

GRADUATE STUDENT USER FEEDBACK

Toolik Steering Committee Meeting

December 13, 2014

Presented by Caitlin Rushlow

OUTLINE

- Before heading up
- Traveling to/from TFS
- Logistics
- EDC
- GIS
- Science Support
- Camp Life
- Additional Staff Feedback

BEFORE HEADING UP

- Interest in a funding mechanism whereby students can apply to conduct independent research.
- Continued request (Year 4+?) for a graduate student listserv... Would be really helpful for coordinating efforts/equipment!
- Inventory of SCUA materials online?
- Website should include basic project/science information- see CZO websites for an examples.

LOGISTICS: TRAVEL TO CAMP

- Calendar system works well but fills up fast.
- Travel via vans during peak exchange times?
- Request for Toolik Taxi to go to both airports in Prudhoe, because of inconvenience of hauling large amounts of equipment from one to the other.
- Earlier departures from Fairbanks- arrive during dinner, earlier orientation convenient for managers?
- Hand out maps of camp at orientation.

LOGISTICS: IN CAMP

- Grad students appreciate shipping consideration and timeliness- thanks to Pete specifically.
- *“There were not enough MBL trucks available this year.”*
- *“I don’t understand why NSF doesn’t buy these 5 year grants a truck that can then be turned over to the camp at the end of the project. It makes me crazy to think about how much money is paid out to CH2MHILL for these rentals when a larger fleet could support all of the scientists in camp.”*
- *“If possible, it would be helpful to extend UAF vehicle usage to the entire Toolik community, not just UAF employees.”*

EDC: EQUIPMENT

- 10 of 15 respondents used EDC equipment.
- Requests:
 - Higher powered microscope.
 - pH meter.
- Issue with incubation facility this year: one tank was reserved the entire season and unused, which was problematic because of high demand mid-summer.
- Some find the reservation system for equipment to be cumbersome and prone to user error.

EDC: DATA

- Appreciation for soil and air temperature data.
- Disproportionate emphasis on biotic (floral and bird) data collection?
- Data collection requests include:
 - Thermistor chains in important study lakes to monitor water temperature at multiple depths.
 - Better ice-on and ice-off data for lakes.
 - Ice thickness data for lakes.
 - Monitor snow depth and density, not just areal coverage.
 - Number of birds during spring arrival and fall departure.

GIS

- 13 of 15 respondents used GIS services and all indicated that their needs were met in a timely fashion.
- Jason, Randy, and Jorge received consistently positive feedback from survey respondents.
- GIS seems to be keeping abreast of updated technology and datasets, e.g., North Slope DEMs, Google Glass.
- Requests for additional services:
 - Mosaicing of aerial images.
 - Loan of survey grade GPS units.
 - Basic surveying tools for loan.
 - Terrestrial LiDAR scanning.

SCIENCE SUPPORT

- 12 of 15 respondents used science support services.
- Jeb, Joe, Glenn, and Justin received consistently positive feedback throughout the survey responses.
- *“Ice augers were in limited supply in May.”*
- Requests:
 - Set of ratcheting wrenches available for loan.

WORKING IN CAMP

- Lab tents insufficiently warm for housing and using some scientific equipment.
- It took two summers before old project materials from other PIs were moved out of our project's designated lab space.
- Storing materials beneath buildings is inefficient and they degrade quickly: some other system for larger material recycling?

LIVING IN CAMP: FOOD

- Most common descriptors were “delicious” and “plentiful.”
- *“It would be nice to have more “all welcome” vegetarian options at dinner.”*
- *“Why not have vegetarian lunches for everyone? I like to eat meat, but twice a day is too much for me.”*
- *“This year I did miss the more varied ethnic (especially Asian) foods that seemed more common in previous years, but that's just because I'd been spoiled.”*
- *“More beans and (sweet) potatoes!”*

LIVING IN CAMP: RESOURCES

- Lots of support for the new sauna hours- Thanks!
- Spotty or no internet in many weatherports/ATCOs.
- Requests:
 - Update the quiet space/library in the GIS trailer.
 - Set of lockers for people who live in Tent City.
 - Newer equipment/improved space for the Health Club.
 - Sauna temperature on website?

LIVING IN CAMP: COMMUNITY

- *“The community of Toolik is what makes doing research there so wonderful. The dining hall is the most important aspect of this.”*
- *“Any organized activity that breaks up the work day/provides stress relief/physical activity in the evening is great, and I would love to see more of it.”*
- *“I hope that the atmosphere at Toolik will not be altered too much with the presence of NEON crews in the coming years.”*

ADDITIONAL STAFF FEEDBACK

- Many staff members go far above and beyond their job descriptions to help scientists succeed in their work.
- I appreciated the continuity of the higher-level staff over my three years working at the field station, and the new hires this year were great too!
- *“Jeff Spencer certainly deserves recognition as being a cheerful, friendly, and excited member of the staff/kitchen.”*
- *“We are really thankful that Toolik hired Seth.”*
- *“We have had help from Molly in all aspects of our project...”*

THANKS FOR LISTENING!

QUESTIONS?

