

Toolik Field Station

2026 Winter Steering Committee Meeting
Jan. 29, 2026, 9a - 1p



We acknowledge the Alaska Native nations upon whose traditional lands our field station operates. In Fairbanks, our Logistic offices are located on the traditional lands of the Troth Yeddha' Dena people of the Lower Tanana River.

We acknowledge that Toolik Field Station and the surrounding areas are located on the ancestral hunting grounds of the Nunamiut, and occasional hunting grounds and routes of the Gwich'in, Koyukuk, and Iñupiaq peoples.

Toolik Field Station recognizes, and is grateful for, the Indigenous people who inhabit and steward the land.





2026 Operations

Staff changes

Farewell

Laura Belval

Faye Ethridge

Scott Filippone

Randy Fulweber

Justin Johnson

Mike Reynolds

Matt Walker

Jorge Noguera Tapia

Welcome

Lindsey Clark

Brian Tamm

Trevor Layman

New GIS Manager

Happy retirement to Brian Barnes!



Welcome, Trevor Layman!

- 9 month position starting in late Feb.
- Masters from Scripps
- Background in education & civilian & Coast Guard operations in polar regions
- Formerly the
 - Crew-science liaison on Arctic icebreaker Healy
 - Search & Rescue supervisor in Juneau
 - Comms lead at McMurdo
- Enjoys running, yoga, video games, skiing, foreign languages, and learning!





What to expect in 2026

- Town Hall - **February 6, 2026 @ 10 am AKT**
- Summer reservations due **March 1**
- TFS rate increase in 2026 to **\$135/night**
- Logistics and transportation
 - North and south trucks will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays weekly.
 - Dalton Highway Express will run north on Fridays and south on Saturdays during select peak season weeks.
 - **Arrival days to the station are Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.** Other arrival days need to be coordinated with the station manager on site.
 - Expecting limited availability for pad trucks. **Range is limited to between Atigun Pass and Sagwon.**
 - New driver forms (again). Same backups required. 21 year age restriction removed from UAF.



What to expect in 2026, continued



- Truck transfer in process for 14 vehicles from NSF to UAF, in part to address age restriction.
 - Timeline has been slow.
 - NSF vehicles are not roadworthy during the period that their plates are removed and UAF plates are installed. UAF requires ~2 months of processing time to receive state plates.
 - Trying to avoid having trucks out of commission for the summer.
- Two NSF trucks were transferred to UAF this winter & will join the pad truck fleet.
- We anticipate renting one additional UAF vehicle to help meet researcher needs.
- Age requirements are still in place for NSF but have changed for UAF.
 - NSF = min. 25 years old
 - UAF = 3 years of licensed driving experience.



What to expect in 2026, cont'd



- New SRS labels for southbound sample hold and shipments.
 - Non-critical information lines have been removed.
- ALL southbound hazardous shipments must be accompanied by the Hazmat Shipping Transfer Form.
 - This includes batteries.
 - Ensure your safety office understands that haz shipments out of AK sometimes have more restrictions than within the continental United States.
- Both the forms, and SRS labels can be found in shipping and receiving, the computer lab, and at the dining hall computer counter.

Southbound Sample **HOLD**

SRS #: _____ Package # _____ of _____

Temperature requirement:

☐ DNF ☐ None ☐ 4°C ☐ -20°C ☐ -80°C

We can store samples at their appropriate temperature in Fairbanks.

Hazmat?: Yes or No if yes, UN # _____

Required Actions:

- ☐ Notify FOA/OPS staff of this shipment
- ☐ Affix special labels if needed (HAZ, fragile, etc.)

Southbound Sample **SHIPMENT**

SRS #: _____ Package # _____ of _____

Temperature requirement:

☐ DNF ☐ None ☐ 4°C ☐ -20°C ☐ -80°C

We suggest shipping temperature sensitive samples on Monday/Tuesday.
We can store samples at their appropriate temperature in Fairbanks.

Hazmat?: Yes or No if yes, UN # _____

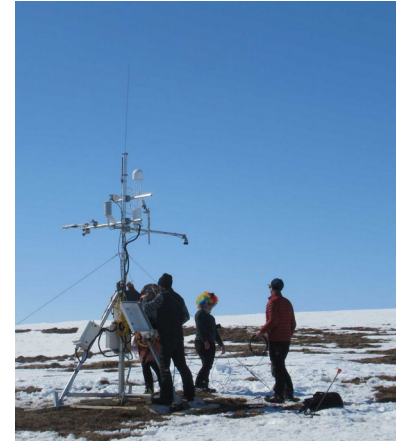
Required Actions:

- ☐ Notify FOA/OPS staff of this shipment
- ☐ Affix special labels if needed (HAZ, fragile, etc.)
- ☐ Completely remove/cover old shipping labels and barcodes

Spatial & Environmental Data Center



- New autonomous instrumentation fee - **\$200/month/project**
- Science Support - **\$16.88/hour**
 - Remote access/field assistance - 16 free hours per project per year*
 - GIS & remote sensing support (data collection & processing) - 16 free hours per project per year*
- *only if projects spend at least 5 user days at Toolik.
- Drone replaced - discussion to come!
- Year-round EDC office & work space
- Secondary met station data now online



New projects - 2026

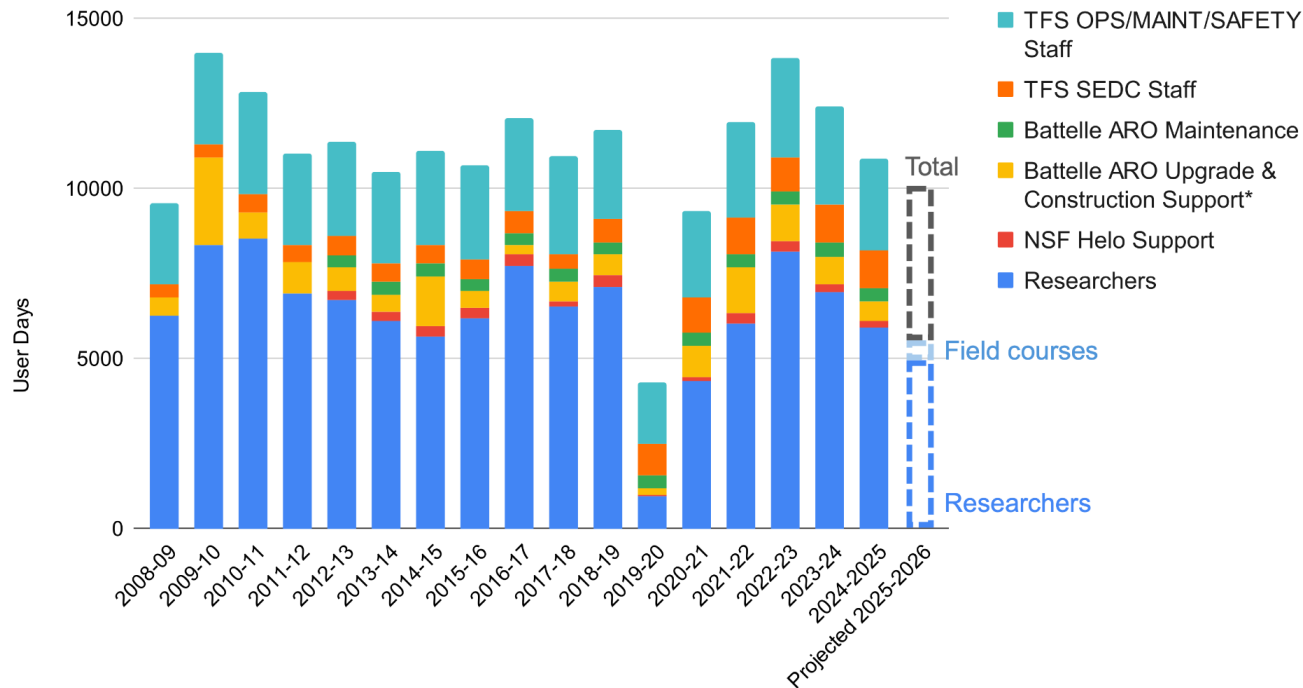


- Permafrost thaw impacts on stream water quality
 - Dr. Marisa Repasch, UNM, prior Tundra Awardee, funded by Sandia Nat'l Lab & UNM
- Moss-cyanobacteria-associated nitrogen fixation in primary succession
 - Dr. Mingyue Yuan, prior Tundra Awardee, funded by Swedish Research Council
- North Slope grizzly diets & behavior
 - Ellery Vincent, PhD student at Washington State Uni, in partnership with AK Dept. of Fish & Game
- Evaluating the potential of airborne SAR to detect and monitor caribou
 - Lindsay Stark, PhD student at Boise State, funded by NASA
- Arctic thaw slump-snow feedbacks on winter soil temps & GHG flux
 - Dr. Kelly Gleason, funded by Portland State Uni
- Searching for radio-quiet site to capture signals from the cosmic dark ages
 - Dr. Cosmin Deaconu, U of Chicago, privately funded by Research Corp for Scientific Advancement
- Influence of warming winters and increased snow cover on Arctic freshwater food systems
 - Dr Sally MacIntyre and Dr. Milla Rautio at Univ du Québec, funded by New Frontiers Research Fund (CAN) & NorForsk (Nordic)



Projected user day outlook 2026

Station Occupancy (2008-present)



- Expecting 600 less research user days
- Making up the difference with 572 field course days
- ~10,000 user days total, lowest non-COVID year since 2008



Field Courses & Outreach



- New Field Course Support fee - **\$70/person/night** for non-UA groups (\$51.80 for UA)
 - Covers station tours, pre-course planning, other misc. support, and on-site coordinator to help reduce impact to station
- Removed date limitations for courses
- Currently 8 courses for June - Aug. 2026
 - 4 Summer Sessions, including A Natural History of Arctic Alaska led by Brian
 - 2 Upward Bound, new UAF & returning one from OSU
 - UAF Climate Scholars, Soil Geography
- Visitor's Day 2026 - Saturday, June 6
- Artist-in-Residence program



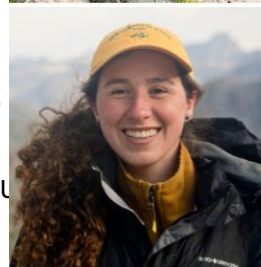
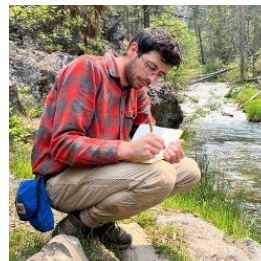
Photo by Erin Towns





Tundra Awardees

- Three awards in 2025
 - Claire Bachand & Morgan Brown, UAF grad students, supported by Reeburgh fund
 - Preston Kemeny & Marisa Repasch
 - Emma Chandler
- New updates from past awardees
 - Cansu Culha '24 returned in 2025 & will return in 2026
 - Austin Routt '24 returned in 2025 & planning field course for 2027
 - Returning in 2026: Alex Michaud '22, Mingyue Yuan '23
 - Marisa Repasch '25
 - 7 out of 16 awardees have returned to Toolik to continue research
- 2026 applications close on Feb. 15



UA Giving Day is March 24-26.
Interested in sponsoring a challenge?

Toolik merchandise

- New water bottles, stickers, hats on e-store
- Exploring a sunshirt/athletic wear hoody w/ simplified Toolik logo
- Over \$4,800 in net sales since summer 2024
 - Proceeds benefit the Toolik Station Support Fund, which supports efforts like our artist program & renewable energy efforts
- What merchandise would you like to see?





Spatial & Environmental Data Center Qs

● Drones

- DJI drones no longer allowed for federal grants.
 - Retired and auctioned off our DJI drones
- Drone replacement plan
 - [VisionAerial Switchblade](#)
 - Innovating a 3D printed drone
 - Grant writing to replace drones
- Cannot fly sensors owned by researchers that are not on the approved list

● Embargo Period





Questions?



Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Initiatives

- Wrapping up two strategic initiatives
 - International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP) - final report 3/26
 - Marin Kuizenga co-chaired RPT 7
 - Donie Bret-Harte co-chaired RPT 2 & contributed to RPT 7
 - Amanda Young is secretary for RPT 5
 - 50th Celebrations
 - Building science community: ASM & AGU Town Hall
 - Raising awareness: Visitor's Day, First Friday & 4 articles on our 50th (Impact, OBFS, Aurora, UA Statewide)
 - Progress has been made on other efforts like formalizing educational support, collaboration with rural communities
- We will be revisiting Strategic Plan in Spring 2026 to plan initiatives for coming year.
- What initiatives do you want to see?



All Scientists Meeting 2027



- Joint with ARC LTER, which we hope will bring more attendees to the ASM & increase broader Toolik community understanding of ARC LTER

CA renewal on-deck for 2026-2027!





Thank you!
We will meet again in the summer!