



## Parks teacher to embark on an Arctic journey for the second time

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### By Press Release

Deanna Wheeler, a science teacher at J.C. Parks Elementary School, is about to return to the Arctic for a second educational experience of a lifetime. As part of the PolarTREC program, Wheeler will travel aboard an icebreaker for 21 days in the Chukchi Sea with scientists to participate in polar research. She was initially selected for the program in 2009, when she traveled to the Bering Sea.

The PolarTREC program, which stands for Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating in the Arctic, is an educational research experience that is funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation and managed by the Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S. During her polar expedition, Wheeler will participate in polar research such as examining the food chain for walrus and eiders, testing the water, and examining the sediment at the bottom of the sea for living organisms. The expedition will also monitor areas where exploratory offshore oil and gas drilling has been conducted.

Wheeler is excited about being selected to participate in the program for the second time, and is looking forward to learning as much as possible. "To have the opportunity to share real life research from an icebreaker in the Chukchi Sea will be an awesome experience," she said.

Wheeler will be able to share her experiences on board the USCGC Healy with other educators, scientists and students through Internet tools including online teacher and research journals, message boards and podcasts. Wheeler said she will not only be able to share the experiences with students at J.C. Parks, but she will be able to share data and her experiences with other Charles County Public Schools students through the online tools available on board the icebreaker.

"If students at another school are working on a specific project in which I have data for, they can view daily reports that we will upload to the Internet. I look forward to helping connect two vastly different worlds and will communicate with the use of technology back to our students and the community," Wheeler said.

The application process is rigorous and more than 250 teachers nationwide apply to participate in the program, which only accepts about 15 teachers per year. She departs for her experience in Dutch Harbor, Alaska on August 5 and returns to Barrow, Alaska on August 25. She trains the next few weeks to prepare for the experience.

To follow Wheeler's daily logs, or for more information about the application process and PolarTREC

program, visit [www.polartrec.com](http://www.polartrec.com).

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