



MichiganTech

Geological & Mining Engineering & Sciences

News & Events

Field Trip to Alaska



Luke Spaete (left) of the Michigan Tech Research Institute with Michigan Tech president Glenn Mroz looking at ALWAS: Automated Lagrangian Water-Quality Assessment System developed by MTRI [MTRI ALWAS Page](#)

[See the Alaska Slide Show](#)



Michigan Tech Professor John Gierke with Josh Richardson.

Michigan Tech research professors and students recently visited the Michigan Tech Research Institute (MTRI) projects in Alaska.

The faculty and students conducted research projects in several locations including the Bering Glacier, Vitus Lake, Midtimber Lake, and Seal River.

According to MTRI in a story that appeared in the Detroit Free Press, the Bering Glacier is melting at a faster rate than was believed.

Since 2000, MTRI's scientists and engineers have been conducting research on the Bering Glacier in Alaska to support a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) hydrological study. The Bering Glacier is the largest (5200 sq km) and longest (190km) glacier in continental North America. Bering Glacier alone covers more than 6% of the glacier-covered area of Alaska and may contain 15-20% of Alaska's total glacial ice. The entire glacier lies on BLM-administered land. The rapid, continuous retreat of the glacier and the expansion of Vitus Lake at the terminus have provided opportunities for establishing new habitats and new flora and fauna, including a population of endangered harbor seals. [Google maps: Bering Glacier](#)

The Bering Glacier is located in coastal south central Alaska at 60-61 degrees north (latitude) and 141-145 degrees west (longitude), it is bounded in the north by the St. Elias Mountains and in the south by the Gulf of Alaska. In various places, the glacier has a thickness of over 800m.

The Bering Glacier area is exceptionally diverse and valuable from both an ecological and cultural perspective. Unique plants and animals have evolved in this area as a result of the dynamic conditions and rugged terrain found within the Bering Glacier. From a human perspective, the Bering Glacier area is used for recreation, subsistence hunting, and commercial fishing, among other activities.

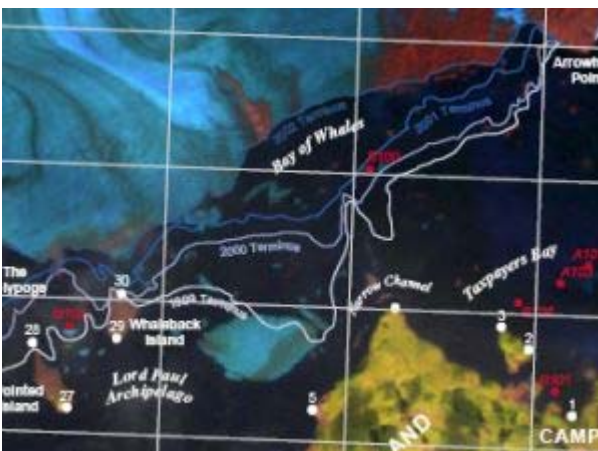
Several other sites were explored by the Michigan Tech researchers, including Childs Glacier, Grindle



Applied Geophysics students Kevin Endsley, Josh Richardson, and Silvia Espino formed the Michigan Tech student team



The Bering Glacier camp is located on the edge of Vitus Lake (see map) on a former terminal moraine. The camp, complete with refueling airstrip, kitchen and mess tent, command center, and restrooms, can comfortably host 25 scientists at a given time. The scientists and their staff sleep in tents or wooden floor huts.



[See PDF USGS Map](#) 983 kb

Hills, Seal River, Cordova, Copper River Delta, Orca, Sheridan Glacier, and Miles Glacier.

[Alaska Report Article about MTRI and Bering Glacier](#)

[Detroit Free Press article \(PDF\)](#) 85 kb

Find out more about MTRI Projects at the [Bering Glacier](#)

[View the Bering Glacier website](#)

[MTRI College Student research at Bering Glacier](#)

More about [MTRI](#)



Dr. Robert Shuchman, Co-Director for MTRI, piloting the Zodiac



[See the Alaska Slide Show](#)

2007 August Trip Participants

[Google maps: Bering Glacier](#)

[Google maps: Camp](#)



(Left to Right) Dr. Michael Stubblefield from Southern University in Baton Rouge Louisiana, Chris Noyles who is the Remote Sensing Specialist, Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management; Nathan Rathbun, and Scott Guyer, Bering Camp Manager, Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management



Bering Glacier camp is located on the edge of Vitus Lake (Liza Liversedge photo)



Preparing for a morning excursion

Michigan Tech Research Institute

Dr. Robert Shuchman, Institute Co-Director
Liza Liversedge
Luke Spaete
Erik Josberger

Michigan Tech

Dr. Nancy Auer
Dr. John Gierke
Silvia Espino
Josh Richardson
Kevin Endsley
President Glenn Mroz
Vice-President for Research David Reed

Photos by Kevin Endsley and Liza Liversedge

[BACK to News](#)

8/21/2007