

Mostun – what, how and why?

Mostun is Rogaland's only nature information centre run by non- governmental organisation.

The centre was officially opened 6 November 2011 and received authorisation as a national wetland centre in December 2012.

Mostun is located by Mosvatnsparken, between Stavanger Art Museum and Tjensvollskrysset. The building has previously been a café, a residential home and a clubhouse. The former tenants, SIF Håndball, moved out of Mostun in 2011 after 28 years in the house. Around the same time Natuververnforbundet (The Norwegian Society for the Protection of Nature) was looking for new premises, as its housing contract for Sandsvigå 24 was terminated.

Historic decision

Chief of the parks and highways municipality Torgeir Sørensen professed that Mostun would be a remarkable space for an office, meeting and exhibition point for biodiversity organizations in Stavanger. In August 2011, the Municipal Board for Development and Environment received a proposal suggesting the lease of Mostun to organisations. The proposal stated that "the building shall be used as a visitor centre / information centre with focus on nature and with special emphasis on Mosvannsparken."

A unanimous Municipal Board voted to offer Mostun to Naturvernforbundet with partnering organisations, i.e. the local branches of the Norwegian Ornithological Society (NOF) and the Norwegian Botanical Association (NBF).

Officially opened 6 November 2011

Two months after the decision to lease Mostun to Naturvernforbundet, the centre was officially opened on 6 November 2011 by Mr.Sørensen, head of the parks and highways authority. The opening was in conjuncture with the release of photographer Roy Mangersnes's beautifully illustrated book on Mosvatnet and Stokkavatn lake, nature and wildlife. Naturvernforbundet's 2009 exhibition on threatened biodiversity in Rogaland was presented, as well as the exhibition on RAMSAR* wetlands at Jæren. The exhibition is issued by the county governor of Rogaland and Jæren friluftsråd (Jæren outdoor committee) and is on permanent display at Kvasseim Fyrhus (Kvasseim lighthouse and recreation area).

Moving in June 2012

It still remained for Naturvernforbundet to agree on Mostun's terms of lease with the landlord, Stavanger Eiendom. The first contract proposal from Stavanger Eiendom was rejected by Naturvernforbundet. The Mostun building had significant damages that would entail a much too high cost for Naturvernforbundet. Luckily, the solution appeared when the park and highway municipality agreed to assist with funding for repairs and restoration of the nature centre.

The lease was signed on 1 March 2012, and in June the same year Naturvernforbundet moved its office to Mostun. The lease is valid until 2022 with possibilities of extension.

1500 visitors in 2012

The building is still characterised by wear and tear caused by poor and inadequate maintenance. However, the damages are not standing in the way of using the premises as an exhibition, - meeting and office space. In 2012, Mostun was Sunday-open 15 times with a cafe and shop. Moreover, there have been two major events hosted at Mostun in collaboration with the Norwegian Trekking Association and the Norwegian Ornithological Society. In September, the nature centre was the arena for free evening lectures on Mosvannet and the region's wetlands. 118 people participated at the lectures and a total of 1,500 people were registered as visitors in 2012.



Jan Petter Hubert Hansen, consultant at the Norwegian Environment Agency visited Mostun in the autumn of 2012. Foto: Erik Thoring.

Authorised centre in December 2012

In late November 2012, Naturvernforbundet requested certification as a national wetland centre. The Norwegian Environment Agency believed that Mostun with its central location in the city had the potential to become a wetland centre with a significantly high visitor rate. Right before Christmas Naturvernforbundet received certification as a national wetland centre. Mostun is the main base for Jæren national wetland centre, with Kvasheim Fyrhus and Orre friluftshus (Orre outdoors centre) as satellites. Kvasheim and Orre are run by Jæren friluftsråd and display exhibitions on RAMSAR sites at Jæren and the Jæren beaches landscape preservation area.

The national wetland authorisation involves a fixed annual subsidy for the period 2012 to 2016. The majority of the funds totalling NOK 3.95 million will be spent on the employment and salaries for a full-time nature guide and a project manager.

*RAMSAR : Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat