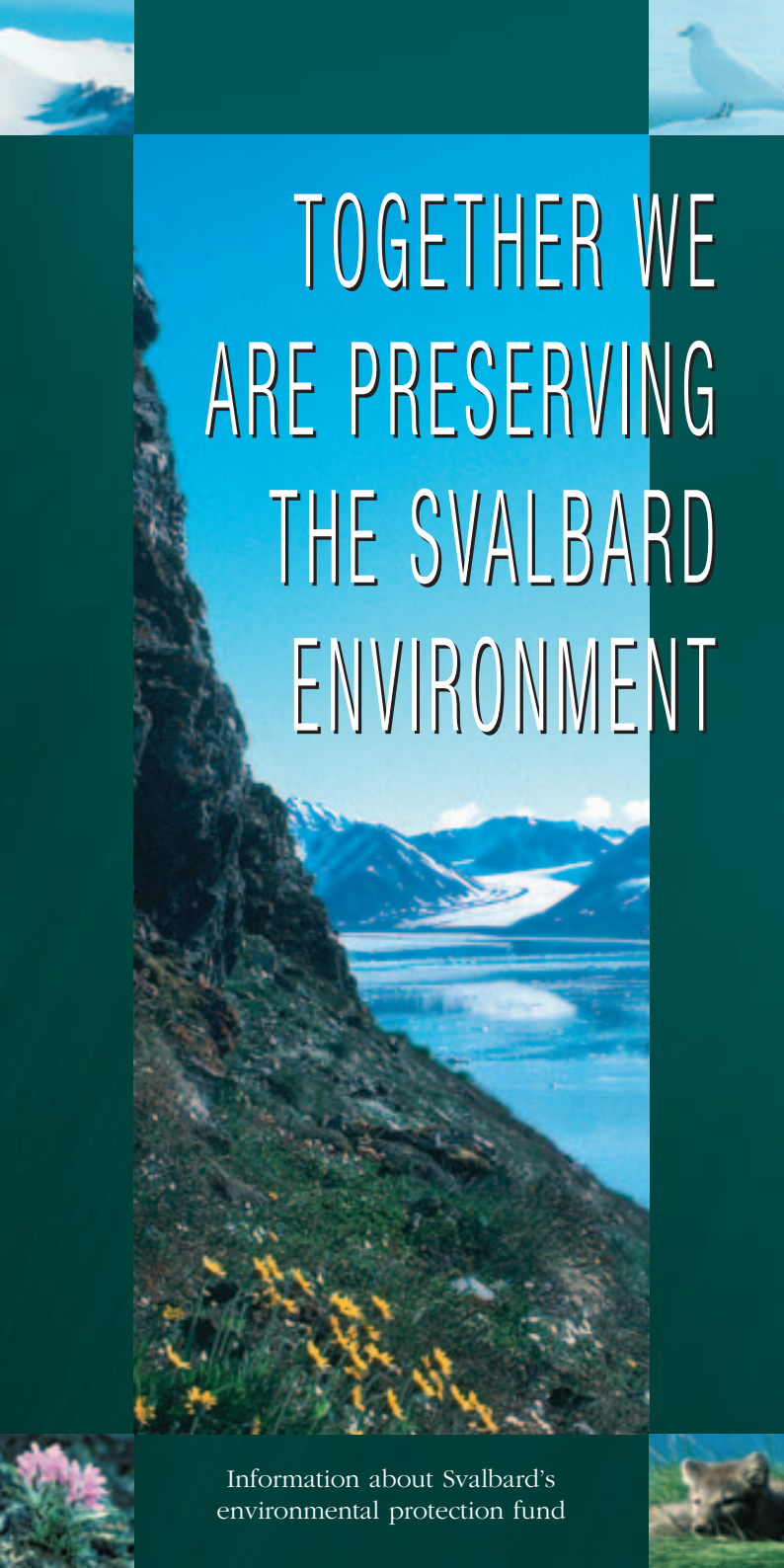




TOGETHER WE ARE PRESERVING THE SVALBARD ENVIRONMENT

Information about Svalbard's
environmental protection fund

Dear Visitor

Not so long ago, it was only miners and hunters who came to Svalbard. Now this unique wilderness area is open to us all.

You have a lot to look forward to. The air is clean; the nature is wild, beautiful and untouched. Svalbard has distinctive plant life, unique cultural heritage, and many animal species which can only be found in the Arctic. Most of what you will see around you only exists here.

Such nature is at the same time fragile. It is expensive to protect, preserve, prevent and repair. Therefore, everyone who comes to Svalbard must pay a small environmental fee which goes towards protecting the environment and cultural heritage. We would like to thank you for your contribution, and hope that in return you will remember your stay for the rest of your life.

Your environmental fee is a vital contribution to the preservation of Svalbard's nature and culture. Photo: Nalan Koc.



Environmental fee for visitors to Svalbard

The magnificent and untouched arctic nature has a powerful appeal to visitors. Simultaneously, modern means of transport make Svalbard's natural and cultural environments more easily accessible than before, so that more people can experience and use this magnificent wilderness.

Increased tourism and traffic means that the nature and cultural environment at Svalbard is becoming more exposed to deterioration and disturbance. One of the greatest challenges we currently face at Svalbard is to manage the increase in tourism, outdoor activities and other traffic in a positive way. To ensure sustainable management of the unique natural areas and cultural environments, an environmental fee has been introduced for visitors to Svalbard. Based on the principle that "miljøpåvirker betaler" (the agent of environmental change, pays), the environmental fee can be seen as positive reciprocity from the visitors for the experience of Svalbard as one of the world's best managed wilderness areas.

*People become small in Svalbard's magnificent nature.
The picture is taken by Tunabreen, Svalbard. Photo: Bjørn Fossli Johansen.*



There is a lot of well-preserved history in Svalbard. In 2004 Norwegian researchers unearthed parts of a skeleton from a plesiosaurus, which lived approximately 150 million years ago. Photo: Jørn H. Hurum © Naturhistorisk museum, Universitet i Oslo (The Natural History Museum, University of Oslo).

A disused mine by Longyearbyen has become an important cultural historic monument of the coal mining operation at Svalbard. Photo: Ann Kristin Balto.



The Svalbard environmental law

The Svalbard environmental law looks after the primary goals which the Norwegian authorities have established for preservation of Svalbard's distinctive wilderness and cultural heritage. The Law makes possible the introduction of an environmental fee for visitors to Svalbard, and fees for hunting and fishing cards. The income from the fees will be added to Svalbard's environmental fund. The fund can only be used for initiatives in Svalbard which are designed to protect the environment and cultural heritage. Resources from the fund can be used to pave the way for experiences of Svalbard's nature and cultural environment, among other things, by establishing initiatives for looking after a natural state or cultural monument which is exposed to natural or human influence.

About the environmental fee

The environmental fee will be introduced in 2007 and fixed at NOK 150 per person per entry. The fee will not be levied on residents in Svalbard. The fee will only apply to trips to Svalbard's territories and inner waters. The environmental fee will be paid through purchasing airline tickets or cruise tickets as the fee will be added directly on to the ticket price and collected by the airlines and cruise ship companies. For visitors to Svalbard travelling in their own boat, payment will be made directly to the district governor as secretariat of the environmental protection fund.

Svalbard's environmental protection fund

Svalbard has completely unique environmental and cultural heritage values. These are under increasing pressure due to both natural and man-made influences. The influences in arctic areas often cause greater consequences than at more temperate latitudes. The work of ensuring that coming generations can have experiences and opportunities to use Svalbard, must therefore be reinforced.

Svalbard shall be one of the world's best managed wilderness areas. Simultaneously, shall Svalbard's unique wilderness both be made use of and experienced. Passage must therefore be carefully made so that the quality or size of the areas is not reduced. Through the principle of "miljøpåvirker betaler", various environmental fees will secure financing for initiatives which protect both the natural environment and cultural heritage in Svalbard.



Mountain fox in summer fur. Photo: Eva Fuglei.



In the summertime, there is a unique and rich plant life in Svalbard. The picture is taken in Kongsoya. Photo: Norsk Polarinstitutt (Norwegian Polar Institute)

Svalbard's cultural heritage is protected and vulnerable; it must be visited with care and thoughtfulness. Photo: District governor of Svalbard

Polar bear research in Hopen, Svalbard. A researcher is measuring an anaesthetised polar bear. Photo: Magnus Andersen.



Purpose of the fund

Svalbard's environmental protection fund is pursuant to the Svalbard environmental law. The fund's resources will be used to initiate and stimulate good projects and initiatives with the purpose of looking after the lofty environmental goals which are set for Svalbard. The income from the fund ensures that Svalbard's distinctive wilderness nature can be preserved as a basis for experiences, knowledge and value creation.

The fund is financed by dues and allocation is dependent upon the incomes. An environmental fee for visitors, fees for hunting and fishing cards, the value of flora and fauna which is handled in violation of the Svalbard environmental law, environmental compensation and enforced penalties set by the district governor are the fund's income sources. The Department of the Environment has fixed rates for fees for hunting and fishing cards, and an environmental fee for visitors is being introduced in 2007. In this way, the fund will be operational during the course of 2007.

What the fund's resources will be used for

The fund will be used to finance initiatives which are not covered by ordinary day-to-day funding for the district governor. Svalbard environmental law establishes the main rules for appropriation of the fund, which are supplemented by guidelines drawn up by the department. The fund's resources can only be used for initiatives in Svalbard with the purpose of protecting the environment. During the management of the fund's capital, emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the capital benefits those groups which have been involved in providing the capital to the fund. For the most part, the fund will be used for initiatives in the area of for example, management and maintenance, restoring environmental degradation, mapping environmental conditions and investigations into what is causing changes to the environment. The fund can also be used for initiatives within information, training, and arrangements with the purpose of taking care of the natural environment and cultural heritage in Svalbard.

Distribution of funds

Private or public businesses, organisations and private individuals can apply for support from the environmental protection fund for initiatives and projects. The fund's management makes decisions and distributes funds based on the application. The secretariat for the fund is linked to the district governor of Svalbard who ensures for advertising of the fund's resources, processing applications and making recommendations to the board. The secretariat will also distribute the capital and control its use.

For further information about the application process, please contact the secretariat or visit www.sysselmannen.no.



Map showing protected areas



- Nature conservation area
- National park
- Protected biotope area
- Bird reserve

More than half of Svalbard's land area and most of the territorial waters are preserved as national parks, nature reserves, bird reserves or protected biotope areas.

In most of these areas, passage is permitted on foot, by ski or by boat. In some areas motorised cross-country driving is also allowed on the frozen and snow-covered land. However, it is forbidden to traverse some areas, for more information visit www.sysselmannen.no



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