

Conferences and Events

Biodiversity Science and Governance

An international conference was held 24-28 January 2005 under the high patronage of Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, and Mr. Koichiro Matsuura -Director-General of UNESCO. Ministerial contributions included that of Elliot Morley, UK Minister for Environment, who was able to advise the conference that part of the upcoming G8 meeting in the UK this year will be devoted to biodiversity. He further emphasized the necessity of strengthening scientific capacity and the urgent need for capacity building in developing countries in order to try and meet the 2010 target. A new UK inter-departmental subcommittee on biodiversity was announced with responsibilities that include global biodiversity and scientific cooperation internationally. For full details of the conference, including the Paris Appeal on biodiversity please see: www.recherche.gouv.fr/biodiv2005paris/en/

Ecological Diversity of Soil Biota and Bioproduction of Soils

IV (XIV) scientific conference on soil zoology was held 01-04 February 2005 in Tyumen, Russia.

For full details of the conference, please contact: Dr. A. V. Tolstikov, e-mail: atol@utmn.ru and see <http://soilzoo.utmn.ru/index.html>

Third International Conference on Environmental Change in Central Asia. May 23-27 2005, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Following on from two previous conferences in 2001 in Lanzhou, China and 2003 in Berlin, Germany, the MOLARE Research Centre at the National University of Mongolia will host this conference. Over the 3 days natural and human influenced landscape development, past and present climate change, and traditional and modern land use problems will be presented and discussed. Topics will include: climate, landscape, geodynamics, watershed management, evolution, human impact and land use. Following the conference there will be a one day excursion to observe nature protection, tourism management and geomorphological features

For further details contact Prof. Michael Walter: e-mail MwalterUB@magicnet.mn and see: www.num.edu.mn/molare/frames/international_congress_frame.html

XVII International Botanical Congress, Vienna, Austria, 17-23 July 2005. For further information please contact Prof. Dr Marianne Popp: Marianne.Popp@univie.ac.at or botanik@univie.ac.at

First Asiatic Wild Ass Conference (AWAC) to be held in Hustai National Park, Mongolia, 10-13 August 2005.

The Asiatic wild ass (*Equus hemionus*) with its various subspecies has in the past undergone a dramatic shrinkage of its distribution range and only few scattered populations remain. Nowadays species persistence in its last strongholds also seems to be threatened. Habitat deterioration, competition with domestic livestock for pasture and water and direct persecution by man were and still are the main causes for the decline in numbers and distribution range. Recent population surveys and research in Mongolia show that although Mongolia still is a main stronghold of *Equus hemionus*, the species seems to be declining and at risk of becoming fragmented. It therefore is time to exchange experiences on Asiatic wild ass research and conservation on an international scale. Based on international and national expertise, the conference aims to be a starting point towards an action plan for the long-term conservation of the Asiatic wild ass in Mongolia. A preliminary program includes: Taxonomy of *Equus hemionus*; Status Worldwide; Status in Mongolia (Results of the National survey 2003; legal status; History of the exploration of *Equus hemionus*); Monitoring methods for large ungulates; Recent Research on Asiatic Wild Ass (Spatial requirements and habitat use; social organization; feeding ecology; reproduction and mortality); The human dimension of wild ass conservation (Vegetation assessment and impact of grazing; economic situation of herders); Approaches in wild ass conservation (captive breeding, sustainable use, conservation incentives, cross border cooperation).

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