

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) will have equal rights to the centre. The station is managed by the Department of Biology at UiO, and UiB contributes to around half of the operating costs. The Technical Division at UiO is responsible for the buildings at the centre. 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 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.

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 2011, the board of the station consisted of:

Chair: Atle Nesje (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: Torstein Solhøy, UiB
 (former deputy for Larsson)
 Technical representative, UiO: Hans Borg (deputy:
 Johan Erland)
 Technical representative, UiB: Solfrid Hjelmtveit
 (deputy: Knut Helge Jensen)

Technical operation and maintenance

For the third consecutive year, the centre employed a summer assistant to carry out research assistance in various projects, maintenance work and assistance in the practical operation of the centre (e.g. transportation, cleaning, etc.). Users of the station were able to hire the assistant at a fixed hourly rate covering employment costs, and an internal transfer from the Technical Division at UiO covered all maintenance work.

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 was about 33% higher in 2011 than in 2010; 609 logged working days and 514 overnight stays (this excludes 80 working days by the summer assistant, who in part worked as a research assistant). 84% of these working days took place during the summer months of June, July, August and September. This increase was partly due to visiting research groups through the INTERACT network, an EU-funded network of 32 circum-arctic terrestrial field stations. We received visitors from three INTERACT research groups during 2011 (7 persons and 85 working days). As the only station in southern Scandinavia, we will receive funding to host research groups at the station over the next three years. For more information about the network, see <http://www.eu-interact.org/>

The station was used mostly by researchers from UiO (15 persons), UiB (9 persons) and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (8 persons). Other research institutions using the station were (number of persons in parenthesis): University of Greifswald (3), University of Agder (2), Swansea



Finse Research Centre in winter © E. Leslie

University (2), University of Cambridge (2), Telemark University College (1), Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (1), Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority (1), Polish Academy of Science (1), Senckenberg Research Institute (1) and University of Lancaster (1).

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 1182 overnight stays were registered in connection with courses, seminars and meetings in the Course and Conference Unit of the centre.

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

- Alpine Ecology (BIO259), University of Birmingham (7 days in July).
- Winter Ecology (BIO344), UiB (6 days in April)
- Biological Diversity (BIO1200), UiO (3 groups of 5 days from late July)
- GEO1010/Physical Geography (GEO1010), UiO (5 days in August)
- Quaternary Geology (GEOL106), UiB (5 days in August)
- Alpine Ecology (BIO343), UiB (6 days in September)
- Glacial and periglacial geomorphology (GEO4410), UiO (5 days in September).

The 10th International Workshop on Subfossil Chironomidae was held at the station 30 June to 2 July (Organized by Gaute Velle, University of Bergen).

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. There has been considerable interest in this offer and the cabin was used 62 days during the year, mainly on weekends. During the most busy summer weeks, Garpen is used for extra accommodation for researchers and summer employees at the station. Thanks to Bjarte Aarseth from the Natural History Museum who has volunteered to do maintenance and upgrading work on Garpen, the cabin has been considerably improved over the last three years. During the summer of 2011, walls and ceilings were treated for mould and painted. The station also has a lease agreement with landowners in Ulvik regarding the use of the Torbjørnstølen for similar purposes.

Outreach

We organized an open house event in August with lectures on the dynamics of the Hardangerjøkulen glacier, climatic effects on plant communities, and small rodent cycles. The participants were also introduced to the various activities at the centre and a light meal was served.

The centre director represented the centre in a current issues program (Førkveld) on national TV (NRK) in May.

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 Protection meet once or twice a year.