

BERITA-BERITA LAIN (Other News)

Technical Talk

“Impact of Spatial Variability on the Classification and Management of Peatlands in Asia”

Friday, September 21, 2007.

Curtin University of Technology, Sarawak Campus

The above technical talk was presented by Dr. Eswaran Padmanabhan to an audience of around 20 people at Curtin University of Technology, Sarawak Campus. A few geologists from Sarawak Shell Berhad also attended this talk.

Abstract

Globally, wetlands occupy about 18.96×10^6 km², of which 2% is made up of organic soils. In Asia, about 2.2 million km² (~ 1.0%) of the land surface comprises peat or Histosols. The current global approach to land use/management places considerable emphasis on environmental quality, conservation of biodiversity and preservation of ecosystem while striving to achieve sustainable land management, use and production. Ignorance of the functions and value of such areas has led to many forms of degradation. The most important factor differentiating peatlands from their mineral counterparts is microvariability; this has not been addressed adequately and requires innovative approaches and technologies. Therefore, sustainable development of the peat soils requires not only a holistic approach to the management but also dictates the need for a paradigm shift in resource characterization, research trends and land use policies. Research strategies needed to ensure sustainable development of organic soils include the urgent need for innovative measures to characterize the resource, evaluating and monitoring soil quality, assessing the potential of peat lands to release methane and other greenhouse gases upon drainage, and assessing the integrity of the ecosystem. Issues pertaining to productivity, assisting in the design of rational policies for development, promoting preservation of heritage, inculcating the ownership concept and developing better methods to gauge the economic viability of such projects are additional important factors that ensure sustainability. Conventional surveys must be augmented with more innovative techniques as current methods suffer from various kinds of limitations. Innovative technologies are urgently needed to overcome these limitations in order that the peat land resources are managed in a sustainable manner within the realms of inferred resilience of the system.

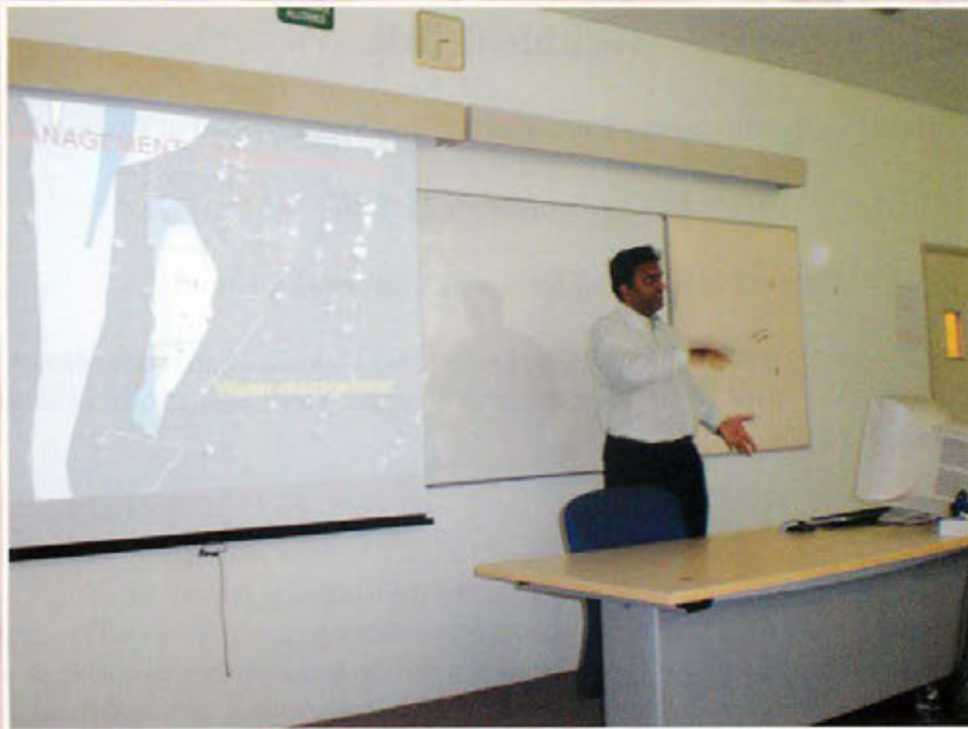
This presentation is based on collaborative work done with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (United States Department of Agriculture), Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authorities (FELCRA, Malaysia), STRAPEAT (Strategies for Management of Peatlands, DANCED), UNIMAS and Univ. of Saskatchewan (Canada).

The 1-hour talk concluded at 3:00pm.

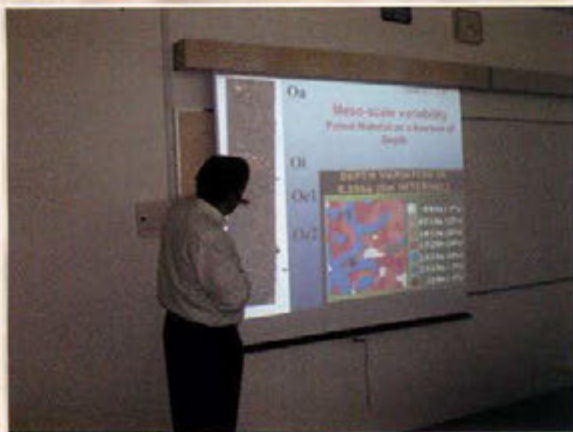
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eswaran Padmanabhan
Curtin University of Technology., Sarawak Campus)

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Assoc Professor Dr Eswaran elaborating on management strategies.



Dr. Eswaran making a point on microvariability.



A section of the audience.