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Polar Continental Shelf Program



Canada

Key support for innovative research in Canada's North since 1958

The Canadian Arctic is a region that captures the imagination of Canadians. Its environment, both beautiful and harsh, makes it an interesting and challenging place for conducting scientific studies. Natural Resources Canada's Polar Continental Shelf Program (PCSP) enables Arctic science through providing expert logistics advice and coordination to Canadian government, non-government, university and international researchers.

Established in 1958, the PCSP has become Canada's centre of excellence for logistics, contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge of the Canadian landmass and the exercise of Canadian sovereignty in Canada's North. With the help of the PCSP, scientists can confidently and safely conduct field research across the Canadian Arctic in scientific disciplines ranging from anthropology to zoology. Their work is important for developing an improved understanding of the past, present and future of Canada's North.

Enabling scientific and operational endeavours in the Arctic

Most Canadian Arctic field studies are conducted in remote locations where transportation and communications services are limited, specialized and difficult to organize. Researchers can rely on the PCSP to coordinate their field logistics, allowing them to focus on their important studies. Their research is contributing to discussions of collecting and preserving Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, climate change, cultural history, environmental protection and management, sustainable resource development, and wildlife conservation.

Many PCSP-supported projects provide valuable Arctic field experience to high school and post-secondary students and post-doctoral fellows. These field studies are key training opportunities for future and early-career Arctic researchers.

The PCSP also supports Arctic training activities; operational field work to service scientific equipment and perform inspections; and documentary filming.



Partners in northern research and training

To maximize efficiencies in delivering a range of safe and efficient logistics, the PCSP partners with major science programs and other federal government departments and agencies. This whole-of-government approach shares resources to meet Government of Canada objectives in a cost-effective manner. These partnerships promote efficiencies in northern operations and further contribute to training the next generation of Arctic professionals.

Through a partnership with Polar Knowledge Canada (POLAR), the PCSP is providing terrestrial field logistical support to scientists who are delivering POLAR's Science and Technology Program at the Canadian High Arctic Research Station in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, and across the Arctic. Additionally, the PCSP provides logistics and infrastructure for the Department of National Defence's Arctic Training Centre in Resolute, Nunavut. This collaboration improves Canada's capacity to conduct Arctic training activities, extends the field season for the PCSP's Arctic clients and expands the PCSP radio and satellite communications network.



Field equipment

Scientists have access to an inventory of field equipment that includes everything from satellite telephones and global positioning system units to camp supplies, clothing, boats and all-terrain vehicles. All PCSP clients may request field equipment for Arctic field work, and federal government clients may also request field equipment for non-Arctic study locations throughout Canada.



PCSP COORDINATION, ADVICE AND PLANNING

The PCSP's logistics network extends from the Canadian borders with Alaska and Greenland to the geographical North Pole to the southern reaches of Hudson Bay.

Air transportation and fuel

The PCSP coordinates fixed-wing and rotary-wing chartered aircraft for field studies throughout Canada's North, offering scientists air travel to and from remote field camps and the use of aircraft for field work. The PCSP dispatches aircraft from Resolute and remotely manages and coordinates aircraft from many northern communities and other field locations. The PCSP can also supply fuel for aircraft, field equipment and camps.



Communications network

The PCSP provides a safety network for field camps through scheduled communications twice per day via high-frequency radio or satellite telephone. Researchers can rely on this network to communicate with colleagues and the PCSP logistics coordination team.

Applying to the PCSP

Each October, researchers may apply online to the PCSP for logistics coordination, including field equipment, for the following year's Arctic field season. Federal government researchers may also request field equipment for work in southern Canada.

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Dr. Roy M. "Fritz" Koerner Laboratory

Scientists may also request use of the Dr. Roy M. "Fritz" Koerner Laboratory in Resolute, which has a walk-in freezer, a walk-in cooler, a -80°C freezer, fume hoods, a compressed air supply and a water purification system.

Arctic advice and science liaison

As a trusted member of the Canadian Arctic community, the PCSP provides employment, student training and business opportunities for northern residents. The organization uses its extensive experience to advise scientists about organizing and managing project logistics, safely transporting hazardous goods, facilitating field safety, and obtaining required licences and permits for field studies. The PCSP also helps with science outreach through publishing an annual science report and connecting researchers with northern community organizations.

PCSP Arctic logistics hub in Resolute

The PCSP facility in Resolute is open from February to September. From this logistics hub, the PCSP coordinates logistical operations across the Arctic. It houses field equipment stores, has limited storage space for clients (upon request) and acts as the facility's staging area for field parties. Part of the logistics hub also has unique workspaces and pre-positioned field equipment for the Canadian Armed Forces Arctic Training Centre.

The Martin Bergmann Complex can accommodate 237 people. Whether transiting through Resolute on the way to and from field camps or working locally, clients staying at the facility are provided with meals and sleeping quarters and access to large common areas, a fitness room and work, classroom and meeting spaces.



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