

Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 17: Deploying an ITP?

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Today the WHOI team is putting in their first of 5 Ice Tethered Profilers (ITP) of this cruise. (For a detailed description of an ITP, visit the WHOI ITP website.) The first thing to do is find some ice.

Will (left) and Rick head out to find a suitable ice floe for ITP deployment.

Rick and Will are flying out to look for a suitable ice floe. The LSSL Ice Observer Marie-Claude Bouchard accompanies them and adds her expertise. The ideal piece of ice is at least 3 meters thick, has a flat top indicating even growth of the ice over time, and few, if any, melt ponds. When they spot one, pilot Chris Swannell will land so Rick and Will can drill a test hole. Once the ice is determined to be suitable, the spot is marked with a flag and GPS.

Will and Rick test the ice by drilling a hole. They need a floe that is neither too thick (so they can drill through to the water underneath) nor too thin (not thick enough to support the ITP for several seasons). Photo courtesy of Rick Krishfield.

Will and Rick drill through the ice. This floe is too thin for an ITP deployment. Photo courtesy of Rick Krishfield.

The drill test hit water about half way down indicating that the floe was not solid or stable enough to support an ITP. After surveying more of the area by air, another one could not be found. They will try again tomorrow, as we move even further north.

Back at the ship, the sun came out and so did a few of the scientists -- for a bit of Vitamin D therapy.

Taking advantage of the sun, some scientists try their feet at hacky sack. The sun offers many great photo ops!
All photos by PolarTREC teacher Gerty Ward unless indicated.

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