

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 given on the condition that the University of Bergen (UiB) should have equal rights to the centre. The centre is managed by Department of Biosciences at UiO, and UiB contributes to the operating costs. The Technical Division at UiO is responsible for the buildings. The centre has two main buildings: 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, but the research station is also much used by other research 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 Biosciences, 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 Biosciences at UiO. In 2012, the board of the station consisted of:

Chair: Atle Nesje, UiB (deputy: Göran Högstedt) Scientific Representative, UiO, and vice leader: Geir Hestmark (deputy: Klaus Høiland) Scientific Representative, UiO: Dag Klaveness (deputy: Ole Humlum) Scientific Representative, UiB: Aage Paus, UiB (deputy: Vidis Vandvik) Technical Representative, UiO: Hans Borg (deputy: Johan Erland) Technical Representative, UiB: Solfrid Hjelmtveit (deputy: Knut Helge Jensen)

For the fourth consecutive year, the centre employed a summer assistant for maintenance work and assistance in the practical operation of the centre (e.g. transportation, cleaning, etc.). Users of the research station also had the opportunity to

hire the assistant at a fixed hourly rate covering employment costs.

The catering agreement with Tajo a/s at the Course and Conference Unit works well for all parties and will be continued.

Research activity

The number of working days in connection with research activities at the station in 2012 was 450 (362 overnight stays). This excludes 75 working days by the summer assistant, who in part worked as a research assistant. 88% of the research working days took place during the summer months of June, July, August and September. In total 208 working days were registered in connection with maintenance and operation of the field station.

In total 53 persons from 12 institutions used the station for research activities during 2012. The station was used mostly by researchers and students from UiO (15 persons), Norwegian University of Life Sciences (12 persons) and UiB (11 persons). Of the 15 researchers/students from UiO, 6 came from Department of Biology and 9 came from Department of Geosciences. Other research institutions using the station were (number of persons in parenthesis): Norwegian University of Science and Technology (4), Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (3), University of Amsterdam (2), University of Southampton (2), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (1), Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority (1), Hedmark University College (1) and Senckenberg Research Institute, Germany (1).

Two research groups from the universities of Amsterdam and Southampton received funding from the INTERACT Transnational Access Programme to work at the station in 2012 (in total 4 persons and 16 working days). As the only station in southern Scandinavia, we are secured funding to host research groups at the station over the next two years, and negotiations to extend the programme is under way (see below).



Finse Research Centre in winter © E. Leslie

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/>

Courses and seminar activity

A total of 1572 overnight stays and 425 persons were registered in connection with courses, seminars and meetings in the course and conference unit of the centre.

The following regular university field courses was held at the centre (chronological order):

- Winter Ecology (BIO344), UiB (6 days in April, 20 participants)
- Alpine Ecology (BIO259), University of Birmingham (7 days in July, 30 participants)
- Biological Diversity (BIO1200), UiO (3 groups of 5 days in July/Aug, 82 participants)
- Physical Geography (GEO1010), UiO (2 groups of 3 days in August, 79 participants)
- Quaternary Geology (GEOL106), UiB (5 days in August, 46 participants)
- Alpine Ecology (BIO343), UiB (7 days in September, 23 participants)
- Glacial and periglacial geomorphology (GEO4410), UiO (2 days in September, 13 participants).

The station also housed 3 other academic events:

- Two pre-conference workshops in connection with International Statistical Ecology Conference (4 days in June/July, 46 participants)
- "Fægri dagene" – a biology course for teachers organized by Skolelabben at UiB (5 days in July, 19 participants)
- Nordic Summer school in Climate Change Effects (NordForsk research training PhD course; 7 days in September, 38 participants)

In addition, the course and conference unit was used for a seminar by the Technical Division at UiO (3 days in March, 15 persons) and a seminar by the Oslo University Hospital (Rikshospitalet) (3 days in March, 14 participants).

Other activities

The station is part of an EU-funded network of 33 circum-arctic terrestrial field stations in the Scandinavian countries (including Spitsbergen), Russia, Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Faroe Islands and Scotland (see <http://www.eu-interact.org/>). The leaders of the stations participate in a Station Managers Forum that meet about twice yearly. A Station Catalogue was completed in 2012 (downloadable here <http://www.eu-interact.org/station-managers-forum/report-deliverables/station-catalogue/>), and a hand-book on 'Best practices of Station Management and Administration at Arctic Research Infrastructures' is under way.

The centre participates in the Finse Forum, where representatives from local business, NGO's and local governments meet twice a year. The director of the station also took part in meeting initiated by Hallingskarvet Nasjonalparkstyre to discuss public outreach and information about the national park.

Annexes

The Garpen cabin, which belongs to the research station, is rented out on a daily basis to staff and students at UiO and UiB. The cabin has been renovated over the last years, and there has been increased interest in renting the cabin. In 2012 the cabin was used in 158 days. During the most busy summer weeks, 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 to have access of the Torbjørnstølen cabin for similar purposes.