

# field notes

The Polar Field Services Newsletter



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## [2011-2012 PolarTREC Teachers Explore the Poles](#)



2011 PolarTREC orientation participants pose for a group photo after dinner.  
Photo courtesy of Mike League

During the last week in February, thirteen educators from across the United States convened in Fairbanks, Alaska, to participate in the 2011 [PolarTREC](#) Orientation and ShareFair. The annual orientation is the kick off for this rigorous and rewarding [National Science Foundation-funded](#) professional development opportunity. Now in its fifth year, PolarTREC improves teacher content knowledge and instructional practices through intensive two-to-eight-week research experiences in the polar regions. While working closely with polar scientists across many scientific disciplines, PolarTREC teachers share information about polar science and the polar regions with their students and communities.



National Science Foundation Einstein Fellow, Laura Lukes tries a reindeer antler on for size at the UAF Reindeer Research Station. Photo courtesy of Janet Warburton

Orientation events included presentations from ARCUS staff who described the PolarTREC program, requirements, and technology. Three PolarTREC alumni and one past PolarTREC researcher attended the orientation to share their experiences and words of wisdom with newly selected teachers.



University of Alaska Fairbanks scientist, Katey Walter Anthony, clears snow from a small pond to try to find methane bubbles trapped in the ice. Photo courtesy of Zeb Polly

A large part of orientation is preparing teachers for the logistical situations unique to the polar regions. Robbie Score from CPS and Roy Stehle from SRI both attended to ensure teachers had a good understanding of typical procedures and the use of satellite phones. Several additional PolarTREC alumni, researchers, and other experts joined the orientation in-person and virtually to present on their areas of expertise.



ARCUS Website Developer Ronnie Owens helps a small group of teachers learn how to post journal entries to the PolarTREC website. Photo courtesy of Zeb Polly

During the orientation's communication technology training, teachers learned to post online journals, complete with photos

and video, from their field camps and stations. Participants also listened to presentations and discussed ideas for sharing the PolarTREC experience with their classrooms, schools, and communities. Between intensive training and hands-on work sessions the whole group also got outside, explored Fairbanks, and learned a little about the Arctic.

Field trips included a visit to the University of Alaska's (UAF) Museum of the North, the UAF Reindeer Research Program, the World Ice Art Championships, and a visit to a nearby thermokarst pond where Katey Anthony Walter discussed the role of methane in a warming arctic. Teachers also visited the CPS warehouse where Polar Field Service's Matt Irinaga performed his popular "dressing for work in the Arctic" fashion show.



Matt Irinaga actively describes methods for dressing to work in the Arctic. Photo courtesy of Mike League

Despite the long days, many teachers expressed that the PolarTREC orientation and ShareFair was one of the best professional development workshops they had experienced. At the end of the week they felt well-prepared and enthusiastic about sharing their upcoming experiences.



PolarTREC teachers take photos and record videos as they feed lichen to the reindeer at the UAF Reindeer Research Station. Photo courtesy of Janet Warburton

PolarTREC teachers venturing into the Arctic this year include John Wood, who worked with Susan Natali (University of Florida) studying carbon balance in Healy, Alaska; and Mike Lampert, who is now based at the Svartisen Subglacial Laboratory in Norway with researchers from Iowa State University. Paula Dell is spending April to early June in the Antarctic studying ice fish with Kristin O'Brien from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

In coming events, Jim Pottinger will soon return to Greenland to work with Koni Steffen (University of Colorado) at Swiss Camp, while Jim Miller will visit Barrow, Alaska in June to study microbial activity in thawing permafrost with David Lipson of San Diego State University.

Teacher expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic will be ongoing throughout the year.



2011 PolarTREC teacher, John Wood works on chiseling ice in hopes of finding places where bubbles of methane have been trapped in the ice. Photo courtesy of Zeb Polly

Follow [PolarTREC](#) expeditions online at the [Virtual Base Camp](#) where you can search expeditions by timeline, map, or project participants. –Kristin Timm

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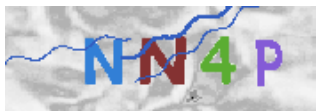
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