



Mines not so fine

Store Norske violating pollution, risk management and other environmental laws, report finds

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Store Norske is violating numerous environmental laws, including deficient control of its emissions and other pollution, a lack of contingency plans for accidents, and the use of un-

registered imported chemicals, according to a report by the Norwegian Environmental Agency following an inspection earlier this month.

The report lists seven violations found during the inspection, plus two comments about operational improvements the mining company should make. Store Norske been ordered to remedy the violations by Feb. 1.

"We are also asking the business to submit a brief report describing how the comments are being assessed and how they will eventually be

followed up on," the report states.

Oddmund Rønning, director of health, safety and environmental management for Store Norske, told *Svalbardposten* the company was already aware of some deficiencies after an inspection five years ago and remedies are already being implemented.

"It is serious that we have discrepancies that can be documented as violations of the framework, but it is not dramatic for us," he
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JAN-MORTEN BJØRNBAKK / SCANPIX

The French-German station in Ny-Ålesund, above, is now the most active in the international research community, with work days by researchers at the Norwegian station declining 20 percent since 2011, according to a report issued Monday by the Office of the Auditor General of Norway. At right, the *Fram*, the oldest in a Norwegian vessel fleet nearing the end of its functional lifespan, awaits scientists working on the ice.



NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

Norway's science less cool

Arctic research falling behind that of other countries due to inefficient facility use, audit finds

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Norway isn't getting the best bang for the big bucks being investing in Arctic research facilities, yet at the same time is making no plans to replace a fleet of vessels near or at the end of their useful lifespan, according to an audit released this week.

As a result, Norway is falling behind other countries in research activity and published
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Rubbish hut may not be trashed

Controversial seaside art project gets potential caretakers one day before scheduled removal

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

As farewell parties go, it was a spectacular flop – in the best possible way.

Not because of the turnout, which was minuscule due to frigid weather than was less than ideal for reminiscing at length. But a couple of guests made a surprising offer that means the object of affection may not depart after all.

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Solveig Egeland, center, gathers with visitors inside her beachside hut made of trash Monday for what was supposed to be a farewell party.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.

Getting kids high for charity



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Longyearbyen firefighters take visitors for a lift in the department's new high-rise truck crane during an open house Saturday to raise funds for the annual NRK charity telethon. The new crane, obtained with a new truck after a fire in the roof of the city's power plant in 2012 revealed current equipment was inadequate to reach the top of the structure, has a maximum height of 32 meters. Mounted under the basket is a water cannon that can deliver hundreds of liters a minute and a sprinkler system to protect against flames. Games of chance and rides for younger visitors in one the department's older trucks, seen at right, were also offered during the event, the proceeds of which will go toward efforts to provide clean water and sanitation facilities in several countries.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

We had one of those spew-coffee-on-screen moments this weekend upon seeing an article in Canada's *The Globe and Mail* with the headline "A rare Arctic land sale to Chinese tycoon stirs concerns in Norway" since we don't recall anyone on this side of the ocean mentioning that much-feared deal actually happening. It turns out the headline writers of Canada's "paper of record" goofed, since the article was a rerun of a front-page *New York Times* feature about the possibility of the sale, which has pretty much been the situation for months. But the *Times* didn't exactly drape itself in journalistic glory either, as clicking on links to two other articles written by the same reporter during his visit here earlier this year reveals rather head-scratching corrections for both of them. The first, published in June, notes a caption under a photo of Spitsbergen was wrong because "while it has a harsh and frigid climate, it is not the case that it has no birds." Um, yeah, since that's like one of the things the island is world-famous for. The other



ROY MANGERSNES / REX FEATURES

"What do you make of its facial expression?" We're thinking it's not much different than any local resident who's a bit peeved at being gawked at and photographed.

is even more bizarre, with the following correction for a June 11 article published Sept. 22: "It is dark for four months of the year, not six. The error was repeated in an accompanying caption for a map. A reader pointed out the error in June; this correction was delayed for research." Inquiring minds want to know what kind of verification process The Grey Lady has that requires more than three months to confirm a fairly basic astronomical fact ... **Much safer and always popular with readers, on the other hand, are cute and dramatic photos of Svalbard's animals, which seems to constantly make whatever top 10 wildlife listicles and slideshows are being featured in various publications** – especially British newspapers, for some reason. Among the past week's "winners" were a rather grouchy-looking walrus as part of *The Guardian's* "The Week in Wildlife", at tinyurl.com/p2ejhmn and a video of a female polar bear and her two cubs making a long swim to land featured in *The Daily Mail* (a leader in such hard-hitting coverage) at tinyurl.com/p42q5m6.



WWF

More naked than a Page Three swimsuit girl: And despite the two tiny kids, no chance of getting busted on "To Catch A Predator"

Getting skids high for rarity



SYSSELMANNEN

The historic Fredheim trapping station, top left, is now elevated on steel beams, lower left, in preparation for a relocation further back from the sea due to concerns about beach erosion. At top right, the interior of the cabin is braced and the floor removed to prevent damage during the move. The corners of the steel beams supporting the cabin, lower right, are shaped like ski tips so it can be towed on snow. The cabin used by trapper Hilmar Nois remains a popular site for locals and visitors, but studies during the past 15 years have concluded it will be destroyed without the move.

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Foreigners continue to be more common in Svalbard

Foreigners are continuing to increase their presence in Svalbard, accounting for all of the archipelago's new residents during the first six months of 2014 – and then some. Svalbard has 2,562 residents as of July 1, 16 more than on Jan. 1, including 19 new foreigners, according to Statistics Norway. Svalbard's total number of foreigners has increased from 293 in 2008 to 457 this, representing 14 percent and 22 percent of the overall population, respectively.

Environmental grants: 25.2M kr. sought, 6M kr. available

Seventy-one applicants are seeking a total of 25.2 million kroner from what is expected to be a six-million-kroner allocation from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund in November. Among the major requests are 307,999 kroner by Norut for ground-based radar mapping of a mountainside between Mine 2B and Nybyen that poses a high landslide risk, 1.27 million kroner by the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators for a coastal cleanup program involving the vessels, 1.1 million kroner by Kings Bay AS for a "limits of acceptable change - air quality" study, and 475,000 kroner by the city of Longyearbyen for development of a "green port."

Historic rifle at museum may be illegal despite damage

A historic rifle at Svalbard Museum with a jammed cartridge that apparently resulted in the death of a trapper and three others nearly a century ago may be illegal, according to The Governor of Svalbard, who states only sealed weapons can be displayed. "If we go in and do a procedure that seals it, the historical value deteriorates," said Sander Solnes, the museum's curator. The museum is seeking permission to display such weapons if they are non-functional. Among them is a rifle trapper Georg Nilsen, who a century ago failed to show up for a visit at a German research station. Two station members sent to search for him perished and the station's leader committed suicide soon afterward.



Harsh research audit omits UNIS

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works, contrary to Parliament's goal of making Norway an international leader in key areas of research in Svalbard.

"The survey shows that Norway is ranked number 17 on the list of the most-cited research nations in terms of polar research," the audit states. "This shows the Auditor General that Norway does not have as great a scientific interest as one might expect, even though Norway is a major contributor to Arctic polar research."

Norway ranked sixth out of 15 nations in terms of Svalbard-related published research between 2005 and 2009, the report adds.

Norway's share of researcher work days in Ny-Ålesund decreased from 38 percent in 2008 to 32 percent in 2013, or by a cumulative total of 700 days. The French-German research station has been the most active since 2011.

Furthermore, four of Norway's five research vessels operating in Arctic waters are at or near their designated service life of 30 years, according to the audit. But beyond a new ice-class vessel now under construction,

there are no plans to acquire additional ships.

"This may eventually have negative consequences for, among other things, Norwegian marine research and monitoring of climate change," the audit states.

The audit's findings are being challenged by Norwegian Minister of Education and Research Torbjørn Røe Isaksen, who told forskning.no it is unfair to compare current efforts with 2008, which was designated as the International Polar Year and therefore resulted in an extraordinary commitment to Arctic research.

In addition, Isaksen said the audit doesn't factor in research conducted at The University Centre in Svalbard and Svalbard Science Centre. He said Norway's Arctic research has increased more than any nation – 60 percent since 2010 – if those facilities are included.

Auditor General Per-Kristian Foss told Nord24.no she agrees UNIS plays an import role in polar research, but the purpose of the audit was to determine if Norway is making effective use of its Arctic facilities.

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

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. SE winds to 42 km/h. High 3C (-3C wind chill), low -7C (-12C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 49 km/h. High 5C (2C wind chill), low 3C (-3C wind chill).	Cloudy. SE winds to 32 km/h. High 6C (3C wind chill), low 2C (-2C wind chill).	Rain. SE winds to 55 km/h. High 6C (1C wind chill), low 1C (-3C wind chill).
Sunrise 7:36a; sunset 5:57p	Sunrise 7:44a; sunset 5:49p	Sunrise 7:51a; sunset 5:41p	Sunrise 7:59a; sunset 5:33p
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, 5C (0C), 0C (-4C), light 9:18h; Monday, rain/snow, 5C (-1C), 1C (-6C), light 9:02h; Tuesday, cloudy, 1C (-6C), -1C (-6C), light 8:46h; Wednesday, cloudy, -1C (-5C), -3C (-9C), light 8:30h			

Data provided by storm.no



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

A "farewell party" for a hut made of trash collected from Svalbard's beaches attracts only a handful of people Monday evening, most of them crowding inside to escape the wind and cold. But two of the attendees told designer Solveig Egeland they may be willing to manage and preserve the hut.

Good use of hut may ease bad moods

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Longyearbyen residents Eli Meling and Camilla Skou told artist Solveig Egeland they are interested in taking over responsibility for her seaside hut made of trash collected from Svalbard's beaches, if details such as getting permission from the city to keep the structure can be arranged.

"We think that the cabin is nice to look at and it is convenient in that you can go in to warm up," Meling wrote in an e-mail interview. "It's a great way to use the litter and purely in aesthetic terms, we think it is a great work of art."

Egeland said no other potential caretakers had expressed interest by the time she arrived at the farewell gathering, but she appeared cheerful nonetheless.

"I never give up hope," she said.

The hut, which debuted at the beginning of August next to the Svalbard Sailing Club, was originally scheduled for removal Oct. 1. But Egeland, a Versland resident who has built

several similar structures on the mainland, sent out a message on a Longyearbyen Facebook community page asking if anyone was interested in caring for the hut if an extension could be arranged.

That resulted in a fierce debate about the merits of the project, with some locals arguing they had no desire to look at a pile of trash – no matter how colorful – especially since it received a 350,000-kroner grant from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund that could have gone to more practical purposes.

But Anne Lise Sandvik, one of the most vocal critics before the hut's debut, said she now has no problem with it remaining on the beach. She said one of her strongest original objections was using a large amount of grant money for a short-lived and seemingly frivolous project.

"I think it would be nice if it had a purpose, if someone could use it," she said.

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

Store Norske says it's fixing problems

VIOLATIONS, from page 1

said. "We take this seriously and will correct it."

The inspection from Sept. 1-4 – which included interviews of employees, examining documents and spot checks of Store Norske's operations – revealed the following violations:

- The company's environmental risk management, including developing procedures to prevent spills and other accidents, is inadequate.

- A review of management shows there is insufficient awareness of issues related to the environment, such as pollution and waste.

- Measures to prevent emissions from coal dust being transported to Marthabreen in uncovered trucks have not been implemented. Also, there is no screening at the entrance of the Svea mine to prevent coal dust from blow-

ing onto the glacier.

- The company's monitoring and control of air and water pollution are lacking.

- Inspection and preventive maintenance of equipment designed to prevent discharges are inadequate.

- Contingency plans that determine the response time and expertise needed to address problems in all areas of operations have not been created.

- The company is importing two chemicals, used to "wash" coal, that are not registered (declared) with the Norwegian Environmental Agency.

In its comments, the agency also states Store Norske's deviation system operations and waste management can be improved.

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

What's up

Sept. 30

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social. Svalbard Church.

Oct. 1

Deadline for registration for Confirmation through the The Norwegian Humanist Association. Classes begin in January, with the ceremony on Aug. 4. More details at www.human.no.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Frank Miller's Sin City: A Dame to Kill For," U.S. action ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 2

8 p.m.: Book debut: "Røde Robert Hermansen. Redningsmann og Syndebukk," profiling the controversial former Store Norske administrative director. Hermansen and author Otto Ulseth will be interviewed by Arne Holm. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 3

9 p.m.: 10-year anniversary concert by Longyearbyen rock/punk band Schmeerenburgh. Kroa.

Oct. 4

2 p.m.: Free bluegrass concert for children by Onkel Tuka. Huset.

9 p.m.: Bluegrass concert: "Saturday Night Live!" by Blåmyra and Onkel Tuka. Huset.

Oct. 5

5 p.m.: Movie: "Kaptein Sabeltann og Skatten i Rama Lama," Norwegian family film, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Gone Girl," U.S. drama/thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 6

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

Oct. 7

3 p.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

Oct. 8

3 p.m.: Presentation by Mia Börjesson about working with children and young people in Longyearbyen. Kulturhuset.

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:

- *Half of Earth's animals gone since 1970*
- *Climate change deniers in U.S. up 7%*
- *Impacts of Earth's coming magnetic flip*
- *Antarctica meltdown weakening gravity*