

# TOOLIK FIELD STATION

TOWN HALL – 02/19/2021

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# WHAT TO EXPECT THIS SEASON ?



- TFS is open to researchers. No closure as in 2020 due to COVID-19
- However, we are not back to pre-pandemic conditions yet
  - We will have similar quarantine & testing protocols as in 2020 prior to arriving at TFS
  - Masks are required when you can't socially distance
- Logistics and transportation are expected to operate closer to “normal”, but with some COVID adaptations – no Prudhoe Bay pick up
- Population will be capped at ~100, 1 resident per bedroom (except family units)
- We will continue to offer Remote Access and field assistance to researchers; please feel free to use this service
- We know that quarantine is challenging for researchers

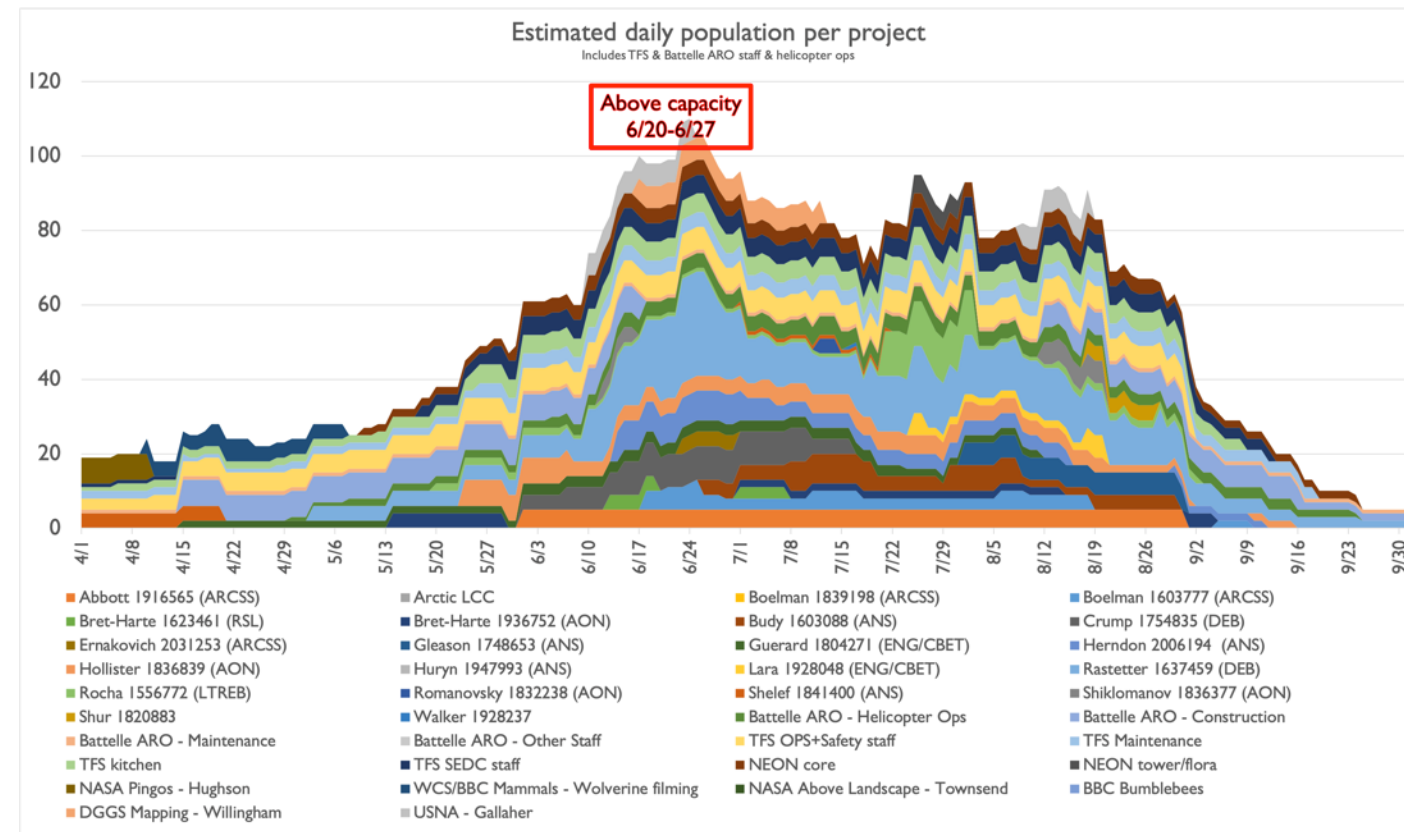
## SAFETY - VACCINES

- Vaccination status will not provide an exemption for pre-travel requirements or in-camp policies
  - Not all people are protected by vaccines
  - Vaccines may protect you, but not the people around you
- Long term data is still forthcoming – too soon to make exceptions
- Community transmission of COVID-19 is still much higher than it was last summer
- New variants are concerning
- TFS does not have sophisticated medical capability on-site

# SCIENCE IN 2021



- ~30 projects expected to be present at TFS, including 21 NSF/Battelle-ARO supported projects.
- 2 NSF helicopters in camp & 1 for DGGS
- Please make reservations in MyToolik by 3/31



# SAFETY - PRE-TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS



- Everyone must undergo a 14 day quarantine
  - Quarantine facility organized by Battelle ARO for all NSF supported projects
- 2 negative COVID-19 tests
  - One on Day 5 & one between Days 7-10 (depending on logistics)
- Temperature screening on the day of departure
- You must provide evidence of Medevac insurance prior to travel
- Protective plans are no longer required by the State of Alaska

# ALASKA STATE HEALTH ADVISORIES



- Because the State of Alaska's emergency declaration expired at midnight on February 14, 2021, there are at present no COVID-19 testing requirements for travelers
  - Testing at the airport is available, and is recommended
  - It is now free for both residents and non-residents
- However, it is possible that a new emergency declaration may go into effect
- Keep an eye on <https://covid19.alaska.gov/travelers/>

## SAFETY - PRE-TOOLIK TRAVEL ACCOMMODATIONS

- Socially distanced outdoor recreation will be permitted during quarantine
- Working on setting up online voice channels for individuals in quarantine to communicate with one another
- Potential for members of the same household or lab group to quarantine together in a “pod”
  - But, one positive test flags everyone quarantining in the pod

## SAFETY - IN-CAMP COVID POLICIES

- Masks must be worn when social distancing is not possible, both indoors and outdoors
- Frequent sanitizing of dining facility surfaces
- Kitchen services may be reduced
- Dining shifts at high population levels (~60+)
- 1 resident per room
  - Possible exception for members of the same household or couples
- We are looking into getting COVID-19 tests in camp
- TFS will continue to follow the safety plan and protocols approved by UAF



## WHAT IF?

- What if you get sick with COVID-19 in Alaska?
  - TFS staff and/or Medevac will get you back to Fairbanks
  - Your institution, not NSF, has the responsibility to get you home from there
- What if you test positive for COVID-19 during quarantine?
  - You have to stay in the quarantine hotel until cleared by a medical professional, seek additional treatment, or go home
  - Your institution has the responsibility to pay for the extra days and to get you home

# Toolik Helicopter

Two Robinson-44 helicopters – vendor TBD

- Currently 233 flight hours
  - Helicopter one dates: May 25 – September 15
  - Helicopter Two dates: June 15 – August 15
- Two helicopter coordinators
- Pilots and coordinators will follow all Toolik COVID protocols
- Please provide all initial flight requests to [Rachel@polarfield.com](mailto:Rachel@polarfield.com) by **March 15**.



# Quarantine

Battelle ARO will provide quarantine lodging and testing in Fairbanks and Anchorage.

- Lodging in Fairbanks can be at Sophie's Station or Wedgewood.
- For most groups, meals will be reimbursed at \$55/day. No receipts needed.
- Testing process will be revised this year:
  - Battelle ARO will provide test kits, to your hotel room.
  - You will register with Beacon and schedule a brief Zoom consult, to assure adequate sample collection.
  - Staff will pick up your kit and ship.
  - Results will be available directly to you in 24-48 hours.
- Project Managers will be your POC – an updated fact sheet will be forthcoming.



# REMOTE ACCESS - SUCCESSES



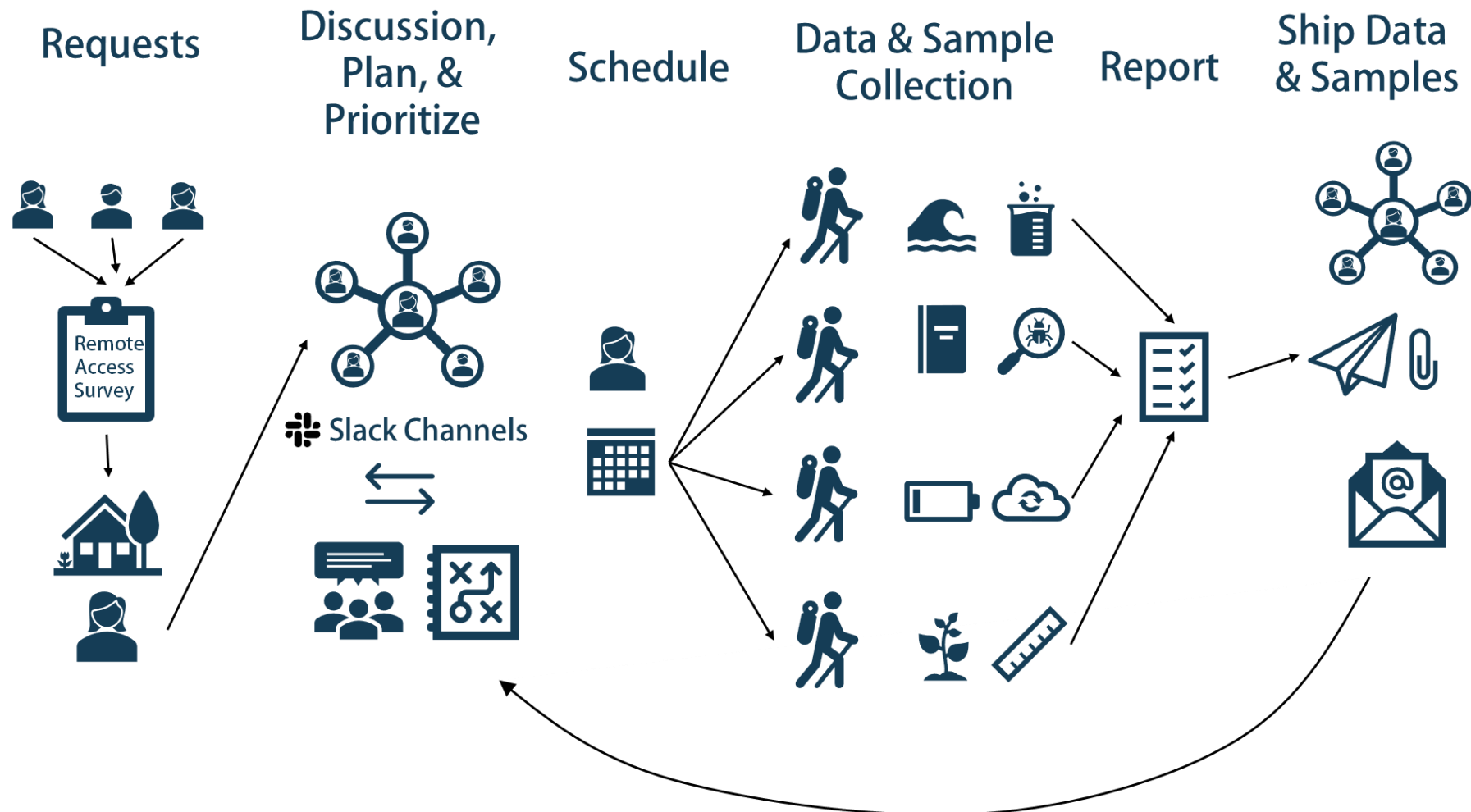
- Hired all staff from within Alaska in 2020 to reduce the risk of COVID.
- Lessons were learned in what the level of detail were needed to communicate with researchers.
  - Details in protocols from researchers.
  - Details in questions to clarify from TFS support staff.
- Established a mechanism to help support more projects at Toolik throughout the year.
- Successfully supported 27 projects (2344 hours 2020 vs. 242 hours in 2019)
  - Projects supported were large collaborative NSF projects as well as fieldwork for graduate theses.
    - 4 post-docs, 12 PhD students, 4 MS students, and at least 6 undergraduate students



# REMOTE ACCESS EXAMPLES



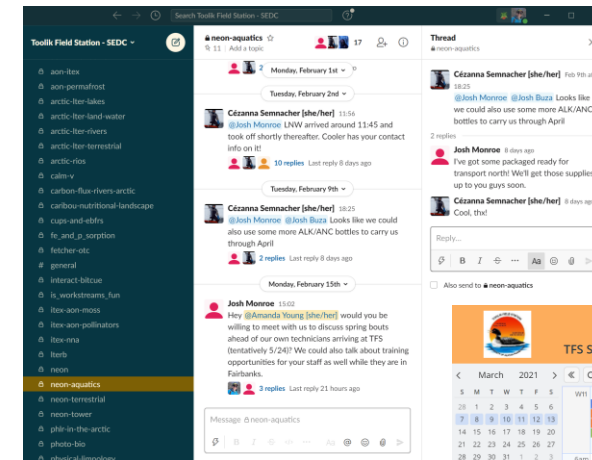
# REMOTE ACCESS - STRUCTURE



# REMOTE ACCESS GOING FORWARD



- Continue to provide Remote Access to users who cannot make it to Toolik
  - Year-round support
- Provide additional field support to researchers at Toolik
- Continue to improve communication between the SEDC and researchers
  - Request Remote Access or Field Assistance
    - <https://forms.gle/JY6AgP7AfBv9b6qa8>
  - Slack – contact Amanda Young ([ayoung55@alaska.edu](mailto:ayoung55@alaska.edu)) if you would like a Slack tutorial or if your project does not yet have a channel
  - Calendar of staffing, remote access, and field assistance for researchers to see when their sampling is scheduled.
    - Check your slack channel for a link to your calendar



**Toolik Remote Access and Field Assistance Survey**

This survey is to enable the SEDC (Spatial and Environmental Data Center) to understand the demand for Remote Access or Field Assistance during spring and summer of 2021. Please fill out the survey with your requests. The survey allows for 3 potential requests on each form. You may submit additional requests by filling out the form additional times.

If you have any questions feel free to contact the SEDC Manager Amanda Young ([ayoung55@alaska.edu](mailto:ayoung55@alaska.edu)).

\* Required

Email address \*

Your email

Name \*





QUESTIONS?

