

Excursion to Kaserstattalm, Stubai 23-10-2023

On Monday the 23rd of October, some members of the 'Future Mountain Forests' research project, including Terra the dog, went on an excursion to the University of Innsbruck field site near to Kaserstattalm in Stubaital. The sun was shining on us, gifting us with beautiful views over to the Stubai Glacier, Serles, and Kesselspitze.

After a steep drive up the gravel track from the valley to the field site with the electric university bus, Alex and Dr Bernice Hwang showed us around the small but compact drought plots. The field site is situated on a steeply angled, South to South-east facing slope that, on the day we visited, was basking in the Autumnal sunshine. The Larch trees were turning bright yellow and orange, contrasting with the dark green of the Spruce. Around the site, there are three plots, each with their own rain-out shelter and control plot. Each rain-out shelter reduces the rainfall reaching the ground, simulating drought conditions. The aim of this is to understand the long-term impacts of drought conditions on the ecosystem.



Alex explaining the measuring instruments.

Around the site, there are various measuring instruments, including two different types of flow meters, dendrometers and soil cores. In addition, there is a tower for meteorological measurements.

[Álex](#) and Bernice explained to us that the drought experiments have been running every summer for the last 8 years but will change next summer. Instead of covering the plots with the white, plastic sheeting to prevent rainfall reaching the soil surface, the covers will not be used, leaving the ground exposed to rainfall. The aim of this next stage is to look at the drought legacy effects, a project that will run for at least the next two years (research done among others by [Álex](#), [Markus](#) and [Moritz](#)).



From left to right: Terra, Alex, Irmgard, Jakub (visiting Erasmus student), Anna, Laura and Bernice.

Text: Laura and Anna