



Painting by Carl Svante Hallbeck from 1856 of Harsprånget
(Njommelsaska in Sami) waterfall on the Lule River.

BIOrdinary Summer School 2025

Dear [Name Surname],

You are cordially invited to the third BIOrdinary Summer School!

When: June 16-19, 2025

Where: Norrbotten (North Bothnia), Sweden

BIOrdinary




Biodiversity justice against the current

The 2025 BIOrdinary Summer School explores the interplay of nature, culture and extractive industries in the Swedish north. Over the course of four days, we journey upstream along the 461-kilometre-long Lule River that runs from the Sulitjelma massif on the Norwegian border in the West to the Bothnian Bay in the East. The river was once home to Sweden's biggest waterfall – Stora Sjöfallet in Swedish, Stuormuorkkegárttje in Sami. Since 1915, invasive hydropower operations have altered the river's movements and the life-forms that the river's yearly fluctuations supported. Today, no less than 15 active hydropower plants interrupt the river's flow.

Through field excursions, expert-led discussions and cultural activities, we travel against the current to learn about the environmental and societal disturbances and afterlives of hydropower expansion along with other industrial activities, such as forestry and mining, that have left imprints on the riverbanks. We approach these irrevocable interventions and unruly afterlives in the river landscape through the lens of **biodiversity justice**: How has Sweden's history of hydropower expansion altered ecosystems and human-environment relationships, and what can its 100-year legacy teach us about current sustainability debates, future restoration projects and biodiversity justice? How were people, animals and plants affected, displaced and dispossessed from their land? What life-forms and multispecies collaborations emerged in the wake of the disturbance and destruction of life as it once was?



The legacy of hydropower in Northern Sweden

In this year's summer school, we seek to explore biodiversity and social justice through the imprint of 'green energy transitions' on local landscapes. Amidst a global pandemic, an escalating climate crisis and a war in Europe, the urgency to secure energy supplies and cut dependence on coal and gas has never been greater. But the story of green energy is not as clean as advocates makes it sound: experts warn that contemporary green energy projects intensify extraction of natural resources and appropriate lands for mining, industrial forestry and wind turbines. Rather than speculating on the long-term costs and consequences of these novel projects on people, species and landscapes, we will closely examine river landscapes in the Swedish north as ecological archives and draw insights from the testimonies of local communities that have lived with hydropower for generations.

The rapid hydropower expansion in Northern Sweden – peaking between the 1940s and 1970s – has significantly bolstered the nation's prosperity and welfare. In the official

narrative, the Swedish hydropower expansion has been and continues to be promoted as a safe, reliable and renewable source of 'green' energy, leaving out the detrimental alterations that comes with any damming. In fact, the majority of Sweden's hydropower plants were constructed with little or no consideration for environmental risk, destruction of livelihoods or damage inflicted on biodiversity. If we zoom in on the flooding of old-growth forests, the decline of wild salmon and the millennia-old practice of salmon fishing, and the displacement of local communities to ensure seamless energy flows for the majority population, it is evident that the state-led development of hydropower in the Swedish northern peripheries and Sami territories is a form of modern imperialism that continues to haunt the landscapes. In the summer school, we follow the undercurrent stories that run under the official narrative of the hydropower miracle and tell of life against and despite hydropower, and learn from these protagonists about power and responsibility, inclusivity and justice, cultural memory, and loss.

Travelling upstream along the river

Our journey along the river begins in the city of Boden. It concludes at Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkke National Park, located within the Sámi World Heritage site of Laponia. To reach the north, we embark on a night train in Stockholm on Sunday evening. Going back to Stockholm on Thursday, you can choose to travel by night train, arriving at Stockholm Central on Friday morning, the 20th of June (Midsummer Eve) *or* catch a flight, which arrives at Stockholm Arlanda Airport on Thursday evening, the 19th of June. More information will follow.

On Monday morning, we start by a guided tour at Heden's fish farm in Boden that raises and releases hundreds of thousands of salmon and trout each year to compensate for the impact of hydropower on the fish's natural habitats. We travel upstream, visiting both tamed and untamed river landscapes, including the 17-kilometre-long dry riverbed near the Letsi Power Station and Storforsen, an 82-meter waterfall on the Pite River and the largest unregulated rapids in Europe through which 250 cubic meters of water passes every second. As our main guides, we have Thomas Öberg (biologist and ecologist, nature photographer and public educator) and Jannete Hentati (author of *Älven i mig* (2023), a book that explores the Lule River through its history and personal memories, and a holder of a PhD in Social Anthropology from Stockholm University).

It would be helpful if you could already now indicate how you are planning to travel to and from the summer school. Please note that it is not possible to attend only selected days. Help us organise travel arrangements by **completing the online questionnaire by March 31st**: <https://forms.gle/VhomDhLPaPsCeUJV9>

We are delighted to invite you and look forward to your participation!

Sincerely,
The BIOrdinary Team



Program

(Outbound travel) Sunday 15 June

21.55 Night train departure from Stockholm Central Station

Day 1, Monday 16 June

08.00 – 09.00 *Breakfast in the bistro (participants pay themselves or bring their own food)*

09.00 – 11.30 Getting to know each other / introduce conceptual framework

10.51 – Arrival to Boden Central Station

11.00 – 12.00 **Excursion I: Heden's fish farm with Henri Heimonen**

12.00 – 13.00 Drive to Storforsen

13.00 – 14.00 *Lunch at Storforsen Hotell*

14.00 – 16.00 **Excursion II: Storforsen with Sofia Perä**

16.00 – 18.00 Drive to Hotel Jokkmokk and check in

18.00 – 19.00 *Dinner at hotel*

19.00 – 20.30 Introduction to Summer School with BIOrdinary and Jannete Hentati

21.00 – 23.00 **Optional midnight excursion to Letsi dry river bed** (or sauna for the lazy ones)

Day 2, Tuesday 17 June

07.00 – 08.00 *Breakfast*

08.00 – 12.00 **Excursion III: Pärälven with Thomas Öberg**

12.00 – 14.00 *Lunch at Àjtte Swedish Mountain and Sami Museum*

14.00 – 17.00 **Excursion IIII: Gälllok with Tor Tourda**

17.00 – 19.00 Drive to Harsprånget (quick stop) and Porjus

19.00 – 20.00 *Dinner in Porjus*

20.00 – 21.30 Drive to Stora Sjöfallet and check in

Day 3, Wednesday 18 June

08.00 – 09.00 *Breakfast*

09.00 – 12.00 Optional activities in Stora Sjöfallet (hiking, kayaking, etc.)

12.00 – 13.00 *Lunch*

13.00 – 15.00 Optional activities in Stora Sjöfallet

15.00 – 18.00 **Excursion V: Guided tour to the Suorva Dam, Akkajaure**

18.00 – 19.00 *Dinner at the hotel*

19.00 – 21.00 **Evening seminar at Naturum Laponia**

(Return travel) Thursday 19 June

08.00 – 09.30 *Breakfast and check-out*

09.30 – 12.00 Wrapping up the Summer School

12.00 – 13.00 *Lunch at the hotel*

13.00 – 18.00 Drive back to Luleå