



IRENE SKAUEN SANDODDEN / SYSSELMANNEN

Elin Lien, left, and Hilde Tokle Yri assess damage to a cabin at Copper Camp in St. Jonsfjorden as part of a heritage site restoration project by the Svalbard governor's office in 2011.

A future for the past

Plan seeks 99.9% preservation of Svalbard's top 100 heritage sites

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

A "steaming fresh" vision of Svalbard's future looks a lot like the past, even if it means doing some revisionism.

The new 10-year plan for managing the archipelago's cultural heritage sites establishes 100 priority locations, some of which will change a bit as structures are relocated to deal with problems such as erosion. The plan from Norway's Environmental Ministry also sets a variety of goals such as improving environmental monitoring and providing better information

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Trashing for the environment

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

"Trash amnesty" for Longyearbyen residents, a first-ever solar power installation for an apartment complex and a pilot project to raise permafrost near a road are

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Escape for fire culprit

Power plant blaze due to faulty construction, but too much time has passed to press charges

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

A fire that forced the shutdown of Longyearbyen's main power plant last December was caused by faulty construction, but no charges will be sought because nearly a decade has passed since the work was done, according to the Svalbard governor's office.

"The investigation has revealed the existence of constructional defects in the roof and safety valves on the roof of the energy plant, and that it was these flawed works that allowed the fire to start and evolve," a brief statement from the governor's office notes. "These works were completed in 2004 and the matter is criminally obsolete. The case is therefore dismissed because the offense is outdated."

The governor's office has not taken a position on the company's possible legal liability financially, according to the statement.

The company's insurance is paying for the fire damage and extra funds from the national government are paying for improvements to avoid problems resulting from the shutdown,

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Weather trauma? Blame Svalbard

Extreme effects of Arctic climate change means major changes for mainland life, minister says

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

The big headline from a mainland newspaper says it all: "Northern Norway is the worst."

Norway is getting soaked with wetter, harsher weather and Svalbard is largely getting the blame. As with regions everywhere south of the Arctic Circle experiencing extreme weather, the rapid pace of climate change in

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TROND STRØM / AFTENPOSTEN

An Oslo woman and her baby are soaked by an unusually heavy rain storm, which officials say will be more common due to climate change.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

Copy Editor

Brennan Purtzer

Principal of principles

Kristan Hutchison

Psychiatrist

Irene Gallion

Mailing address

Icepeople
Vei 210 -2- 13
Longyearbyen, Svalbard
9170
Norway

Telephone

Norway: +47 41 51 46 38
U.S. +1 (970) 673-4472

E-mail

marksabbatini@yahoo.com

Web site

www.icepeople.net

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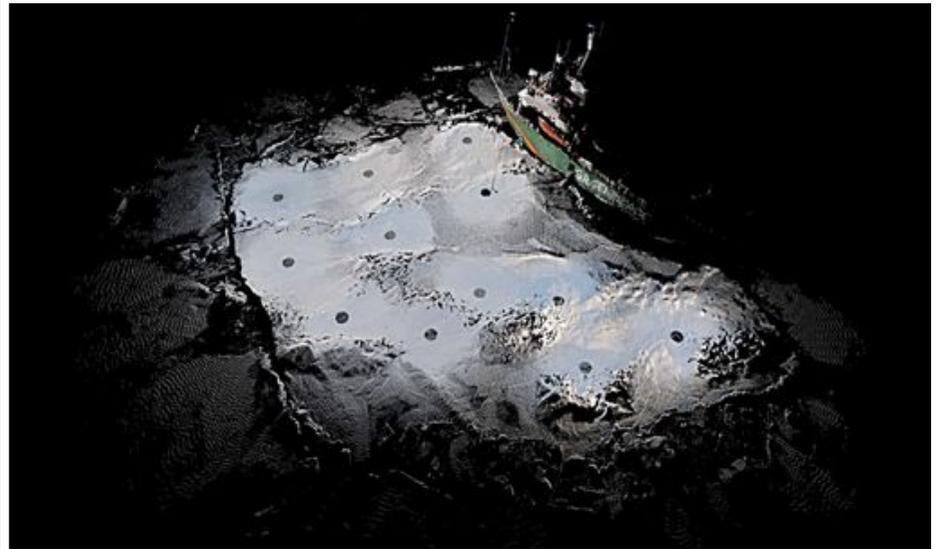
Corrections policy

When we screw up you'll know about it – on the front page. One of the big complaints about newspapers is they tend to bury corrections and clarifications deep inside where few people who read the original article see them. If we need to fix something, an alert box on the front page will state what story is in error and where the full correction is printed.

Submitting material

Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome, but we can't offer pay for published items since nobody here is getting paid at the moment. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.

Heard of 3D printing? Here's a 3D scan of ice



SCANLAB PROJECTS

A Svalbard ice floe next to a Greenpeace ship is captured by 3D scanners as part of a project documenting the melting and breakup of ice in the area. British architects Matthew Shaw and William Trossell are capturing natural images at various locations, which they refer to as "documentary holography," as part of their ScanLAB project. Details about their project are at <http://bldgblog.blogspot.no/2013/05/documentary-holography.html>.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

It's another week of realizing we're at the bottom of the journalistic food chain as it turns out we missed quite possibly the most newsworthy expedition to the North Pole this year. **Neil Rhodes, a personal trainer from England, set the world record for the most northerly outdoor use of a rowing machine when he spent four minutes on the contraption at the North Pole in early March,** according to the racing organization Row2K. "Of course if you are going to travel all that way you want to make the most of your trip, so I naturally thought, 'take an erg,' as I'm sure any dedicated ergonaut would do," said Rhodes, who stripped down to his all-in-one rowing suit in the minus 21 degrees Celsius temperatures during the feat. We're taking Row2K's word for it, even though the photo accompanying the press release is less convincing than the UFO-over-Svalbard conspiracy shot we ran a while back ... Speaking of conspiracy theorists, **the latest doomcrier about our Doomsday Seed Vault is F. William Engdahlus, an author notorious for theories such as the U.S. government creating HIV for genocidal purposes and orchestrating the 2011 Arab Spring revolution to take "the whole of Eurasia under control."** In a column last week for what some might consider a lunatic fringe "research" organization (not that we, as impartial journalists, make such judgements) he basically spouts the usual stuff about Bill Gates and Co. trying to rule the world and asks "what future do the seed bank's sponsors foresee, that would threaten the global availability of current seeds, almost all of which are already well protected in designated seed banks around the world?" Just for the record, we'll note one of those seed banks was recently destroyed by insurgents where all



COURTESY OF ROW2K

Worst. Pole. Picture. Ever. Sure this is an, um, interesting "first" at the top of the world. But this bragging-rights photo just looks like an incompetent studio shot for a catalog that was Photoshopped by North Korea's news service.

those revolutions are taking place ... In less dramatic, but more firmly rooted in reality, misadventures of seed vault bureaucracy, **officials are confirming what they essentially confirmed earlier this year by announcing a short-lived ban on visitors inside the facility is being lifted.** Measures dealing with fire safety concerns have been enacted, although they're sort of ignoring the major issue of fire officials insisting there should be a second exit in case the sole existing one is blocked – which is basically impossible since the vault is buried deep in a mountain. We've previously noted enforcement of the ban, enacted in March of 2012, seemed questionable at times since absolutely reliable sources told us film crews toured the vault last fall. Curiously, that's the only time our inquiries to vault officials went unanswered. The ban ended for all practical purposes during the vaults five-year anniversary celebration in February when dignitaries and journalists were allowed inside.

Training for the big one



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

A train procession departs Svalbard Church on May 1, the traditional spring festival holiday and International Workers' Day, en route to a flower-laying ceremony at the Skjæringa memorial and a speech/performance show at Kulturhuset. A much-larger group of Longyearbyen residents will take part in a similar procession and memorial ceremony beginning at 11 a.m. May 17 to celebrate Norwegian Constitution Day. The full schedule of events is at <http://tinyurl.com/bsv6txm>.

Power plant gets 4.3M for upgrades

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said Marianne Aasen, head of Bydrift, the city's infrastructure agency.

She said the company has performed satisfactory work for several years, but the fire will be a consideration for future projects.

"Of course we will look for other companies, but I am not sure we will do it this year because it is a lot of work," she said.

The fire occurred Dec. 7 when a safety valve in the roof failed to close properly, causing heat to build up. The main plant was closed for three days, with a lower-output reserve

plant provided electricity, but an evacuation of the city likely would have been necessary had that plant failed for a significant duration.

The Norwegian government is providing an extra 4.3 million kroner for work to improve emergency preparedness at the plant, Bydrift announced in a statement this week. Among the improvements are structural upgrades at the main plan, and relocating control units for the reserve plant away from the main power gird.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

Arctic causing heat, sea levels to rise

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the north is being cited as the cause.

Warnings that politicians and citizens will need to plan for and adapt to the new reality were voiced this week by Norwegian Environment Minister Bård Vegard Solhjell.

He said a projected temperature increase of two degrees Celsius and sea level rise of up to 70 centimeters this century means municipalities need to consider how close to sea level construction should occur and what steps can

be taken to drastically reduce pollution.

"Increased rainfall, rising temperatures and more extreme weather demands more careful placement of buildings, roads and construction," he said in a statement. "Climate change can affect drinking water and timber may be more vulnerable to decay. But if we prepare early, we can both save costs and utilize opportunities that will arise."

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

UNIS selects CO2 storage site; still needs officials' OK

A carbon-capture facility operated by The University Centre in Svalbard has taken a major step forward as a suitable storage reservoir has been found in Adventdalen, according to researchers. "Now we need to find out one more thing: if we are allowed by the government to store CO2," said Alvar Braatheby, geology professor at UNIS. Facility officials met last week with industrial and research partners about the project, and plan to prepare a budget in June to present to them. "We are talking about a budget of nearly 100 million kroner, spread over two to three years," said Ragnhild Rønneberg, the facility's managing director, who noted the amount far exceeds other research projects in recent years. The facility, expected to be able to store 1.2 million tons of liquid CO2 for 20 to 30 years, is being hailed as a potential global model.

Parents of woman killed by glacier seek criminal charges

The parents of a woman killed when ice from a calving glacier hit the rubber tour boat she was in last summer are challenging a decision by Svalbard's governor not to seek criminal charges. "Tourism on Svalbard is growing, while the number of carriers is limited and I would think that everyone is aware of this incident and the matter as follows," wrote Gunnar Nerdrum, a Tromsø attorney hired by the couple, in the complaint to the Troms and Finnmark public prosecutors. "A criminal sanction against Grands Espaces and the two guides will therefore provide important message." Among the faults in the investigation, the complaint notes, is failing to determine how close the boat was to the glacier.

Svalbardposten not yet part of national journalists' strike

Svalbardposten is not among the 102 companies with 2,200 journalists scheduled to go on strike at midnight Friday if state-mediated wages talks are unsuccessful. However, union leaders, who say journalists receive lower wages than the rest of the Norwegian labor market, said more companies may participate if a strike is prolonged.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. Variable winds to 25 km/h. High -3C (-6C wind chill), low -5C (-10C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 25 km/h. High -2C (-5C wind chill), low -5C (-10C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 22 km/h. High 0C (-4C wind chill), low -3C (-8C wind chill).	Mostly clear. Variable winds to 11 km/h. High -2C (-5C wind chill), low -5C (-8C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight
Extended forecast: Sunday, clear, -1C (-5C), -5C (-8C), light 24:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, -1C (-5C), -2C (-6C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, 0C (-3C), -2C (-5C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, 0C (-3C), -1C (-4C), light 24:00h			

Data provided by storm.no



TROND ESPEN HAUG / SYSSELMANNEN

Visitors gather at Hilmar Nøis' trapping station at Fredheim during an open day hosted by Svalbard's governor in the spring of 2012. Moving the station due to the threat of coastal erosion is one of the top priorities in a ten-year plan to preserve historic sites in the archipelago.

Plan: Preserve 99.9% of the past

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to the public about listed heritage sites.

The blueprint for 2013 to 2023, a revision of the existing plan implemented in 2000, extensively details past efforts and the significance of future top-priority sites, going so far as to quantify how much deterioration is acceptable.

"The annual loss of automatically protected monuments and listed sites as a result of human influences should not exceed 0.1 percent," the report states.

At the same time "it is neither possible nor desirable to take care of all the sites" in Svalbard.

While a summary of the plan by the Svalbard governor's office focuses on general goals, it singles out Hilmar Nøis' trapping station at Fredheim as a preservation priority. The station, which was visited by more than 500 people during two "open weekends" hosted by the governor in April, is among the structures

that needs to be relocated.

"It is threatened by erosion and may be in danger of being lost," a statement by the governor's office notes. "Since 1987 the (coastal) edge has come nine meters closer to the cabin and there is only eight-and-a-half meters remaining."

A similar move is among the options being considered for the steam locomotive in Ny-Ålesund, idle since mining stopped in the settlement 50 years ago, because it is rapidly rusting due to its close location to the sea.

All fixed and movable cultural heritage sites older than 1946 are automatically protected in Svalbard. The majority are in wilderness areas, which means they are also often protected by other regulations.

The plan, in Norwegian with an English summary, is at www.syssemmannen.no/Nyheter/Kulturminneplan-for-Svalbard.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

'Trash amnesty' among grant winners

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among 26 projects sharing five million kroner in the first of two allocations this year from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund.

"Twenty of the projects will be carried out by local project managers," the fund's board of directors wrote in a statement.

The trash amnesty program will allow Longyearbyen residents and businesses to discard large items such as vehicles for free at Bydrift's waste facility, at least while the grant funds last.

"The project has received 250,000 kroner to handle filed trash," a grant summary notes. "Once these are used up, it will cost money to get rid of their old contraptions – so here should both industry and individuals should ensure they are 'first come, first served.'"

Another Bydrift project receiving funding

is a pilot project raising the permafrost below the road on Isdammen.

"Initially Bydrift wants to test the effects of a restricted area," the municipal infrastructure agency notes in its project summary. "The method as planned is to establish a gentle slope by filling it up with soil so that permafrost may rise and thus act as sealing of leaks existing today through the road."

Nearly one-third of the funds are for cultural heritage projects, including a museum in the now-closed Mine 3 museum that Store Norske has struggled to obtain support and funding for.

The full list of this spring's grant recipients is at <http://tinyurl.com/car7n2e>. The deadline for the next round of grants is Sept. 15.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

What's up

May 8

6 p.m.: Movie: "Pelle Politibil på Sporet," Norwegian children's animated film, all ages. Kulturhuset.

May 12

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Pelle Politibil på Sporet," Norwegian children's animated film, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Rebel," Canadian drama/crime, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

May 13

Noon: Board of Youth Activities meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Barentz Pub.

May 14

7 p.m.: Evening gathering. Svalbard Church.

May 17

Norwegian Constitution Day. Full schedule at <http://tinyurl.com/bsv6txm>.

May 18

8 p.m.: Chinese Downhill race, starting at Trollsteinen. Winner is first person down by any non-motorized means. Details at www.spitsbergenupanddown.no.

May 19

11 a.m.: Mass w/ guest musicians from Bergen. Svalbard Church.

May 20

6 p.m.: Movie: "Star Trek Into Darkness" (3D), U.S. adventure/sci-fi, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Passionate Violinist," Belgium/German/French drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Barentz Pub.

May 21

9 a.m.: Bydrift Board meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

7 p.m.: Municipal Council meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

7 p.m.: Evening gathering. Svalbard Church.

What's online

Icepeople.net provides daily updates of news about Svalbard and the world's polar regions, plus extras for articles from the print edition. Among the latest news:

- *Greenhouse gas hits 3-million-year high*
- *Antarctica tourism rises 30% in 2012*
- *Arctic Ocean acidifying rapidly – forever?*
- *Two months of icebreaking in five minutes*