

Mapping Peatscapes: Geographies of Resource-making, Restoration, and Carbon Farming

30–31 March 2026 | The Lapworth Museum of Geology, Education Room, Birmingham

Organizers: Thomas Franssen (Leiden University) & Kärg Kama (University of Birmingham)

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Peatlands have taken centre stage in global efforts to tackle the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate breakdown. What historically used to be considered idle ‘wastelands’ which must be drained and improved through cultivation, grazing, forestry and peat mining, are now being reappraised in terms of ‘natural climate solutions’, ‘ecosystem services’, and ‘biodiversity assets’. The remaking of peatlands for carbon storage and nature restoration purposes has placed these degraded landscapes under new pressures of large-scale rewetting, carbon farming and afforestation. Yet, these agendas are being mapped onto very diverse ‘[peatscapes](#)’ across Europe, and have thereby become widely contested, renegotiated and adapted to local circumstances. This workshop brings together social scientists working on European peatlands from across Geography, Anthropology, STS, and related disciplines. We seek to collectively explore the various land use histories, resource-making practices, ecological and industrial heritage, technoscientific entanglements and regulatory regimes, which will importantly challenge the rapid upscaling and standardisation of Europe-wide peatland restoration today. In particular, we are keen to consider how these peatland legacies might present various (im)possibilities for the upcoming [EU CRCF](#) framework, national net-zero emissions and ecosystem restoration targets, and regional carbon and biodiversity offsetting schemes.

This two-day workshop is co-organized by Kärg Kama and Thomas Franssen, with support from the Birmingham–Leiden Strategic Collaboration Fund. It also builds on ongoing research activities in the “[Peatscapes](#)” project and the [Polderlab](#) within the “[Curvebend](#)” project. The workshop aims to initiate a collaborative social science network with regional expertise from across Europe, to advocate critical interdisciplinary research against a rapidly evolving policy landscape, extensive public spending, and novel market experiments.

Monday, 30th March 2026

9:00 Welcome by Kärg Kama and Thomas Franssen

9:30–10:00 *Carbon and the Political Ecology of Dutch Peatlands*

Thomas Franssen | Centre for Science and Technology Studies, Leiden University, the Netherlands

10:00–10:30 *Competing Peatlands: CO₂, Peat and Nitrogen in the Restoration Effort in Denmark*

Freja Marie Hegelund | Department of Human Geography, Lund University, Sweden

10:30–11:00 *Peatland Restoration through Paludiculture in Switzerland: Longing for Scale?*

Olivier Ejderyan | Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, Switzerland

11:00 Coffee break

11:30–12:00 *“We Don’t Talk about Carbon”: The Parallel Realities of Peat Extraction and Mire Conservation in Estonia*

Kärg Kama & Roosa Rytönen | School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, UK

12:00–12:30 *From Resource to Relation: Reassembling Lithuanian Peatlands*

Martyna Šulskutė | Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University, Lithuania

12:30 Lunch

13:00–13:30 *Reclaiming Peatlands – A History of Resource-Making in Ireland’s Bogs*

Lily Toomey | Trinity Centre for Environmental Humanities, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

13:30–14:00 *Restoration or Revolution?: Parallels and Continuity in the Drainage and Restoration of Norwegian Peatlands*

Magnus Olav Nyaas Ravnå | Department of Geography and Social Anthropology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

14:00 Behind the scenes tour: ‘peat’ and other objects in the Lapworth museum

15:00–15:30 *The Ugly Side of Restoration – Aesthetics of Scaling Up*

Minna Santaoja | Faculty of Management and Business, Administrative Studies, Tampere University, Finland

15:30–16:00 *Shifting Repertoires of Draining and Restoring Wetlands on Gotland, Sweden*

Tom Mels | Department of Human Geography, Uppsala University Campus Gotland, Sweden

16:00–16:30 *Peatscape Futures in the UK: Caught between Complexity, Commodification and Co-production*

James Palmer & Nye Merrill-Glover | School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol, UK

16:30–17:00 Wrap-up discussion

17:30 Dinner at Bristol Pear (676 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, B29 6BJ)

Tuesday, 31st March 2026

9:00 Welcome

9:30–11:00 Collaborative writing activity: smaller groups

11:00 Coffee break

11:30–12:30 Outcomes and future plans: joint session

12:30 Lunch and departure