



NGF Geological Society of Norway
c/o NGU Pb.
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DNT
Den Norske turistforening
Youngstorget 1, 0181
Oslo

NSK Norsk stratigrafisk komité
c/o Oljedirektoratet, v/Harald Brekke,
Postboks 600, 4003 Stavanger NORWAY

To members of the

- Norwegian Geological Society,
- the Norwegian Tourist Association and
- the Norwegian Stratigraphic Committee:

This letter is in response to the contest held in Norway during the fall of 2013 to give a name to the mountains that pass through Norway, Sweden and Finland. This contest resulted in the suggestion that the mountain belt would receive the name '*Nordryggen*.' The Swedish Geological Society (*Geologiska Föreningen*) has decided that a response is appropriate, and our thoughts are outlined below. Indeed, the board has received requests from several Nordic geologists to respond to the naming contest, many of these from Norway. Because of the strong feelings expressed by these people as well as our board members, we feel compelled to take up the issue.

Because it is not clear to us exactly how geographic features are 'officially' named in Norway, it is not clear to us the official status of *Nordryggen*.

At our most recent board meeting (2014/1/31), we discussed the issue, and we decided to write a letter expressing our thoughts, summarized here:

1. We question the premise of the competition that stated that the mountains lacked a name. Of course, in common parlance, people visiting the mountains most often use '*fjällen*' in Sweden, however it seems that '*Skandinaviska fjällkedjan*' is well-established. And in the Store Norske Leksikon on line, the main entry for these mountains is *Den skandinaviske fjellkjede*, implying that the Norwegian language has had a name for these mountains. The Swedish geographer Ljunger suggested in 1944 that the name '**Scandes**' would be a useful, simpler term, and since his time, there are many references, including scientific articles in English, that refer to the '**Scandes Mountains**.' A chapter written by a Norwegian geographer in 2005 on these mountains in the Oxford University publication, 'The physical geography of Fennoscandia,' is called '**The Scandes**.' Thus, it seems quite inaccurate to suggest

that the mountains lacked a name. Additionally, the Norwegian name ‘**Kjølen**’ is referred to in places, although this may refer to only a part of the range. We do not mean to imply that ‘Scandes’ is the official name, which seems to be an issue that only Lantmäteriet could solve, but we disagree that a name did not exist.

2. Even though we regard the mountains to already have a name (and a contest was unnecessary and perhaps even inappropriate), we wish to express surprise and disappointment that Sweden was not contacted to be involved or to express its views. It is quite clear that the name ‘Nordryggen’ is intended for the entire mountain range even in Sweden and Finland. It is also apparent that the term is not merely the Norwegian name, but meant to be used internationally.
3. Because of these issues, it also seems unlikely that any Swedish geologist will refer to these mountains as ‘Nordryggen.’ This is not out of anger, but simply based on the recognition that a well-used name (‘the Scandes’ or ‘the Scandinavian Mountains’ or ‘the Scandinavian Mountain Chain’) already exists.
4. We agree with the ‘well-meaning’ intention behind the idea of the naming contest, that is, to lift up geology as a theme in society. It is extremely important that the Nordic geological societies make the broader society more aware of geology, and Norway’s efforts to identify a national rock type and significant geologic places is to be greatly applauded.

Finally, we strongly identify NGF as being our ‘sister society’ whom we regard as a clear and essential partner in highlighting Scandinavian geology and geology in general. Despite our comments above, we regard this issue about a name as being not ultimately divisive. We look forward to increased contact and cooperation among our Nordic societies.

Sincerely

Geologiska Föreningens styrelse

Mark Johnson, ordförande

Anna Kim-Andersson, sekreterare

Ann Bäckström, kassör

Christian Skovsted, redaktör, GFF

Paul Evins, ledamot

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