



National Science Foundation
OPERATED BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

NSF-ICF Science Management Office Update

Joe Souney

University of New Hampshire

Ice Core Working Group (Virtual) Meeting

February 23, 2026



**University of
New Hampshire**

<https://icecores.org>



Talk Outline

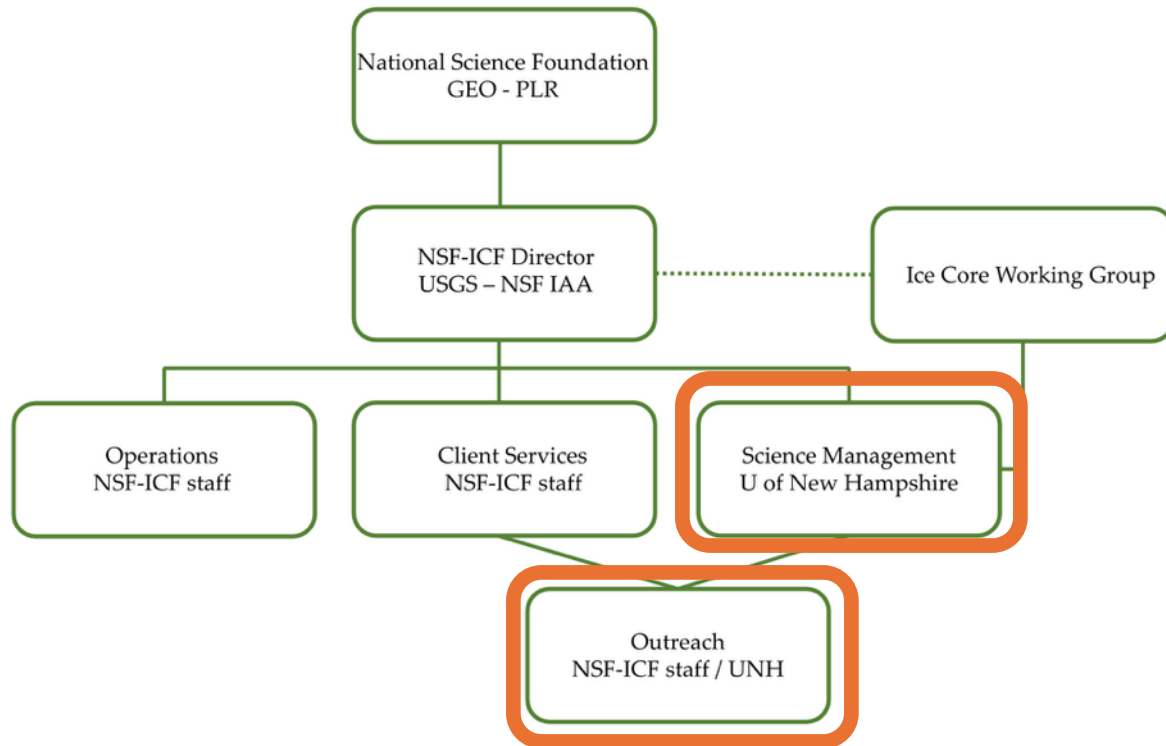
- NSF, NSF-ICF, and SMO
- Personnel Updates
- Science Management Office (SMO) – Major Tasks
- How to Access NSF-ICF Services
- Storage of Cores (even temporarily)
- Deaccessed Cores
- Proprietary Cores at NSF-ICF
- Sample Allocations
- Letters for Proposals
- Sample Allocation Committee (SAC)
- Beacon/Mullins Valley Cores



NSF, NSF-ICF, and SMO

Interagency Agreement between NSF and USGS to operate NSF-ICF. SMO (UNH) operates as a subaward to USGS.

NSF-ICF Org Chart



People

National Science Foundation, NSF

- Kelly Brunt, Program Director

NSF-Ice Core Facility (NSF-ICF), USGS

- Michele Wolf, Technical Director
- *Curt La Bombard, Curator
- *Richard Nunn, Assistant Curator

Science Management Office (SMO), UNH

- Joe Souney, SMO Director
- Mark Twickler (a couple hrs/wk)

*Full time NSF-ICF employees



Personnel Updates

Technical Director

Lindsay Powers

- Departed the USGS in April 2025.
- Curt LaBombard assumed role of Acting Technical Director (while still also serving as Curator).

Michele Wolf

- Assumed Technical Director role effective November 2025. mwolf@usgs.gov
- Michele is serving more of a program officer role managing the budget and staff, and Curt is managing the technical side of running the facility (while still also serving as Curator).

Science Technician

Theo Carr

- Departed the USGS in ~February/March 2025. Science Technician position (which was a full-time position) is still vacant. Federal hiring freeze effective January 2025 is still in place.

Interns

- One intern (Meagan) in 2025. Two interns in 2026 from NSF COLDEX. Interns have been super helpful.



Curt LaBombard



Michele Wolf



Lindsay Powers



Theo Carr



Science Management Office (SMO)

MAJOR TASKS

- Primary contact point for scientific community interested in using the facility and ice core archive.
- Requests for samples or use of the facility are submitted to the SMO from interested parties.
- Investigators submitting a proposal to any funding agency are required to contact the SMO prior to submitting the proposal if samples from the public archive are being requested and/or if the proposal requires any use of the facility, such as for a core processing line or core storage.
- If samples from the NSF-ICF archive are requested in the proposal, sample availability is checked, and if samples are available without overly depleting the archive, a “Facility Letter” is provided for the proposal. If the proposal is funded, the SMO sends the sample request to the SAC (bcc NSF) for review. The SAC, not the SMO, has the authority to approve sample requests from the NSF-ICF archive.
- Bi-weekly meetings with NSF-ICF Curator (Curt LaBombard), and ~monthly meetings with NSF, NSF-ICF Curator, and NSF-ICF Technical Director.
- Provides updates to the unified NSF-ICF and SMO website (<https://icecores.org>).
- Quarterly reporting of SMO activities to USGS and NSF.



How to Access NSF-ICF Services

1. Storage of cores

2. Use of Facility

3. Sample Requests

- Contact the NSF-ICF Science Management Office (SMO) (nsf.icf.smo@unh.edu) **at least four weeks prior** to your proposal submission deadline if you are submitting a proposal that requires any of the NSF-ICF services listed above.
- A letter from the SMO needs to be included in your proposal.
- <https://icecores.org/services>
- <https://icecores.org/inventory>
- Questions? Send the SMO an email at nsf.icf.smo@unh.edu and we'll set-up a call with you to discuss your needs.



Storage of Cores (even temporarily)

- No cores, no matter the quantity, should ever be sent to the NSF-ICF without first talking to the SMO and obtaining permission. **Do not send cores from the field to the NSF-ICF without prior approval.**
- Storage space is an issue, so we are selective regarding which new shallow cores are accepted into storage.
- Dry ice is not allowed at the NSF-ICF; core boxes packed with dry ice will not be accepted.
- We only store meteoric cores; we do not accept sea ice cores or debris-rich firn/ice cores.
- <https://icecores.org/services>
- Questions? Send the SMO an email at nsf.icf.smo@unh.edu and we'll set-up a call with you to discuss your needs.



Deaccessed Cores

- There are many cores at the NSF-ICF that are on a deaccession list. A funded proposal is not needed, and Sample Allocation Committee (SAC) approval is not needed, to access cores on the deaccession list.
- <https://icecores.org/inventory/deaccessed>
- <https://icecores.org/services>
- Contact the SMO (nsf.icf.smo@unh.edu) to determine the best deaccessed core for your research or outreach needs.



Proprietary Cores at NSF-ICF

- Newly drilled ice cores that arrive at the NSF-ICF are proprietary and not available to other researchers, without permission from the PI, for the duration of the PI's funded proposal.
- When the PI's award funding is over, if the PI chooses to leave the remaining core at the NSF-ICF, the core is no longer proprietary to the PI, and the core becomes a part of the community archive from which anyone can request samples through the SMO.
- **Examples: (1) NSF COLDEX, (2) PI Eric Saltzman 2024 Summit (Greenland) core**

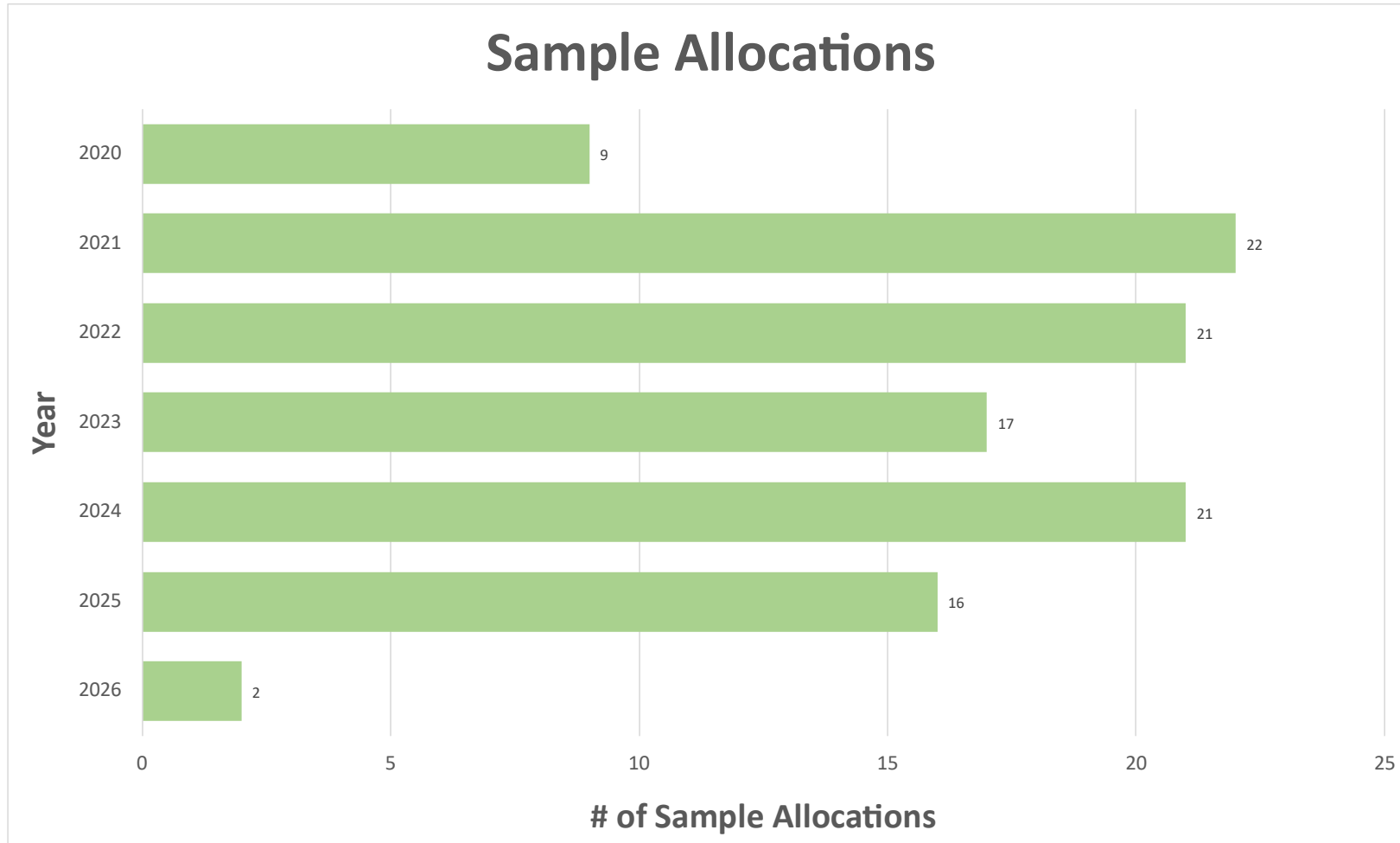
Conditions

- Investigators must contact the SMO during the project planning stage, prior to proposal submission, for possible permission to store new ice cores.
- Only ice cores made of meteoric ice are authorized for storage at the NSF-ICF. No sea ice, permafrost, or sediment cores are permitted in the facility.
- If no other conditions are defined at the proposal stage with the concurrence of the ICF and the SMO, the end date of the investigator's proprietary period will be the end date of the investigator's funded award.
- If the investigator is using the ICF to sample their proprietary core, it is the investigator's responsibility to sample the core within the scope outlined in their funded award.



Sample Allocations

Does not include sample allocations associated with proprietary cores, such as NSF COLDEX.



108 sample allocations over last ~6 years



Sample Allocations (calendar year 2025)

Does not include sample allocations associated with proprietary cores, such as NSF COLDEX.

Science (10)

- Denali (1)
- Camp Century 62 (1)
- GISP2D (1)
- Milcent (1)
- Mount Moulton (1)
- Bentley Shot Hole (1)
- J-9 (1)
- Newall Glacier (1)
- SDMA (1)
- South Pole SP04-C5 (1)
- WDC06A (3)
- WAIS Divide replicate cores (1)
- Deaccessed cores (2)

Classroom activities (3)

- Camp Century 61 (1)
- Crete74 (1),
- Newall Glacier (1)

Public outreach (2)

- Camp Century 61 (1)
- Crete74 (1)

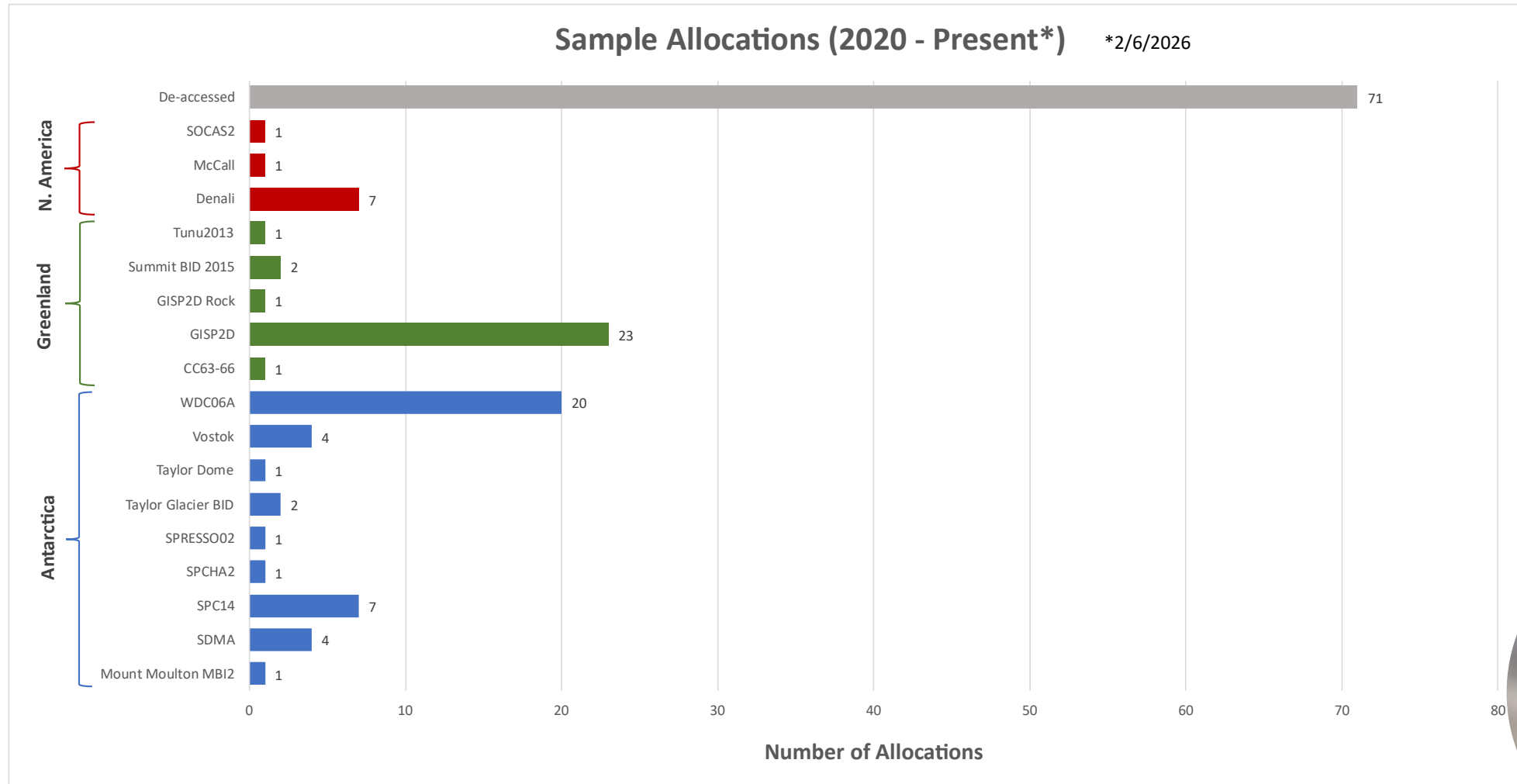
Art/film/photography (2)

- Crete74 (2)

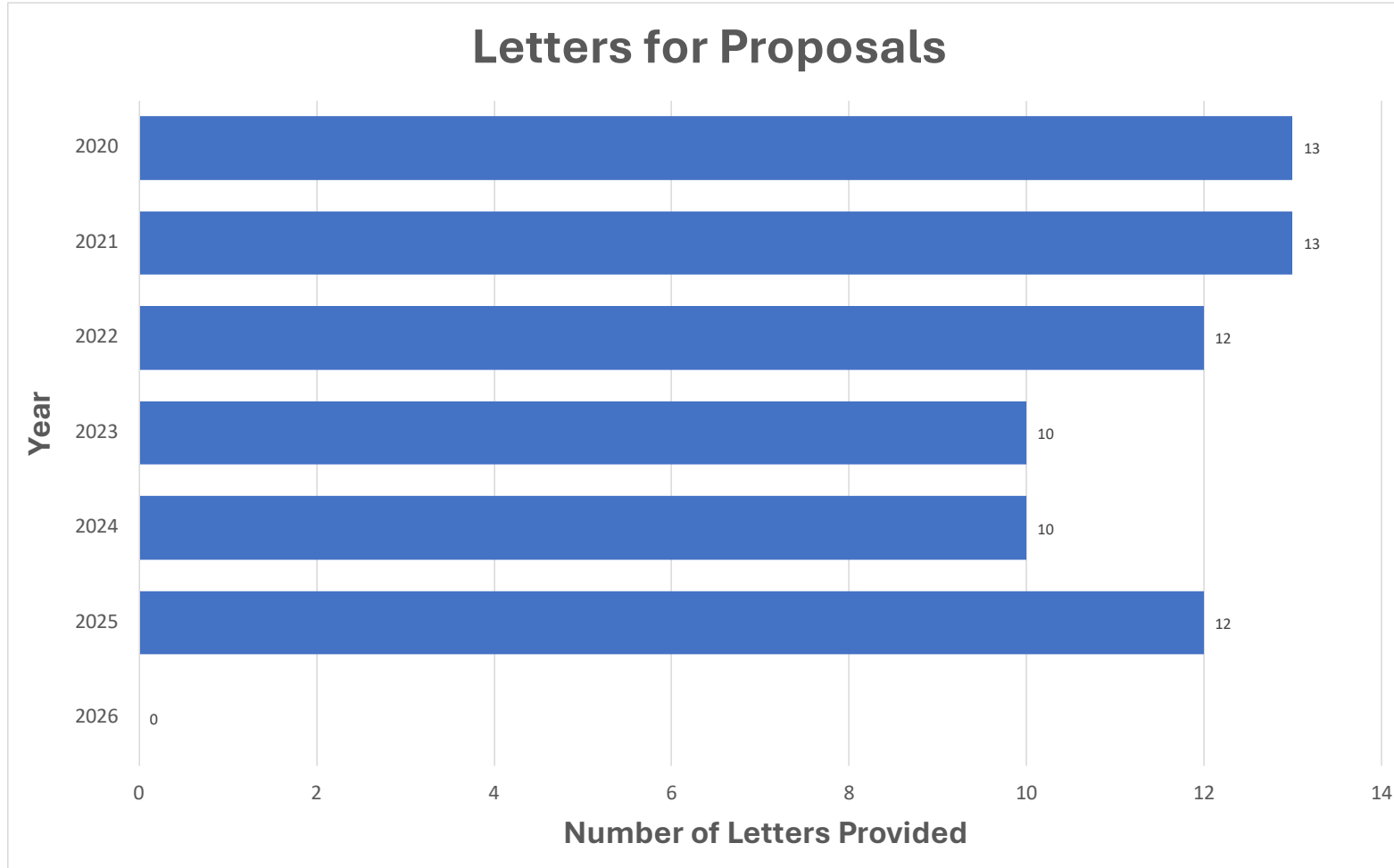


Sample Allocations

Does not include sample allocations associated with proprietary cores, such as NSF COLDEX.



Letters for Proposals



70 letters
over last ~6
years



Letters for Proposals (calendar year 2025)

12 letters provided for NSF proposals

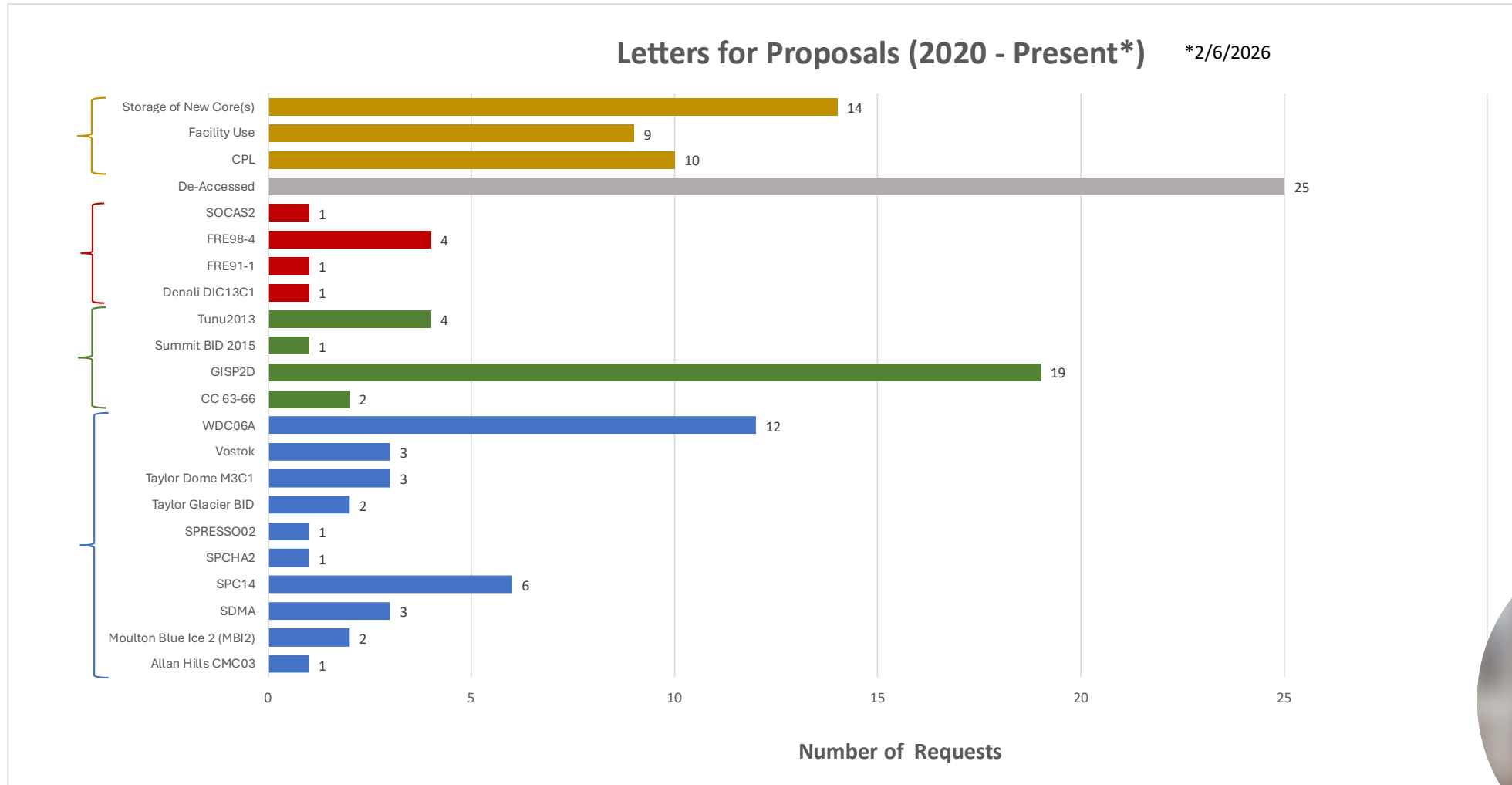
- 11 proposals requesting samples from the public archive (i.e., from cores listed at <https://icecores.org/inventory>)
- 1 proposal requesting to archive newly drilled core at conclusion of project
- 1 proposal requesting to use hyperspectral imaging (HSI) equipment

Other

- Not counted above is one letter that we provided and subsequently the PI(s) decided not to submit the proposal.
- Worked on 2 sample request inquiries that haven't (yet) reached the submitted proposal stage



Letters for Proposals



Sample Allocation Committee (SAC)

The NSF-ICF Sample Allocation Committee (SAC) was established in 1996 as an ad hoc subcommittee to the Ice Core Working Group (ICWG).

During the 2024 ICWG Meeting, it was decided that all members of the ICWG will serve on the SAC.

The SAC stills functions as an ad hoc subcommittee to the ICWG, which allows the SAC the flexibility to add non-ICWG members if/when needed.



Sample Allocation Committee (SAC)

- If you receive a sample request from the SMO to review, immediately let the SMO and other SAC members know if you have a conflict of interest (e.g., if you are a co-PI or if your lab is somehow involved in the project).
- Typically ask for the SAC to respond to sample requests within 2 weeks.
- SAC makes final decision on sample allocation
- SAC reviews the request (sent by the SMO) and either approves it, declines it, or suggests other options
- SAC decision is via simple majority vote



Beacon/Mullins Valley Cores

<https://icecores.org/inventory/beacon-and-mullins-valley>

- **VERY OLD buried ice deposits from the MCM Dry Valleys.** Not "typical" ice cores because of their high mixed ice/sediment content.
- Mixed ice/sediment cores aren't supposed to be at the facility. **Most cores shouldn't be cut in the exam room because of their high sediment content.**
- Collected by David Marchant (2004/05; G-054-M), Kate Swanger (2006/07; G-054-M), and Michael Bender (2008/09, 2009/10; G-070-M). Shipped directly from Antarctica to NSF-ICF and remained in main archive freezer.
- **Digital copies of the field notebooks and metadata from the field campaigns exist!**
- The PIs did not receive approval beforehand to ship the cores to the NSF-ICF. After the cores unexpectedly arrived at the NSF-ICF, the plan was to only temporarily store the cores at NSF-ICF.
- **The cores have remained at the NSF-ICF, with little interest in them from the scientific community.** Unsuccessful attempts with community members (Oregon State Univ marine and geology repository, WHOI) in 2023 and 2024 to find a new home for the cores.
- **Please tell your community members about these cores!!!**
Go to <https://icecores.org/inventory/beacon-and-mullins-valley> and download the **"Beacon/Mullins Valley PDF document"** for more information (including pictures) about these cores.



Beacon/Mullins Valley Cores

<https://icecores.org/inventory/beacon-and-mullins-valley>

During the 2025 ICWG meeting, the SMO asked the ICWG to consider moving the cores to the de-accession list. **It is unclear to the SMO whether the ICWG voted to move the cores to the de-accession list.**

Why move to the de-accession list?

- The cores weren't supposed to go to the NSF-ICF (i.e., mixed ice/sediment cores aren't supposed to be at the facility).
- Most of the cores shouldn't be cut in the exam room because of their high sediment content.
- There has been little interest in the cores from the scientific community.

If the cores are de-accessed:

- They will continue to be stored in the freezer (like the other de-accessed cores).
- It allows easier access to the cores (i.e., no NSF funded proposal needed, no SAC approval needed), which may help increase community use of the cores.
- It will make it easier to move the cores to a new locations if/when one is found.



Beacon/Mullins Valley Cores

<https://icecores.org/inventory/beacon-and-mullins-valley>

- **There were no requests for samples from these cores in 2025.**
- If/when freezer space becomes an issue, and we need to remove cores from the archive, the Beacon/Mullins Valley cores will be the first cores the SMO recommends for removal.
- Mixed ice/sediment cores aren't supposed to be at the facility. **Most cores shouldn't be cut in the exam room because of their high sediment content.**
- The PIs did not receive approval beforehand to ship the cores to the NSF-ICF.
- After the cores unexpectedly arrived at the NSF-ICF, the plan was to only temporarily store the cores at NSF-ICF.
- There has been little interest in these cores from the scientific community.
- **We have the equivalent of 108 4-inch tubes of core in the collection plus one ISC box of samples.**



Thank you



Don't hesitate to contact
Joe Souney with
questions:

joe.souney@unh.edu

