

Winthrop Graduate Student to Spend Summer in Arctic Circle



Nick LaFave

ROCK HILL, S.C. – **Nick LaFave**, an environmental science teacher at [Clover High School](#), always wanted to take part in a polar research expedition.

This summer, he will take a break from pursuing a masters in curriculum and instruction-educational technology to achieve this goal by joining Duke University researcher, [Amanda Koltz](#), in the Arctic Circle for six weeks studying wolf spider populations. The team will be exploring whether climate change is stimulating changes in wolf spiders that could influence the structure and functions of arctic food webs.

Quick Facts

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The research team will be living and working out of [Toolik Field Station](#), located in the northern foothills of the Brooks Range in northern Alaska, from June 3 through Aug. 1. [Read about the expedition here.](#)

Beginning in June, LaFave will participate as a research team member in an authentic scientific expedition in the Arctic. He will be joining other K-12 teachers who will be working in research locations from the **Arctic Ocean** to **Antarctica**, as part of a program that allows teachers to experience first-hand what it is like to conduct scientific research in some of the most remote locations on earth.

LaFave is one of 16 teachers selected this year through a nationwide search to participate in [PolarTREC](#), an educational research experience in which K-12 teachers participate in polar research, working closely with scientists as a pathway to improving science education.

Through **PolarTREC**, selected teachers will have the rare opportunity to spend two to six weeks working with a research team in the Arctic or Antarctic. While on field expeditions, teachers and researchers will share their experiences with scientists, educators, communities, and students of all ages through the use of Internet tools such as online teacher and researcher journals, message boards, photo albums, podcasts, PolarConnect real-time presentations from the field, and online learning resources.

After the field experience, teachers and researchers will continue to share their experiences with the public and create instructional activities to transfer scientific data, methodologies, and technology to classrooms.

The first expeditions departed in April 2012 with teachers deploying to **Alaska**, **Norway** and **Siberia**. The Antarctic field season will be in full swing by October and continue through the winter of 2013. These **PolarTREC teachers** will spread out across the southern continent from the **Southern Ocean** to the **South Pole Station** studying a range of topics from marine biology to Trans-Antarctic Mountain geology.

PolarTREC is managed by the [Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S.](#) (ARCUS) and funded by the [National Science Foundation](#). For more information and to participate, contact **Janet Warburton** or **Sarah Crowley** ARCUS Project Managers, at warburton@arcus.org or crowley@arcus.org or 907/474-1600.

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