

Finse Alpine Research Centre

www.finse.uio.no

The Research Centre at Finse is formally owned by the University of Oslo (UiO), but the funding to build the station was originally issued on condition that the University of Bergen (UiB) will have equal rights to the centre. The practical operation and administration of the centre is conducted by Department of Biology at UiO, and UiB contributes around half of the operating grant. The Technical Department at UiO is responsible for the buildings at the centre. The centre has two divisions: a Research Unit with laboratories and 14 beds, and a Course and Conference Unit with 44 beds. Research and teaching connected with the MN Faculties of both UiO and UiB have priority use of the station, but the station is also used largely by other research and educational institutions from Norway and abroad. The station has a board consisting of two scientific representatives and one technical representative from both UiO and UiB. The board is appointed by the Department of Biology, UiO and the MN Faculty at UiB. News and information about the activities of the centre are updated regularly on the station's website: <http://www.finse.uio.no/>

Operation and administration

The daily operation and administration of the centre is carried out by the Director, Torbjørn Ergon and the Manager, Erika Leslie, both from the Dept. of Biology at UiO. In 2010, the board consisted of:

Chair: Geir Hestmark (UiO)

Scientific representatives: Torstein Solhøy (UiB), Atle Nesje (UiB), Dag Klaveness (UiO)

Technical representatives: Solfrid Hjelmtveit (UiB), Hans Borg (UiO)

Deputies: Klaus Høiland, Göran Högstedt, Ole Humlum, Knut Helge Jensen, Johan Erland

Technical operation and maintenance

For the second consecutive year, the centre employed summer assistants to carry out research assistance, maintenance for the Technical Department (TA) and centre operation assistance (e.g. transportation, cleaning, etc.).

Three assistants worked a total of 871 hours at the station during June-September, of which 26% were research assistance, 30% centre operation assistance and 44% work for TA. The 'summer assistant' scheme is popular with researchers at the station and will continue in future years. In 2010, both of the centre's buildings were painted and various other maintenance works were carried out.

The station has broadband internet via radio-transmission provided by *DirectConnect*. In order to continue the delivery of broadband networks at Finse, an application for support to the sum of 74 000 NOK was made to the Ulvik municipality for the upgrading of equipment. After the mayor raised the issue at the Finse Forum (see 'Out-reach' below), USIT (UiO) contributed 1/3 of the upgrade costs whilst the hotel Finse 1222, DNT Finsehytta and the municipality contributed the rest. The upgrade means that the centre now has a substantially faster network (8000 kbps for both downloading and uploading).

The catering agreement with Tajo a/s at the Course and Conference Unit works well for all parties and will continue indefinitely in the future.

Research activity

The Research Unit was well-used in the summer months, but there was a slight decrease in the number of days booked in connection with research activities. 453 working days (361 overnight visits) were recorded for research-related activities.

The station was used mostly by researchers from UiO (10 persons), UiB (7 persons) and UMB (5 persons). Other research institutions using the station were: Telemark University College, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority, Swedish Agricultural University (Swedish Species Information Centre), University of Cambridge, University of Lancaster, Senckenberg Research Institute (Germany) and the Natural Science Museum of Trento (Italy).



Finse Alpine Research Centre © E. Leslie

Furthermore, the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority and the Norwegian Meteorological Institute (DMNI) have installed permanent measuring equipment at the station. A brief description of each research project at the centre and a list of publications are published on the centre's website: <http://www.finse.uio.no/research/>

The centre is part of the EU-funded project INTERACT which consists of a circum-Arctic network of 32 terrestrial field stations. The project was scheduled to start in autumn 2010 but postponed to January 2011. We will receive funding to invite foreign researchers to the station, and researchers from Norway will receive support to work at field stations outside of Norway. For more information on the project, refer to the project website: <http://www.eu-interact.org/>.

Courses and seminar activity

A total of 2029 overnight stays were registered in connection with courses, seminars and meetings in the Course and Conference Unit of the centre (an increase of 18% from 2009).

2010's research seminar was, as usual, conducted at the station for two days in late April. This was the third research seminar in the series, with 29 people from 10 different institutions participating. This annual event has shown a yearly increase in size. The programme for the seminar is available on the station's website.

The University of Birmingham held, for the second consecutive year, a five-day field course in mid-July. Otherwise, the following regular UiB and UiO courses ran as usual: BIO344 Winter Ecology (UiB), BIO1200 Diversity (UiO), GEO1010 Physical Geography (UiO), GEOL106 Quaternary Geology (UiB), and BIO343 Alpine Ecology (UiB).

The Science School Laboratory at UiB hosted a five-day course in biology for teachers in mid-August.

In mid-September, a five-day workshop was conducted at the research station, funded by NordForsk and directed by Torbjørn Ergon: 'Species Occupancy Modelling' plus a two-day preparatory course: 'Statistical Estimation Methods'. There were 27 participants, mainly PhD students and postdocs from the Nordic countries (with two from NINA, one from Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, and one from the University of Aberdeen).

Annexes

The Garpen annex, which belongs to the research station, is rented out on a daily basis to staff and students at UiO and UiB. There has been considerable interest in this offer and the facility has been rented 69 days during the year, mainly on weekends. In busy periods, Garpen is used for extra accommodation for researchers and summer employees at the station. The station also has a lease agreement with landowners in Ulvik regarding the use of the Torbjørnstølen for similar purposes. For the second consecutive summer, Bjarte Aarseth from the NHM donated two weeks of his holiday to renovating Garpen, inside and outside. A new combustion toilet was operational at the facility from winter 2010.

Outreach

There is great interest from the public in the activities at Finse Alpine Research Centre. The centre participates in the Finse Forum, where representatives from business and leisure as well as from the municipality and county's Department of Environmental Affairs meet once or twice a year.

A journalist and a photographer from Uniforum, an internal UiO newspaper, was present during some of 2010's Winter Ecology course. The article is available at the following address:

<http://www.uniforum.uio.no/nyheter/2010/05/undervisning-pa-hoyt-niva.html>.