

**Igloolik Trip Report (February 13 – 21, 2004)**  
*Summary of Gita Laidler's Preliminary Research Visit for "Ice, Through Inuit Eyes"*

Purpose of the trip: to meet community members and organizations to discuss a project on sea ice, and see if there is any interest in collaborating on future research trips.

Purpose of this report: to update the community members of Igloolik on: i) what I did during my trip; ii) concerns that were raised; iii) observations that were shared; iv) recommendations that were made; and, v) my future research plans.

**What I did during my visit to Igloolik →**

- Met with the Mayor and SAO
- Met with Nunavut Research Institute representatives
- Met with Nunavut Arctic College representative
- Held a call-in radio show
- Met with the Wildlife Officer
- Met with Department of Sustainable Development representatives
- Met with the HTA board members
- Met with the Ataguttaaluk High School principle, vice principle, and some teachers
- Met with Igloolik Isuma Productions representatives
- Met with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association representative
- Met many community members along the way
- Looked through the Oral History Database

**Concerns raised →**

- Many researchers have not reported back to the community about their study results.
- People are worried that the information and results will only go back to the university, and not the community – *this will not be the case.*

**Observations shared →**

- Many people who work mainly in offices are not as aware of sea ice conditions.
  - People do not go on the radio as much to tell the community what the ice conditions are like.
  - Knowing what the ice conditions are during the winter helps people know what they will be like in the spring.
- There is a lot of snow around the bay, but if you go down to the floe edge there is less snow.
- There have not been many differences observed in sea ice conditions.
  - Things always change from year to year.
- A few differences identified:
  - Ice at the floe edge, that is not connected to landfast ice, used to go back and forth at the edge – now more is leaving and not coming back.
  - The ice seems thinner than years ago.
  - Some people have noticed changes in the freezing rates of sea ice, and the sizes of polynyas.
- Sometimes satellite images of ice distribution are downloaded off the internet, but people find it hard to interpret them.
  - The images do not help that much in determining the colour, or other safety-related, ice conditions.

- People can start travelling on the ice in October and November.
  - There is still ice around in June, but it is starting to get rotten. It is a great time for seal hunting though.
  - It is too dangerous to travel on the sea ice in July.

### Recommendations made →

- People to talk to:
  - Active hunters – people most involved in marine mammal harvesting would know the most about sea ice travel, conditions, changes, and important wildlife habitat.
  - Elders – because they have a lot of experience, and are very knowledgeable. But they have different areas of expertise, so again it would best to talk to those who were mainly involved in marine mammal harvesting.
  - Names of several individuals were put forward as excellent people to talk to/interview on return research visits.
- Researchers should come to the community with an open mind and be willing to learn, not just telling people what to do or how things *should* be done.
  - Report back to community contacts throughout the project, and with final results (from all three communities – Pangnirtung, Kinngait, and Igloolik).
- It would be helpful to learn more about interpreting satellite imagery that is available on the internet, so that images can be better understood (and possibly used).
- It might be valuable to have students involved as assistants, or even observers, in future research trips.
- Since Inuit ancestors did not have anything in writing, it was suggested that it would be useful to have some of this knowledge/information in writing.
- Talk to the HTA board members when I come back, and they will help me identify people to interview, or travel on the ice with.

### Future research plans →

- March, 2004 onwards → I, along with my professors and your recommendations, will finalize funding details to ensure sufficient funds to conduct this project.
- April – September, 2004 → I will visit Pangnirtung and Kinngait to begin research (April/May), and will conduct more background research on ice conditions, climate, and previous research in the Igloolik area.
- October/November, 2004 → return to Igloolik for a 3-week field research trip.

*Thank you for hosting me in your community, and for all your support. I very much enjoyed my time in Igloolik, and I look forward to returning and working with you in October. Feel free to contact me any time with comments, questions, or suggestions.*

Sincerely,

Gita J. Laidler