

TOOLIK FIELD STATION

2020 SAFETY & EMERGENCY OVERVIEW
OCT 1, 2019 - SEPT 30, 2020 REPORT



SCOTT FILIPPONE



INITIAL COVID RESPONSE



- Large decisions with a rapidly changing ruleset
- Daily meetings
- Organizational direction established within a week
- Dealing with uncertainty
 - “Are we doing the right thing?”
 - “Are we doing the right thing *correctly*?”

THE EXTENDED SHIFT



- Established to buy time during a period of little information
- Core team was established for a 3-month shift
 - 1 camp manager
 - 2 maintenance personnel
 - 1 kitchen staff
 - 1 EDC manager
 - 3 EDC technicians
 - 1 GIS lead
 - 1 PFS technician
 - 1 EMT

EXTENDED SHIFT OBJECTIVES



- Core objectives:
 - Protect personnel in camp
 - Protect camp infrastructure
 - Generate scientific data
 - Allow for research continuity for researchers

DECISION TO OPEN



- Multi-month discussion with a fast-approaching deadline
- Risk vs. Reward
- Decisions make a direct impact on the life of staff and users
- Evaluation of our organization's mission
 - We support science
 - We enable the scientific process to thrive in a remote and challenging environment
 - Our services allow long-standing research to continue
- Compliance with state and federal legislation
- Risk vs Reward
 - Highly personal

DECISION TO OPEN



- Primary objectives:
 - Prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into camp
 - Allowing for expanded operations to occur while keeping participants safe
 - Minimize the risk of introducing COVID cases into Alaska
- A strict set of entry guidelines were established in accordance with CDC guidance and current research
- Required collaboration between camp staff, Fairbanks staff, NSF, and researchers
- Policies and guidelines were drafted up for safe camp operations and incident response
- Back-and-forth review with ultimate approval by UAF and NSF
 - All current protocols have been approved by TFS, UAF, and the NSF

RELEASE OF INFORMATION



- Researchers were provided updates via the Toolik Field Station website and town hall meetings
- Town hall meetings provided an additional stream of feedback and granted us additional perspective
 - Most importantly: Transparency

STATION ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



- Self-screening questionnaire
- 14-day quarantine
 - Lodging provided in Fairbanks
- 2 Negative COVID tests
 - Alleviated concerns about false negatives
- Pre-trip temperature screening

EXPANDED OPERATIONS



- Only a few projects were able to comply with our restrictions and sent personnel to conduct research
 - Long standing projects
- While some projects were unable to comply and conduct research this season, we feel that we have preserved our mission to the best of our ability
- Zero suspected cases in camp since the start of the pandemic

LOOKING FORWARD



- Mental health must be taken into account, especially now
 - More responsibility spread among fewer staff
 - Translates to researchers
- Staffing and shifts
 - Quarantine takes a mental toll on users and staff before their shift even starts
 - Lack of access to friends and family

THANK YOU!

