

Finse Alpine Research Center

www.finse.uio.no

The Research Center 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 center. The center 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 center 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 takes part in a EU-funded infrastructure network of 33 circum-arctic terrestrial field stations (see <http://www.eu-interact.org/>), and provide transnational access grants to researchers from other EU member states or associated states. Further information about the center is available on the station's website: <http://www.finse.uio.no>.

Operation and administration

The daily operation and administration of the center is carried out by the Director, Torbjørn Ergon and the Manager, Erika Leslie, both from the Dept. of Biosciences at UiO. 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. In 2013, the board members were:

Chair: Atle Nesje, UiB (deputy: Göran Högstedt) Scientific Representative, UiO, and deputy chair: Geir Hestmark (deputy: Klaus Høiland) Scientific Representative, UiO: Dag Klaveness (deputy: Ole Humlum)

Scientific Representative, UiB: Aage Paus, UiB (deputy: Vigdis Vandvik)

Technical Representative, UiO: Hans Borg (deputy: Johan Erland)

Technical Representative, UiB: Solfrid Hjelmtveit (deputy: Knut Helge Jensen)

For the fifth consecutive year, the center employed a summer assistant for maintenance work and assistance in the practical operation of the center (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 and will be continued.

Research activity

The number of working days in connection with research activities at the station in 2013 was 421 (358 overnight stays). This excludes 68 working days by the summer assistant, who in part worked as a research assistant. 82% of the research working days took place during the summer months of June, July, August and September. In total 171 working days were registered in connection with maintenance and operation of the field station.

In total 45 persons from 17 institutions used the station for research activities during 2013. The station was used mostly by researchers and students from UiO (19 persons including field assistants and 226 working days), UiB (5 persons, 30 working days) and Norwegian University of Life Sciences (3 persons, 31 working days). Of the 19 researchers/students/assistants from UiO, 13 came from Department of Biosciences (179 working days) and 6 came from Department of Geosciences (47 working days). Other research institutions using the station were (number of persons in parenthesis): Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (3), Uppsala University (3), University of Gothenburgh (2), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (1), Granada University (1), MTT Agrifood Research, Finland (1), Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute (Skog og landskap) (1), The Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (1), University of Flensburg (1), University of Helsinki (1), University of Turku (1), University of Worcester (1) and University of Exeter (1).



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Nine researchers in four teams received funding from the INTERACT Transnational Access Programme to work at the station in 2013 (in total 98 working days). We are currently secured funding to host research groups at the station for only one more year, but negotiations to extend the programme is under way.

A brief description of each research project at the center and a list of publications are published on the center's website: <http://www.finse.uio.no/research/>

Courses and seminars

A total of 1500 overnight stays and 415 persons were registered in connection with courses, seminars and meetings in the course and conference unit of the center. The course and conference unit was in use during 80 days throughout the year.

The following regular university field courses were held at the center (chronological order):

- Atmospheric physics (GEF2200), UiO (3 days in February/March, 12 participants)
- Snow, Snow Hydrology and Avalanches (GEO4430), UiO (3 days in March, 15 participants)
- Alpine Ecology (BIO259), University of Birmingham (8 days in July, 30 participants)
- Biological Diversity (BIO1200), UiO (3 groups of 5 days in July/Aug, 84 participants)
- Physical Geography (GEO1010), UiO (7 days in August, 76 participants)
- Quaternary Geology (GEOL106), UiB (12 days in August/September, 57 participants)
- Glacial and periglacial geomorphology (GEO4410), UiO (7 days in September, 13 participants)

The station also housed four other academic events in 2013:

- SeedClim workshop, Department of Biology, UiB (6 days in March, 13 participants)
- Glacial research safety course, Department of Earth Science, UiB (4 days in September, 12 participants)
- The Norwegian Research School in Climate Dynamics (ResClim) communication course, Geophysical Institute, UiB (5 days in September, 25 participants)
- “Homes for science: The Anthropology of Tropical and Arctic Field-Stations”, an international workshop funded by the European Science Foundation, Institute of Social Anthropology, UiO (6 days in September, 32 participants)

Other activities and outreach

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 handbook for “Good Practises of Research Station Management” was completed in 2013 (downloadable here <http://www.eu-interact.org/station-managers-forum/report-deliverables/>). Other activities in the network include a Transnational Access research funding scheme and coordination of joint research and monitoring programs and outreach.

The center participates in the Finse Forum, where representatives from local business, NGO’s and local governments meet twice a year. Several school classes visited the station and were given an introduction to alpine ecology. The summer assistant made a new notice board that will be placed along the railway construction road (the Navy road/Rallarveien). The board will be filled with general outreach articles and summaries of research activities at the center, which will be seen by thousands of bikers during the summer months.

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 using the cabin. During the most busy summer weeks, Garpen is used for extra accommodation for researchers and summer employees at the station. In 2013 the cabin was used in 116 days. The station also has a lease agreement with landowners in Ulvik to have access of the Torbjørnstølen cabin for similar purposes.

Technical upgrades

The roof of the course and conference unit got a new corrugated steel surface that will reduce the build-up of snow during winter, and most exterior doors were replaced due to weathering.