

TOOLIK FIELD STATION TOWN HALL

FEBRUARY 24, 2023



WELCOME



- Opening Remarks – Syndonia Bret Harte, TFS
- Opening Remarks - Frank Rack, NSF



Winter photos by Amanda Young and Joe Franich

Town Hall Meeting - February 24, 2023

Land Acknowledgement

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 this land.

WHAT TO EXPECT THIS SEASON ?



- Changes to TFS Covid Mitigation Plan
- Shuttle schedule:
 - Northbound truck(s): Tuesdays & Thursdays (Fridays during peak season, June-July)
 - Southbound truck(s): Tuesdays & Thursdays (Saturdays during peak season, June-July)
- Prudhoe Bay pick up and departures can be arranged on Thursdays, in advance
- Kitchen staff at less than full strength, potential for less diverse meals
- Population capped at ~125 (shared rooms with some two dorm-style tents reserved for sick bays)

Summer reservations due **March 31st, 2023**

COVID-19 Mitigation: Overview



- Moving from a pre-travel quarantine model to a testing and response-based approach
- Before traveling to Toolik, individuals will need to provide proof of two negative rapid antigen tests.
 - Take the first test two days before you are scheduled to travel to Toolik.
 - Take the second test on the scheduled day of departure.
- After arriving to the station, all residents need to take a rapid antigen test on days 5 & 7.
- Projects need to provide a minimum of six rapid antigen tests per participant, per trip.
 - This is an allowable grant expense for NSF funded projects.

COVID-19 Mitigation: Pre-Departure



- Vaccines (or exemptions) are still required. Users will complete a policy review and vaccine attestation through their myToolik account prior to their scheduled travel date
- Individuals who test positive will not be permitted to travel to Toolik until they have been cleared in accordance with CDC guidelines. In such an event, TFS Safety will be in contact until the individuals have recovered.
 - Projects are responsible for housing arrangements should a member of their group test positive before the traveling to Toolik.
 - Travelers are highly encouraged to practice COVID-safe practices and social distancing 10 days before their departure to Toolik.

COVID-19 Mitigation: At the station

- New residents are encouraged to wear a face mask indoors for their first 7 days at Toolik but will, otherwise, be able to go about their business normally.
- Additional outdoor dining space will be provided to help facilitate social distancing, and we will add HEPA filter air purification units in the dining hall.
- Residents who contract COVID-19 at Toolik will be isolated in a designated “sick bay” and monitored until they are cleared in accordance with current CDC guidance.
 - If an outbreak spreads through Toolik, residents will undergo periodic antigen testing and new arrivals may be deferred until the spread of illness stops.
 - TFS will maintain a supply of Paxlovid for those who meet the eligibility requirements.

COVID-19 Mitigation



Our new focus is one of personal responsibility:

- Travelers should be aware of the risks of COVID-19 during travel and protect themselves.
- Understand that there is always a possibility that COVID-19 could enter Toolik at any time.
- Adjust your plans in the week leading up to your scheduled travel date – Just because there isn't a quarantine doesn't mean that you shouldn't practice social distancing and isolation.
- We encourage masking indoors to mitigate outbreaks.

STAFFING



Welcome to:

- Logistics Coordinator: Kara Kornhauser
- Fiscal Professional: Adam Chisom
- Fiscal Assistant: Haley Tyler
- MEF Tech: Kevin Williams
- Year-round EDC Techs
 - Mayra Melendez-Gonzalez
 - Abby Jackson

Goodbyes...

- Pete Reynoldson has a new job with UAF
- Stevie Goetz has a new job in IAB



REMOTE ACCESS/ FIELD ASSISTANCE



- Toolik will continue to offer year-round Remote Access in 2023.
 - Remote Access is **not** a replacement for place-based research but can enhance it:
 - Extending sampling period beyond the time that a project is in camp
 - Lends extra sets of hands to projects for large sampling events
 - Safety of an extra person
 - Access to the station when no one on a project can come
- Allows data to be collected from Toolik for circumpolar projects (INTERACT).
- Decreases carbon footprint by decreasing the amount of travel to AK and Toolik.
- All projects in myToolik are available to receive 40 hours of assistance before being charged.

Do you have Remote Access needs? Contact Amanda Young!

Email ayoung55@alaska.edu or DM on the Toolik Slack workspace.

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Update on Helo Support to Toolik Field Station

Presentation for Toolik Town Hall on 24 February 2023

Actions to Improve Helicopter Support for 2023

- The Helo Support subcontract is being recompeteted using expanded criteria developed in collaboration with NSF and the Department of the Interior Office of Aviation Services (DOI OAS), as well as based on feedback from the Toolik Steering Committee.
- Efforts to improve Helo Coordinator communication and scheduling performance are underway, including implementing an improved Helo Calendar capability and involvement of IAB (Randy Fulweber) in the Helo Coordinator recruitment/interview process.
- Direct feedback mechanisms from Helo Support participants are being implemented in the form of a brief 'Snap' survey that will be used to gather feedback from individuals filing a flight plan that will be transmitted directly to Battelle ARO Program Management (Brian Hawkins), Alaska Operations (Patrick Proden), and HSE (Bevin Luna), as well as NSF.

A detailed update is planned for a Toolik Town Hall in May to introduce the Helo Vendor for the 2023 Field Season, roll out the helicopter survey, and provide other related updates

***Reminder: - Helo schedule requests from researchers due March 8 to Patrick Proden
- Final season schedule will be prepared by April 1***



THANK YOU!



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@Jason Stuckey