

Toolik Steering Committee RA Update



January 2022
Jason Dobkowski

RA's at Toolik

- Toolik Users
- Many stay at TFS for full summer, or make several trips
- Usually not students, but often working closely with graduate students or mentoring undergrads
- Carrying on research and making project decisions when PIs are not in camp

Working at TFS in 2021

- Overall a successful field season for projects able to make it to TFS in 2021
- Many more projects present for majority of the summer than in 2020
- “Catch up” on work/measurements missed in 2020



What would make work easier at TFS?

- An additional DI machine and acid washing station – high traffic at wet lab, impeding getting lab tasks accomplished
- EDC help didn't always have required equipment/gear for helping with field work (e.g., waders)
- Identifying and enforcing what are communal vs. project specific supplies – concerns raised over some labs equipment being volunteered to other groups through the EDC

COVID 2021

- Quarantine in Fairbanks went very well for most people, testing went much better than in 2020. PFS coordination was very helpful.
- “The quarantine made me feel significantly more comfortable working in camp... .For at-risk folks, the message could easily become “my research is more important than your well being.”
- Concerns raised about whether staff and users were under the same covid restrictions, especially with regards to staff trips to Fairbanks or Prudhoe.

Life at TFS

- Overall camp life was good in 2021, lower population and single rooms was widely appreciated.
- Efforts made towards more inclusive events appealing to broader interests
- Shower module is “cold, cramped, unpleasant, lacks privacy, and is often broken”
- Perennial problem: WiFi in living spaces is awful or non-existent

Helicopter for fieldwork

- No major conflicts reported with scheduling
- Pilots and coordinators were terrific
- Noted some friction between pilots and coordinator regarding safety policies and who makes the final decisions with regards to safety

Misconduct and camp culture

- Required Title IX training is good, the “real” camp scenarios are helpful
- Documentation around camp, in towers, is useful
- Need to incorporate more than just sexual misconduct into the required training for all TFS users

Title IX Reporting

- “I would like to see added to the training is a section to help individuals figure out if they're a mandatory reporter and, if they are, where and who they are mandated to report to.”
- “Maybe there could be a check box in the myToolik check in that's like "I am (or am not) a mandatory reporter" and then those people could get some extra training”

Staff Recognition

- “I find Justin to be the most helpful person in camp most of the time”
- “Huge thank you to Justin, Collin, Bodie, and Kevin for tackling projects that made life in camp way better like the new sauna shower and the screened in porch off the community center.”
- “And a huge shout out to Gina for keeping the kitchen going after Laura was hurt!”
- “Dave, Colin, Justin, Amanda, and Lindsey were all very helpful”

Summary

- Overall, 2021 was a very good season
- No reported critical problems preventing projects for getting their work done
- COVID was a big factor for most projects and what research could be carried out
- Helpful to get any info/changes in COVID protocols and quarantine as early as possible

