



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA

INUIT FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM

The Inuit Field Training Program (IFTP) introduces Inuit youth to the skills and techniques required to work in a northern research camp, and teaches them about the opportunities available for employment or further education. With training from a team of Inuit mentors and scientists, this program gives Inuit youth a hands-on research experience and acts as a stepping-stone towards other opportunities.

Launched in August 2018, the IFTP is based out of a remote field research station at East Bay, Southampton Island, Nunavut, in the Qaqsauqtuuq Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The program was initiated by Environment and Climate Change Canada scientists Dr.'s Grant Gilchrist and Paul Smith, who recognized the need after more than 20 years of working alongside Inuit in Nunavut.

Gilchrist and Smith drew on their long-standing relationship with the community of Coral Harbour to co-develop the program, and the local steering committee plays a leadership role in selecting the participants in the program.



Our senior Inuk mentor Solomon Nakoolak speaking to the students.



This Inuit Field Training Program is an innovative and focused approach to address a real need – helping Inuit youth succeed in making the transition from secondary school to further opportunities. In the long-term, this initiative could make a meaningful contribution to science-based departments’ achievement of their Inuit employment goals, and more generally, to the Government of Canada’s objective of meaningful inclusion of Inuit in environmental research and monitoring in the North.

Led by a balanced team of senior and junior Inuit mentors and scientists, the IFTP teaches students about environmental monitoring techniques, skills required for living and working safely in remote research camps, educational and employment opportunities available to them in environmental fields, and Inuit traditional knowledge taught by a local elder. Through the program, we are able to help participants pursue post-secondary school or training, hire some as research assistants in our own programs, and mentor others as they work towards more permanent employment in environmental fields with government departments or the private sector.



In 2019, the program was once again run at the Qaqsauqtuuq Migratory Bird Sanctuary, in late July. Eight participants (4 male, 4 female), all from Coral Harbour, were selected by the local steering committee. Elder Solomon Nakoolak taught the participants land skills such as the operation and maintenance of camp equipment and how to butcher a caribou, as well as traditional games and stories. Scientific and pre-employment training was provided in part by ECCC PhD candidate Christine Anderson, and ECCC staff Bonnie Taparti. In 2019, funding for the program was from Environment Climate Change Canada and the Polar Continental Shelf Program, with important contributions from the Canadian Economic Development Agency, CanNor. Funding is currently being sought to expand the program to a second site in 2020, drawing participants from additional communities.

If you have any questions please contact:

Bonnie Taparti
 Wildlife Research Division
 Science and Technology Branch
 Environment and Climate Change Canada /
 Government of Canada
bonnie.taparti@canada.ca / Tel: (613) 998-8433

