

High school students - building scientific and polar curiosity through participation in Fram-V: a scientific field camp on drifting sea ice

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Principal objective

To introduce and educate high school students in practical and theoretical aspects of modern polar research.

To acquire the geo-scientific data which will contribute to:

- constrain the plate boundary for the earliest motion within the emerging Fram Strait gateway;
- to document the Holocene paleoenvironment north of Svalbard and the relative strength of inflow of Atlantic water and
- to document the state of the upper ocean and sea ice during IPY and collect data to improve our understanding of interaction processes between Atlantic heat and sea ice cover.

Project summary

To inspire, educate and give hands-on polar research experience to high school students, we propose to establish a five week field camp on drifting sea ice about 300 km north of Svalbard. The four week science and education program - early April to early May 2007 will involve up to 50 students (4 groups) selected in a process which involves all high schools in Norway. Following a one day polar introduction at the Fram Museum in Oslo, a group of 10-12 students will during one week on the ice be allocated specific research projects in geophysics, geology and oceanography and daily receive two hours of lectures on how mathematics and physics apply to exploring the polar environment. A short report of scientific results is due at the end of their stay. Max. 20 people will be present in the ice camp at any one time.

Field transportation was originally planned to be by chartered ski-equipped Twin Otter stationed in Longyearbyen for the duration of the project. The logistic arrangements have since been reconsidered for financial reasons. It seems now that hovercraft is a more affordable alternative.

This education and outreach program is part of IPY project # 77 PLATES AND GATES. All scientific data will be collected as part of university research programs and incorporated in future publications.