

# GLACIER RETREAT AND CHANGING LANDSCAPES



We walked through the recently deglaciated landscape, strewn with debris and boulders that were covered by ice just a few years ago. A stream that used to tunnel under the glacier, easily crossable on an ice bridge, was now fully exposed where the glacier has vanished.

Willard Ned (above, at SFU weather station overlooking Kaskawulsh Glacier) joined the SFU Glaciology Group for a day of field work in August 2019. We serviced a weather station and time-lapse cameras overlooking Kaskawulsh Glacier, and dismantled GPS stations that had been monitoring glacier movement near an ice-dammed lake. With great persistence, Willard managed to pull 4 metres (13 ft) of steel pipe out of the ice, allowing us to recover all of our equipment this year.

With all of our instruments serviced and recovered, we took a trip to a nearby unnamed glacier (photo at right) that the SFU Glaciology Group began studying in 2006. The

glacier has changed dramatically in the last 14 years, retreating by over 500 m (550 yards). While this retreat is partly due to the natural process of recovering from a surge in the 1980s, it is being accelerated and exacerbated by global warming.

Much of the landscape, in which we had spent almost 10 field seasons, seemed almost unrecognizable. It was a strange experience indeed to be walking “under” the glacier where we used to work. Glacial change is anything but slow these days.



**For more information or to inquire about opportunities:** contact Gwenn Flowers ([gflowers@sfu.ca](mailto:gflowers@sfu.ca)) or visit [www.sfu.ca/~gflowers/](http://www.sfu.ca/~gflowers/). We are always looking for enthusiastic KFN community members and youth to join us in the field.