

Soil mapping in the Falklands – a personal view

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First published 12th February 2019

I am a researcher who loves soil. I am working on a soil survey project in the Falklands with SAERI and finished my first field visit in December. This trip focused on soils on the East Falkland Island. The first thing that I have to say is that it is an amazing place. I am from Punta Arenas originally, so, at the beginning, I did not imagine a big difference between the soils since the climates and soil formation processes are similar between both places. This impression changed drastically when we landed and made our first morphological descriptions. The soils are so different, and it is very important to have the correct information so that we can make better decisions about the soils' uses. This is one of the main reasons that this soil survey is being carried out in the Falklands, and it is very interesting.



During the four weeks that I was in the Falklands, there were two soil types that were most frequently described: Histosol and Podsol. One of the main characteristics of a histosol is that the soil is organic, but I never dreamed that I would get to describe an organic soil four meters deep! Simply amazing. Thinking about the accumulation process that the soil has

undergone for thousands of years to reach such depth is shocking! Another soil type that more than once gave us trouble when we tried to use the dutch auger was the podsol. Passing through a layer of clay is complex and tiring. It's one thing to get the dutch auger in and another to take out it!

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Without a doubt I cannot finish commenting on my first experience without sharing one of the many anecdotes about what happened to us trying to reach the points for the descriptions. Many places that we had to reach were very far away and were complicated to access. We had to face problems such as crossing rivers, building bridges, crossing the entire

farm and passing many peat banks. A couple of times we were bogged in; one of those times was at Walker Creek, and it took us almost four hours to get the car out! It was very frustrating at the beginning, but afterwards it was very rewarding when we finally got out. It was a relief and extra motivation to continue with our work. I'll be back in February to continue with the adventure and descriptions of soils in West Falkland. I am eager to see what lies ahead and venture to the new points where we must go and describe the soils that we find.

