

Hunters of the Alpine Ice: The NWT Ice Patch Study

By Thomas D. Andrews, Glen MacKay and Leon Andrew

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Drawing on the expertise of archaeologists, Aboriginal elders, biologists, geologists and educators, the NWT Ice Patch Study is a collaborative effort to learn and share knowledge about the human and environmental history of the Northwest Territories by investigating permanent ice patches in the Mackenzie Mountains. The pictures presented in this book represent over five years of research carried out in partnership with the Tulita Dene Band and many talented scientists. Our team has strived to conduct our work in a context that actively engages Aboriginal students in traditional knowledge and cutting edge northern science. The NWT Ice Patch Study is an International Polar Year Project funded by the Government of Canada.

More than mere lenses of ice, ice patches are frozen repositories of well-preserved archaeological artifacts and biological specimens. As illustrated in the pages of this book, truly exceptional archaeological artifacts are emerging from the ice as these features, which have persisted for nearly 5000 years, are increasingly under pressure from warming climates. Ice patches are providing exciting opportunities to learn about the precontact hunting weapons used by the ancestors of the Shuhtaot'ine (Mountain Dene), and provide a myriad of biological samples to study changes in mountain caribou ecology through time.

The book is intended as an extension of the science camps held during the summers of 2007 and 2008, during which students and elders from Tulita, Northwest Territories partnered with ice patch scientists to share each others' knowledge and experience. The resulting mix brought benefits to all who participated and this book continues this collaborative spirit.