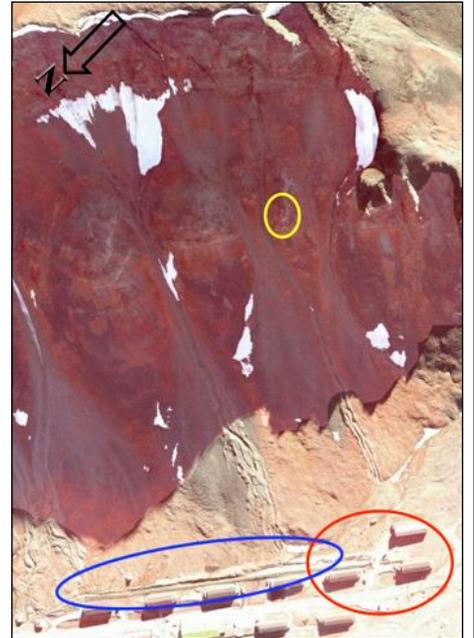




MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Rocks above Mine 2, left, are unstable due to a newly discovered crack, according to researchers. At right, an infrared photo shows a row of multi-unit housing buildings in Nybyen in similar peril.



UNIS

Landslides looming

Mine 2, Nybyen housing at risk from new threats due to climate change; other areas also a concern

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Housing units in Nybyen and Mine 2 are facing threats from newly discovered landslide hazards resulting from climate change, and many other older buildings will see similar risks with increasing frequency and severity, according to researchers and Longyearbyen officials.

The new threats were announced by the city this week after receiving a requested study

“
Much of the old settlement is located in landslide-prone areas.
- Vigdis Hole, Bydrift response statement to study
”

from the Geological Survey of Norway. Additional research and discussions are planned to

address if mitigation or evacuation measures are necessary, what other areas are at risk, and what responsibility the city and other entities have in dealing with the issue.

"Climate change could lead to more frequent incidents of flooding and landslides, and they will become more extreme," wrote Vigdis Hole, head of planning and development for Bydrift, the city's municipal infrastructure agency, in a statement announcing the findings

See **HAZARDS**, page 4

Safety, smog woes in Barentsburg



MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY

Emissions from Barentsburg's coal-fired power plant severely exceed legal limits, according to Norway's Climate and Pollution Agency.

Power plant in 'severe' violation of emissions laws; injury at mine raises worker-protection issues

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Barentsburg took a big step toward reversing its long-time woes by reopening its fire-damaged coal mine, but pollution and safety issues are giving Norwegian officials problems.

The Russian community's coal-fired power plant is violating emissions laws and consuming too much coal, according to Norway's Climate and Pollution Agency (SFT). In the mine itself, a May 17 accident that injured a worker is raising concerns about worker-protection

See **VIOLATIONS**, page 2

Inside

Rocket scientists: Hurray, we lost it!	Page 2
Headlines from Svalbardposten	
- Crime up 26% in 2011 due to large drug bust	
- First mandatory pilot accompanies cruise ship	
- Airline miles ban illegal, but not necessary over	Page 3
Greenpeace back, helps w/ 3D map	Page 3
Weather forecast	Page 3
Events calendar	Page 4

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

Staff writer/photographer

Karla Paz

Copy editor

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

Icepeople is published weekly (or thereabouts) on Tuesdays (or thereabouts), with printed copies available free on a limited basis in Longyearbyen. Additional printed copies are available locally and by mail upon request. Charges are on an "at cost" basis.

Copyright stuff

Original contents of this publication can be reproduced for non-commercial purposes free of charge if *Icepeople* is credited as the source. The original writers, photographers and other contributors retain their rights to all published works.

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.

Portrait of an artist as a skewed man



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Kristian Finborud, left, explains his graphics works that are part of a new three-artist exhibit at Galleri Svalbard during a reception Thursday premiering the collections. Finborud, educated at The National College of Art and Design, creates images that "often show subtle moments in human life that gives rise to reflection," according to an artist profile. Also showing works are Tormod Ropstad, whose "paintings often show objects we know from daily life, but treated on an almost sacral interactive way through the background and lighting," and Kari Finborud, whose work is described as "paintings in a more abstract figurative tradition, where the situations described as poetic reflections." The exhibit is on display until Aug. 31.

A black eye for Barentsburg's coal

VIOLATIONS, from page 1

measures, according to an audit by Norway's Labour Inspectorate.

"Severe" violations of sulfur dioxide emissions limits exist at the 40-year-old power plant, which Trust Arktikugol is operating under a 2010 agreement, according to the SFT report. Coal from Barentsburg's mine is high in sulfur content, but several methods to reduce levels.

"What surprised us was that the use of coal does not match the amount on the basis of the application," said Harald Sørby, the agency's leader, in an interview with NRK published Monday. "Consequently, we will have a meeting with the management of Barentsburg about this."

Sørby said he believes the Russians are willing to cooperate, although a meeting date has not been determined.

A Russian man who injured his arm in the

accident at the mine was hospitalized in Tromsø with serious, but not life-threatening, injuries. Trust Arktikugol representatives told Labour Inspectorate investigators they believe the accident was caused by human error, but the agency's audit expresses concerns about obtaining candid details.

"The Labour Inspectorate has imposed the trust to come with a written explanation of their procedures to protect employees who are witnesses to accidents and other traumatic events," the audit states, according to *Svalbardposten*. "The Labour Inspectorate will also want to know what the trust will do to protect the witness of the May 17 accident."

The mine reopened in 2010 after an underground fire in 2006 brought the facility to a halt. Production has recovered sufficiently to ship multiple loads of coal for export.

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

We get as irked as anyone at all the cries of "junk science" every time researchers spend years exhaustively proving things that are unpleasant or can't be properly explained on a bumper sticker. But the naysayers can have a bit of fun with this: A "historic" rocket launch from the Andøya Rocket Range in late June ended 10 minutes later when it crashed into the sea 150 kilometers south of Spitsbergen, with researchers unable to locate it after an extensive search due to the apparent failure of a parachute and float system, according to *Svalbardposten*. Nonetheless, "everything went according to the plan," Kjell Bøen, the rocket range's leader, subsequently told NRK. "We

could not be more satisfied." Seems they got the data transmissions they wanted, thus alleviating the grief of littering the waters with the record-size seven-ton rocket they hoped to recover ... Since our corporate headquarters (a.k.a. mailbox) is in one of the city's old buildings near Mine 2 we're naturally worried about the report detailing new landslide risks due to climate change. Since stress is unhealthy, we're thinking those climate skeptics in the U.S. might not be totally nuts in their approach. In North Carolina, for instance, where coastal areas face huge and expensive measures to deal with rising sea levels, politicians simply outlawed making claims such scary problems exist due to climate change.



BAS BEENTJES / GREENPEACE

Miryam Justo of Perua, left, and Yvette Sena Blankson of Ghana, both members of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, inspect sea ice off the coast of Svalbard during the voyage of the Greenpeace vessel *Arctic Sunrise* to create the first-ever 3D map of the ice.

Greenpeace hosts 3D map cruise

First-ever model of Arctic sea ice part of month-long voyage to Svalbard in ongoing campaign

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Greenpeace is b-a-a-a-c-k – in 3D. This time, however, the horror picture is about what's happening to the Arctic ice rather than the group's zany publicity stunts to preserve it.

The *Arctic Sunrise* departed Friday for a month-long Svalbard expedition that will feature the first-ever 3D mapping of the Arctic sea ice. The ship, carrying filmmakers and Chinese celebrities in addition to scientists and climate activists, also is making plans to travel to the North Pole to drop off a petition signed by one million people calling for the area to be declared a global sanctuary.

The mapping, beginning July 9, will use a special autonomous submarine to measure underwater icebergs and surface laser scanners for the exposed parts. Researchers will work with 3D scanning experts and engineers to construct a model of the ice, pinpointing pressure ridges and deformations resulting from the repeated melting and freezing.

"The emphasis on pressure ridges is because these ice deformation features – which can be as much as 50 meters deep – contain about half of the ice in the Arctic, yet have been shrinking in numbers and thickness much faster than the ice as a whole," said Peter Wadhams, a Cambridge University scientist

leading the study, in a statement issued by Greenpeace. "We need to see if they are melting, or disintegrating, or both."

Greenpeace is also using the voyage to draw attention to its Save The Arctic campaign, launched during the Rio+20 Earth summit in June to preserve Far North from oil exploration and industrial fishing. The organization plans to place an Arctic Scroll petition – signed so far by celebrities such as actors Hugh Grant and Penelope Cruz, entrepreneur Richard Branson and singer Paul McCartney – at the North Pole once one million signatures are collected.

The dropoff spot will be marked by a Flag For the Future designed in a competition by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, which has two members aboard the *Arctic Sunrise's* current voyage.

The *Arctic Sunrise* is the ship that infamously blockaded the Svea mine for two days in 2009 as a political protest and upon leaving was detained by Tromsø customs officials for carrying more beer aboard than declared. The fine of 20,000 kroner was about equal to what organizers of a local fundraiser say they lost when the governor was forced to cancel his appearance to deal with the protest.

Greenpeace regularly engages in similar disruptions and publicity stunts worldwide in their ongoing campaign to "Save the Arctic," but return trips by the ship to Svalbard have occurred without notable incident.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Crime up 26 percent in 2011 due to high-profile drug bust

Crime rose 26 percent in Svalbard during 2011 compared to 2010, in contrast to a nationwide drop, but the sole reason is a high-profile drug sting resulting in the arrest of 11 people, according to Statistics Norway and the Svalbard governor's office. Multiple charges for some of those arrested resulted in 24 drug crimes in Svalbard during 2011, compared to a normal average of two to three. A total of 101 crimes were reported in 2011, up from 80 in 2010. There were eight incidents involving violence in 2011, up from four in 2010, and one rape. Also reported were 19 traffic incidents, 21 thefts and three environmental crimes, all roughly matching past averages.

First mandatory cruise ship pilot accompanies Svea trip

A new law effective Sunday requiring licensed pilots with Arctic navigation experience on some large cruise ships in Svalbard resulted in the first such official monitoring a voyage to Svea on Monday. "My role is more advisory," said Roy Arne Rotnes, who rode aboard the German ship *Aidacara*. "The captain is responsible, as I stand in the background and monitor and advise." The initial phase of the law requires pilots only for large-ship Svea voyages, but next year will include most large ships in Svalbard and in 2015 will apply to vessels longer than 70 meters. Vessels less than 150 meters long can apply for exemptions if a qualified navigator is aboard.

Ban on airline miles illegal, but don't start collecting yet

Norway's ban that prohibits airlines from offering frequent flier miles on domestic flights violates the EEA agreement regarding unfair commercial practices, according to a preliminary ruling by the EFTA Surveillance Authority. But Svalbard residents can't start collecting miles yet, since the ruling is based on the general nature of the prohibition in effect since the summer of 2007. The ban could still apply to specific stretches, and a proposed partial repeal would keep the policy in effect on flights between northern and southern Norway.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Occasional rain. W winds to 22 km/h. High 4C (1C wind chill), low 4C (-1C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 15 km/h. High 5C (5C wind chill), low 3C (1C wind chill).	Rain. E winds to 25 km/h. High 2C (-1C wind chill), low 1C (-4C wind chill).	Rain. E winds to 18 km/h. High 2C (-1C wind chill), low 1C (-3C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight
Extended forecast: Sunday, p. cloudy, 2C (-1C), 1C (-2C), light 24:00h; Monday, cloudy, 2C (-1C), 1C (-2C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, 2C (0C), 1C (-1C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, 2C (1C), 1C (-1C), light 24:00h			
Data provided by yr.no			



MARKUS ECKERSTORFER / UNIS

A series of photos shows a newly discovered crack above Mine 2 that could trigger a landslide up to 20,000 cubic meters in volume, according to a new study. Other nearby areas are likely to face similar risks as climate change creates more unstable areas, say researchers and city officials.

New landslide threats revealed

HAZARDS, from page 1
of the study.

"New knowledge about the potential danger areas and the effects of climate change can lead to areas that have previously been regarded as sufficiently secure for buildings no longer meeting the safety requirements of the Planning and Building Act and building technical regulations."

The study, conducted in cooperation with The University Centre in Svalbard, reveals a crack about 40 to 50 meters long above the ruins of Mine 2, now a cultural monument, that could release a landslide of up to 20,000 cubic meters in volume.

A row of housing in Nybyen is also at risk from a potentially unstable rock outcrop. Researchers stated it is "very difficult" to predict the impact path large boulders in a resulting slide would take.

"It is emphasized that these two potentially unstable areas are discovered by chance while working with completely different issues," the study notes. "It can not be excluded that there are more similar sites in Longyeardalen that require follow-up surveys."

Hole, in her response statement, notes the "Longyearbyen municipal council has in recent land-use plans taken into account that much of Longyeardalen is avalanche prone."

"New buildings may not be listed in areas that are believed to be prone to avalanches," she wrote. "Much of the old settlement is located in landslide-prone areas, resulting in limitations on the use of the buildings. This will be taken into account when processing an application for change of use of older buildings."

Frequent observations, blasting or other mitigation measures, or "ultimately the evacuation of buildings" may be necessary to deal with the risk, she added.

Stian Pettersen, Bydrift's quality manager, said the next step for city officials is initiating discussions of the findings with Hanne Christiansen, a physical geology professor at UNIS who has advised the city about slush avalanches in the area. He said they will also seek assistance from UNIS in measuring and predicting



UNIS

Red arrows show unstable areas of concern to researchers in a rock outcrop above Nybyen.

the behavior of the crack above Mine 2, while specific actions for Nybyen are yet to be determined.

Bydrift is active in multiple other ways to prepare for avalanche events, Pettersen said.

A landslide is "not the same problem, but it is some of the same challenges to deal with," he said.

The city also expects to complete an emergency management plan by next year that will include avalanche and landslide issues, Pettersen said.

An unresolved issue, however, is what responsibility the city, other government entities and landowner Store Norske have in assessing and addressing landslide risks.

Store Norske and the city, for instance, disagreed about responsibility for landslide risks to existing buildings when negotiating a 2008 liability agreement, Hole wrote in a letter this week to the Norwegian Ministry of Justice. She stated new knowledge about climate change posing a risk to buildings previously thought to be safe "reinforces the need for a clarification."

Also, "there is uncertainty as to who is responsible for securing existing buildings that are prone to natural hazards" under the Natural Disaster Act, Hole wrote. The law is applicable to Svalbard, but "the result of such work could be transferred to Longyearbyen."

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

What's up

July 1 - Aug. 5

Movie theater at Kulturhuset closed for renovations.

Aug. 12

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Amazing Spider-Man" (3D), U.S. action/thriller, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

Aug. 15

Deadline for master plan for water supply.

Aug. 19

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Dark Knight Rises," U.S./British action, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Aug. 26

6 p.m.: Movie: "Madagascar 3," U.S. animated/family film dubbed in Norwegian, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Kon-Tiki," Norwegian dram, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

Aug. 28

6-8 p.m.: Activity fair. Demonstrations and signups for Longyearbyen's recreational clubs. Svalbardhallen. More information at svalbardturn.no.

Aug. 29

6 p.m.: Movie: "Ice Age: Continental Drift" (3D), U.S. animated/comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

Aug. 31

6 p.m.: Movie: "Til Ungdommen," Norwegian documentary about youth activism in the summer of 2011, premier screening, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 2

6 p.m.: Movie: "Til Ungdommen," Norwegian documentary about youth activism in the summer of 2011, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Albert Nobbs," U.S. drama/romance, no age limit specified. 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:

- 'Anonymous' hacks Shell to help Arctic
- Norway, Japan kill UN whale sanctuary
- NYT debate: Gene banks good or bad?
- Rowers plan 1,300-mile trip across Arctic