

Soil science is way more fun than a proper job (Philippe Duchaufour Medal Lecture)

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Having now worked in soil science and climate change for over 20 years, I find myself giving one of the “old man / old woman” lectures at the EGU2017. You probably get picked to do this when your peers think that you are about to die soon, so I had better make the most of my time left!

We are very fortunate to have a career in science, and to belong to the soils, and the wider, biogeosciences communities. If ever you get fed up with your teaching load, with your experiment that won’t work, your model that you can’t get running, or your paper that reviewers do not realise for the gem that you know it is, remember that we could be doing a 9 to 5 job, stuck in an office, with no opportunities to meet, talk and have fun with others from around the world with whom we share the same passion. I hope you enjoy your research careers and the time you spend with your work friends as much as I have.

In this presentation I will reflect on how much I have learned about soils, climate, and the politics of how things get done over the past 20 years, and I will pick out some changes in our understanding of soils, and their role in the world as I go. I will draw on examples not only from my own work, but those of others, and will reflect on the some of the fun I have had while doing this “job”.