



Tour guide

How to find Oslo's rivers and streams by train, tram, bus and Metro



Oslo River Forum 25th Anniversary

Oslo River Forum (Oslo Elveforum, OE) was founded in the year 2000 as a forum for volunteer groups and associations working for Oslo's ten river catchments.

Our task is to promote to the protection, rehabilitation and re-opening of the rivers and streams in the City's built-up area. We work to make Oslo's waterways clear, clean, open and accessible for citizens and visitors. Riversides are to be protected green spaces, with trails along each stream. Waters are to be a healthy environment for a diversity of aquatic species.

Oslo River Forum submits comments in all plan and zoning matters that concern the City's streams, protesting when developments are proposed within the 20 and 12 metre limits set in the City's zoning guidelines. We campaign for re-opening of buried waterways. In a wet and wilder climate, opening streams saves trouble.

We organise guided tours along our streams. And we help schools that wish to adopt their own stretch of river.

Our vision:

Living streams
from forest to fjord

www.osloelveforum.no

Table of Contents

How to find Oslo's rivers and streams by train, tram, bus and Metro	4
Legend for the maps	5
Rivers and streams:	
Lysakerelva	6
Mærradalsbekken	8
Hoffselven	10
Frognernelven	12
Akerselva	14
Hovinbekken	16
Alna	18
Østensjøvannet	22
Ljanselva	24
Gjersjøelva	26
Ellingsrudelva	28
The city of Oslo is re-opening Oslo's rivers and streams	30
Ruter's public transport hub Jernbanetorget/Oslo S	31



The terms 'river', 'stream', 'brook' or 'creek' each convey the size of a watercourse. In Oslo, three words apply: *elv*, *bekk* and *å*. A distinction is that one can leap over *en bekk* but not *ei elv*. From Danish there is a saying: *Mange bekker små gjør en stor å*. 'Many brooks make a large stream', so *å* is larger than *bekk*. And remember: *å* is pronounced 'awe'.

A little Norwegian grammar: *En* and *ei* are the masculine and feminine article 'a'. To make 'the' in a Scandinavian language, we put an article at the end; in Norwegian *-en* for masculine and *-a* for feminine. In Oslo, both are used with *elv* for 'river': *Akerselva* flows through a former factory area; *Hoffselven* flows through upmarket residential suburbs.










How to find Oslo's rivers and streams by train, tram, bus and Metro

Welcome to Oslo with its ten rivers and streams, and the nature reserve Østensjøvannet. You will find precious natural areas along our waterways, rich in bird, animal and plant life, with good walking trails, places to bathe and parklands, all surrounded by the Capital City's urban bustle.

Tips for an enjoyable walk:

- Use your senses: look, listen and smell. Take note of your surroundings and follow on the map. A quarter of Oslo's waterways are still underground in pipes and culverts, so there are places where the path simply follows the low ground, perhaps along city streets.
- This guide follows each stream upstream towards its source. The numbering on each map begins with the access point furthest downstream. This has been chosen because most visitors will be staying in or near the city centre and the fjord to which nine of the ten streams flow. Don't let the numbering stop you from choosing to walk downstream.
- The guide takes the public transport hub, Jernbanetorget, at Oslo Central Station (Oslo S) as its starting point (see map page 31). Check with the transport authority for Greater Oslo, Ruter (www.ruter.no), download their

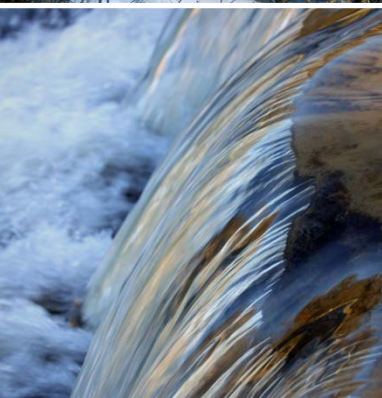
Legend for the maps

	Train		
	Metro	----- River or stream in pipe	 Water
	Bus	==== River or stream in tunnel	 Swamp
	Tram	— Official trails in Oslo	 Forest
	Information board OE trails by the rivers	 Green space

app (Ruter) with live schedules and travel planner, or visit the information office on Jernbanetorget. Please note that Metro is called T-bane in Norwegian and 'tram' is trikk.

- Public transport in Oslo is convenient and reliable, in part because tickets are not sold on board. The app Ruter is now available if you have a mobile phone from Europe. Single, 1-hour tickets are sold at train and Metro stations and kiosks (Narvesen, Seven Eleven and Mix), but not at bus or tram stops. For kr 50, kiosks sell transport cards that can be loaded with a 24-hour, 7-day or 30-day pass, or with travel money that is checked and, if expired, drawn upon when you scan it at a station or on board.
- Not all trails are suitable for wheelchairs, prams or even bicycles.
- The apps Norgeskart (from the national mapping authority, Statens kartverk) or Ut (from the Norwegian Mountain Walking Association, DNT) can be useful in following a waterway.
- Oslo Elveforum is on Facebook. Please share your photos on Instagram with #osloelveforum and #(the stream's name).

Enjoy your walk!



Lysakerelva

► styret@lvv.no

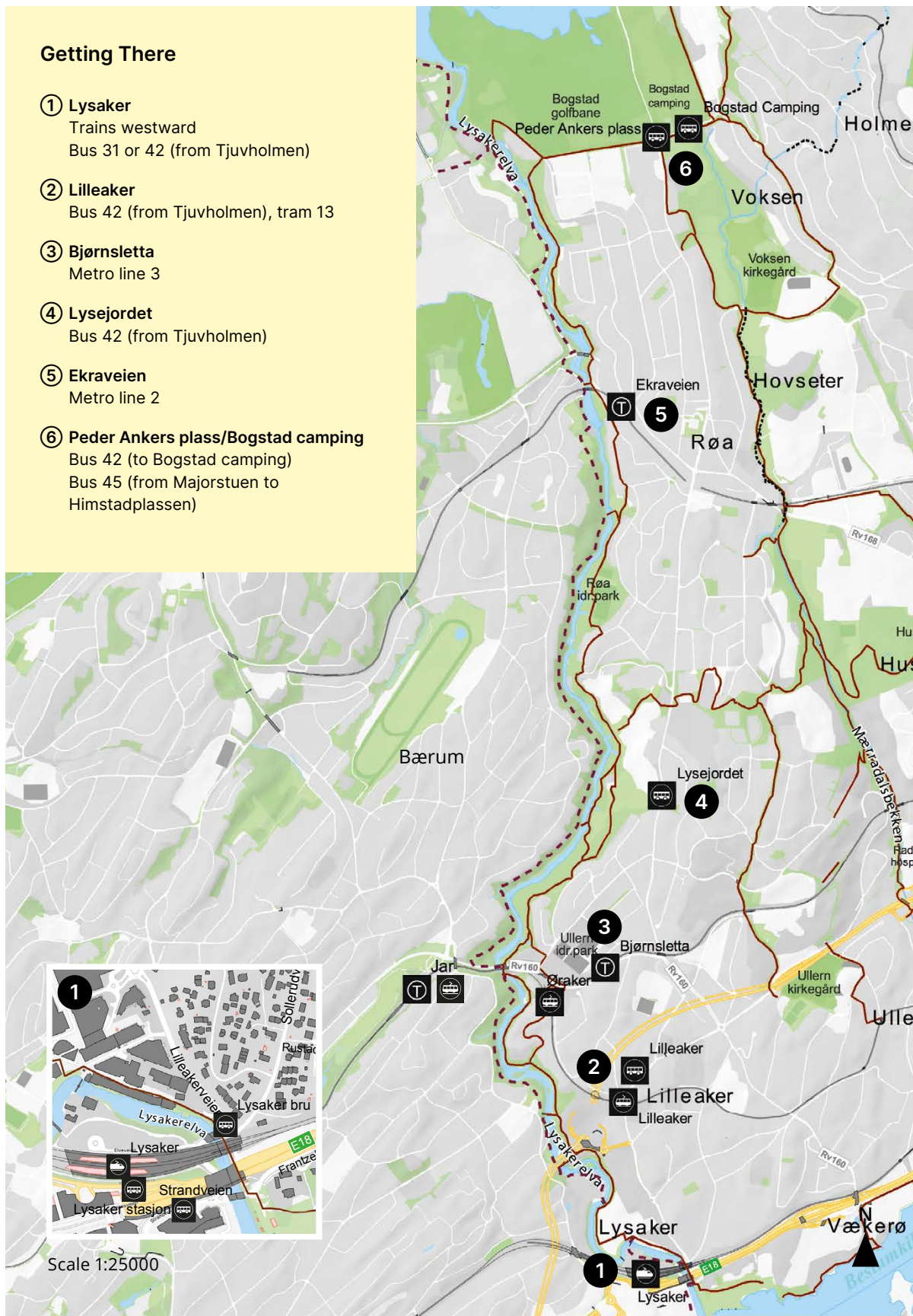
Flows into: Lysaker Fjord at Sollerudstranda

A county line with waterfalls and gorges

A major stream in a dramatic landscape forms the boundary in the west between Oslo and the neighbouring borough of Bærum. You will be surprised by its wildness and get some real exercise along the river's steep valley. There are walking trails on both sides, designated L-1 in Bærum and A1 in Oslo and eleven footbridges linking them. Along the Lysaker River you will find the ruins of saw mills, corn mills and the remnants of heavy industry. There is abundant birdlife with 102 species registered. Trout are to be taken along the whole stream, and fine sea trout and salmon run up to spawning grounds below the first high waterfall.

Getting There

- ① **Lysaker**
Trains westward
Bus 31 or 42 (from Tjuvholmen)
- ② **Lilleaker**
Bus 42 (from Tjuvholmen), tram 13
- ③ **Bjørnsletta**
Metro line 3
- ④ **Lysejordet**
Bus 42 (from Tjuvholmen)
- ⑤ **Ekraveien**
Metro line 2
- ⑥ **Peder Ankers plass/Bogstad camping**
Bus 42 (to Bogstad camping)
Bus 45 (from Majorstuen to Himstaplassen)





Mærradalsbekken

➤ post@osloelveforum.no

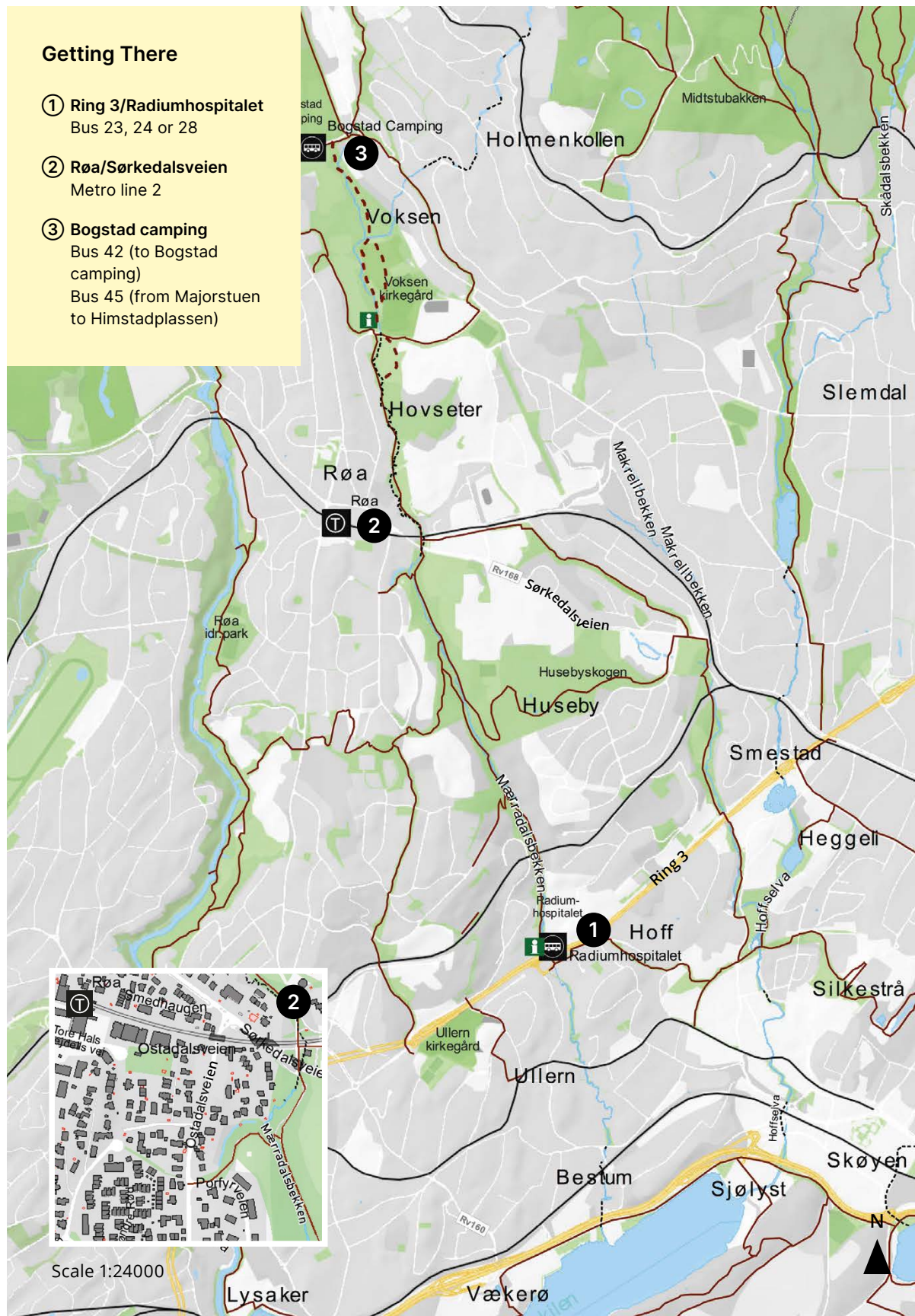
Flows into: Bestumkilen at Maritim

Richness and diversity

The lower reaches of Mærradalsbekken run through private gardens before entering a culvert under the railway and motorway. That is why we start from the outer ring road (Ring 3) at Radiumhospitalet, Norway's specialist cancer clinic, from where an excellent trail proceeds northward through the narrow Mærradalen gorge and up to Sørkedalsveien. This very special landscape supports a rich variety of plants, especially fungi and mosses, and the birds that depend on them. It is so special that it is a national nature reserve with a habitat to be protected. North of Sørkedalsveien, the trail follows the wide Hovseterdalen, all the way to Bogstad Camping. The stream was laid in a pipe in the 1970s when the housing scheme was built.

Getting There

- ① **Ring 3/Radiumhospitalet**
Bus 23, 24 or 28
- ② **Røa/Sørkedalsveien**
Metro line 2
- ③ **Bogstad camping**
Bus 42 (to Bogstad camping)
Bus 45 (from Majorstuen to Himstadplassen)





Hoffselven

➤ hoffvassdragetsvenner@gmail.com

Flows into: Bestumkilen at Skøyen

From ice dam to ice dam

The catchment of Hoffselven extends from the edge of Nordmarka to Bestumkilen at Skøyen where heavy industry previously manufactured locomotives, hydropower turbines and ship pumps. The "Industrial town of the West End" has since become offices, shops and housing. A short way upstream lies Hoffsdam, a farm dam that also supplied a mill. Further up we find hidden ponds and dense vegetation with many birds and rare fungi near the beautiful, 11-meter high Dronning (Queen's) Falls. Even further up you find the Bjørnebo Dam, Smestad Dam and Holmen Dam, all ice dams where ice was cut for ice boxes, the refrigerators of the 1800s. Higher up the stream divides and we end up by Holmenkollen.

Getting There

① Skøyen

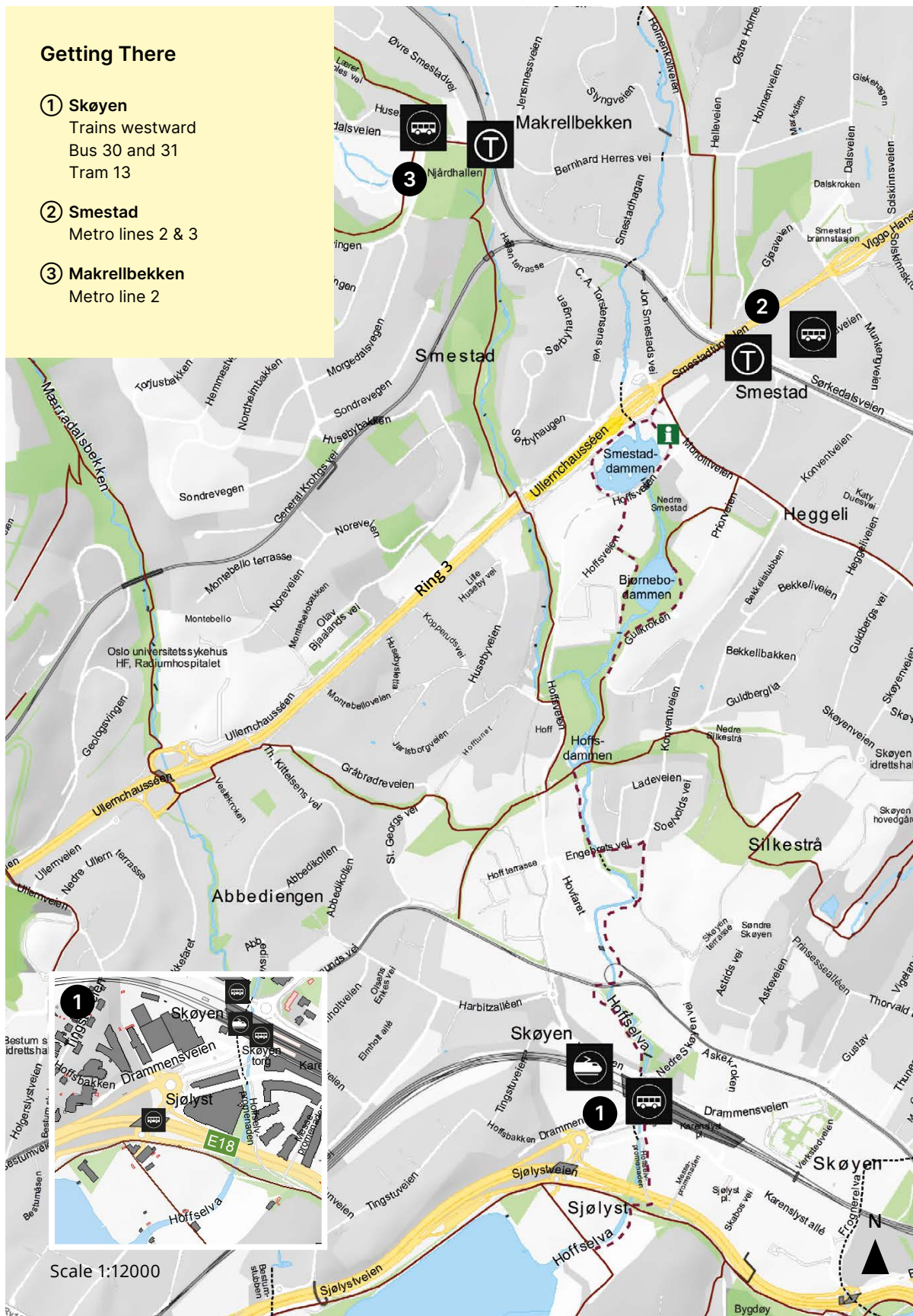
Trains westward
Bus 30 and 31
Tram 13

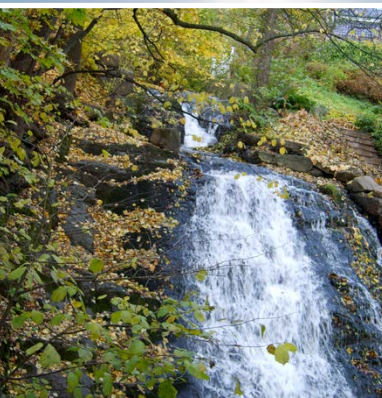
② Smestad

Metro lines 2 & 3

③ Makrellbekken

Metro line 2





Frognerelven

➤ post@osloelveforum.no

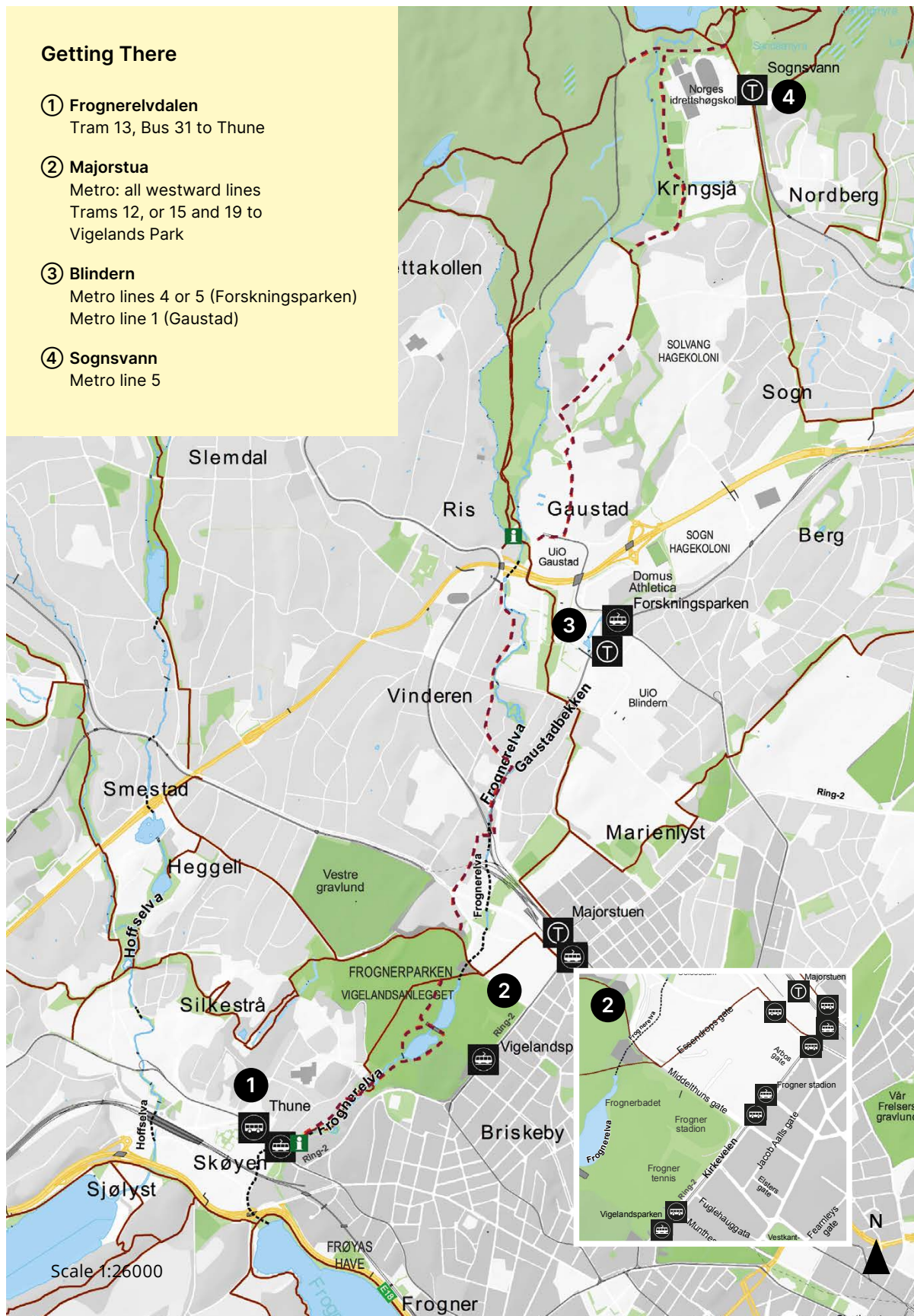
Flows into: Frognerkilen (Frogner Inlet)

Across ancient farms, through woods and Vigeland's park

This river has everything, flowing as it does from the lake Sognsvann by one of Oslo's favourite entrances to the communal forest, Marka, to the inlet Frognerkilen. Starting from Thune you will be surprised by the magnificent deciduous trees in the dale that leads to the famous sculptures in Vigeland's Park where Frognerelven forms a central feature. Above the east bank, Frogner Manor stands proudly, now as Oslo City Museum. Sognsvannsbekken and Gaustadbekken run together at Frøen. If you begin from Forskningsparken or Blindern, follow the map to Rasmus Winderens vei and westward to Sognsvannsbekken, follow a path a short way downstream, and enjoy Vinderenfossen, a wide waterfall in among the houses. Upstream one can walk all the way to Sognsvann and take the Metro back to town.

Getting There

- ① **Frognereelvdaalen**
Tram 13, Bus 31 to Thune
- ② **Majorstua**
Metro: all westward lines
Trams 12, or 15 and 19 to
Vigeland's Park
- ③ **Blindern**
Metro lines 4 or 5 (Forskningsparken)
Metro line 1 (Gaustad)
- ④ **Sognsvann**
Metro line 5





Akerselva

Flows into: Bjørvika

➤ post@akerselvasvenner.no

■ akerselvasvenner.no

f facebook.com/Akerselvasvenner/

Red-brick factories and cherished urban green space

This is Oslo's river, as the Thames is to London and the Seine to Paris, just much smaller. Its waterfalls are great assets that the more famous streams lack. The series of falls were harnessed in the 1840s to launch the industrial revolution in Norway and drive Oslo's explosive growth. A famous song from 1906 lauds the river as "the old and the grey". Once the City Council in 1990 declared the Akerselva Environment Park, transformation into the riverside parklands began, while preserving the red-brick factories and the history of the labouring poor. The contrast between recreation today by an idyllic riverside and the hard labour in those mills could not be greater. If you follow the river all the way upstream or down, you will pass 11 waterfalls and 50 bridges. The catchment covers most of the communal Nordmarka forest and still supplies Oslo's drinking water.

① Grønland

Telthusbakken

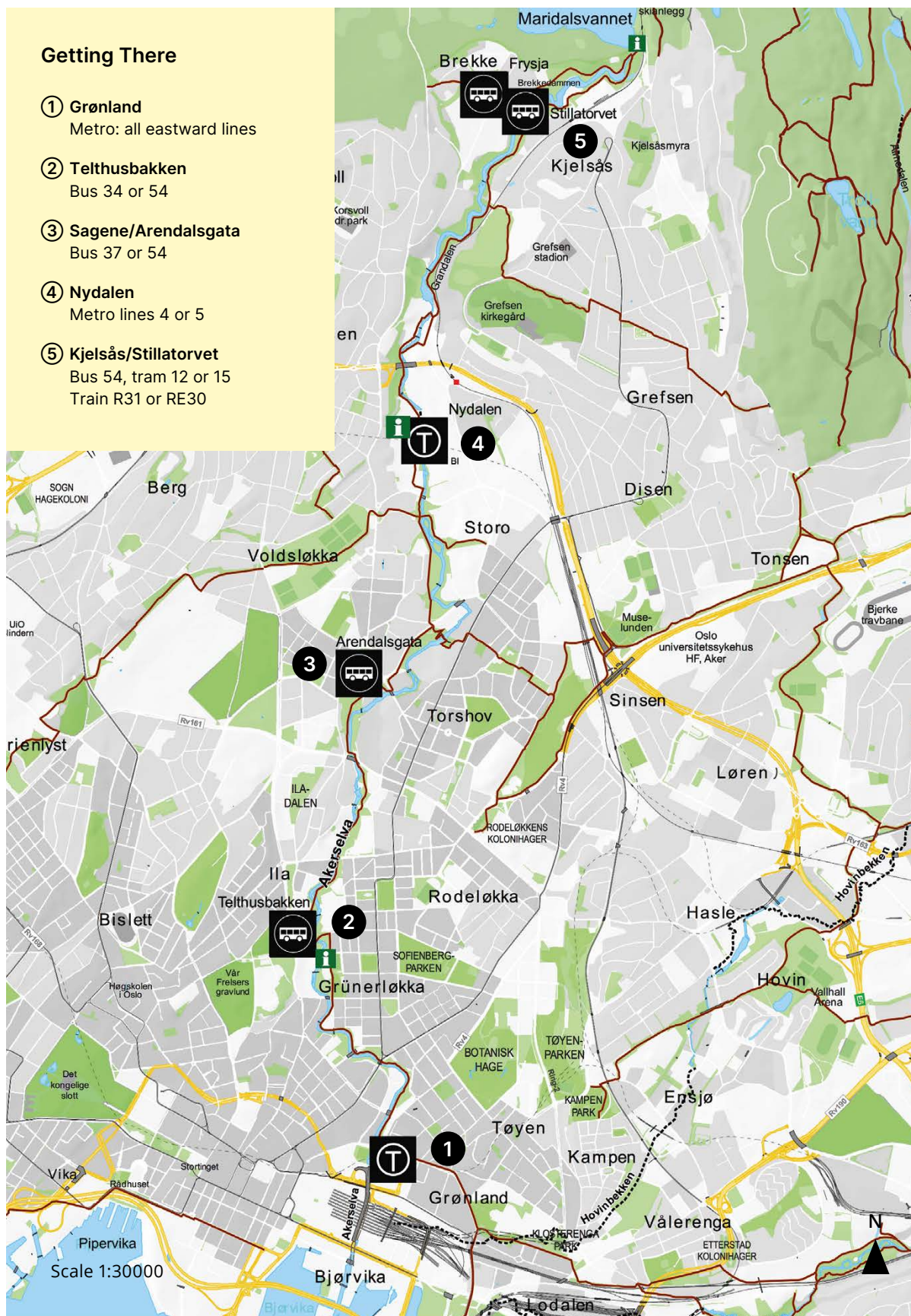
③ Sagene/Arendalsgata

④ Nydalen

⑤ Kjelsås/Stillatorvet

Bus 54, tram 12 or 15

Train R31 or RE30





Hovinbekken

➤ post@osloelveforum.no

Flows into: Bjørvika via Akerselva

An award-winning urban stream

This brook has received many accolades for its re-opening as part of the municipality's strategy for its hidden rivers. We start our walk in Klosterengen Park. The sculpture park realised the late Bård Breivik's dream when it opened in 2023 after 30 years' work to create the interplay of water, sculptures, rocks and vegetation. From Galgeberg we follow the stream through Jordal Park with its ice hockey hall, Jordal Amfi, completed in 2022. The stream is hidden up to Enjø torg but open along Gladengveien to Tiedemanns Park which won the City's architecture prize in 2023. Cross Grenseveien to Teglværksdammen (Brickworks' Dam) a purification plant from 2016 where trout and waterbirds have found a home. Through Økern the stream is still buried, but we soon come to prize-winning Bjerkedalen with its Pavilion Café. Up to Stig we follow an open stream through dense woods. In summer, refresh by bathing in Årvolldammen. Hovinbekken flows from Kapteinsputten and Isdammen where the iceworks have been restored.

Getting There

- ① **Klosterenga**
Bus 20 (to Galgeberg)
Bus 37 (to Harald Hardrådes plass)
All Metro lines to Grønland
- ② **Gladengveien**
Metro lines 1,2,3, or 4 to Ensjø
Bus 21 or 28
- ③ **Teglverksdamen/Hasle**
Metro line 5 (to Hasle)
- ④ **Bjerkedalen park**
Bus 60 (to Økernbråten)
Metro lines 4 or 5 (to Vollebekk)
- ⑤ **Marka/Årvoll**
Bus 31 (to Stig)





Alna

➤ post@alnaelva.no

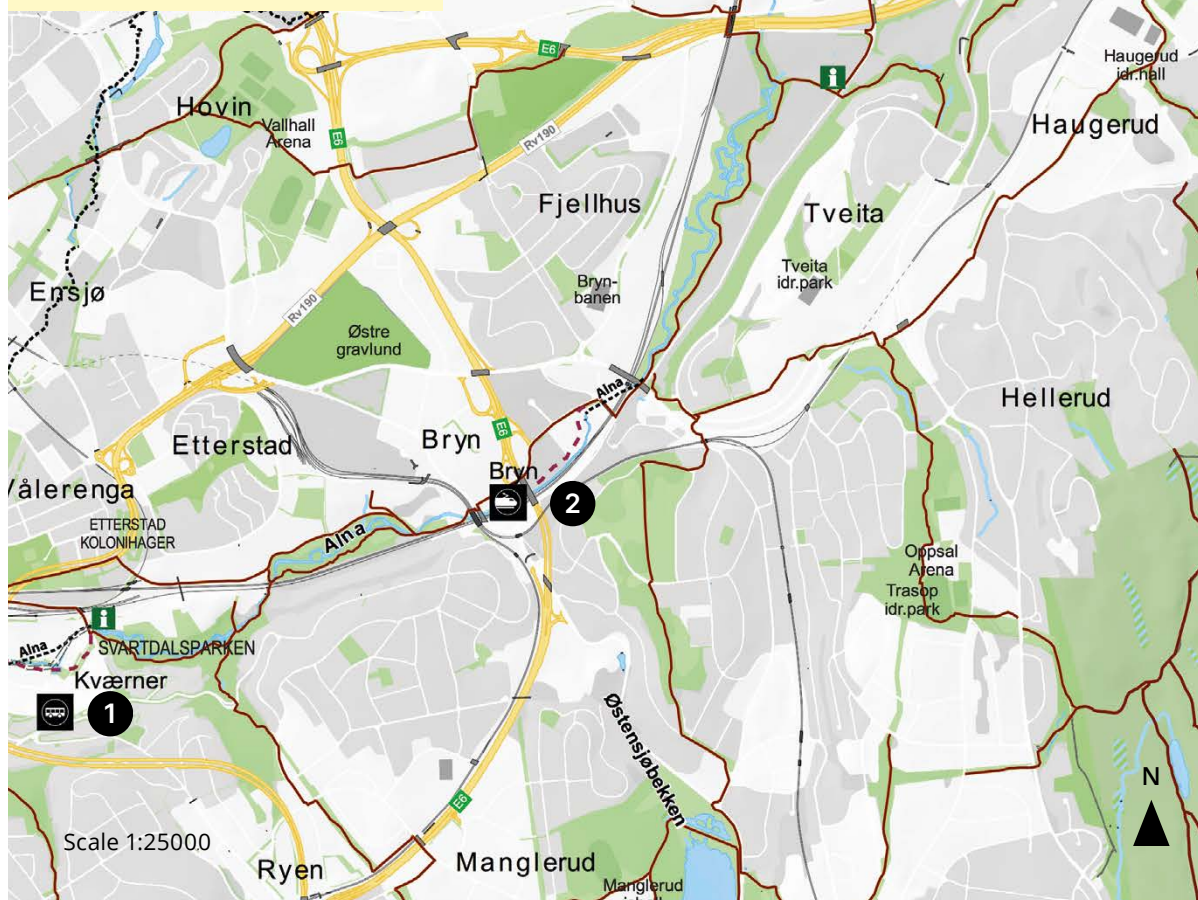
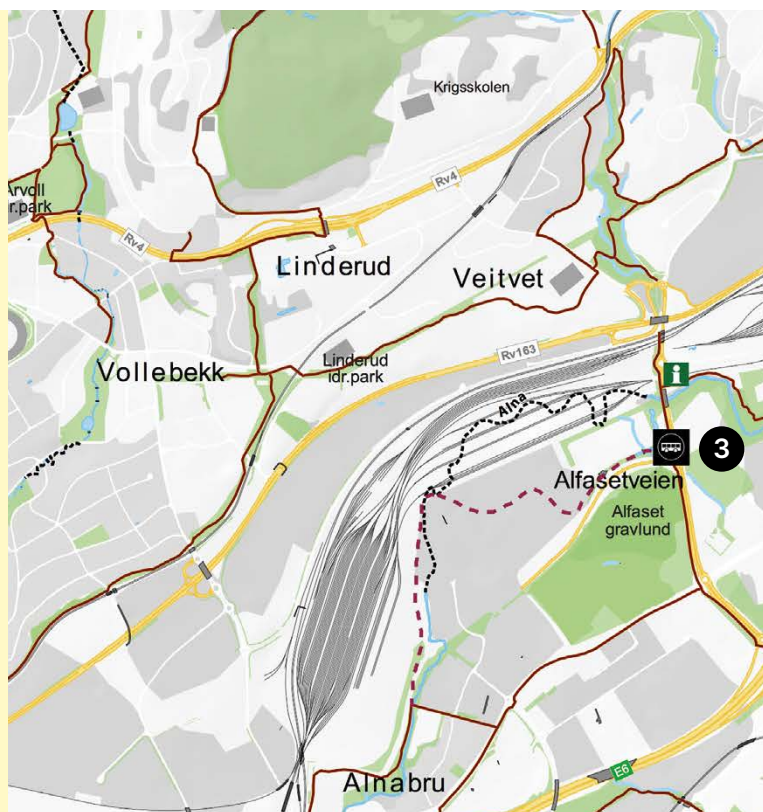
Flows into: Oslo Fjord at Kongshavn and the lake in Medieval Park

All natural!

Alna is 15 kilometers long, making it the longest stream in Oslo's built-up area. Historically it was Oslo's southern boundary. The lake in Medieval Park replicates Oslo's shoreline from the Middle Ages. The river is expected to be extended out to Bjørvika. Walking upstream through the dense housing in Kværnerdalen, one comes to the old forest in Svartdalen. Here the river follows the Ekeberg fault line with its bedrock of gneiss formed a billion years ago. A hanging bridge and a wooden pathway anchored to the valley wall is part of the experience. Along Smalvollen, the river meanders through a wetland rich with wildlife. By Grorud station, the river is joined by Fossumbekken flowing in from Vestli and Alna continues towards Alungsjøen with Oslo's highest waterfall Leirfossen (14 meter/46 feet) at Hølaløkka. Both streams have well-made paths. →

Getting There

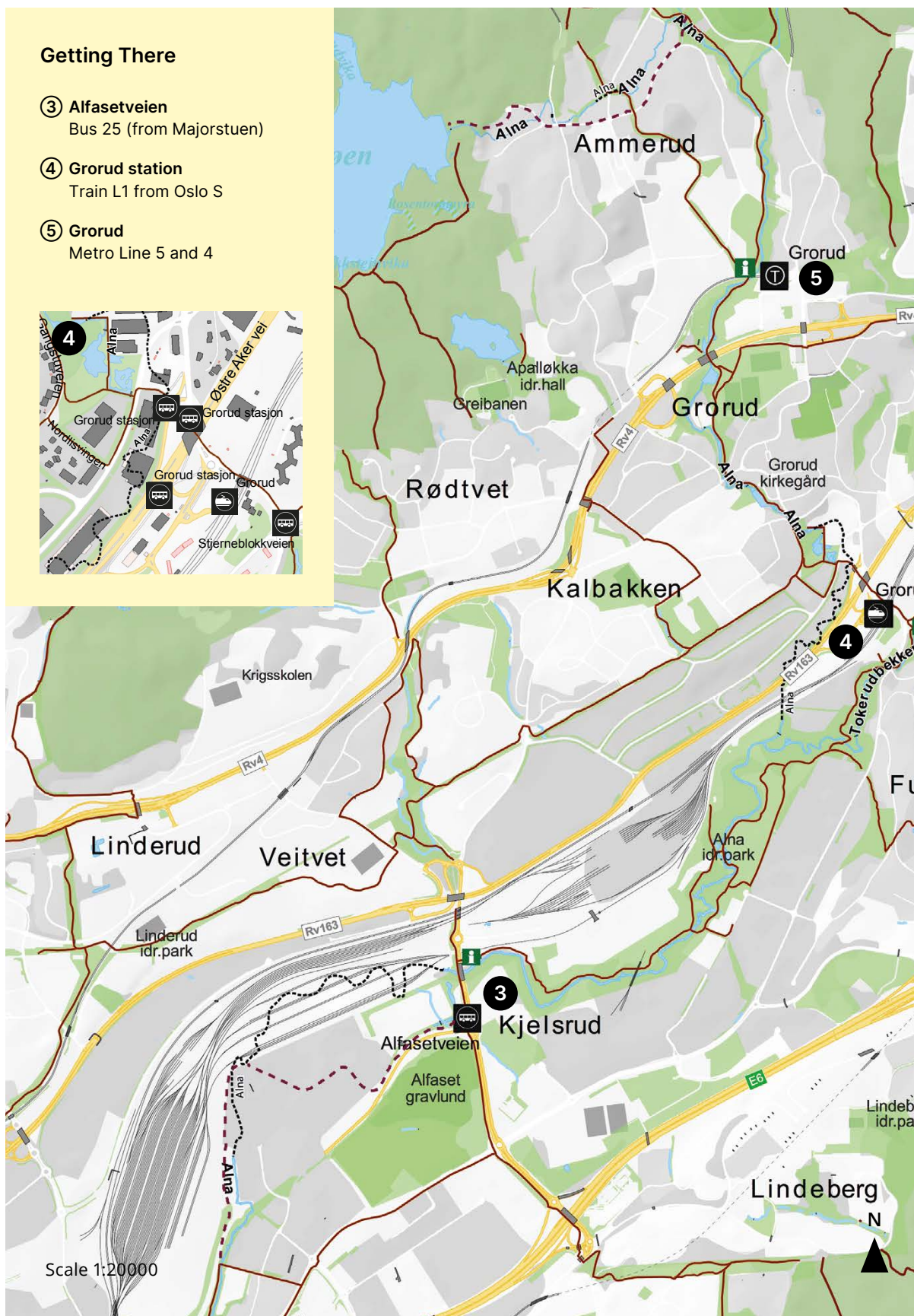
- ① **Kværner**
Bus 54
- ② **Bryn station**
Train L1 from Oslo S
Metro lines 1,2,3 or 4
(to Brynseng)
- ③ **Alfasetveien**
Bus 25 (from Majorstuen)





Getting There

- ③ **Alfasetveien**
Bus 25 (from Majorstuen)
- ④ **Grorud station**
Train L1 from Oslo S
- ⑤ **Grorud**
Metro Line 5 and 4





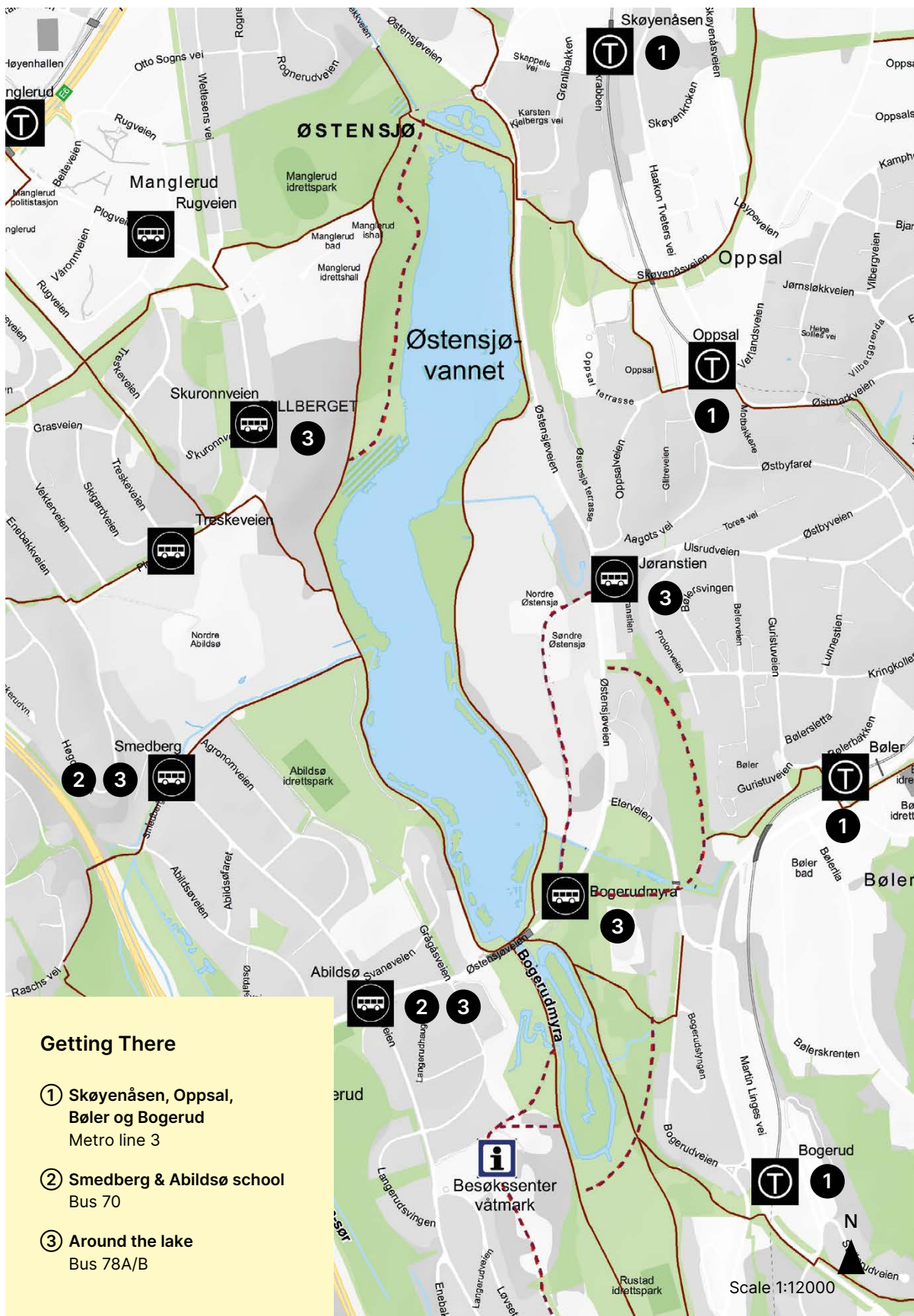
Østensjøvannet

➤ post@ostensjovannet.no

(Lake Østensjø)

For the protection of birds

Lake Østensjø and the surrounding nature are both beautiful and bountiful with an exceptional degree of biodiversity. The lake and the Bogerud marshland to the south were declared a nature reserve in 1992. 234 bird species have been recorded. Every spring, the lake and its surroundings are packed with nesting birds. There is a bird observation shelter on the western side. Since 1983, the Friends of Østensjøvannet have looked after the area to preserve the precious habitat. The two farms on each side of the lake, Abildsø and Østensjø, have heritage protection. The Visitor Centre Wetland Oslo (Besøkssenter våtmark Oslo) at Bakkehavn Farm is certified by the Environment Authority for disseminating an understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment, specialising in the ecological value of wetlands. It is visited annually by 10.000 school and kindergarten children and is often open to the public on Sundays. There is a easy trail around the whole lake and marshland.



Getting There

- ① Skøyenåsen, Oppsal, Bøler og Bøgerud
Metro line 3
- ② Smedberg & Abildsø school
Bus 70
- ③ Around the lake
Bus 78A/B



Ljanselva

➤ ljanselva@osloelveforum.no

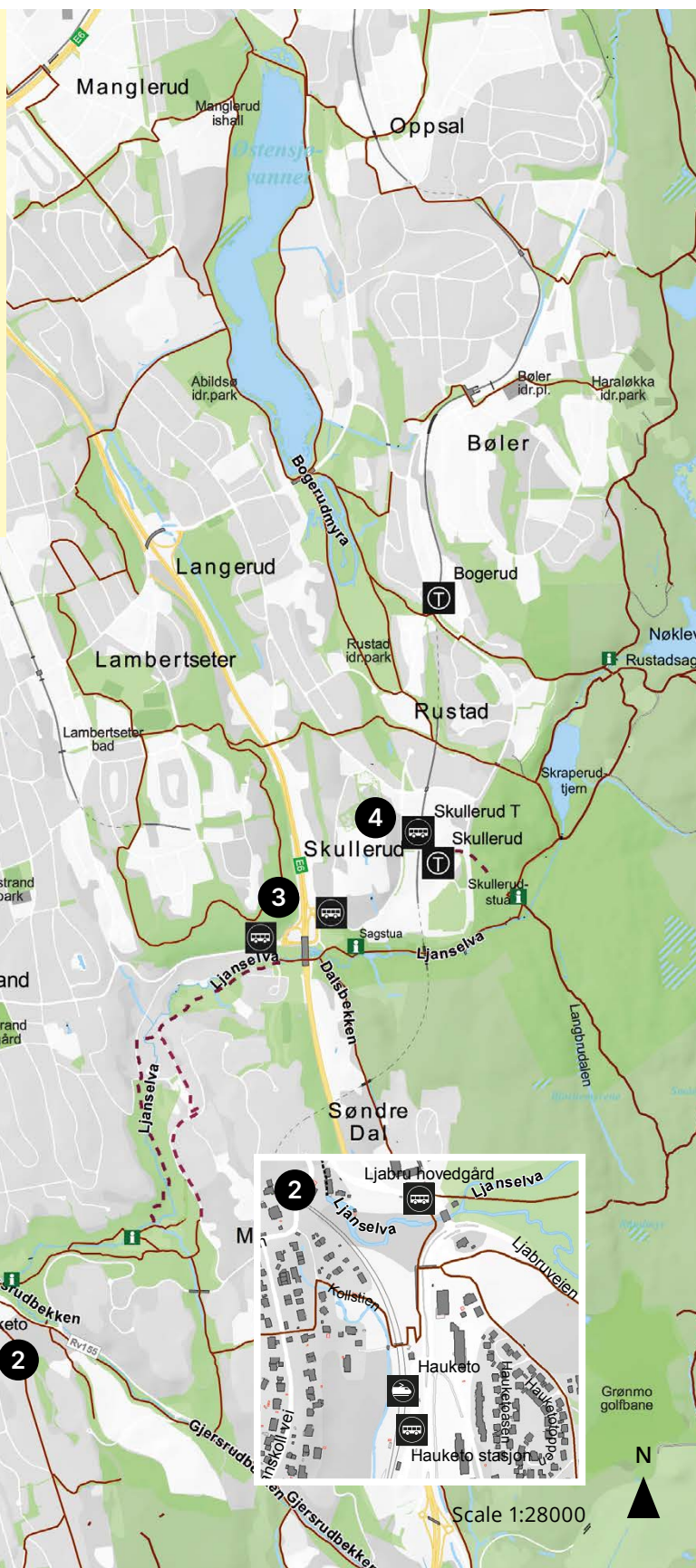
Flows into: Fiskevollbukta (Fiskevoll Bay)

Green space, old forest and historic remains

A walk along Ljanselva is a walk through some of Oslo's history. The river has powered corn mills and saw mills for centuries. In Liadalen you will find the remains of a gunpowder factory, smithies, a handcrafts school and the dancing floor where hundreds of people gathered on summer evenings. Ljanselva has been re-directed through Ljanskollen which has to be climbed to re-join the river at Hauketo where Ljabru Manor stands. The whole trail is well served with informative signs about the river's natural and cultural heritage. The biodiversity found over short distances in quiet surroundings makes it an ideal place for outdoor schooling. This is largely thanks to the zoning regulations that have reserved a belt 100 metres wide on each side of the stream with one exception, the traffic junction at Hauketo where you may still view the stone-arch bridge, built in 1804, as the traffic roars over.

Getting There

- ① Fiskevollen
Bus 83
- ② Hauketo
Train L2, bus 81 (to Ljabru Hovedgård)
- ③ Skullerudkrysset
Bus 74 (to Leirskallen)
- ④ Skullerudstua
Bus 70 (to Skullerud T)
Metro line 3 (to Skullerud)





Gjersjøelva

➤ post@osloelveforum.no

Flows into: Oslo Fjord at Ljansbruket

River history with a working mill and pit saw

By the river which divides Oslo from the borough of Nordre Follo to the south, you can visit a centre with demonstrations of water power in action. By this beautiful stream, not far from its mouth, lie both the ruins of old mills and a reconstructed pit saw and Norse corn mill or quern. The pit saw was an invention of the 1500s. The export of sawn timber, created jobs and enormous wealth. Today, an enthusiastic band of volunteers recreates bygone times, and rehabilitates the stream for fish so fish again run up the river. There is also the Long House, workers' accommodation built in Russian style. We are not far from one of Oslo Fjord's best bathing spots. Just a kilometre from the river mouth you will find traces of the manor Stubljan, home to a timber baron. A wonderful place to combine history and recreation.

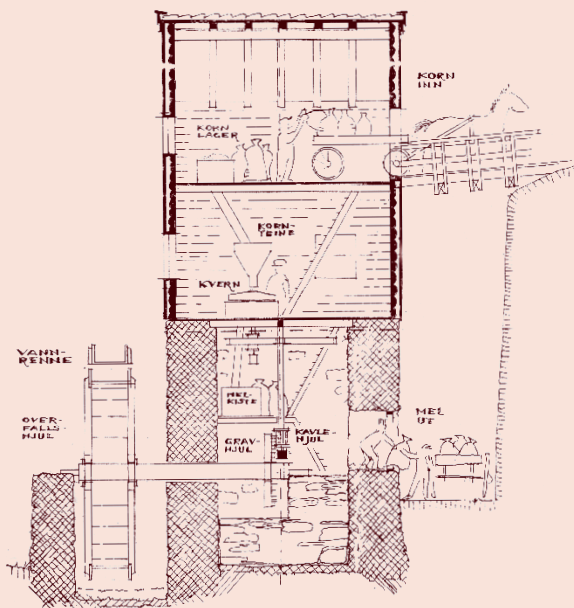
① **Fiskevollen**
Bus 83
Parking Hvervenbukta

Bus 83

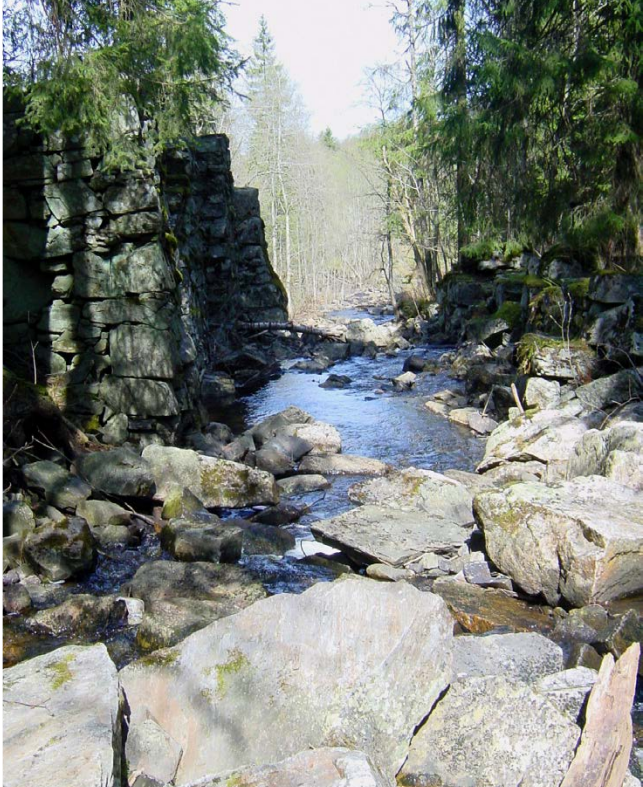
Parking Hvervenbukta



Scale 1:15000



Reconstruction of Ellingsrud mill 1795. Bjørn Berge



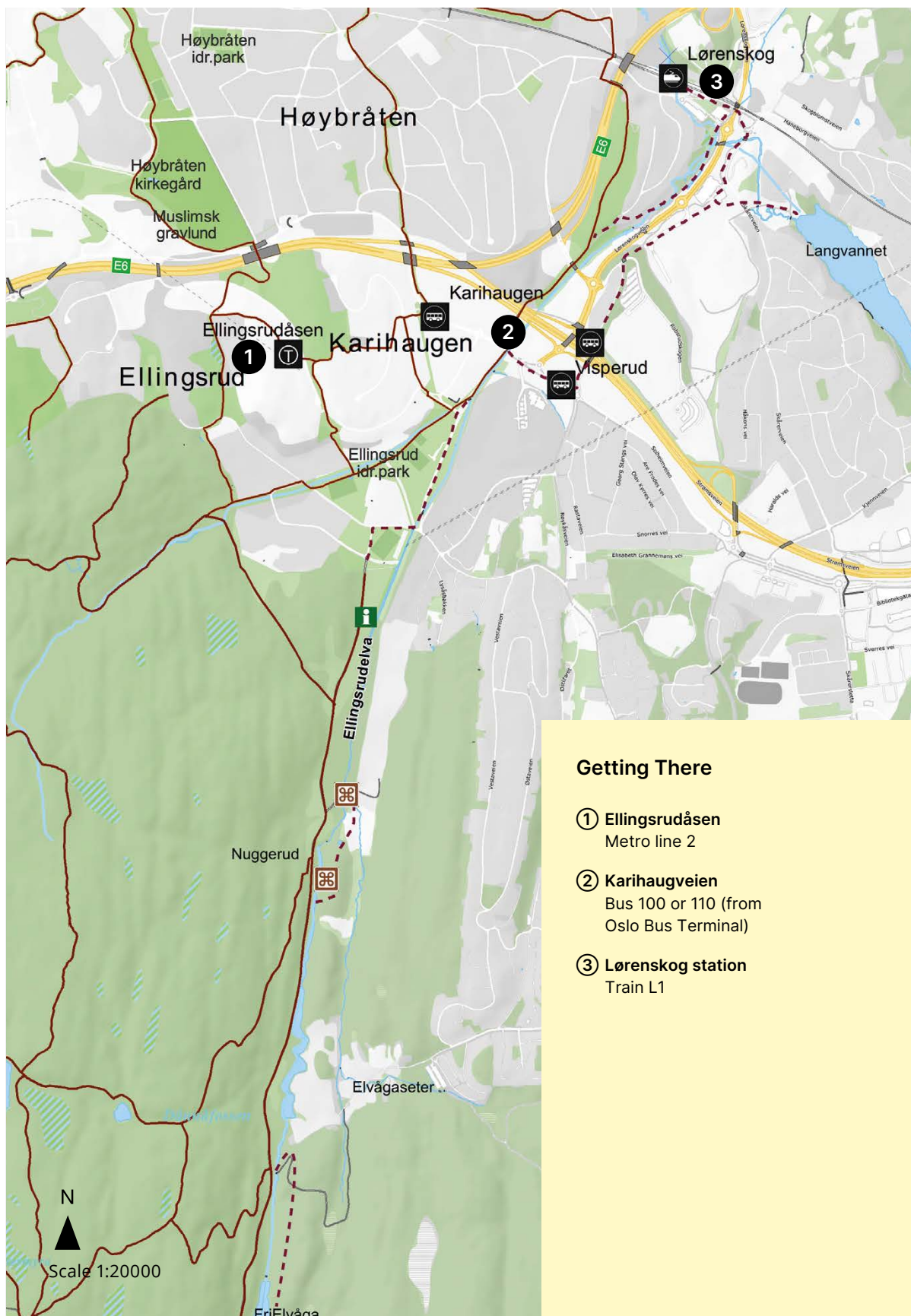
Ellingsrudelva

➤ post@osloelveforum.no

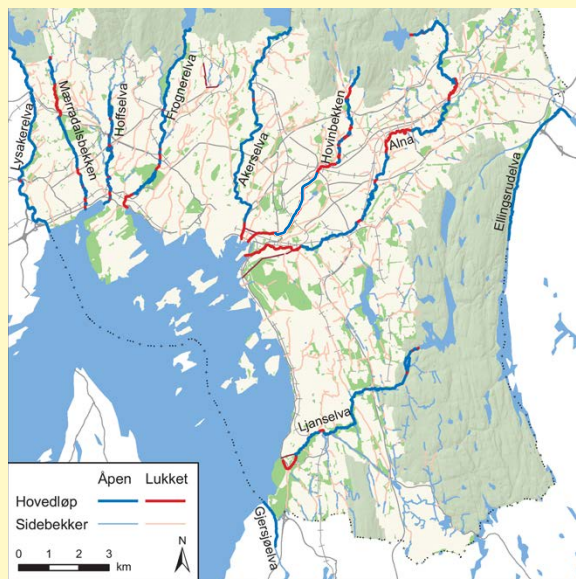
Flows to: Glomma catchment and into the sea at Fredrikstad

A clear stream that flows north

North in Østmarka and out of Elvåga Lake, this is the one Oslo stream not flowing directly down to Oslo Fjord's inner basin. Instead, it flows north, ultimately into Norway's largest river, Glomma. The stream marks the boundary between Oslo and the borough of Lørenskog. The footpath south from the train station follows the river upstream through the commercial district Karihaugen and meets the footpath down from the Metro station at Ellingsrud Farm, an equestrian centre. Continuing upstream, we pass the former tenant farm Nuggerud and follow a sign to the ruins of a corn mill. This was a five-storey structure that exploited the steep terrain. Horse drays brought corn to the top of the hill; sacks of flour were picked up from the ground floor. The footpath continues 3 kilometres along the river to Mariholtet, a lodge by a lake at the entrance to Østmarka communal forest.



The city of Oslo is re-opening Oslo's rivers and streams



“There lies a land by the endless snow, in rifts alone is there life to show,” wrote the Norwegian poet Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. “In rifts” – that is where the rivers and streams run. It is here people settled; Oslo in the Middle Ages lay between Hovinbekken and Alna.

Industrialisation and increasing population turned our rivers and streams into drains polluted with waste. The water stank and could be poisonous. To remove the danger, many of our waterways were buried underground in pipes.

Over the past decades, attitudes have changed. The water in our rivers and streams is now clearer and cleaner. As in many other cities, clean running water has taken on a new role in Oslo. Riversides have become vital

recreation areas, and green spaces that support a wealth of bird, animal and plant life.

Oslo was chosen as the Green Capital of Europe for 2019. One reason was that Oslo had begun to re-open its buried rivers and streams. While at least a quarter of streams in the ten catchments remain buried, Oslo has an ambitious programme for re-opening them.

And Oslo River Forum is a driving force. The City has mandated a 20-meter wide belt along our major streams, and 12 meters from the tributaries, as open areas. We have to protect our riverside parks!

The re-opening of rivers and streams has also an important climate perspective. In steadily wilder and wetter weather, open rivers and streams cope better with large volumes of water, reducing damage to buildings and infrastructure.

Ruter's public transport hub Jernbanetorget/Oslo S

How to find the right platform:

Metro

T all Metro's

Tram

B 12, 13 and 19

F 11, 17 and 18

Bus

D 54

G 34 and 37

H 37 and 74

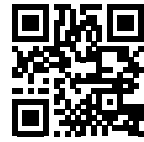
N 31, 32, 60 and 70

P 31 and 32

R 81 and 83

Ruter#

Find journey



Tegnforklaring Legend

- A** Plattform
Platform
- T** T-bane
Metro
- B** Trikk
Tram
- D** Buss
Bus
- G** Tog
Train
- Flytog** Airport Express Train
- Taxi** Taxi
- Sykkelparkering** Bikeparking
- Bysykkel** Citybike
- Trapp** Stairs
- i** Servicepunkt
Service point
- #** Billetter
Tickets

Oslo Elveforum

This booklet is prepared by Oslo Elveforum.

Thanks to The City of Oslo's Water Department for the mapping; Oslo Elveforum has added local tracks and footpaths. Our thanks also to our groups of volunteers.

This guide is provided without charge.
To support the work of Oslo Elveforum can donations be made by **VIPPS** to **555362**.

osloelveforum.no

Editors:

Trine Johnsen, Julie M. Løddesøl, John E. Tibballs, Terje Wold
Original publication March 2019. Updated March 2025

Sources:

"Elvelangs, Ida Hvoslef m.fl Aschehoug 2004, "Blågrønn hovedstad, "Jubel og gråt over Oslos elver og bekker", Oslo Elveforum, 2010, "Bjerkedalen Park" Sidsel Andersen og Rainer Stange, Dronninga landskap 2018, "Lysakerelva", Lysakervassdragets venner 2020

Photos: Oslo Elveforum, Oslo Bymuseum (Anders Wilse) and Unsplash (Ben Pattinson, Michael Diane Weidner, Christian Sogaar, Tom Barrett, Erik Holm, Nick Night, Jaakko Kempainen, Barnabas Davoti)



In collaboration with



Oslo