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Snow, rodents stymie Fla. researchers

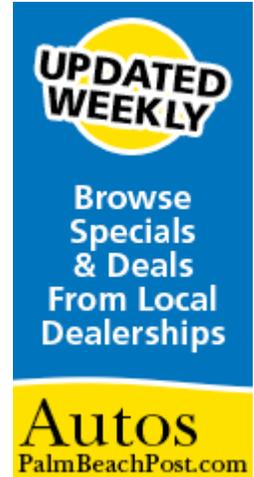
By [KIMBERLY MILLER](#)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Stubborn snow melt and a lemming overload are delaying a South Florida professor's research this summer in Barrow, Alaska - North America's northernmost city.

Florida International University Professor Steven Oberbauer, two students and a local middle school teacher made the 4,200-mile trek to the Arctic tundra this month to finish a four-year study on global warming.



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Oberbauer wrote Thursday via e-mail.

Lemmings aside, Oberbauer's experiment is important in helping predict the amount of global warming occurring in the Arctic.

This year, Dwyer Award-winner Elizabeth Eubanks, who teaches middle school science at St. Mark Catholic School in Boynton Beach, is helping Oberbauer.

But the first few days of the experiment have been stymied by snow refusing to thaw in the 24-hour-a-day sunlight and a huge number of lemming - small hamster-looking rodents that live in the Arctic.

Part of Oberbauer's experiment is to pump water from one area of the tundra to another and measure the greenhouse gasses released based on the water level.

The lemmings eat plant stems, and the leaves left over are clogging the water pumps.

"We also have to watch where we walk to keep from stepping on the lemmings,"

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