

AINA NEWS

Kluane Lake Research Station (KLRS)

KLRS opened the 2025 summer season in late April and closed in early October. The station hosted a range of visitors, including over 1400 overnight visitors along with 100 day-trip users. Additionally, approximately 140 community members visited KLRS throughout the summer during community events. Guests included researchers, students, teachers, Yukon and BC First Nations, government scientists, artists, and community members. Groups from Canadian universities (13), international universities (5), and two government departments visited the station for research and field courses. Researchers were represented by a range of disciplines including glaciology, geology, geography, biology, climatology, space physics, and hydroponics.

Community engagement was prioritized throughout the year. KLRS met with local First Nation governments (Kluane First Nation (KFN), Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN), White River First Nation (WRFN)) and community members to foster relationships and listen to feedback. KLRS participated in many events hosted in nearby communities, such as culture camps, community meals, general assemblies, and open houses. Weekly community nights were hosted at KLRS all summer to help bridge the gap between researchers and surrounding communities, including presentations by researchers and workshops by local Indigenous artists, interpreters, and storytellers. The station hosted a community BBQ in May and an open house in September to start and end the season, sharing meals, research summaries and workshops with the community.

Education and outreach efforts were continued in 2025. In the summer season, the station welcomed primary and secondary schools from the Yukon and southern Canada. The Station Manager and visiting researchers led presentations and hands-on activities to teach students about natural sciences at KLRS and local schools. Three teacher professional development courses and one youth program were run out of KLRS by the Howl Experience. Two artists were hosted at the station for the Kluane National Park Artist Residency, in partnership with Parks Canada and the Yukon Arts Centre. Each artist had a two-week residency and held multiple public art workshops at KLRS.

In the winter, KLRS continued with community outreach and collaborated with Yukon organizations to bring natural science activities to local youth. CAFN invited KLRS to help organize research posters and science activities at the Dakwākāda Mountain Festival at Da Kū Cultural Centre. At the 2025 ArcticNet Scientific Meeting in Calgary, KLRS co-hosted a session with KFN and CAFN on research in southwestern Yukon, with a strong emphasis on the importance of community and collaboration. Presentations were given by researchers and community members.

Ag1054 Project Off-Grid Containerized Agriculture in the North

AINA's Ag1054 project (situated at KLRS) aims to study off-grid containerized agriculture in the North using a shipping container for hydroponic food production (plants grown in nutrient-enriched water instead of soil) (Fig. 1). The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) provided funding for the project in 2025. A full-time Agriculture Research Coordinator was hired, and two locals continued in an advisory role. The hydroponic unit operated from June to early October 2025. Thousands of plants (mainly lettuce with some cilantro and basil) were grown hydroponically over the season, with hundreds more vegetables (radish, kale, broccoli, tomato, cucumber, and microgreens) grown in the greenhouse, outdoor garden beds, and microgreen grow unit. Harvested plants were donated to local communities throughout the season and used in the KLRS kitchen. Education is a priority for the project, including teaching local schools about hydroponics and developing a training short course. The Ag1054 team is collaborating with Kluane First Nation (KFN) and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) to focus on growing additional plants in the hydroponics unit that the Nations are interested in.

In March 2026, the Ag1054 team was invited to visit the Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN) Food Sovereignty team in Áa Tlein (Atlin), Northern BC. TRTFN has been growing a variety of plants all winter in their hydroponics unit, after taking a short course with the Ag1054 team at KLRS in the summer. Both teams have enjoyed exchanging knowledge and plan to continue collaborating on their hydroponics research projects.



FIG. 1. Ag1054 project's off-grid containerized hydroponic unit at KLRS. Photo by Kim Hatcher.

Arctic Council Working Group Observer Initiative

The Arctic Council (AC) Working Group Observer Support Initiative is a partnership between ArcticNet and AINA that supports AINA-associated Canadian observers in Arctic Council working groups. Coordinated by AINA, the initiative enables participation by academic researchers from Canadian universities and Indigenous knowledge holders identified by the Canadian Arctic Council Permanent Participants—the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Inuit Circumpolar Council-Canada, and Gwich'in Council International. Support is provided for observer engagement in a series of working groups under Arctic Council. These groups include the Sustainable Development Working Group, Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, Arctic Monitoring & Assessment Programme, Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment, and a joint Arctic Council-Inter-Agency Standing Committee, all of which work toward strengthening inclusive and evidence-based engagement across the Arctic Council ecosystem.