

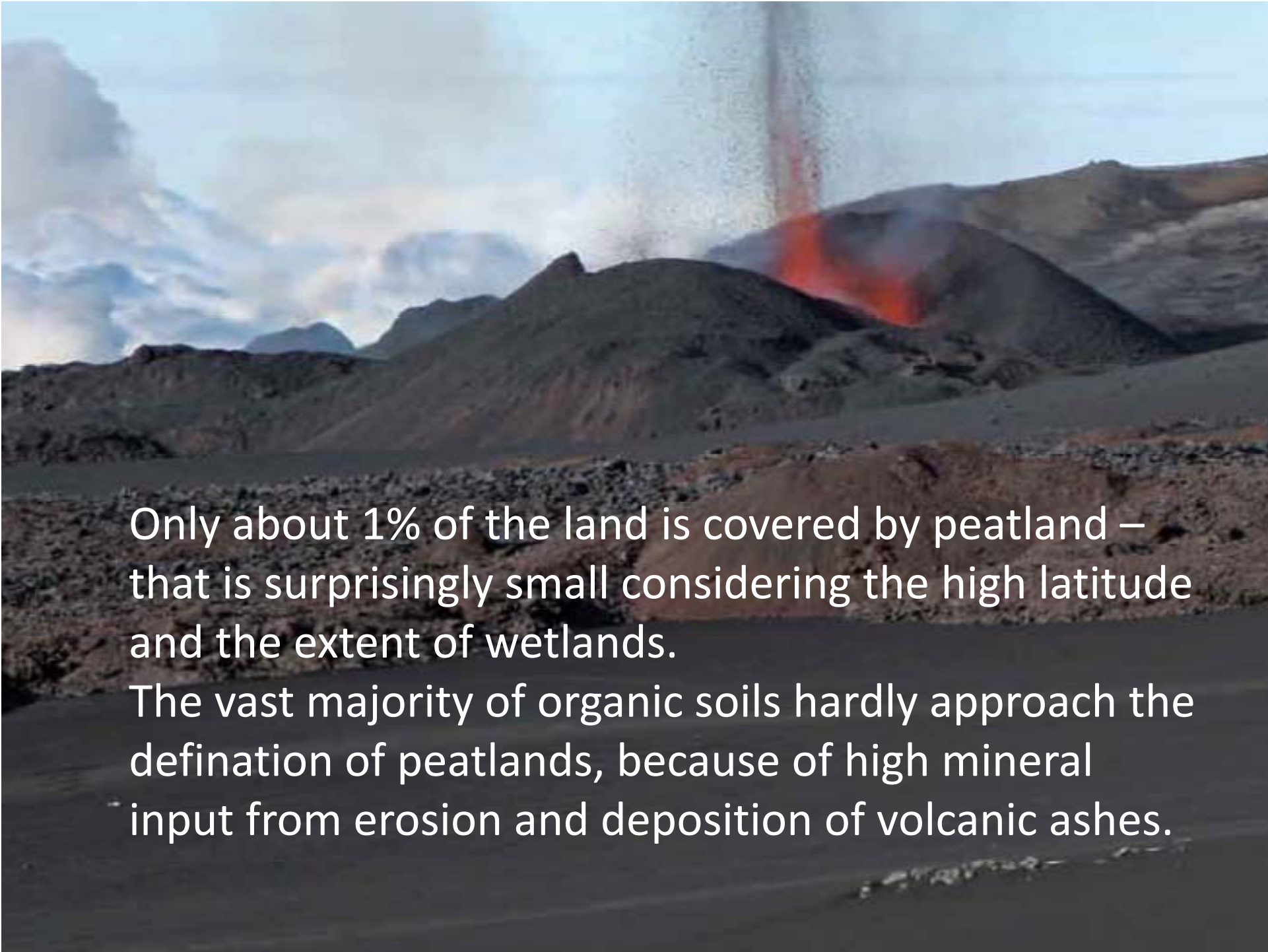


The NorBalWet Peatlands Project

Lille Vildmose - Denmark

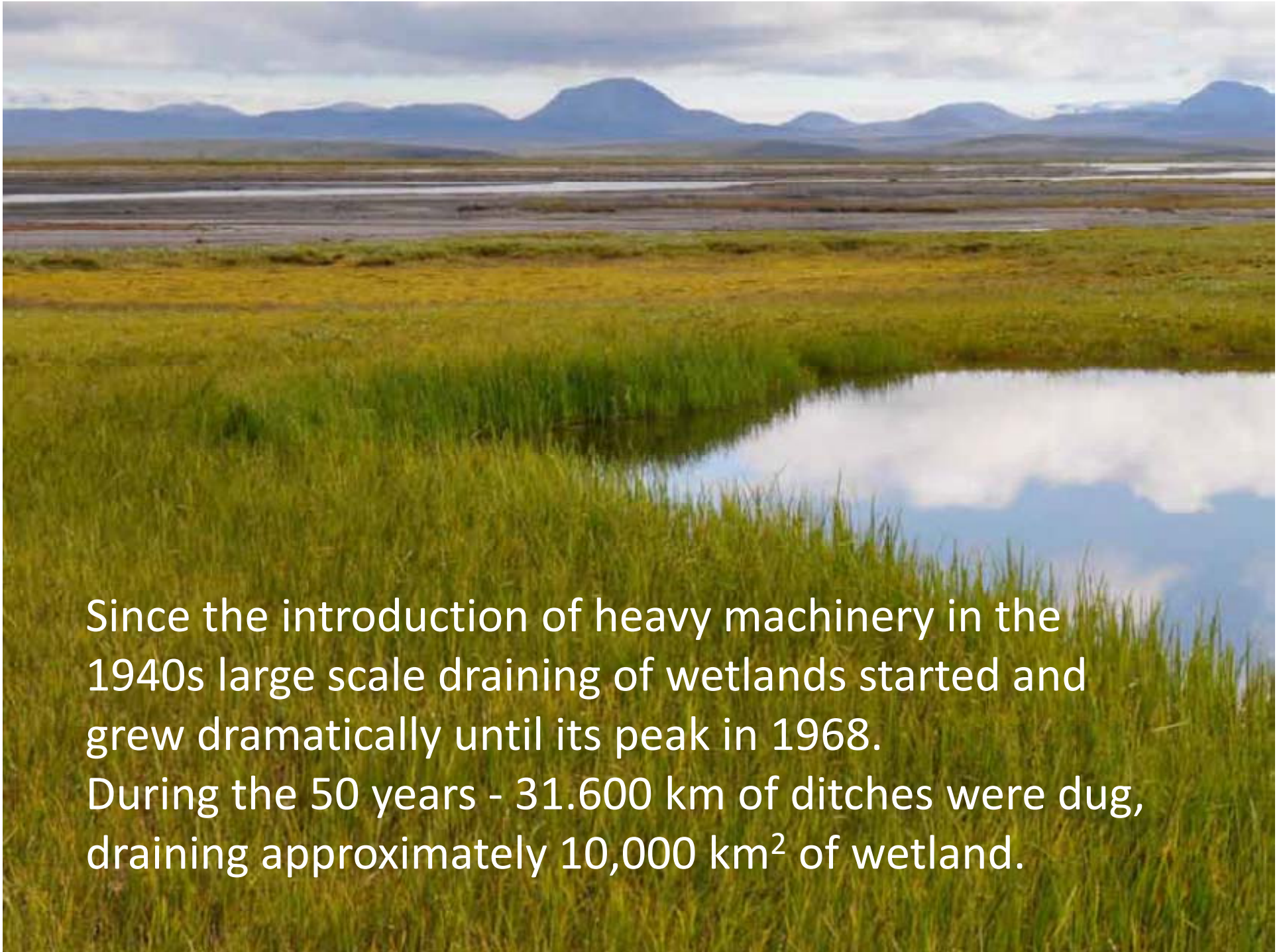
Iceland

Guðríður Þorvarðardóttir

A photograph of a volcanic eruption. In the center, a large plume of white ash and steam rises into a blue sky. Below the plume, a bright red lava flow is visible, cascading down a dark, rocky slope. The foreground is a dark, rocky landscape with some reddish-brown soil. The background shows more volcanic peaks under a cloudy sky.

Only about 1% of the land is covered by peatland – that is surprisingly small considering the high latitude and the extent of wetlands.

The vast majority of organic soils hardly approach the definition of peatlands, because of high mineral input from erosion and deposition of volcanic ashes.



Since the introduction of heavy machinery in the 1940s large scale draining of wetlands started and grew dramatically until its peak in 1968. During the 50 years - 31.600 km of ditches were dug, draining approximately 10,000 km² of wetland.



Iceland total land area 103,000 km²

Organic soil	5,849 km ²	R
Organic soil impacted by draining	4,578 km ²	R
Wetlands on Histosoils	1,250 km ²	R
Wetlands on Histosoils in natural state	220 km ²	R
Wetlands on Histic Andosoils	4,598 km ²	R
Wetlands on Histic Andosoils in natural state	1,045 km ²	R
Vegetated land	23,805 km ²	LMI
Lakes	2,757 km ²	LMI
Glaciers	11,920 km ²	LMI
Desert /wastland	64,538 km ²	LMI

R= the report, LMI = National Land Survey of Iceland (lmi.is)



Rofabörð – remnants of soil and vegetation in Hrunamannahreppur



Picture; Gjóskulög í Skafafirði; Helgi Páll Jónson

Iceland wetland restoration committee 1996 - 2006

The committees conclusion;

- Wetlands will not be disturbed, unless if it becomes necessary.
- Restoration of wetlands will be greater than yearly wetland degradation.
- Evaluate the possibility of using wetland restoration as measures to fulfill obligations of Kyoto (3.7.).
- Government emphasize that wetland restoration will be an alternative project in an agricultural green economical support.

Iceland wetland restoration committee 1996 - 2006

Threats to wetlands;

- Agriculture – e.g. digging of ditches
- Hydro-electric powerplants
- Invasive Alien Species – e.g changes to species combination were mink has been introduced to the ecosystem.
- Pollution, constructions where wetlands are close to urban areas.