

AINA NEWS

AINA Celebrates its 80th Year

The Arctic Institute of North America turned 80 years old in December. Celebrations of this momentous occasion were planned to coincide with ArcticNet's Annual Scientific Meeting Conference that took place in Calgary 15–18 December. Institute staff, researchers, collaborators, and friends enjoyed a spirited evening of celebration at the Grand in downtown Calgary. Executive director, Maribeth Murray, delivered a heartfelt address beginning with a brief history of the institute followed by a focused review of AINA's role in research, collaborations in national and international Arctic-based projects, and the institute's successes in securing research funding and resource development. The event was opened with a message of greeting from Indigenous Knowledge holders, Shelly Eli, a Blackfoot person from the Piikani Nation (north Peigan), and Dusting Walter (Mistukii Ksistukii), a Ampskapii Pikunii (south Peigan). During the event, a room was set aside to show recently digitized films from the institute's large archives accompanied by a string quartet.

Of note was a short address by Stephanie Borgland, associate vice-president (research), who pointed out how funding for the institute has grown significantly. While previously receiving almost no external funding, beginning in 2013, the institute and its partners have received around \$30 million from Canada, the United States, the European Commission, and the Research Council of Norway to name a few. With international and national collaborators, the institute hosts research projects spanning multiple disciplines in areas including, environmental and climate science; Indigenous knowledge and Arctic communities; natural resource management; Arctic ecosystems and biodiversity; and historical and cultural studies.

AINA has always played a leadership role in supporting the dissemination of Arctic research, beginning shortly after its creation with the publication of *Arctic* (1948), a multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal publishing scholarly articles, essays, and book reviews. The journal continues to publish the works of Arctic and northern researchers, attracting a growing number of submission from throughout the circumpolar region. Apart from North American authors, the journal regularly publishes works from Iceland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Russia, and Japan.

Arctic digital information systems, beginning with the creation of the Arctic Science and Technology Information System (ASTIS) is another early and sustained effort to communicate and distribute research information. With its archives, libraries, and especially its digital collections, AINA acts as a hub for vast amounts of data on all aspects of northern and Arctic research. These data collections are an invaluable resource for researchers, providing access to data including meteorological, oceanographic, glaciology, environmental, geopolitical, socioeconomic, and social scientific.

As part of its important education and outreach initiatives, AINA developed its Arctic Discovery & Access database (ADA), a digital education service that builds upon the institute's ASTIS database. ADA provides access to scientific research publications, research projects derived from licenses and permit information, K–12 education resources, virtual exhibits, and AINA's online archives and special collections. It is an online educational experience that brings a digital archive to life with virtual exhibits, educational resources, and search interfaces that support information discovery at different levels. ADA includes rare and unique photographs, art, artefacts, film, and audio materials. The database is also used by Arctic researchers as an online information resource and publications database for the Government of Canada's Northern Contaminants Program and the Beaufort Regional Environmental Assessment, The ArcticNet Network of Centres of Excellence Canada program and the Canadian International Polar Year Program.

The institute's Kluane Lake Research Station (established in 1961), a facility for research located in the traditional territory of the Kluane First Nation and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, has seen huge growth in the resources available to researchers and other visitors over the last ten years. The station has seen growth in the number and diversity of groups coming to conduct research and field trips, including school children from the UK. Facilities have grown to include a transition toward solar power and away from diesel generation, an off-grid container for growing crops, and an automated weather station. The station now supports an artist in residence program and a range of events in collaboration with nearby communities.

Kimberly Aiken Joins the Team at AINA

AINA is pleased to welcome Kimberly Aiken as its newest team member (Fig. 1). Kimberly joined AINA in September 2025 as a research assistant. She supports a diverse portfolio of initiatives that advances AINA's mission in Arctic research, polar policy, communications, and education and outreach. In collaboration with the Institute's executive director, Dr. Maribeth Murray, she oversees AINA's Arctic Council observer programme and public engagement activities pertaining to wildlife conservation in northern Canada. Kimberly has previously served as the communications officer for the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) Secretariat, a research and policy associate with the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, a junior researcher focused on Arctic governance at the Alfred Wegener Institute German Arctic Office, and a project coordinator with GRID-Arendal's polar and mountain programme. She brings a human first approach to her work, which in the past has included research on utilizing the framework of intersectionality to examine overlapping identities such as race, gender, and ethnicity to build a more diverse,



Fig. 1. Kimberly Aiken, AINA research assistant.

inclusive, and equitable Antarctic workforce environment. Notable works include Antarctic Resolution, a digital story map on Securing the Next 30 Years of Antarctic Protection, conference presentations on Stories of the Far South: Why Antarctica needs an intersectional lens, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Southern Ocean Research, and Systemic Bias and Race in Polar Research and Science. Kimberly has a master's degree in international environmental policy from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, California, USA.

Discovery Portals on ADA: Arctic Discovery & Access

Arctic Discovery & Access (<https://ada.ucalgary.ca>) has added discovery portals for ArcticNet and for the Northern Contaminants Program (NCP). Each of these portals now takes users to a landing page with information about these significant Canadian Arctic research programs. The NCP Portal includes links to NCP publications on ADA, as well as links to further explore NCP projects, proposals, and contaminants of concern. ADA is also pleased to host several NCP-led educational materials on our For Educators page. Likewise, the ArcticNet Portal links to ArcticNet funded or ArcticNet produced publications on ADA as well as links to ArcticNet projects, conferences, their podcast, and their polar photography initiative. The Arctic Institute of North America is privileged to host the publications for both these long running critical research programs.

Congratulations to Shannon McAllister and Jacob Huffman

Shannon McAllister, AINA's manager of research data, collections, and digital services has received a 2025 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship for her PhD research proposal, Narrative Structures and Interactive Space: A Study in Communicating Arctic Climate Change Information under the Social Science and Humanities Research Council category. Shannon is taking her PhD with the School of Interactive Arts & Technology at Simon Fraser University.

Jacob Huffman, AINA's information analyst, has earned his Master of Planning (MPlan) from Dalhousie University. Jacob has also recently become a member of the University of the Arctic Thematic Network on Arctic Urban Planning and Design.