

Soils Exhibit Featured at Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History

From July 2008 to January 2010, the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, will showcase a new 5,000 sq. ft. exhibit called *Dig It! The Secrets of Soil*. The educational, interactive exhibition will help visitors discover the amazing connections between soils and everyday life and to think about this hidden world in a whole new way.

"This is one of the best opportunities we have to show the world how basic soils are to life," said Dr. Gary Peterson, President of the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), the exhibition's founding sponsor. The Nutrients for Life Foundation of The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) is the lead sponsor of *Dig It!*, with additional support by several USDA agencies, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

IPNI also provided financial support to the project, as



IPNI Northeast Director Dr. Tom Bruulsema, center, provided technical guidance in cooperation with the design team for the Smithsonian Soils Exhibit and TFI staff members Kathy Mathers (left) and Bill Herz, right. "This was a great opportunity to work with artistic professionals in developing a means of communicating to the public the role of soils and plant nutrients in their lives," Dr. Bruulsema said.

well as technical guidance as various ideas were developed. "This is a rare opportunity to reach segments of the public who may have

very little awareness or appreciation for the soil. The fertilizer industry has an important role in helping to bridge this need for greater understanding of one of our most precious resources," said IPNI President Dr. Terry L. Roberts.

The exhibit will explain differences among soil types, featuring soil samples from all states and territories of the USA and a world map of soils. After examining soil close up, exhibition visitors can step back and see the "big picture" with a world map and interactive stations that present the connection between soil and global systems. Models demonstrate the roles of soil around the house and the formation of soil in commercial and residential construction, dams, playing fields, neighborhoods, roads, and crop production. Visitors will learn about the role of soil as an ingredient in medicines, textiles, cosmetics, pottery, and numerous other products.

Following its showing at the National Museum of Natural History, plans call for the exhibit to travel to a number of museums across the country through 2013 under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. Funding is being sought to support this effort. For more information about the traveling exhibition, visit: >www.sites.si.edu/soils<.

Additional information about *Dig It! The Secrets of Soil* is available at: ><http://forces.si.edu/soils><. **BC**



IPNI President Dr. Terry L. Roberts attended the opening of the new exhibit.

International Plant Nutrition Colloquium Set for August 2009

The 16th International Plant Nutrition Colloquium (XVI IPNC) will take place August 26-30, 2009 at the Sacramento Convention Center in California, sponsored by the University of California-Davis (UC-Davis). Since its inception in 1950, the IPNC has grown to become one of the most important international meetings on fundamental and applied plant nutrition, from both an agricultural and environmental context.

The theme for the 2009 Colloquium, "Plant Nutrition for Sustainable Development and Global Health", aims to highlight the importance of plant nutrition as a foundation science with impact on all aspects of cropping system and environmental sustainability, human health, and well being. Dr. Patrick Brown of the UC-Davis Department of Plant Sciences serves as President of the IPNC. **BC**

Additional information is available at the website: <http://ipnc.ucdavis.edu>.

