in the importance of time and history in patterning plant community composition and ecosystem functioning and conducted a number of cross-disciplinary research projects in forest

historical ecology. He serves the IAVS as member of the Council since 2011 and member of JVS editorial board since 2009.



Radim HÉDL, Czech Republic (Deputy chair) is a senior researcher at the Institute of Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences and head of the Department of Vegetation Ecology (<http://ekolbrno.ibot.cas.cz/en>). He teaches at the Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic. He obtained degrees from plant ecology (Prague), fine arts (Prague) and landscape ecology (Brno). His research focuses on plant ecology of forest ecosystems, with emphasize on the past and present human influence. His principal research area is long-term changes in temperate forest biodiversity through historical vegetation plot resurveys (<http://www.forestreplot.ugent.be>). He is an active member of the IAVS since 2013.



Péter SZABÓ, Czech Republic is a researcher at the Institute of Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Historian by training, he started out at a history department in Budapest, Hungary, moved on to an archaeological institute at the same place, and have been working with vegetation ecologists in Brno for the past ten years. His research ranges from prehistoric forest dynamics through medieval woodland management to the study of the effects of great windstorms on forests in the past two centuries. His work mostly focuses on the role of human societies in shaping vegetation. He published quite extensively on the conceptual aspects of connecting ecology with history. He currently chairs the European Society of Environmental History (ESEH; www.eseh.org) and intends to foster connections with the IAVS new working group.

Peter POSCHLOD, Germany is currently working at the Institute of Plant Sciences at the University of Regensburg, heading the Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology. He also chairs the oldest existing Botanical Society in the world which is the Regensburg Botanical Society. He became attached to and a member of the IAVS at the end of his biology graduation when he presented his diploma thesis at a workshop of the former IAVS working group “long-term permanent plot studies ». The focus of his research is on plant and vegetation ecology but also palaeoecology and conservation biology. He was always interested in the relationship between history and vegetation but this interest became more intense in the last 15 years to explain actual species assemblies and occurrences through the knowledge of historical processes. He applies many methods, e.g. genetic ones and pollen and macrorest analyses to reconstruct the ancient history of species and habitats and soil seed bank analyses to reconstruct the recent history and to finally correlate this knowledge with the actual species assembly.



Kris VERHEYEN, Belgium is a full Professor in Forest Ecology and Management at Ghent University since 2004. He coordinated more than fifty research projects. He also established and coordinate, since 2006, the FLEUR-network (www.fleur.ugent.be), a European network of researchers interested in the dynamics of forest plant species in a changing environment ; since 2010, TreeDivNet (www.treedivnet.ugent.be), a global network of tree biodiversity experiments; and since 2013, the forestREplot database (www.forestreplot.ugent.be), a global database of forest herb layer resurvey plots in temperate forests.

Planned activities for 2019

July 2019: workshop, special session and business meeting



The 62nd IAVS annual symposium will be held in Bremen (Germany) from 14 to 19th July 2019. The topic will be “Vegetation Science and Biodiversity Research”. This will offer the opportunity for the Historical Vegetation Ecology working group to organize its annual business meeting. Besides, we plan to organize a workshop to discuss and initiate

international collaborations among the WG members on various topics. Finally, a special session will be proposed to take place on the Symposium program, following the same format as in the IAVS Symposium in Bozeman in 2018. It will be entitled “*The legacy of the past in the biodiversity of current vegetation*”. All members (and not yet members) interested to participate or learn about our activities are invited to visit the website of the symposium and/or of the IAVS.



Assembling a directory to offer a communication platform to members



The working group should primarily offer a communication platform to its members. To facilitate internal communication, the Steering Committee decided to assemble a directory within the working group, so that members can better know each other. A template has been prepared for this

purpose and will be sent out soon. The ultimate goal is to distribute the directory as pdf among members of the working group. It should also be posted on the IAVS website with restricted access to the working group members, to meet personal data protection requirements. **Please complete the template as soon as possible and return it to guillaume.decocq@u-picardie.fr** ■

What do you expect from the Historical Vegetation Ecology working group?



So far, 134 IAVS members and 32 non-IAVS members have joined the working group, and even more non-IAVS members are expected, once the existence of the working group publicized out of the IAVS. This quite a big number of members reveals that the creation of the working group met the expectations of many vegetation scientists. The group is also very diverse, with scientists working on very contrasting time scales (from millennia to years) and spatial scales (from local to global scale), using different approaches and respective tools (pollen, macro-remains, vegetation

plots, old maps, remote sensing, etc.). The expectations of the working group members might be very diverse and contrasted as well. This is why the Steering Committee decided to launch a survey among the members. The survey will be analysed prior to the IAVS Symposium and the connected WG workshop in July 2019. The results would not only help us to define priorities for the coming years, but may also be a basis for a sound analysis of how historical ecology is actually perceived among the vegetation scientists and what are the timely research questions behind. So, keep an eye to your mailbox, you should receive further information before mid-February. ■

Announcements



From **1 to 5th July 2019**, the 10th International Association of Landscape Ecology World Congress will be held at the University of Milano-

Bicocca, in Milano (Italy); see <https://www.landscape-ecology.org/events/iale-world-congress-2019-call-for-symposia.html>. The conference theme is “Nature and society facing the Anthropocene: challenges and perspectives for landscape ecology”. A

session "Landscape trajectories during the long Anthropocene: dialogues between ecology and archaeology" at the, Italy, 1-5 July 2019). The main aim to this session is to combine and stimulate an

interdisciplinary debate between the (many) Archaeologies and Landscape Ecology – as well as Historical Vegetation Science.

Contact:

giuseppe.bazan@unipa.it



From **21 to 25th August 2019**, the biennial conference of the European society for Environmental History conference will be held in

Tallinn (Estonia); see <http://eseh.org/event/next-conference>. It will operate under the notion of "boundaries in/of environmental history", and will expand the idea of natures in-between to reach out for boundaries

between humans and non-humans, environment and technologies, transcorporeality, transboundary agents, planetary boundaries as well as disciplinary boundaries and boundaries of science and arts, activism, popular science, etc.

Contact:

Peter.Szabo@ibot.cas.cz



From **25 to 29th May 2020**, an International conference entitled

"Historical Ecology for the Future" (HEF2020) will be held in Metz (France); see www.symposium.inra.fr/hef2020. This conference aims at promoting historical ecology and highlighting its recent advances and key results. Archeologists,

biologists, ecologists, economists, geographers, historians, managers, paleoecologists, social scientists, soil scientists, among others dealing with historical ecology issues are welcome to join the conference to share and discuss their questions, data, and results. Contact: contact@hef2020.com



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IAVS

Historical Vegetation
Ecology WG

Chair: Guillaume DECOCO (guillaume.decocq@u-picardie.fr)

Deputy chair: Radim HÉDL (Radim.Hedl@ibot.cas.cz)

Other SC members: Peter POSCHOLD (Peter.Poschlod@biologie.uni-regensburg.de), Péter SZABÓ (Peter.Szabo@ibot.cas.cz), Kris VERHEYEN (Kris.Verheyen@UGent.be)