

**THE 2011 EXPEDITION TO KHARP, SOUTHERN YAMAL  
PENINSULA REGION, RUSSIA**

**DATA REPORT**



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*Members of the 2011 Kharp expedition. Clockwise from upper left: Gerald “J.J.” Frost, UVa; Howie Epstein, UVa; Ksusha Ermokhina, ECI; Roman Ivanov, ECI; and Gosha Matyshak, Lomonosov Moscow State University.*

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**Cover photo:** Young alders growing on mineral-rich microsites at the centers of sorted-circles, Kharp study site.

## ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the methods and results of field studies conducted 18 July-2 August, 2011 at the Kharp study site in the southern Yamal region, northwest Siberia, Russia. Kharp is located in a forest-tundra ecotone at the southern margin of the Arctic tundra biome, in the eastern foothills of the northern Ural Mountains (66.83°N, 65.98°E). Comparisons of high-resolution satellite imagery from 1968 and 2010 indicate widespread increases in alder (*Alnus fruticosa* ssp. *sibirica*) cover at the site. This finding is corroborated by pixel-based regression analysis of the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), derived from a Landsat imagery time-series spanning 1985-2011, that indicates strong, widespread increases in plant productivity (“greening”) in alder shrublands. A brief field reconnaissance to Kharp in 2009 revealed that most of the alder expansion occurred in areas of patterned ground with abundant sorted-circles, and that shrub recruitment was closely linked to mineral-dominated microsites at the circle centers. The primary goals of field studies in 2011 were to (1) identify important environmental state-factors associated with recent shrub expansion and greening; (2) determine whether alder expansion at Kharp is facilitated by cryogenic disturbance processes in patterned ground; (3) determine whether the distribution of older shrubs can be explained by shrub recruitment on sorted-circle microsites; (4) characterize changes to permafrost thermal regime that occur during shrubland development; and (5) characterize the changes in plant community composition that occur during shrubland development.

Field methods used in 2011 differ from previous expeditions along the Eurasian Arctic Transect, which had different objectives (Walker et al. 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2011). Studies at Kharp primarily occurred along transects established in alder-free tundra and in alder shrublands belonging to one of three categories of shrubland stand-age: recent colonization zones, mature shrublands (shrubs evident in 1968 imagery, and most shrubs  $\geq 2$  m height), and paludified shrublands (very old shrubs growing on organic-dominated soils). Data collected at each transect include (1) measurements of soil surface organic depth and mineral horizon thickness taken at uniform intervals along the transects, and at alders; (2) physical attributes of shrubs including age-class and canopy height; (3) soil descriptions at circle and inter-circle microsites; and (4) relevé data including plant species cover-abundance. At a subset of the transects, we also (1) mapped the locations of alders and patterned ground microsites; (2) measured Leaf Area Index (LAI); and (3) recorded daily time-series of near-surface soil temperature at different patterned ground microsites (with and without alder) using iButton dataloggers.

Appendices to this report include: Appendix A – Names and addresses of the participants in the expedition; Appendix B – Soil descriptions for the transects; Appendix C – Relevé data; and Appendix D – Bird species list.

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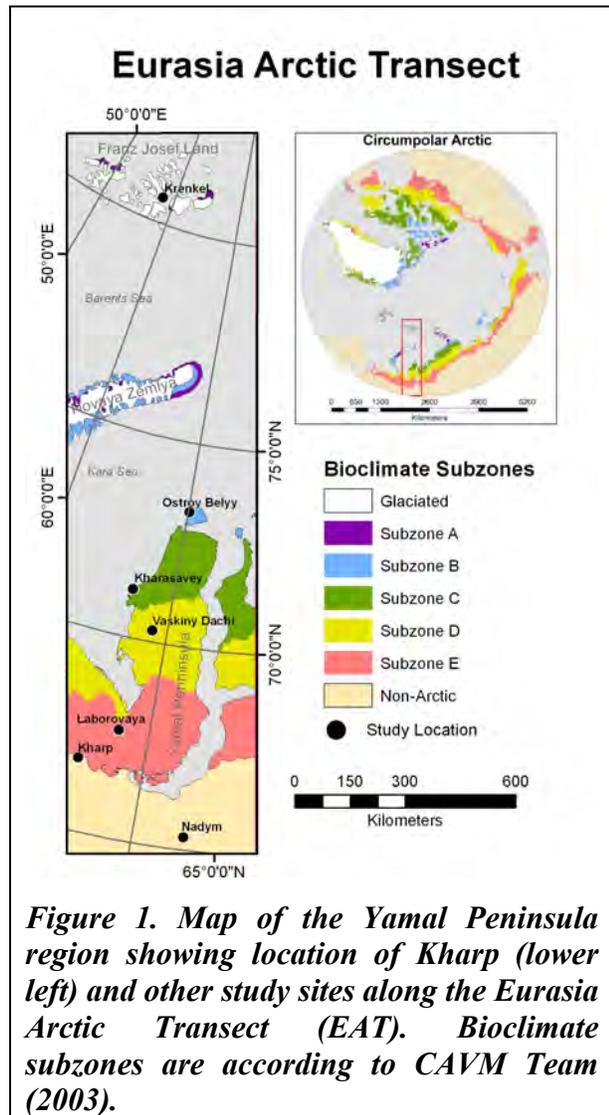
## INTRODUCTION

The 2011 expedition to Kharp was the fifth and final expedition of the project entitled “Land-Cover and Land-Use Changes on the Yamal Peninsula, Russia”, funded by the NASA Land-Cover and Land-Use Change (LCLUC) initiative. One of the primary goals of the Yamal LCLUC project is to examine trends in vegetation, soils, permafrost characteristics, and surface spectral properties along the Eurasia Arctic Transect (EAT), which spans the entire Arctic bioclimate gradient in northwest Russia. The Kharp site is located in an ecotonal area at the southern margin of the Arctic tundra biome (Figure 1). Data reports

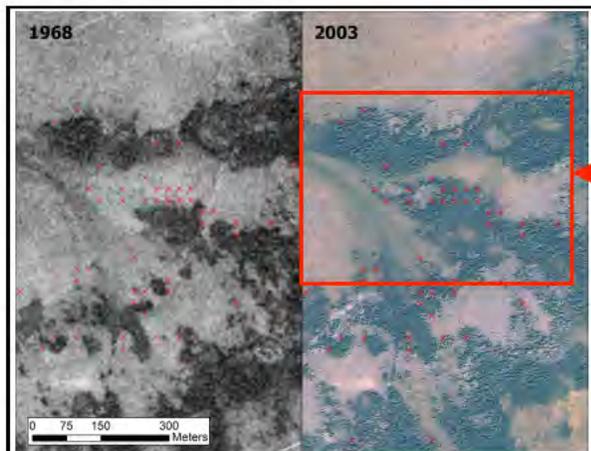
from the previous Yamal expeditions (Walker et al. 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2011) are available on-line at: <http://www.geobotany.uaf.edu/yamal/reports>.

Kharp is the primary study site of G. V. Frost’s dissertation research at the University of Virginia. While evaluating 1960s-era Corona satellite imagery for use in studies of boreal tree and shrub expansion in Low Arctic tundra, it so happened that the first imagery reviewed was the Kharp study area. Comparison with contemporary imagery indicated that alder shrubland extent has increased markedly at the site in recent decades (Figure 2). This finding is corroborated by pixel-based linear regression of the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), derived from Landsat time-series spanning 1985-2010, that indicate strong increases in plant productivity (“greening”), especially in association with alder shrublands (Figure 3).

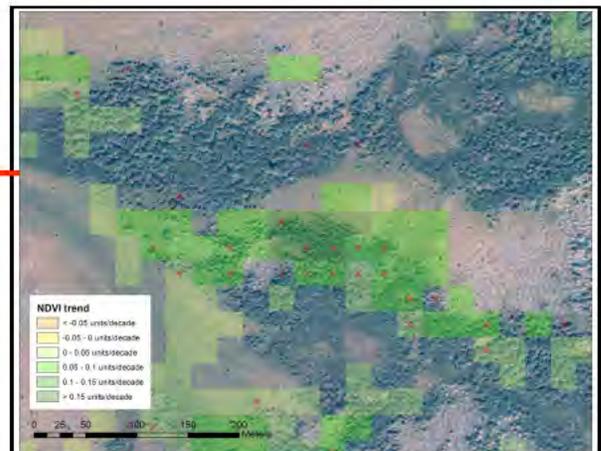
During the 2009 expedition to Ostrov Belyy, we learned that the Kharp study site is within easy hiking-distance of the road linking the towns of Kharp and Labytnangi. Several members of the 2009 expedition were able to make a brief field reconnaissance of the site after completion of studies at Ostrov Belyy (see Walker et al. 2009b). During this ~5-hour reconnaissance, it became clear that most alder expansion occurred in areas of patterned-ground, with most young shrubs growing on mineral-rich microsites on the centers of sorted-circles (see front cover). Additionally, the widespread presence of larch snags and buried charcoal in the soil indicated that most of the expansion had taken place within an old burn ( $\geq 150$  years ago). The linkage between alder expansion and two disturbance agents—cryogenic disturbance in patterned-ground at the meter-scale, and wildfire at the landscape-scale—was compelling and it was clear that the site merited further investigation. An expedition



**Figure 1.** Map of the Yamal Peninsula region showing location of Kharp (lower left) and other study sites along the Eurasia Arctic Transect (EAT). Bioclimate subzones are according to CAVM Team (2003).



**Figure 2. Comparison of 1968 Corona (left) and 2003 QuickBird (right) satellite imagery showing alder shrubland expansion in vicinity of transects K-T04 and K-T05. Red markers denote points with new shrub cover.**



**Figure 3. Detail of area shown in Figure 2, showing Landsat pixels with highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) linear NDVI trends derived from 12 Landsat scenes from 1985-2009. Red markers denote points with alder cover that developed after 1968.**

to Kharp was initially planned for summer 2010, but was postponed because it was not possible to combine work at Kharp with the expedition to Franz Josef Land. Instead, a dedicated expedition to Kharp was undertaken 18 July-2 August, 2011, with a relatively small field crew of five people.

Field methods used at Kharp differ from the previous expeditions to the Yamal region, because study objectives in 2011 were focused more narrowly on the recent history of alder shrubland expansion and increased vegetation productivity at the site. Our objectives at Kharp were to (1) identify important environmental state-factors associated with recent shrub expansion (determined from 1968/2003 high-resolution imagery) and greening (determined from the Landsat NDVI time-series); (2) determine whether alder expansion at Kharp is facilitated by cryogenic disturbance processes in patterned ground; (3) determine whether the distribution of older shrubs can be explained by shrub recruitment on sorted-circle microsites; (4) characterize changes to permafrost thermal regime that occur during shrubland development; and (5) characterize

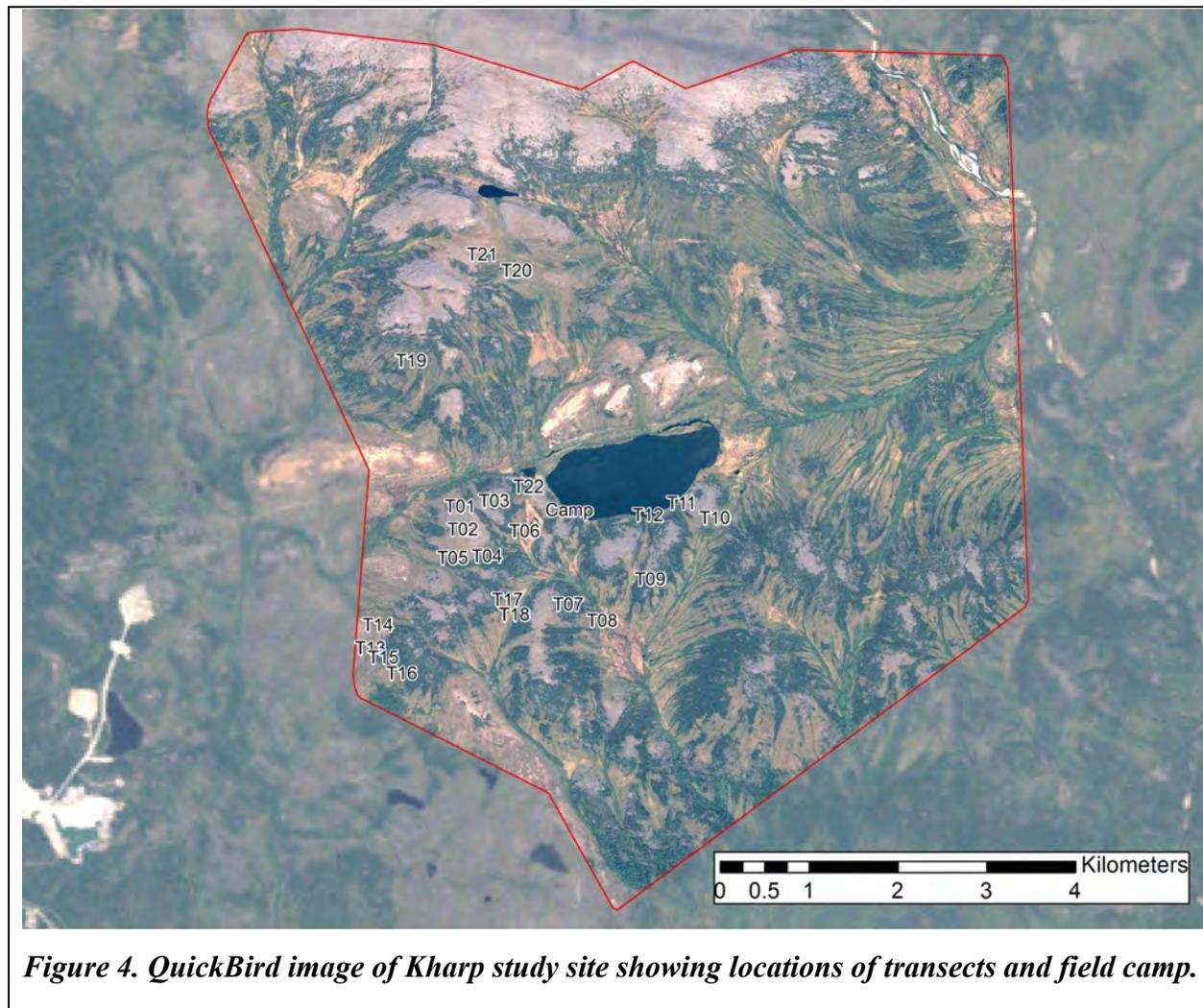
alder shrubland communities and the impacts of shrubification on plant community composition.

## STUDY SITE

### *General description of Kharp site*

The Kharp study area is approximately 64 km<sup>2</sup> in size (Figure 4). Terrain in the area varies from ~200-300 m elevation and mostly consists of gently-sloping low hills separated by small alluvial valleys. The study area is bound by an alpine ridge to the north, the S'Ob River valley to the west, the Ob River lowlands to the south, and the Khamyiy River to the east. Ozero Zholte ("Yellow Lake") is a prominent landmark at the center of the study site.

Access and logistics at Kharp are straightforward compared to most of the other field sites investigated along the Eurasian Arctic Transect (EAT). Our group—three Russians and two Americans (see inside cover)—first flew from Moscow to the city of Salekhard, regional center and capital of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (YNAO). The Kharp site is located



**Figure 4. QuickBird image of Kharp study site showing locations of transects and field camp.**

only ~35 km northwest of Salekhard. We reached the town of Kharp using local taxis on good roads, including a ferry crossing of the Ob River. At Kharp, we hired a “vezdehod”—a large tracked vehicle resembling an armored personnel carrier—to transport us and our camp outfit about 7 km to the field site (Figure 5). The vezdehod driver was able to take us to the exact spot that we had suggested on the map as a good field camp site: a central, upland location in close proximity to Ozero Zholte (water source), with good visibility and exposure to wind (insect relief) (Figure 6).

#### *Surficial geology*

The surficial geology of the Kharp region includes several distinctive rock types that

are associated with the complex geologic history of the Ural Mountains and adjacent fold-thrust belts. Ultramafic igneous rocks of early Paleozoic age are common throughout most of the study area, while metamorphosed sedimentary rocks of Proterozoic age are common at higher elevations along the northern margin of the study area (see Harrison et al. 2008). The prevalence of ultramafic parent materials at Kharp has significant implications for soil formation and cryogenic processes, because mafic minerals tend to weather directly to silt- and clay-sized particles. Fine-grained soils are highly susceptible to cryoturbation and differential heave during freeze-thaw cycles (Peterson and Krantz 2003, Daanen et al. 2008), and partly explain the ubiquity of



**Figure 5. Scenes of the trip to field camp site using ‘vezdehod’ tracked vehicle. Clockwise from upper left: J.J., Ksusha, and Roma ready for departure; vezdehod stuck on steep bank of S’ob River; replacing the left track after being towed out of river by another vezdehod (“quickly broken, quickly repaired”); Sergei (vezdehod driver) after arrival at field camp.**

active patterned-ground features, such as circles at Kharp. Gabbros, which are comparatively resistant to weathering, are also common and underlie the ultramafic deposits (Figure 6). This often results in the co-occurrence of abundant frost-shattered blocks and the fine-grained mineral soils derived from overlying ultramafic rocks. The co-occurrence of these materials explains in part the very sharp microsite contrasts in soil characteristics within patterned-ground at the site.

#### *Geomorphology and permafrost*

Sorted patterned-ground features are common and widespread. The size and

spacing of features vary across the study area, but typically occur at one of two scales: large, sorted polygons ~2 m in diameter and spaced ~4 m apart (Figure 6); and small, high-density circles ~70 cm in diameter and spaced ~2 m apart (Figure 7). The margins of sorted polygons are very blocky and often remain barren in exposed locations, while sorted-circles are fringed by narrow, stony inter-circles that are covered by vegetation (primarily dwarf shrubs).

#### *Climate*

The Kharp area experiences a continental sub-Arctic climate regime that is moderated to some extent by maritime influences

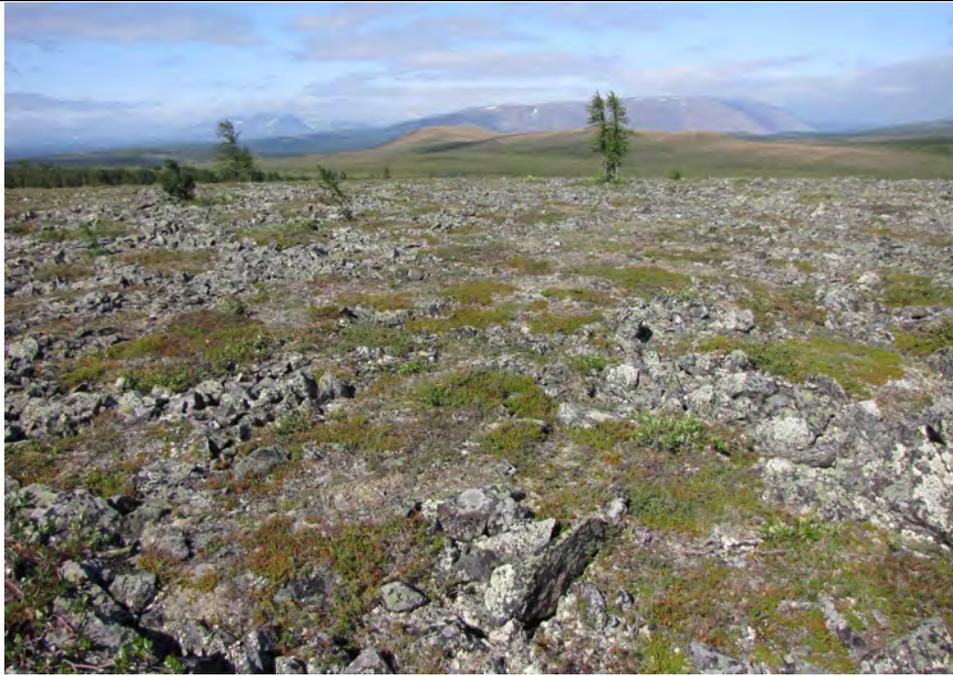


**Figure 6. Kharp field camp and surroundings. Clockwise from upper left: kitchen and gear tent; crew preparing to depart camp for field work; overview of field campsite with Ozero Zholte in background; gear tent being buffeted by wind on 26 July; camp scene during storm of 26 July showing J.J.'s collapsed sleeping tent; Roma in the kitchen.**

associated with the North Cape current. Long-term meteorological observations

(1883-2010) at Salekhard, on the Ob River about 35 km southeast of Kharp, indicate a mean annual temperature of  $-6.3^{\circ}\text{C}$  and a

mean summer (June-July-August) (JJA) temperature of  $11.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Mean annual precipitation for 1966-2010 was 448 mm. Conditions at Kharp are cooler and probably somewhat moister due to the site's higher



***Figure 7. Typical network of large sorted polygons with blocky margins. Polygons are ~2-3 m across and are well-vegetated; the margins are blocky and vegetation mostly consists of crustose lichens. Ultramafic rocks, which appear red (oxidized) in foothills and the Ural Mountains (background), readily weather into very fine-grained materials that co-occur with resistant gabbros (gray frost-shattered rocks, foreground).***



***Figure 8. Typical network of small sorted-circles at Kharp site. The semi-barren circles are about 75 cm in diameter, with regular spacing between circle centers of about 1.5 m. Vegetation at inter-circles is primarily dwarf birch and ericaceous shrubs.***

elevation and close proximity to the Urals. Mean growing season temperatures at Kharp are near 10°C, an important threshold value that largely explains the position of the circumpolar treeline. Therefore, small changes in climate are likely to have disproportionate impacts to growth and reproduction of boreal vegetation at the site. Time-series of mean JJA temperature for the period 1965-2010 are shown in Figure 9 for Salekhard and two other stations in the region—Ra-Iz, at high elevation (880 m) in the Ural Mountains ~ 14 km west of Kharp; and Vorkuta, on the west side of the Urals ~ 110 northwest of Kharp. Linear trends are similar at all three sites and indicate a ~1.5°C increase in JJA temperature since 1965. Thus, it is likely that climate warming has been a contributing factor to shrubland expansion at the site since 1968.

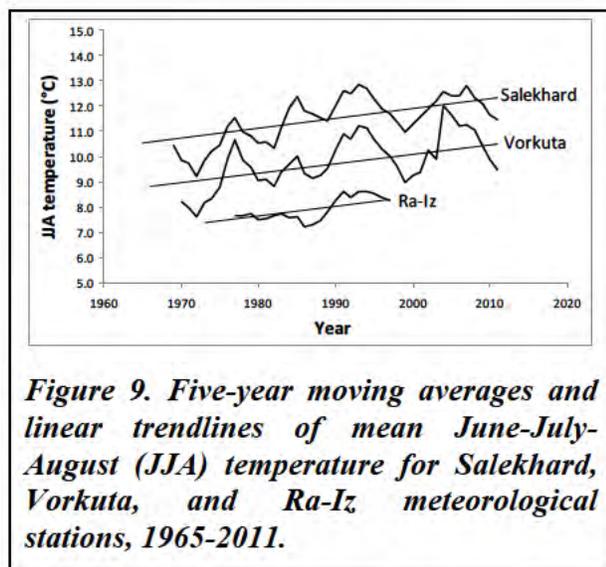
### Vegetation

Common vegetation types include dwarf shrub tundra, dominated by dwarf birch (*Betula nana*) and ericaceous shrubs <30 cm in height; low scrub, dominated by dwarf birch and willows (*Salix* spp.); tall alder scrub, strongly dominated by alder; sparse woodlands of Siberian larch (*Larix sibirica*); and, in wet areas, sedge-moss meadows dominated by *Carex* spp., *Rubus*

*chamaemorus*, and *Sphagnum* spp. Dwarf shrub tundra is especially widespread on exposed uplands and hilltops; this type is common in inter-circle areas among small, active sorted-circles. Low scrub is widespread on lower slopes and often forms conspicuous stringers along small drainages and watertracks. Tall alder scrub is most common on slopes and upland plateaus; canopy-cover is quite variable and often appears to depend on the density of patterned-ground features. Larch woodlands are most common on hillslopes in the southern part of the study area; woodlands tend to have heavy shrub cover in the understory, although scattered larches sometimes occur on exposed sites.

### Disturbance history

In 2009, we observed abundant evidence of two disturbance agents that have strongly affected biophysical attributes of the landscape at Kharp: differential frost-heave and wildfire. These two forms of disturbance act at very different temporal and spatial scales, but have both had strong and interacting effects on vegetation, soil properties, and geomorphology. Differential frost-heave occurs on an annual basis, producing sharp microsite contrasts in soil conditions and disturbance regime at the meter-scale in areas of patterned-ground (see Peterson and Krantz 2003). The ubiquity of conspicuous, barren circles across the study area offer clear evidence of an active, on-going cryoturbation regime at Kharp. Wildfire, on the other hand, occurs episodically at much larger spatial scales. Although we were not able to determine the date of the last wildfire, tree-ring aging of live trees growing in severe burn areas indicate that the fire occurred at least 190 YBP. This fire was severe enough to burn off the entire surface organic mat in many areas, and vegetation has still not recovered from the fire in many places. The wide distribution of fire-killed larch snags in areas



**Figure 9. Five-year moving averages and linear trendlines of mean June-July-August (JJA) temperature for Salekhard, Vorkuta, and Ra-Iz meteorological stations, 1965-2011.**

that currently lack live trees, particularly on exposed hilltops and in wet, paludified lowlands, indicates that tree cover was formerly much more extensive. One explanation for this is that extensive woodlands developed during the Medieval Warm Period, but have not fully regenerated after burning during the Little Ice Age (LIA).

In addition to its effects on vegetation, the wildfire presumably affected the cryogenic disturbance regime by burning off a great deal of surface organic matter. The removal of this insulating material restored sharp microsite thermal gradients that drive differential heave in areas of patterned ground, re-activating sorted-circles across the site.

## METHODS

Our observations during field reconnaissance on our first full day at Kharp clearly indicated that areas of patterned ground were “hotspots” of alder expansion (evident from 1968 Corona imagery) and greening (evident in spatially-explicit linear regressions of 1985-2010 Landsat NDVI time-series). We therefore developed a field-sampling protocol to document and quantify the relationship between alder shrub distribution and sorted-circle microsites, and the effects of shrubland development on biophysical properties of the landscape including plant canopy structure, active layer thermal regime, and plant community composition.

### *Transect selection*

We established a series of transects according to four categories of alder presence/absence and shrubland stand-age: tundra (no alders), alder colonization zone, mature shrubland, and paludified shrubland (Figure 10). Tundra transects were placed in alder-free areas of patterned ground adjacent to colonization zones, and these transects



**Figure 10. Transects in (top to bottom): tundra (foreground), colonization zone, mature shrubland, and paludified shrubland.**

usually spanned both colonization zones and neighboring mature shrublands. Transects in alder colonization zones were established along the margins of alder thickets that had not developed until after 1968 (according to Corona imagery). Vegetation and geomorphic features in colonization zones were very similar to the tundra transects, except that circle centers were dominated by young alders (<30 cm tall). Mature shrublands were dominated by large alders (typically >2 m height) that were already evident in 1968 imagery, although seedlings were often common. Paludified shrublands were characterized by open stands of very old alders, often with low vigor (e.g., with many moribund or dead ramets), occurring on wet soils with a thick surface layer of organic material; seedlings were very scarce or absent in paludified shrublands. Colonization zones and mature shrublands almost always had significant NDVI greening trends in Landsat time-series, with the strongest greening in colonization zones; trends tended to be much weaker in tundra and absent in paludified shrublands.

#### *Transect and alder properties*

Transect size varied depending on the density of alders and patterned ground features (20-100 m length, 4-10 m width) (Table 1); we established larger transects where alders and/or PGFs occurred at low densities. We recorded systematic measurements of soil organic depth, thaw depth/depth to rock, and Leaf Area Index (LAI) at intervals of 1 m along the transect centerline. Transects were placed in areas with homogeneous vegetation and geomorphology, so we assumed that the systematic measurements reflect the relative extent of circle and inter-circle microsites. We also recorded soil organic depth and thaw depth/depth to rock at the base of each alder, regardless of size, within each transect. We also measured the length of the dominant ramet of each alder. From the soil

profile measurements, we calculated the total thickness of mineral soil horizons (thaw depth/depth to rock minus surface organic depth). Soil profile measurements were made with a steel thaw probe, and LAI was measured using a LAI-2000 Plant Canopy Analyzer (LI-COR Biosciences, Lincoln NE, USA). Because the Kharp site is very rocky, most thaw probe measurements were of depth to rock, rather than thaw depth.

#### *Transect mapping*

We mapped the locations of alders and the centers of exposed sorted-circles within a subset of the transects using X/Y coordinates; coordinates were measured relative to the transect centerline using a hand tape. When possible, we visually recorded the microsite from which alders emerged (e.g., center of active circle, margin of active circle, inter-circle) (Figure 11). We also measured the height of the dominant ramet of each individual alder, and assessed shrub vigor on a scale of 0 (dead) to 4 (healthy) based on the presence of moribund and/or dead ramets, and other qualitative characters such as the density of annual leaf-bud scars on small twigs (Figure 12).



**Figure 11. Young alder growing on active circle showing exposed, deformed root resulting from differential heave.**



**Figure 12. Alder showing numerous annual leaf-bud scars on small twigs, characteristic of old, slow-growing shrubs in paludified shrublands.**

### *Soil descriptions*

We established soil pits immediately adjacent to most of the transects. Nearly all transects had strong microsite variation in soil properties (Figure 13), so we usually established two soil pits, one at circles and one at inter-circles. In paludified shrublands, circles and inter-circles were difficult to distinguish so we established soil pits on and hummocks (where alders tended to occur) inter-hummocks. We collected a mineral soil sample at each pit using a standard USDA soil can. Samples were submitted to the USDA field station at Palmer, AK for physical and chemical analysis (see Walker et al. 2009a). See Appendix 2 for detailed soil description methods.

### *Soil temperature profiles*

We embedded 6-10 Thermochron iButton dataloggers (Embedded Data Systems LLC, Lawrenceburg, KY, USA) to measure microsite variation in soil temperature along a subset of the transects (generally the same ones used for alder/PGF mapping). Dataloggers were distributed at the base of alders (within circles on tundra transects) and in alder-free inter-circles. All iButtons were emplaced at a depth of 5 cm; an

additional iButton was placed in a shaded location at a height of 2 m to record air temperature at each transect. Soil temperature measurements were collected at 4-hour intervals; we used 4-hour intervals because we initially intended to retrieve them in June 2012, following the TICOP conference at Salekhard. We collected a total of five days of concurrent data for all transects (27 July-1 August), although observations periods were longer for some transects as not all iButtons were deployed on the same day.

### *Relevés*

We established relevés at most transects. The number of relevés per transect ranged from 2 to 9 (Table 1). All relevés were 5x5 m in size and were centered along the transect centerline. At each relevé, we recorded a complete species list and assigned a Braun-Blanquet cover-abundance score for each species. We also visually estimated the percent-cover of each plant functional type: tree, tall shrub (>1.5 m), low shrub (30 cm–1.5 m), dwarf shrub ( $\leq$  30 cm), sedge, grass, forb, moss, and lichen. Each relevé was permanently marked with an orange pin-flag and an aluminum tag



**Figure 13. Soil pit at sorted-polygon near transect T-06. Mineral soils at the circle are very fine-textured and lack coarse fragments. Inter-circles are composed of frost-shattered blocks of gabbro.**

labeled with the transect number and a unique, sequential identifier (e.g., K-T01-01). We also established relevés in a few common vegetation types that lacked alder, including some that had strong significant trends in NDVI (positive and negative). Results from relevés are summarized in Appendix 3.

## RESULTS

### *Transect attributes*

**Table 1. Summary of transect attributes, Kharp study area.**

Transect ID	Stage	PGF type	Length (m)	Width (cm)	Number of relevés	Number of iButtons	Mapping (y/n)	LAI (y/n)	Soil pit (y/n)	Notes
K-T01	colonization	sorted-circles	50	5	3	6	y	y	y	Mapped alders on first 20 m of transect; relevés centered at 2.5, 25, and 47.5 m.
K-T02	chronosequence	variable	70	n/a	9	12	n	y	y	Transect spans tundra, colonization zone, and mature shrubland.
K-T03	colonization	sorted-polygons	50	5	3	-	y	y	y	Relevés centered at 2.5, 25, and 47.5 m.
K-T04	colonization	sorted-circles	50	4	3	9	y	y	y	Mapped alders on first 20 m of transect; relevés centered at 2.5, 25, and 47.5 m.
K-T05	chronosequence	variable	68	n/a	7	8	n	y	y	Transect spans tundra, colonization zone, and mature shrubland; relevés at 0, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, and 68 m.
K-T06	colonization	sorted-polygons	50	5	3	-	y	y	y	Relevés centered at 2.5, 25, and 47.5 m.
K-T07	paludified	hummocks	100	8	6	12	y	y	y	Relevés centered at 2.5, 20, 40, 60, 80, and 97.5 m.
K-T08	mature	sorted-polygons	50	8	3	-	y	y	y	Relevés centered at 2.5, 25, and 47.5 m.
K-T09	paludified	hummocks	100	8	5	-	y	y	y	Relevés centered at 2.5, 25, 50, 75, and 97.5 m.
K-T10	mature	sorted-polygons	50	8	3	6	y	y	y	Relevés centered at 2.5, 25, and 47.5 m.
K-T11	colonization	irregular sorted-circles	25	n/a	2	-	n	n	y	Relevés centered at 5 and 20 m.
K-T12	colonization	blockfield	25	n/a	2	-	n	n	y	Relevés centered at 10 and 40 m.
K-T13	colonization	irregular sorted-circles	25	n/a	2	-	n	n	y	Relevés centered at 5 and 20 m.
K-T14	paludified	hummocks	25	n/a	2	-	n	n	y	Relevés centered at 5 and 20 m.
K-T15	colonization	irregular sorted-circles	25	n/a	2	-	n	n	y	Relevés centered at 5 and 20 m.
K-T16	colonization	irregular sorted-circles	25	n/a	2	-	n	n	y	Relevés centered at 5 and 20 m.

Transect ID	Stage	PGF type	Length (m)	Width (cm)	Number of relevés	Number of iButtons	Mapping (y/n)	LAI (y/n)	Soil pit (y/n)	Notes
K-T17	colonization	sorted-circles	25	n/a	-	-	n	n	n	
K-T19	paludified	hummocks	50	n/a	-	-	n	n	n	
K-T20	colonization	sorted-polygons	25	n/a	-	-	n	n	n	
K-T21	mature	sorted-polygons	50	n/a	-	-	n	n	n	
K-T22	colonization	sorted-circles	20	4	-	-	y	n	n	Mapped alders in 20x4 m area.

**Table 2. Locations and elevations of transects and relevés. Locations are given in decimal degrees (ddd.ddddd). Datum is WGS1984. Note that GPS locations were not recorded for all relevés; see Table 1 for locations of these relevés along the transects.**

Description	North	East	Elev (m)	Description	North	East	Elev (m)
Field Camp	66.83150	65.96150	235	K-T09-75	66.82114	65.99346	216
K-T01-0	66.82954	65.94572	255	K-T09-100	66.82092	65.99352	212
K-T01-12.5	66.82964	65.94562	255	K-T10-0	66.82764	66.00167	230
K-T01-20	66.82970	65.94558	260	K-T10-12.5	66.82754	66.00161	230
K-T01-37.5	66.82984	65.94542	252	K-T10-25	66.82740	66.00154	229
K-T01-50	66.82994	65.94531	257	K-T10-37.5	66.82731	66.00150	229
K-T01-Pit	66.82989	65.94472	252	K-T10-50	66.82720	66.00144	229
K-T01-R1	66.82993	65.94535	251	K-T11-0	66.82906	65.99809	231
K-T01-R2	66.82974	65.94552	253	K-T11-12.5	66.82895	65.99816	228
K-T01-R3	66.82956	65.94569	255	K-T11-25	66.82884	65.99826	231
K-T02-R1	66.82972	65.94535	255	K-T12-0	66.82805	65.99346	233
K-T02-R2	66.82977	65.94572	249	K-T12-25	66.82783	65.99358	232
K-T02-R3	66.82981	65.94587	257	K-T12-50	66.82760	65.99368	238
K-T02-R4	66.82982	65.94616	248	K-T13-0	66.81832	65.92109	223
K-T02-R5	66.82985	65.94629	252	K-T13-12.5	66.81823	65.92121	223
K-T02-R6	66.82988	65.94644	250	K-T13-25	66.81814	65.92131	226
K-T02-R7	66.82991	65.94655	252	K-T14-0	66.81811	65.92298	232
K-T02-R8	66.82992	65.94665	254	K-T14-12.5	66.81803	65.92311	236
K-T02-R9	66.82996	65.94676	255	K-T14-25	66.81794	65.92328	237
K-T03-0	66.82995	65.94821	261	K-T15-0	66.81477	65.92385	227
K-T03-50	66.83027	65.94739	254	K-T15-12.5	66.81474	65.92410	225
K-T03-R1	66.83001	65.94814	265	K-T15-25	66.81473	65.92438	227
K-T03-R2	66.83012	65.94782	255	K-T16-0	66.81298	65.92837	227
K-T03-R3	66.83026	65.94744	254	K-T16-12.5	66.81303	65.92865	227
K-T04-0	66.82469	65.94301	247	K-T16-25	66.81308	65.92892	226
K-T04-10	66.82466	65.94323	245	K-T17-0	66.82001	65.95631	228
K-T04-20	66.82462	65.94341	247	K-T17-12.5	66.81997	65.95657	231
K-T04-30	66.82457	65.94362	249	K-T17-25	66.81994	65.95684	230
K-T04-50	66.82452	65.94413	254	K-T18-0	66.81845	65.95790	229
K-T05-0	66.82483	65.94334	251	K-T18-12.5	66.81843	65.95819	230
K-T05-20	66.82464	65.94322	245	K-T18-25	66.81842	65.95849	227
K-T05-40	66.82446	65.94310	250	K-T19-0	66.84459	65.93502	279
K-T05-60	66.82431	65.94296	251	K-T19-12.5	66.84451	65.93485	275
K-T05-70	66.82423	65.94288	252	K-T19-25	66.84440	65.93469	273
K-T06-0	66.82697	65.96204	230	K-T19-37.5	66.84430	65.93455	271
K-T06-25	66.82679	65.96174	229	K-T19-50	66.84421	65.93435	269
K-T06-50	66.82662	65.96138	235	K-T20-0	66.85326	65.95244	312
K-T07-0	66.81921	65.97094	206	K-T20-12.5	66.85330	65.95269	315
K-T07-25	66.81920	65.97149	207	K-T20-25	66.85333	65.95298	315
K-T07-50	66.81921	65.97207	209	K-T21-0	66.85481	65.95382	309

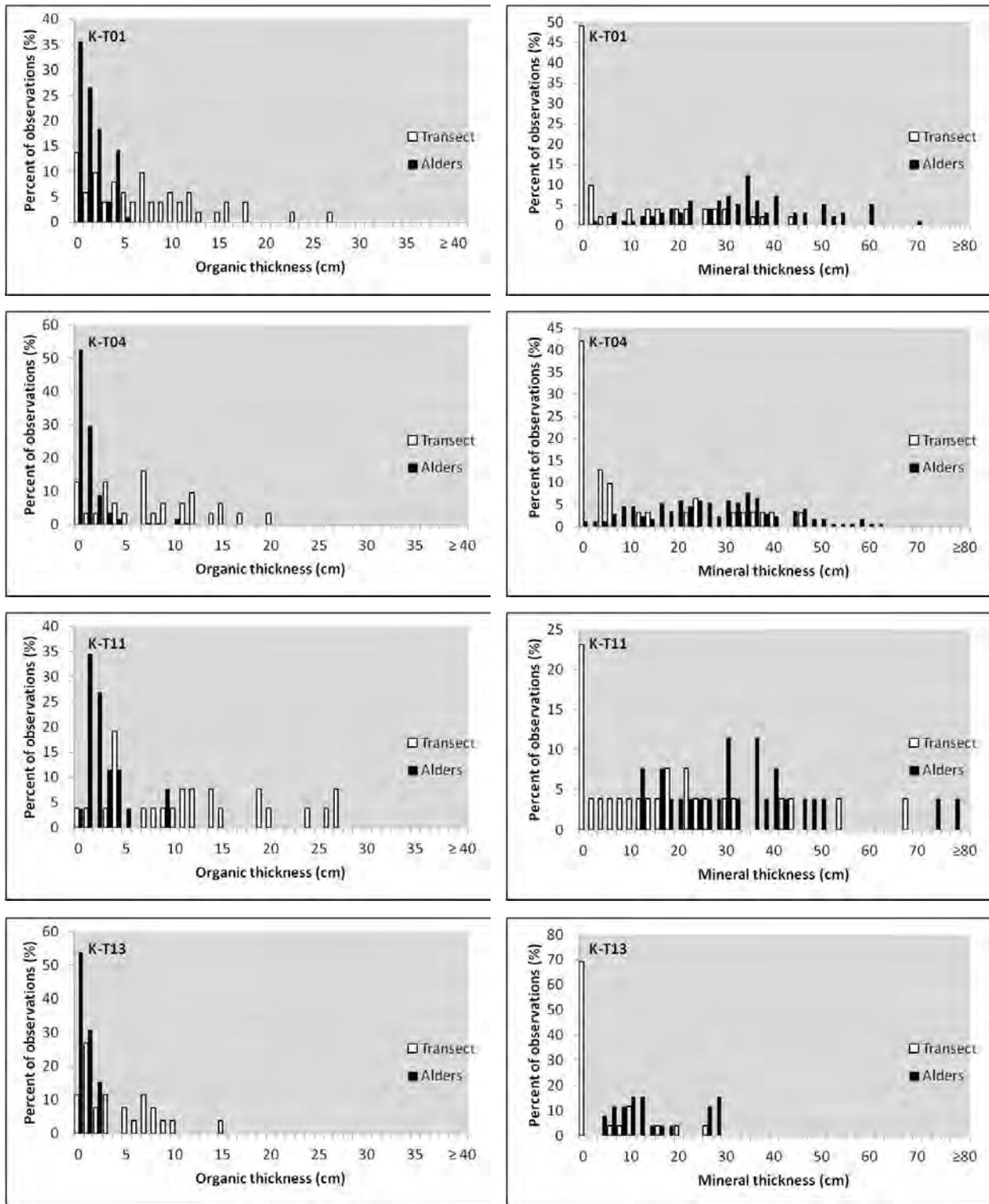
**Table 2. (Continued).**

Description	North	East	Elev (m)	Description	North	East	Elev (m)
K-T07-75	66.81919	65.97263	207	K-T21-12.5	66.85486	65.95409	307
K-T08-0	66.81774	65.97297	199	K-T21-25	66.85488	65.95435	307
K-T08-25	66.81753	65.97294	198	K-T21-37.5	66.85490	65.95464	307
K-T08-50	66.81730	65.97291	196	K-T21-50	66.85492	65.95491	307
K-T09-0	66.82180	65.99326	218	K-T22-0	66.83136	65.95921	234
K-T09-25	66.82159	65.99330	217	K-T22-10	66.83135	65.95942	234
K-T09-50	66.82137	65.99340	214	K-T22-20	66.83133	65.95963	233

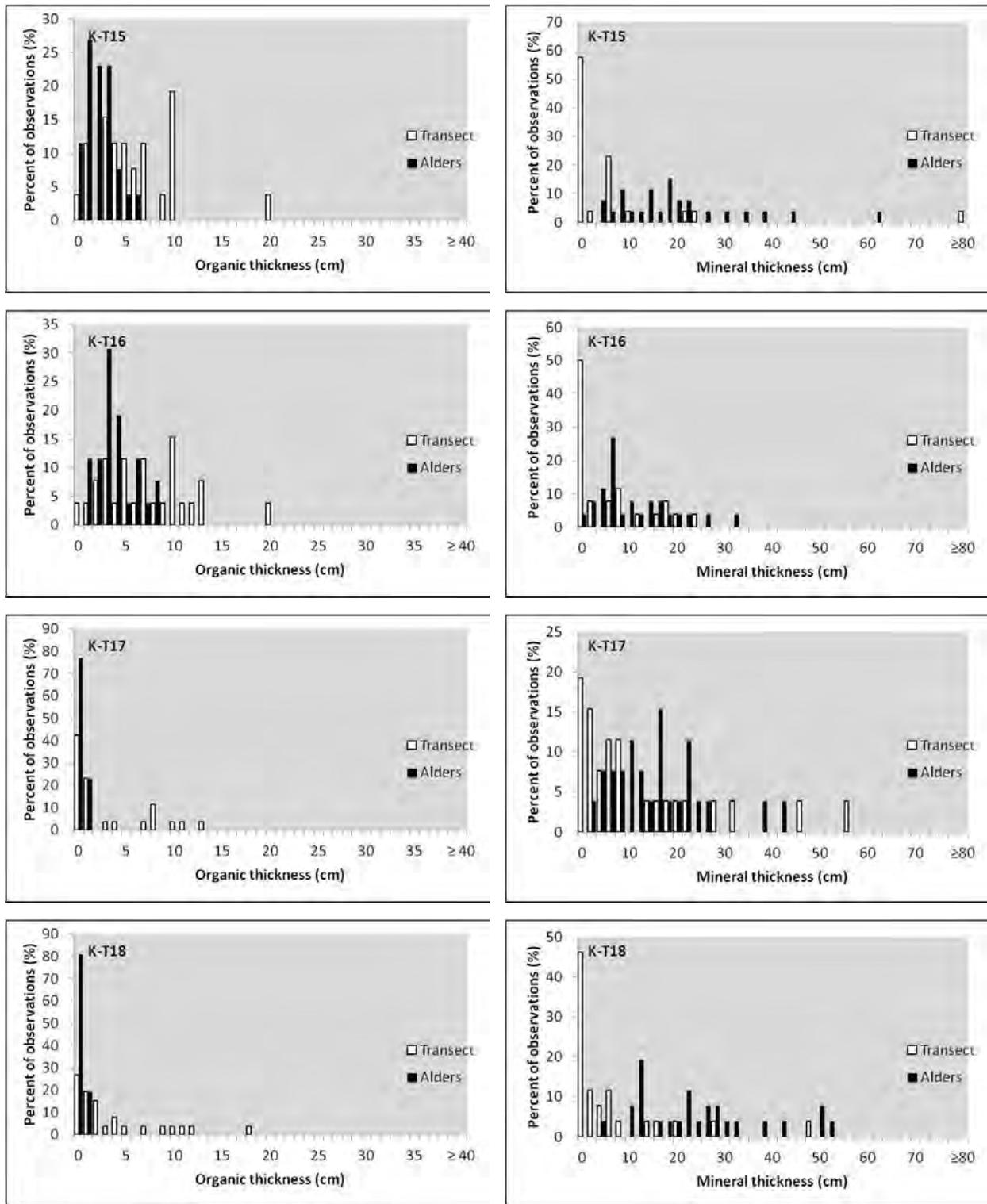
*Transect soil properties by microsite*

**Table 3. Means and standard deviations of surface organic thickness (cm) and mineral horizon thickness (cm), and number of observations, for systematic transect measurements and alders, by transect. Standard deviations are given in parentheses.**

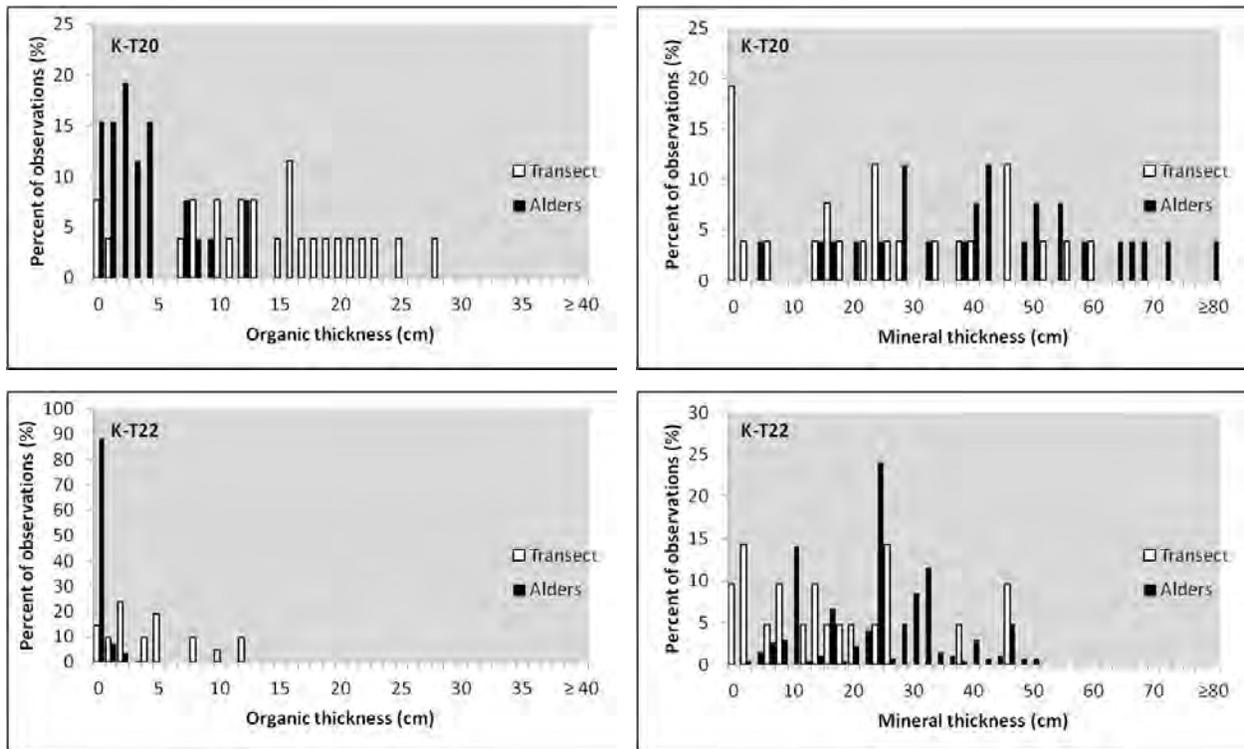
Transect	Stage	Mean organic depth (cm)		Mean mineral thickness (cm)		n	
		Transect	Alders	Transect	Alders	Transect	Alder
K-T01	colonization	7.2 (6.3)	1.4 (1.4)	8.9 (12.5)	31.3 (14.5)	51	103
K-T02	variable	7.0 (4.6)	4.3 (3.4)	8.8 (11.9)	26.8 (14.2)	71	43
K-T03	colonization	1.8 (2.8)	2.1 (1.7)	3.0 (10.3)	25.7 (16.8)	51	18
K-T04	colonization	7.4 (5.5)	1.0 (1.9)	11.3 (14.8)	26.8 (14.0)	31	169
K-T05	variable	6.7 (5.6)	2.3 (2.9)	6.6 (11.3)	18.4 (11.8)	69	67
K-T06	colonization	2.0 (3.8)	2.0 (2.7)	3.3 (9.0)	24.6 (20.9)	51	40
K-T07	paludified	25.2 (7.6)	14.3 (4.6)	21.0 (19.0)	44.3 (15.9)	101	59
K-T08	mature	16.3 (8.9)	2.4 (2.5)	29.9 (24.4)	33.5 (22.8)	51	104
K-T09	paludified	17.9 (6.6)	13.3 (7.8)	25.5 (23.8)	38.5 (22.8)	101	55
K-T10	mature	14.2 (8.4)	1.3 (2.4)	22.0 (28.4)	45.9 (17.6)	51	181
K-T11	colonization	11.9 (8.2)	2.6 (2.2)	17.9 (18.0)	33.5 (16.3)	26	26
K-T12	colonization	0.8 (1.8)	2.7 (2.2)	0.1 (0.4)	10.5 (11.0)	26	26
K-T13	colonization	4.1 (3.8)	0.6 (0.8)	4.0 (7.0)	14.2 (8.4)	26	26
K-T14	paludified	16.2 (4.5)	15.2 (5.3)	9.5 (11.1)	17.8 (12.7)	26	26
K-T15	colonization	5.9 (4.2)	2.2 (1.5)	6.7 (17.2)	19.1 (13.4)	26	26
K-T16	colonization	7.2 (4.6)	3.8 (2.0)	5.4 (7.5)	10.1 (8.0)	26	26
K-T17	colonization	3.0 (4.1)	0.2 (0.4)	11.4 (14.7)	15.2 (9.9)	26	26
K-T18	colonization	3.7 (4.7)	0.2 (0.4)	6.2 (11.1)	23.7 (13.3)	26	26
K-T19	paludified	21.8 (5.6)	17 (5.2)	8.5 (12.6)	17.1 (14.4)	26	26
K-T20	colonization	13.9 (7.3)	3.6 (3.5)	24.1 (18.9)	42.0 (19.8)	26	26
K-T21	mature	11.7 (7.4)	3.9 (2.3)	12.6 (21.0)	21.7 (15.7)	26	26
K-T22	colonization	4.3 (3.8)	0.2 (0.5)	16.4 (13.9)	23.6 (11.0)	21	270
Grand total		11.1 (9.6)	3.0 (5.2)	13.5 (18.9)	28.9 (18.2)	935	1395



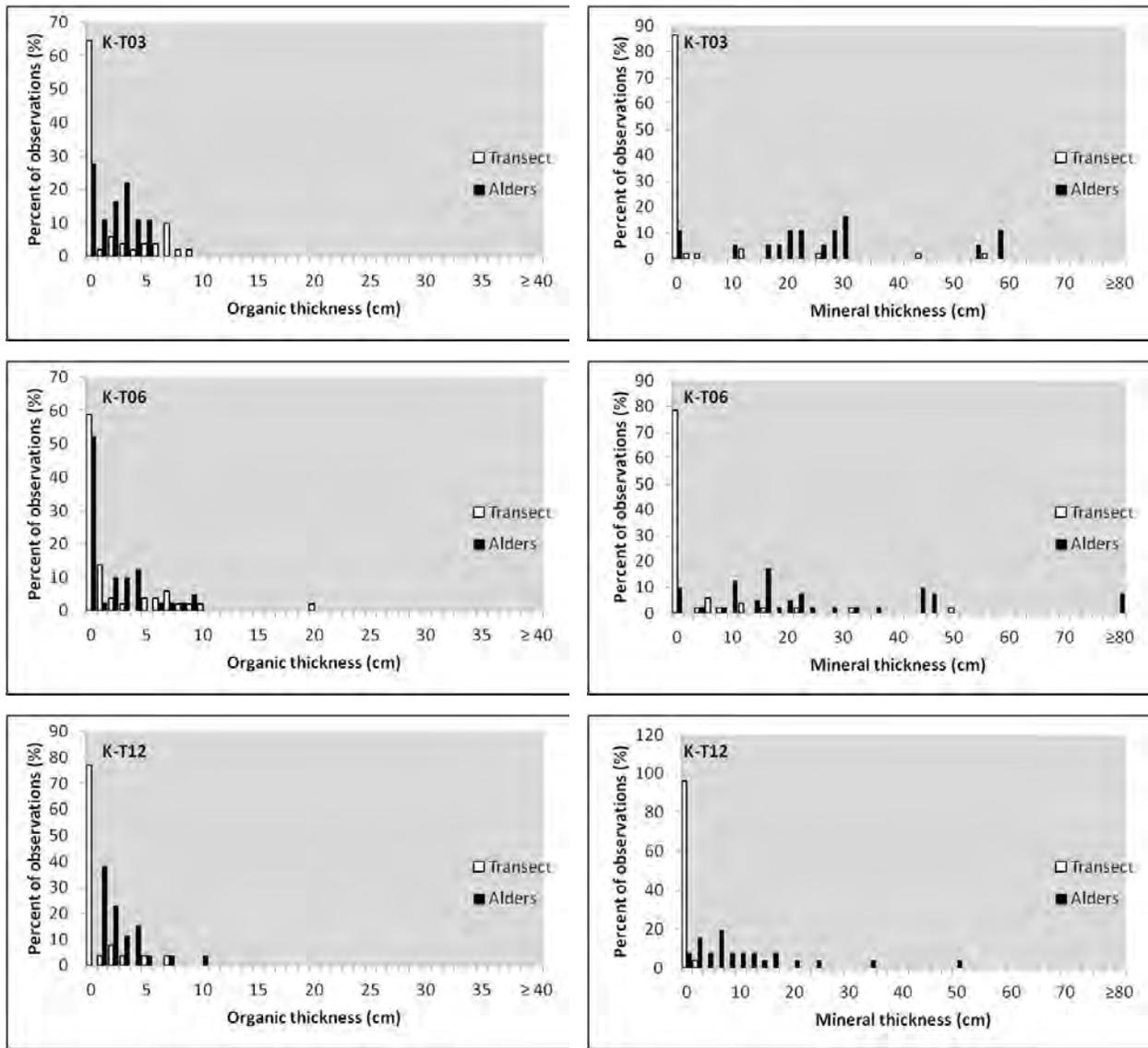
**Figure 14. Frequency distributions of surface organic depth (left column) and mineral horizon thickness (right column) measurements for four transects in alder colonization zones: K-T01, K-T04, K-T11, and K-T13. Mineral thicknesses are binned in 2-cm increments.**



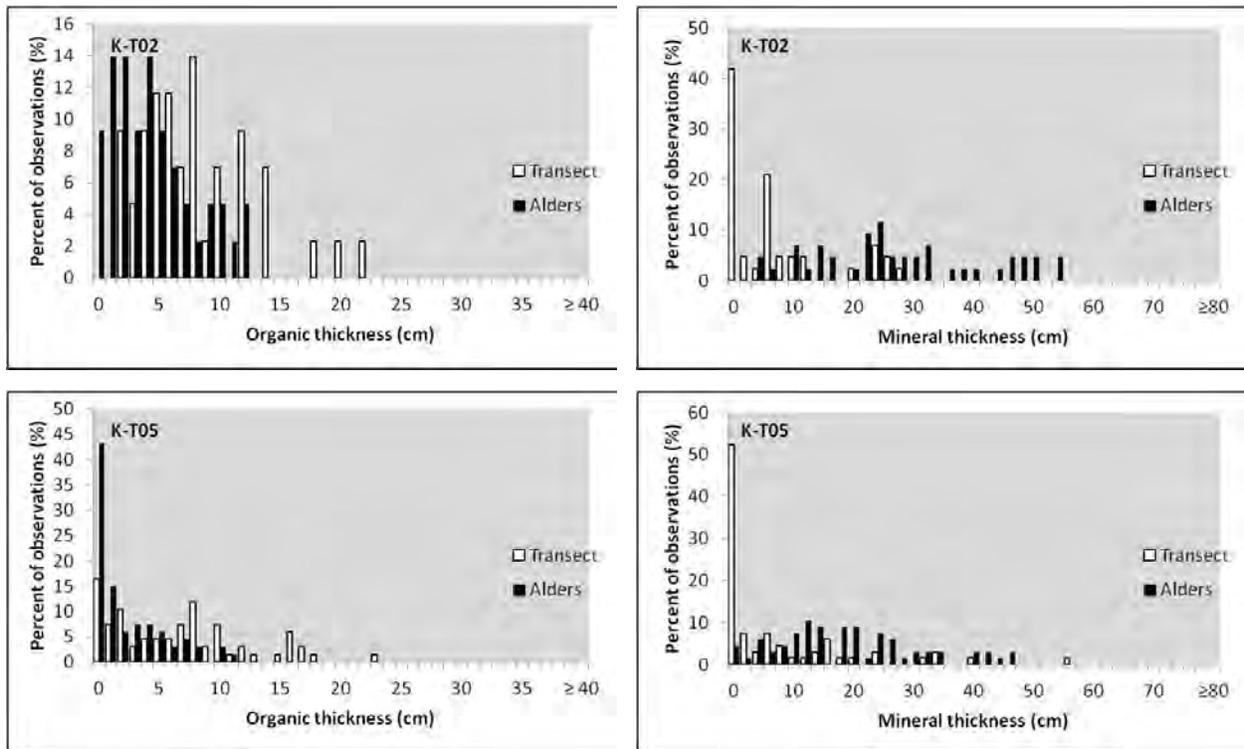
**Figure 15.** Frequency distributions of surface organic depth (left column) and mineral horizon thickness (right column) measurements (cm) for four transects in alder colonization zones: K-T01, K-T04, K-T11, and K-T13. Mineral thicknesses are binned in 2-cm increments.



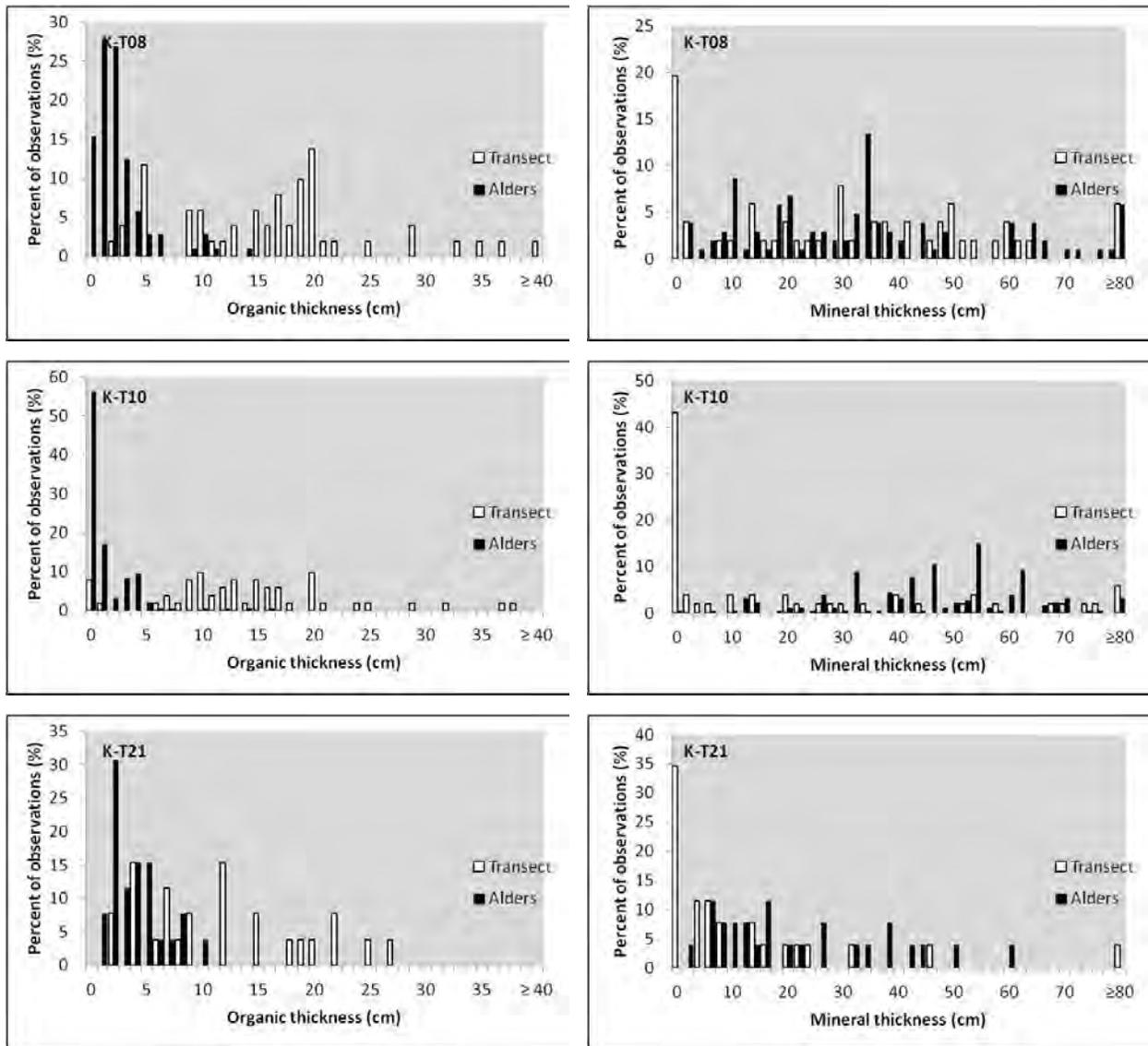
**Figure 16.** Frequency distributions of surface organic depth (left column) and mineral horizon thickness (right column) measurements (cm) for two transects in alder colonization zones: K-T20 and K-T22. Mineral thicknesses are binned in 2-cm increments.



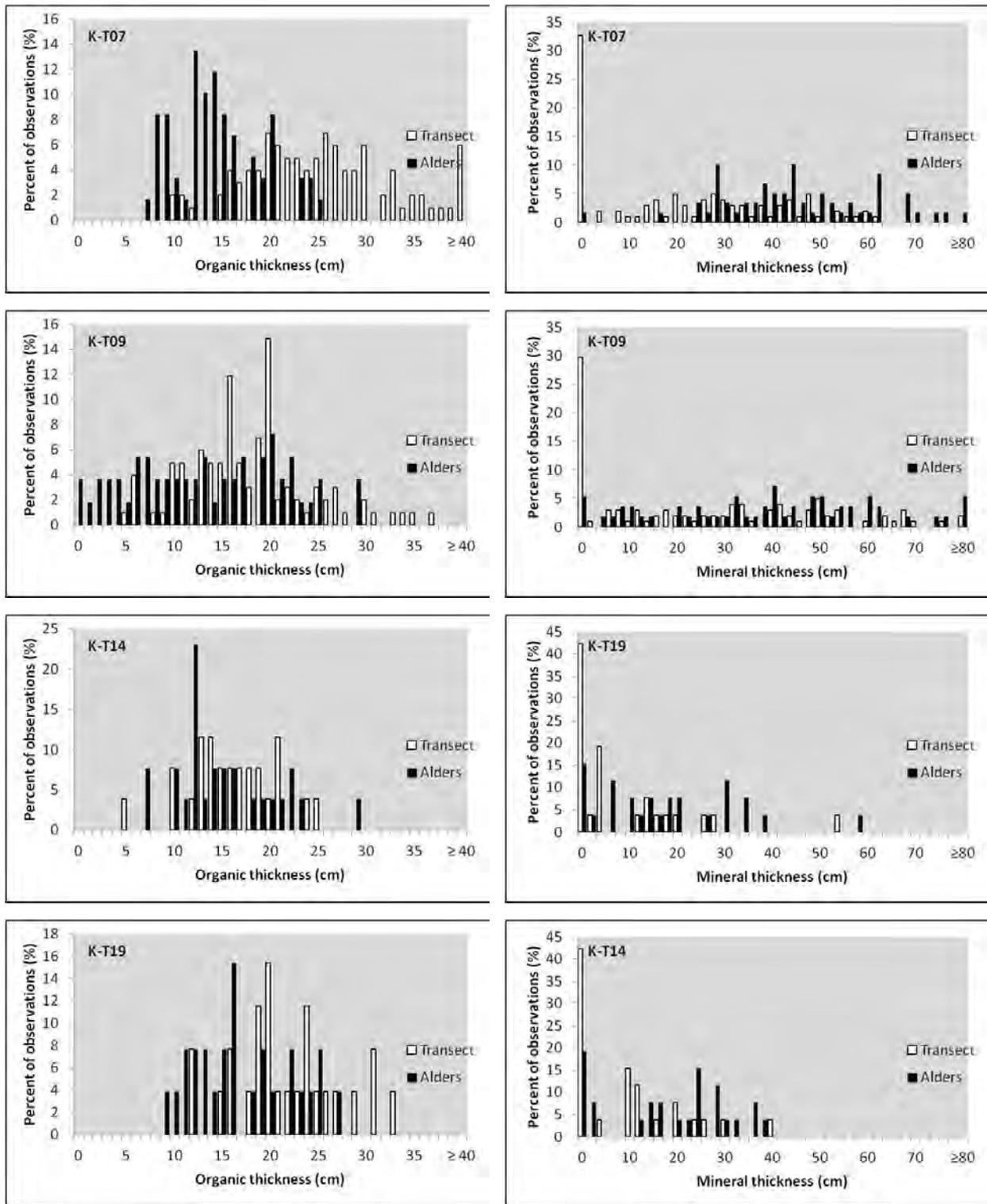
**Figure 17.** Frequency distributions of surface organic depth (left column) and mineral horizon thickness (right column) measurements (cm) for three transects with very blocky inter-circles: K-T03, K-T06, and K-T12. Mineral thicknesses are binned in 2-cm increments.



**Figure 18.** Frequency distributions of surface organic depth (left column) and mineral horizon thickness (right column) measurements (cm) for two transects along successional gradients: K-T02 and K-T05. Mineral thicknesses are binned in 2-cm increments.



**Figure 19.** Frequency distributions of surface organic depth (left column) and mineral horizon thickness (right column) measurements (cm) for three transects in mature shrublands: K-T08, K-T10, and K-T21. Mineral thicknesses are binned in 2-cm increments.



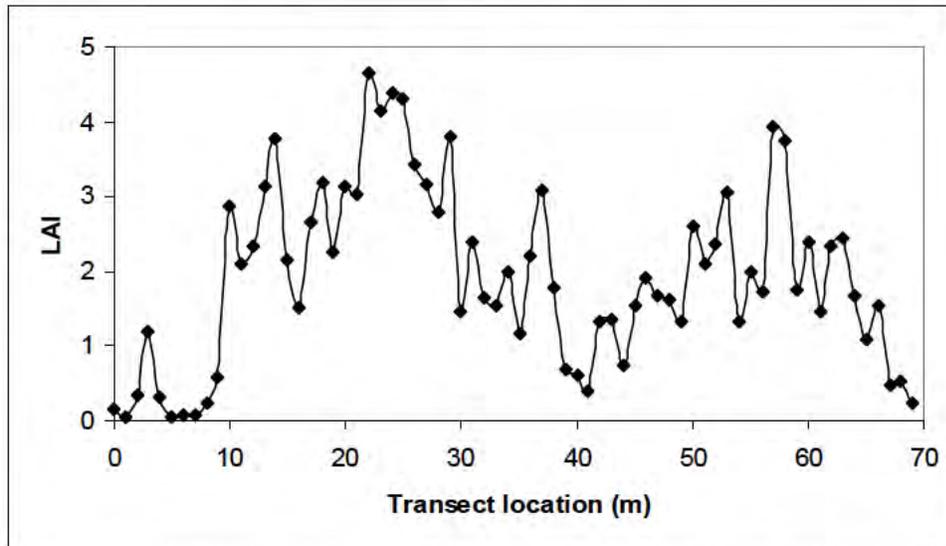
**Figure 20.** Frequency distributions of surface organic depth (left column) and mineral horizon thickness (right column) measurements (cm) for four transects in paludified shrublands: K-T07, K-T09, K-T14, and K-T19. Mineral thicknesses are binned in 2-cm increments.

*Alder properties*

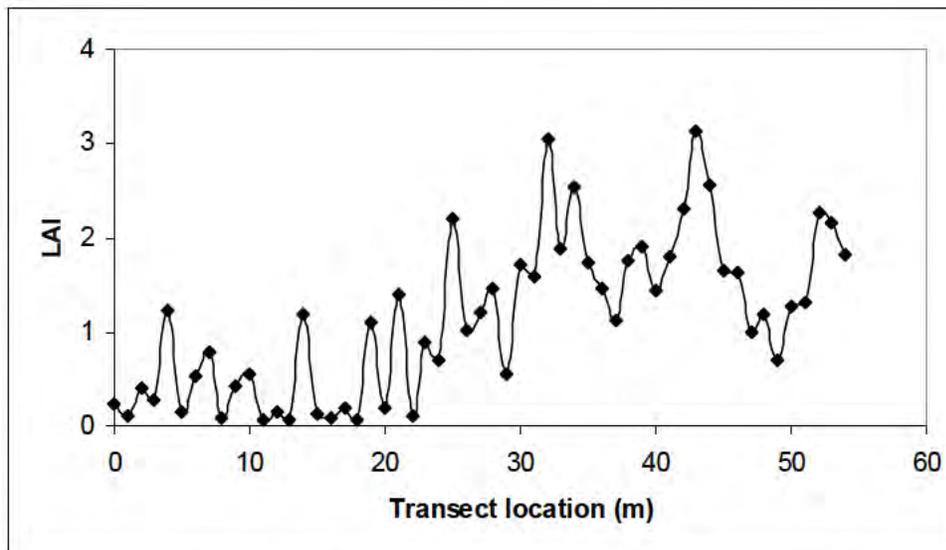
**Table 4. Mean Leaf Area Index (LAI), alder height, alder vigor, and frequency of alder age-classes, by transect.**

Transect	Stage	Mean LAI	Mean height (cm)	Mean vigor	Age-class frequency		
					Adult	Sapling	Seedling
K-T01	colonization	0.7	35.4	5.0	25	59	19
K-T02	variable	1.9	205.2	5.0	-	-	-
K-T03	colonization	0.6	132.7	5.0	16	2	0
K-T04	colonization	0.6	16.3	5.0	17	87	65
K-T05	variable	1.1	123.0	5.0	-	-	-
K-T06	colonization	0.4	87.1	5.0	20	6	14
K-T07	paludified	1.3	90.5	3.6	54	5	0
K-T08	mature	2.1	92.2	4.8	57	37	10
K-T09	paludified	1.1	63.8	3.3	49	6	0
K-T10	mature	1.9	21.8	4.9	19	52	110
K-T11	colonization	-	128.3	5.0	-	-	-
K-T12	colonization	-	174.2	5.0	-	-	-
K-T13	colonization	-	152.5	5.0	-	-	-
K-T14	paludified	-	71.7	2.7	26	0	0
K-T15	colonization	-	160.0	5.0	-	-	-
K-T16	colonization	-	186.1	5.0	-	-	-
K-T17	colonization	-	46.7	5.0	-	-	-
K-T18	colonization	-	38.8	5.0	-	-	-
K-T19	paludified	-	72.1	3.6	26	0	0
K-T20	colonization	-	88.8	5.0	-	-	-
K-T21	mature	-	190.3	5.0	-	-	-
K-T22	colonization	-	16.7	5.0	22	84	164

*Leaf Area Index (LAI) profiles along chronosequences*

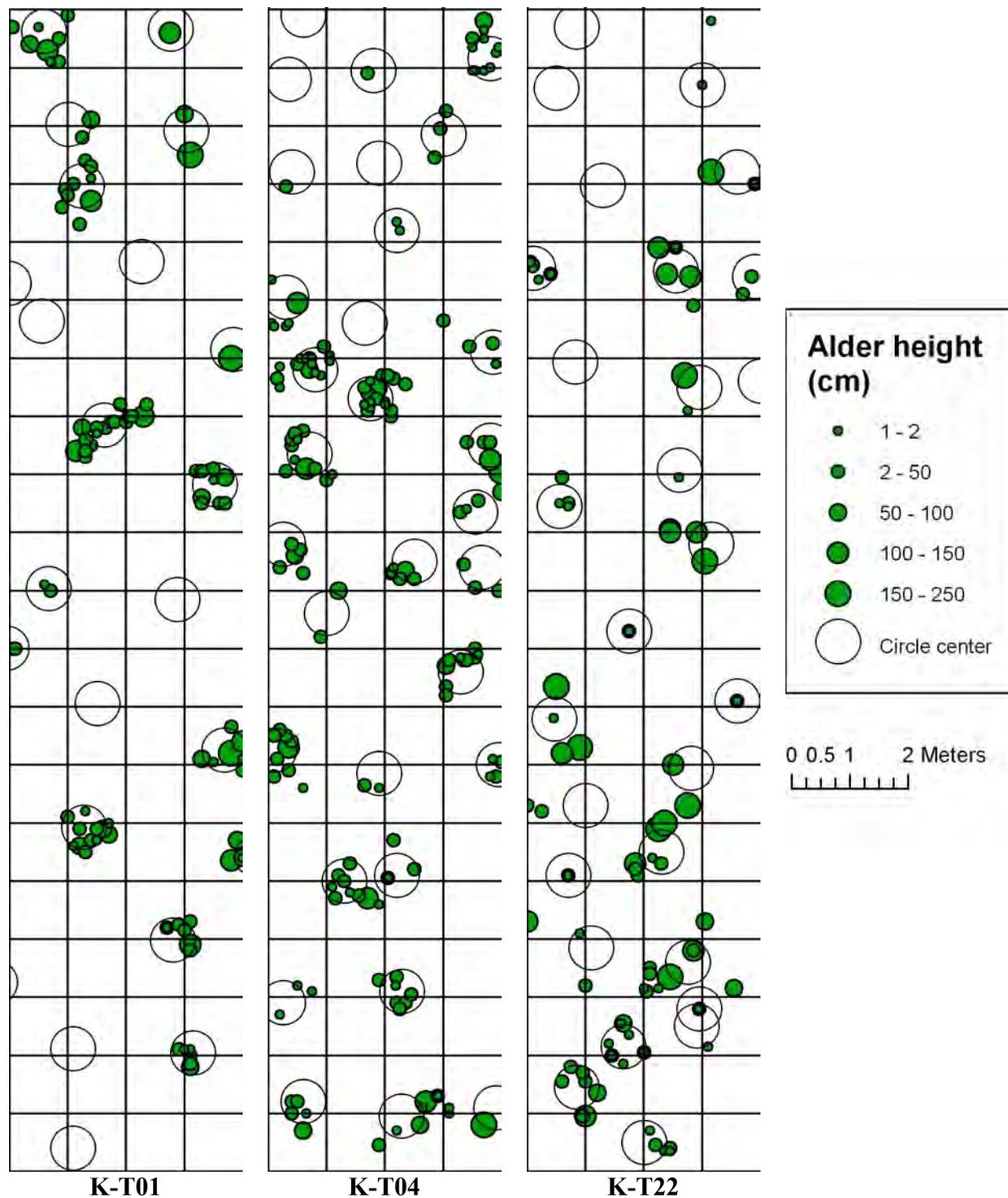


*Figure 21. Scatterplot of LAI measurements along transect K-T02. Alder-free tundra extends from approximately 0-5 m; colonization zone ~5-10 m; mature shrubland 10-70 m.*

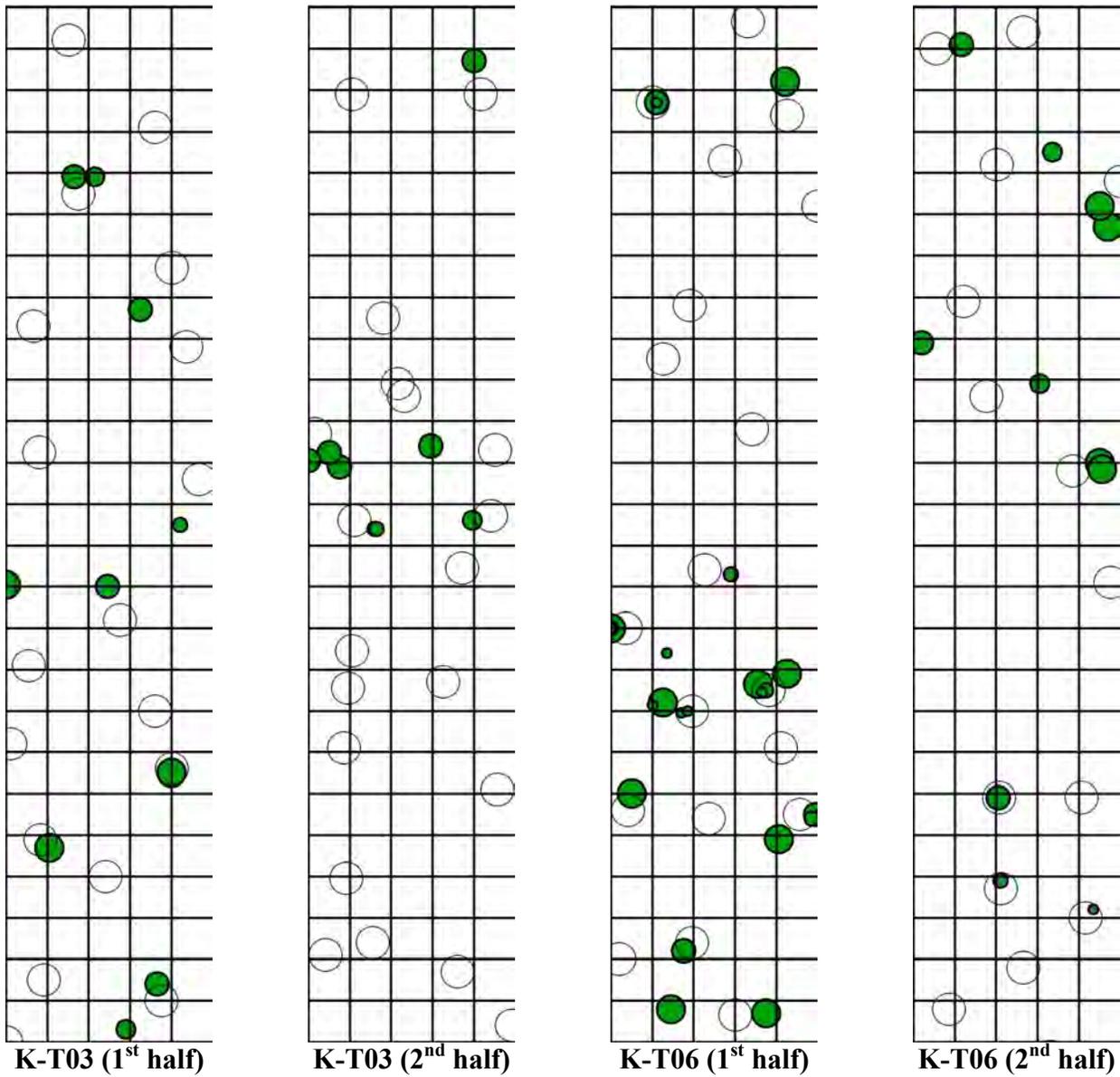


*Figure 22. Scatterplot of LAI measurements along transect K-T05. Alder-free tundra extends from approximately 0-5 m; colonization zone ~5-15 m; mature shrubland 15-55 m.*

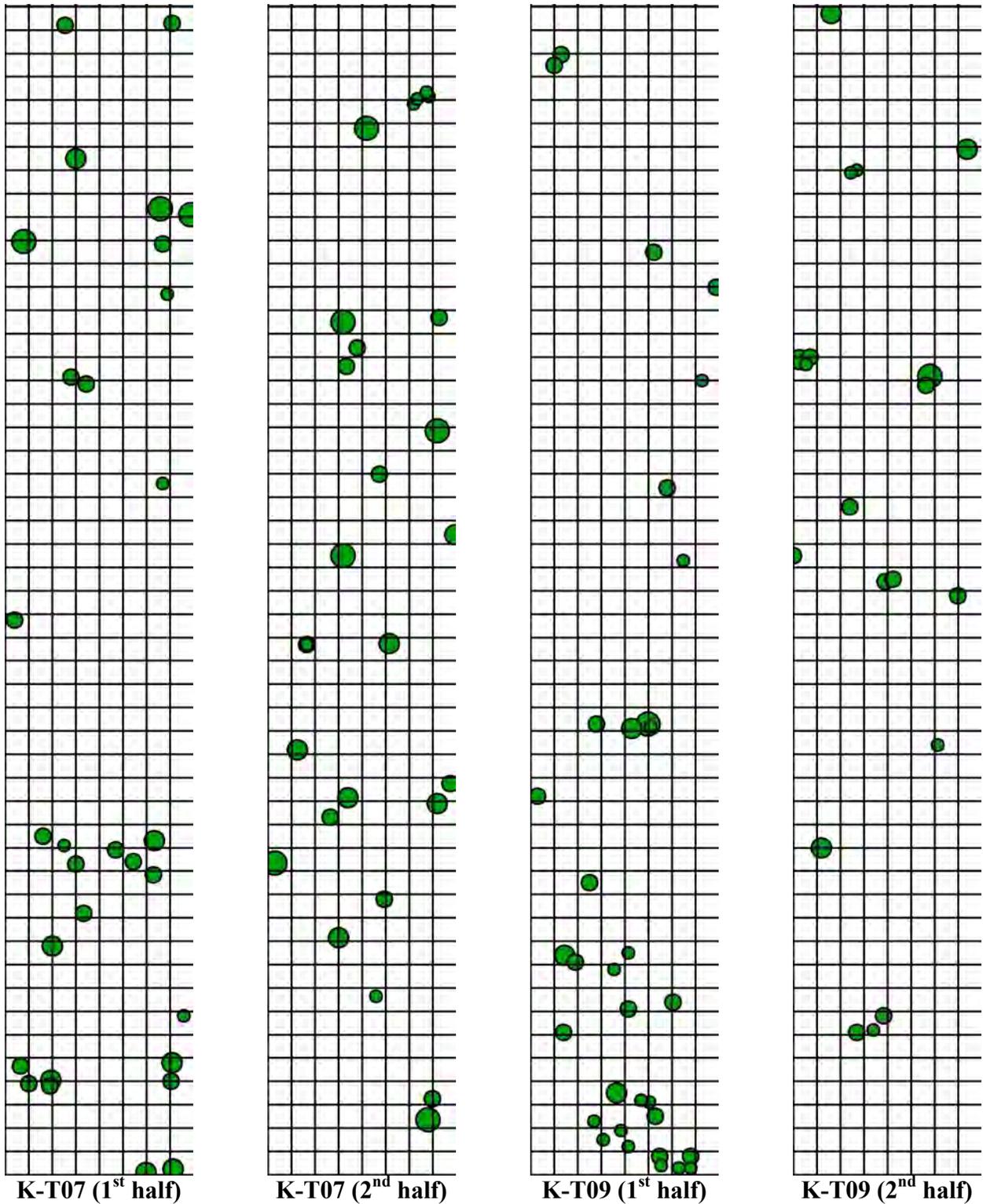
*Transect mapping*



**Figure 23.** Maps of alder and circle distribution for three colonization zone transects. Each square represents one square meter. Open circles mark the centers of mineral-rich circles, and approximate the overall footprint of circles.

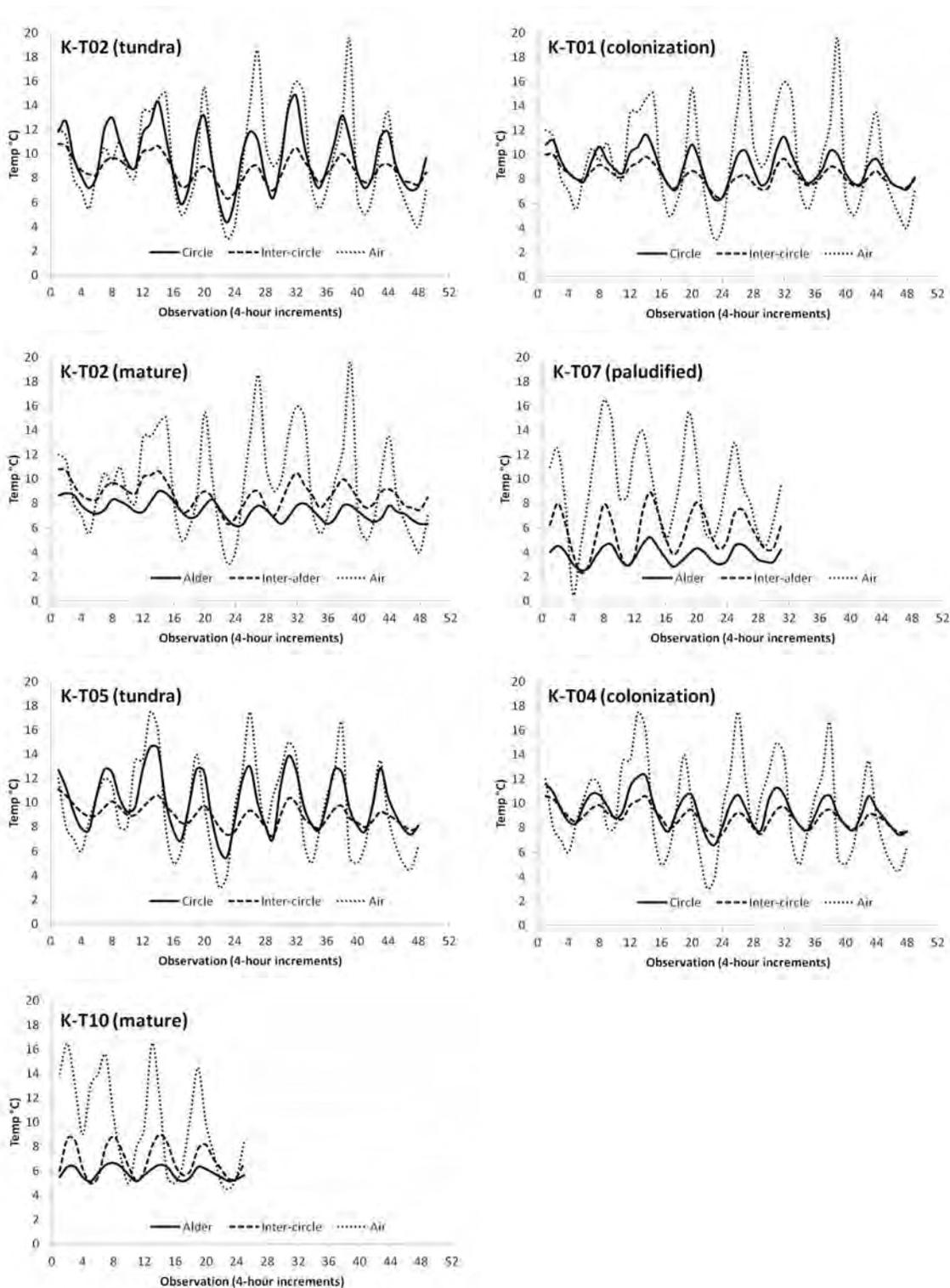


*Figure 24. Maps of alder and circle distribution for two transects in mature shrublands among sorted-polygons. Each square represents one square meter. Circle markers represent the centers of sorted-polygons.*



*Figure 25. Maps of alder and circle distribution for two transects in paludified shrublands. Each square represents one square meter. Locations of patterned ground features are not shown, because their distribution could not be reliably distinguished by visual observations.*

Soil temperature



**Figure 26.** Daily 5-cm soil temperature time-series recorded using *iButton* dataloggers at two tundra transects (first row), two colonization transects (second row), two mature shrubland transects, and one paludified tundra transect (fourth row). The plotted values of alder and inter-circle soil temperatures represent means from multiple *iButtons* (3-6 per microsite).

**Table 5. Mean values and variance of soil temperature and number of iButtons deployed at transect, by vegetation type and microsite.**

Stage	Microsite	Transect	Mean temperature (°C)	Standard deviation (°C)	n
tundra	circle	K-T02	9.7	2.5	3
		K-T05	10.1	2.3	4
	inter-circle	K-T02	8.7	1.1	3
		K-T05	9	0.9	4
colonization zone	circle	K-T01	9	1.3	3
		K-T04	9.4	1.4	5
	inter-circle	K-T01	8.3	0.8	3
		K-T04	8.8	0.8	4
mature shrubland	alder	K-T02	7.4	0.7	3
		K-T10	5.8	0.5	3
	inter-alder	K-T02	7.5	1	3
		K-T10	6.9	1.3	3
paludified shrubland	alder	K-T07	3.7	0.7	5
	inter-alder		5.6	1.7	6

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## Appendix A. List of participants in the five NASA-sponsored Eurasia Arctic Transect expeditions.

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## Appendix B. Soils Description of Studied Sites

### Kharp, Russia

Physiography: Ural mountain taiga-tundra region, Small Ural mountain province.

Landforms: 5th and 6th marine terraces?

Parent material: eluvial deposits of crystalline rocks, clays and stones.

#### Soil description for Transect 1

GPS position: 66°49'47.9"N, 065 °56'39.9"E

Elevation: 250 m.

Classification:

Figure 1: Transect №1, soil pit № 1-11

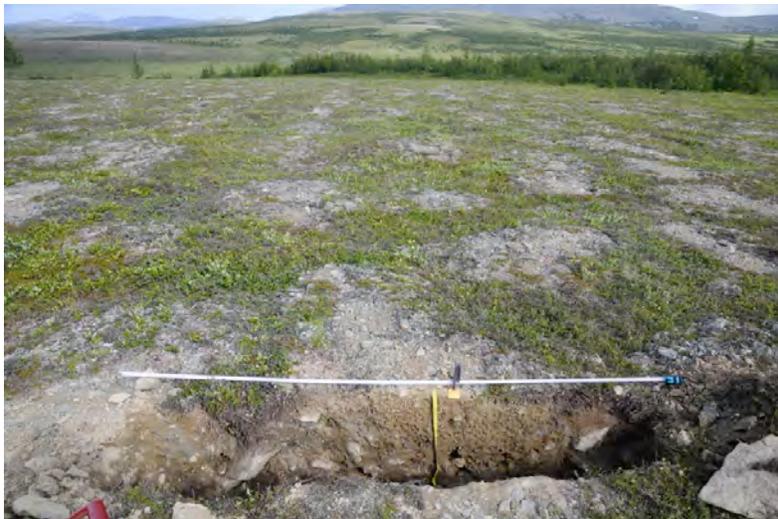


Figure 2: boil



0-5 cm; Bw; pale brown, 10YR6/3; silty clay; dry; soft; many cobbles; many vesicular fine pores; few 40-50 cm reversible trans-horizon cracks, weak very fine platy structure; moderately sticky, moderately plastic, few fine roots, gradual wavy boundary.

5-38 cm; Bwjj; yellowish brown, 10YR5/4; (80%) and 10YR5/1; (20%) clay loam; moist; many vesicular fine pores; few fine roots, few cobbles, many fine gravel; weak fine subangular structure; slightly sticky, moderately plastic, few fine roots, few charcoals (3-5mm), clear wavy boundary.

38-80 cm↓; BC; grayish brown, 10YR5/2; silt loam; weak fine angular structure; firm, non-sticky, slightly plastic, few fine roots, 50% gravel.

Figure 3: charcoal inside Bwjj horizon on 35 cm depth



Figure 4: interboil



0-2 cm; Oi; dark grayish brown,10YR4/2; fibric material, dry, loose, slightly decomposed moss, twigs and leaves of shrubs, many fine and medium roots, clear wavy boundary.

2-35 cm; Bh; very dark grayish brown,10YR3/2; dry, friable, sandy loam; moderate fine subangular structure; non-sticky, slightly plastic, many fine roots; few charcoals (3-5mm), gradual irregular boundary.

35-78 cm↓; BC; grayish brown,10YR5/2; silt loam; weak fine angular structure; firm, non-sticky, slightly plastic, few fine roots, 40% stones and 20% gravel, few dark organic films on stones surface.

### Soil description for Transect 2

GPS position: 66°49'47.5"N, 065 °56'46.5"E

Elevation: 251 m.

Classification:

Figure 5: Transect №2, soil pit № 2-11



0-5 cm; Oe; dark brown, 7.5YR3/2; loose, moderately decomposed forbs, twigs and leafs; few coarse roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

5-20 cm; Bh; very dark brown, 10YR2/2; loam; friable, non-sticky, non-plastic, many fine roots; 10% gravel; clear wavy boundary.

20-30 cm; BC; brown, 7.5YR5/4; silt loam; weak fine angular structure; firm, non-sticky, slightly plastic, few fine roots, few charcoals (3-5mm), 60% gravel.

### **Soil description for Transect 3**

GPS position: 66°49'48.6"N, 065 °56'51.8"E

Elevation: 251 m.

Classification:

Figure 6: Transect №3, sorted circles



Figure 7: soil pit № 3-11 inside circle



0-2 cm; Oi; yellowish brown, 10YR5/4; fibric material; loose, slightly decomposed lichen, moss, twigs and leafs, many fine and medium roots, 10% fine gravel, abrupt wavy boundary.

2-13 cm; Bw1 (E?); light yellowish brown, 10YR6/4; silt loam; dry; friable; moderate medium granular structure; slightly sticky, slightly plastic; many fine and medium roots; common fine vesicular pores; clear wavy boundary.

13-38 cm; Bw2; light brownish gray (10YR6/2) and yellowish red (5YR5/8, 10%), loam; firm; weak medium angular structure; few fine gravel, few fine pores, moderately sticky, moderately plastic; few medium roots; few charcoals (3-5mm), clear wavy boundary.

38 cm↓; BC; grayish brown, 10YR5/2; silt loam; weak fine angular structure; firm, non-sticky, slightly plastic, few fine roots, 50% stones.

#### Soil description for Transect 4

GPS position: 66°49'28.6"N, 065°56'36.3"E

Elevation: 261 m.

Classification:

Figure 8: Transect №4, soil pit № 5-11



Figure 9: boil



0-10 cm; Bw (E?); pale brown, 10YR6/3; loam; dry; loose; many medium vesicular pores; many fine gravel; many 10-20 cm reversible fine trans-horizon cracks; weak fine platy and fine subangular structure; slightly sticky, moderately plastic; few fine roots; clear wavy boundary.

10-28 cm; Bwjg; yellowish brown (10YR5/4) and yellowish red (5YR5/8, 30%), clay loam; firm; weak medium angular structure; few fine gravel; common fine pores; moderately sticky, moderately plastic; few medium roots; clear irregular boundary.

28 cm↓; BC; grayish brown, 10YR5/2; silt loam; weak fine angular structure; firm, slightly sticky, slightly plastic, 50% gravel.

Figure 10: interboil



0-1 cm; Oi; dark brown, 7.5YR3/2; fibric material, dry, loose, slightly decomposed moss, twigs and leafs of shrubs, many fine and medium roots, clear wavy boundary.

1-10 cm; Bh; dark grayish brown, 10YR4/2; friable, clay loam; moderate fine subangular structure; common medium roots and pores; many coarse gravel; clear wavy boundary.

10-21 cm; Bw; yellowish brown (10YR5/4) and yellowish red (5YR5/8, 20%), clay loam; firm; weak medium angular structure; common cobbles; few fine pores; slightly sticky, slightly plastic; common 10-20 cm reversible fine trans-horizon cracks; few medium roots in cracks; few dark organic films on cobbles surface; clear irregular boundary.

21 cm↓; BC; grayish brown, 10YR5/2; silt loam; weak fine angular structure; firm, non-sticky, slightly plastic, few fine roots, 50% stones.

### **Soil description for Transect 5**

GPS position: 66°49'28.6"N, 065 °56'36.3"E

Elevation: 260 m.

Classification:

Figure 11: Transect №5, soil pit № 6-11



0-4 cm; Oe; yellowish brown (10YR5/8); loose, moderately decomposed forbes, twigs and leaves; few coarse roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

4-10 cm; Bh; dark brown, 7.5YR3/2; sandy loam; friable, non-sticky, non-plastic, many fine and medium roots; few charcoals (3-5mm); clear wavy boundary.

10 cm↓; BC; grayish brown, 10YR5/2; silt loam; weak fine angular structure; firm, non-sticky, slightly plastic, few fine roots, 60% gravel.

### **Soil description for Transect 6**

GPS position: 66°49'37.0"N, 065 °57'43.0"E

Elevation: 228 m.

Classification:

Figure 12: Transect №6, sorted circles, soil pit № 4-11



Figure 13: inside circle



0-3 cm; Oi; yellowish brown, 10YR5/4; fibric material; loose, slightly decomposed lichen, moss, twigs and leaves, many fine and medium roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

3-7 cm; Bw1 (E?); pale brown, 10YR6/3; clay loam; dry; friable; moderate fine subangular structure; moderately sticky, moderately plastic; common fine roots; common fine vesicular pores; many fine gravel; clear wavy boundary.

7-30 cm; Bwjg2; brown, 10YR5/3 and yellowish red (5YR5/8, 30%), silt loam; firm; weak fine angular structure; few cobbles; slightly sticky, slightly plastic; few fine and medium roots; few dark organic films on cobbles surface; clear wavy boundary.

30 cm↓; BC; grayish brown, 10YR5/2; silt loam; weak fine angular structure; non-sticky, slightly plastic, 70% stones and cobbles.

## Soil description for Transect 7

GPS position: 66°49'08.2"N, 065 °58'19.8"E

Elevation: 196 m.

Classification:

Figure 14: Transect №7, nonsorted circles, soil pit № 7-11



Figure 15: inside circle, microhigh



0-1cm; Oi; dark brown 10YR4/3; loose; slightly decomposed forbs, twigs and leaf.

1-6cm; Oe; dark brown (7.5YR3/2) hemic material, (H7, F1, R3, V2), friable; many fine roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

6-11 cm; Bw1 (E?); vary pale brown, 10YR7/4; clay loam; dry; friable; moderate medium granular structure; slightly sticky, slightly plastic; few medium roots; few fine gravel; clear wavy boundary.

11-40 cm; Bwjg2; gray (10YR5/1, 50%) and yellowish red (5YR5/8, 50%); clay; firm; moderate angular structure; many fine gravel; few charcoals (3-5mm); moderately sticky, very plastic; few fine and medium roots; clear wavy boundary.

40 cm↓; BCf; brown, 10YR5/3, clay loam; massive (frozen); weak medium platy structure; non-sticky, slightly plastic, many gravel and cobbles; 20% ice.

Figure 16:

charcoals inside Bwjg (on 30cm depth)



Figure 17: between circles, microlow



0-10 cm; Oi; yellow, 10YR7/8; loose, slightly decomposed mosses.

10-40cm; Oif↓; reddish brown (5YR3/4), fibric material (moss), (H2, F3, R2, V1); friable, common fine and medium roots; 20% ice.

## Soil description for Transect 8

GPS position: 66°49'03.0"N, 065 °58'22.6"E

Elevation: 200 m.

Classification:

Figure 18: Transect №8, nonsorted circles, soil pit № 8-11



Figure 19: inside circle



0-5 cm; Oi; dark brown, 7.5YR3/2; fibric material; loose, slightly decomposed moss, twigs and leafs, many fine roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

5-8↓ cm; Bw; brown 10YR5/3; clay loam; firm; weak fine subangular structure; slightly sticky, slightly plastic; few fine roots; 80% gravel and cobbles.

Figure 20: between circles



0-7 cm; Oi; yellowish brown, 10YR5/6; fibric material (H2, F3, R1, V0); loose, slightly decomposed moss; few fine roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

7-15 cm; Oe; dark brown, 7.5YR3/2; hemic material (H5, F3, R2, V1); friable; common fine roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

15-30↓ cm; Bwg; gray, 10YR5/1 and reddish yellow, 5YR6/8, 50%; thixotropic clay; firm; weak medium platy structure; very sticky, very plastic; common fine and medium roots; few fine gravel.

### Soil description for Transect 9

GPS position: 66°49'18.0"N, 065 °59'36.3"E

Elevation: 166 m.

Classification:

Figure 21: Transect №9, nonsorted circles, soil pit № 9a-11



Figure 22: inside circle, microhigh



0-5 cm; Oe; dark brown, 10YR3/3; hemic material (H5, F2, R3, V1); loose; many fine roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

5-8 cm; Bw1; brown, 10YR5/3; clay loam; friable; weak fine subangular structure; moderately sticky, moderately plastic; few fine roots; few fine gravel.

8-20↓ cm; Bw2f; grayish brown, 10YR5/2; clay; thixotropic; firm; weak fine subangular structure; very sticky, very plastic; few fine roots; common gravel.

Figure 23: between circles, microlow



0-5 cm; Oi; yellow, 10YR7/8; loose, slightly decomposed moss.

5-30cm; Oif; yellowish brown, 10YR5/6; fibric material (H3, F3, R1, V0); slightly decomposed moss; few fine roots; 30% ice.

### Soil description for Transect 13

GPS position: 66°49'04.0"N, 065 °55'23.2"E

Elevation: 231 m.

Classification:

Figure 24: Transect № 13, soil pit № 9b-11



0-2 cm; Oi; light yellowish brown, 10YR6/4; loose, slightly decomposed moss, twigs and leaves, (H3, F3, R1, V0); few fine roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

2-7 cm; Oe; very dark grayish brown, 10YR3/2; hemic material (H5, F2, R2, V1); loose; many fine and medium roots, many charcoals (1-5mm); abrupt broken boundary.

7-12↓ cm; Bh (A?); very dark brown, 10YR2/2; sandy loam; friable, moderate fine subangular structure; slightly sticky, slightly plastic, common fine roots; 70% gravel.

### Soil description for Transect 14

GPS position: 66°49'04.2"N, 065 °55'23.9"E

Elevation: 237 m.

Classification:

Figure 25: Transect № 14, nonsorted circles, soil pit № 10-11



Figure 26: inside circle, microhigh



0-3 cm; Oi; light yellowish brown, 10YR6/4; loose, slightly decomposed moss, twigs and leaves, (H3, F3, R1, V0); few fine roots, abrupt wavy boundary.

3-10 cm; Oe; dark brown 7.5YR4/4; hemic material (H4, F2, R2, V1); loose; many fine and medium roots, many charcoals (1-5mm); abrupt wavy boundary.

10-13cm; Oa; very dark brown (10YR2/2) sapric material (H7, F1, R1, V1); friable, few fine roots, many charcoals (1-5mm); abrupt wavy boundary.

13-20 cm; Bh (A?); dark yellowish brown, 10YR4/4; silt loam; friable, moderate fine subangular structure; non-sticky, slightly plastic, many fine roots; few fine gravel.

20 cm↓; Bw2; brown, 10YR5/3; clay loam; firm; 70% gravel and cobbles.

Figure 27: between circles, microlow



0-1 cm; Oi; light yellowish brown, 10YR6/4; loose, slightly decomposed moss, abrupt wavy boundary.

1-10 cm; Oe; dark brown 7.5YR5/4; hemic material (H5, F3, R3, V1); friable; many fine roots; abrupt wavy boundary.

10 cm↓; Bw; brown, 10YR5/3; clay loam; firm; 80% gravel and cobbles.

## Soil description for Transect 15

GPS position: 66°48'53.2"N, 065 °52'27.1"E

Elevation: 222 m.

Classification:

Figure 28: Transect № 15, nonsorted circles, soil pit № 11-11



Figure 29: inside circle



0-1 cm; Oi; light yellowish brown, 10YR6/4; loose, slightly decomposed moss, twigs and leaves.

1-5 cm; Oe; dark brown 7.5YR4/4; hemic material (H5, F1, R1, V1); friable; few fine and medium roots; abrupt wavy boundary.

5-8 cm; Bh; dark yellowish brown, 10YR4/4; silt loam; friable, moderate fine subangular structure; non-sticky, slightly plastic, few fine roots and pores; few fine gravel; abrupt wavy boundary.

8-20 cm; Bwg1; gray, 10YR5/1 (60%) and reddish yellow, 5YR6/8 (40%); thixotropic clay loam; firm; weak medium platy structure; very sticky, very plastic; common fine roots; few fine gravel; abrupt wavy boundary.

20 cm↓; Bw2; brown, 10YR5/3; clay loam; firm; 80% gravel and cobbles.

Figure 30: between circles



0-3 cm; Oi; loose, slightly decomposed moss.

3-14 cm; Oi; brown 7.5YR5/4; fibric material (H4, F3, R1, V1); loose; many fine and medium roots; abrupt wavy boundary.

14-18 cm; Bh; very dark brown, 10YR2/2; clay loam; firm, weak fine subangular structure; slightly sticky, slightly plastic; many charcoals (1-5mm); many fine roots; abrupt wavy boundary.

18 cm↓; Bw; brown, 10YR5/3; clay loam; firm; 70% gravel.

### Soil description for Transect 16

GPS position: 66°48'46.8"N, 065 °55'42.6"E

Elevation: 220 m.

Classification:

Figure 31: Transect № 16, nonsorted circles, soil pit № 12-11



Figure 32: inside circle, microhigh



0-1 cm; Oi; loose, slightly decomposed moss, twigs and leaves.

1-6 cm; Oe; brown, 7.5YR5/4; fibric material (H4, F3, R2, V1); friable; common fine and medium roots; abrupt wavy boundary.

6-17 cm; Bh; dark grayish brown, 10YR4/2; clay loam; firm, weak fine subangular structure; moderately sticky, moderately plastic; many charcoals (1-5mm); many fine roots; many charcoals (1-5mm); abrupt wavy boundary.

17 cm↓; Bw1; brown, 10YR5/3; clay loam; firm; 70% gravel.

Figure 33: between circles, microlow



0-2 cm; Oi; loose, slightly decomposed moss.

2-17 cm; Oe; brown 7.5YR4/4; hemic material (H6, F2, R2, V0); firm; common fine and medium roots; abrupt wavy boundary.

17 cm↓; Bw1; brown, 10YR5/3; clay loam; firm; 80% gravel and cobbles.

## Appendix 1. Temperature data

Figure 1: The temperature of the boil soil horizons

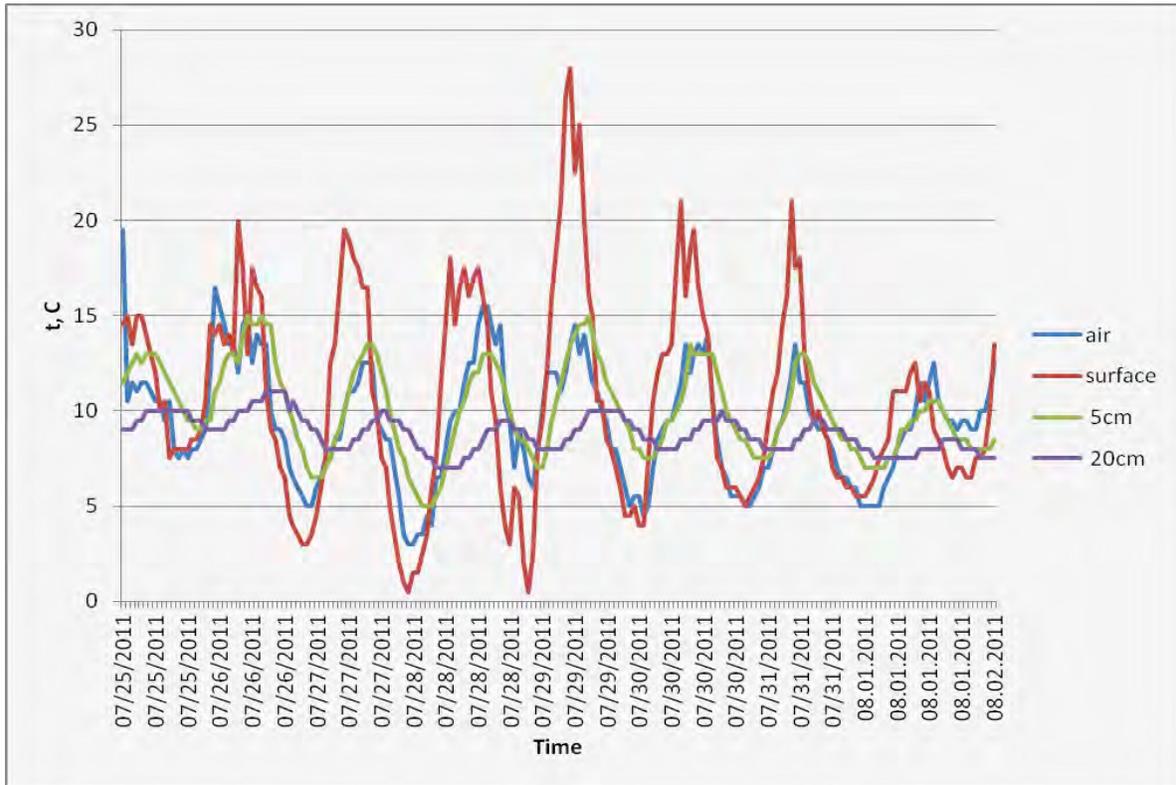
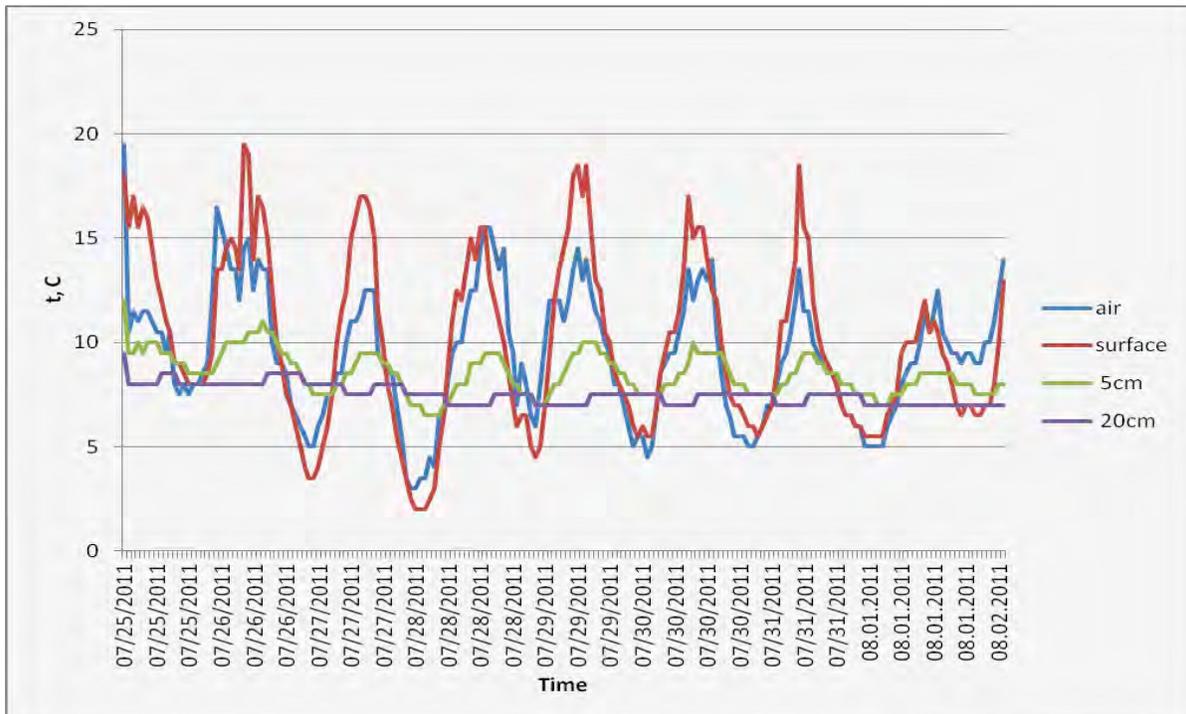
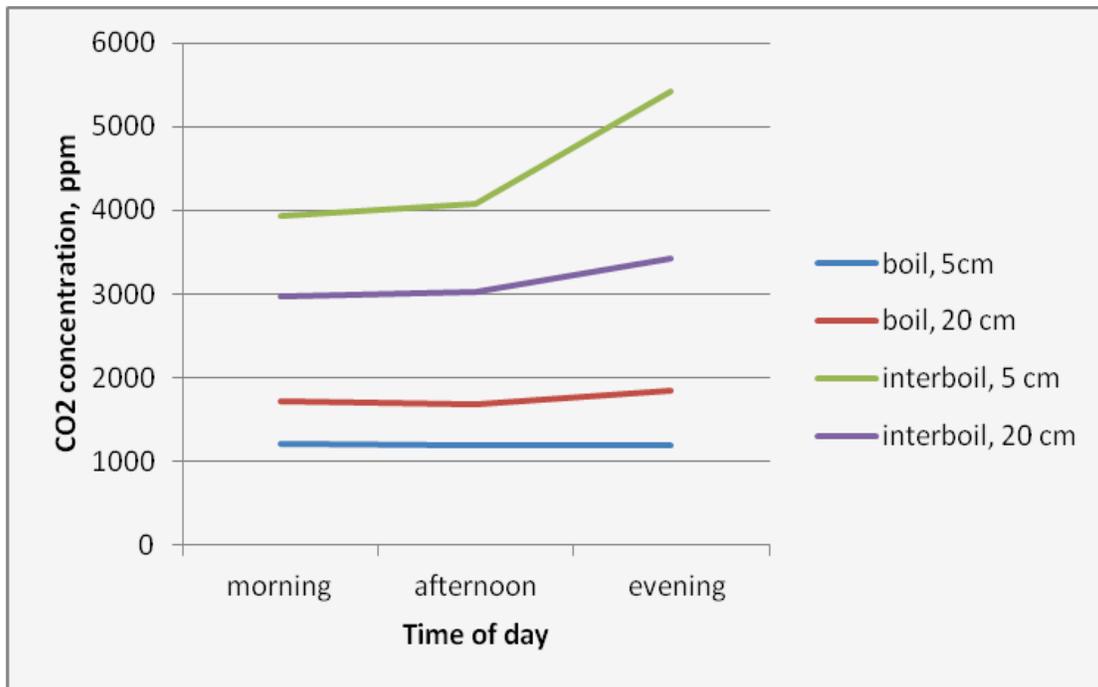


Figure 2: The temperature of the interboil soil horizons



## Appendix 2.CO<sup>2</sup> production data

**Figure 3: CO<sup>2</sup> concentration on different depths, mean value (measurement duration is 5 days, two replications)**



### Appendix 3. Some soil properties

Transect	soil pit	Microsite	thickness of the organogenic horizon, mean (cm)	n (cases)	the decomposition degree of organic material	charcoals	rock/permafrost (*) depth	pH 1:1 (in field), n=3
1	1-11	boil	0	10	-	+	50	5,3
		interboil	31	5	fibric material	+	35	4,5
2	2-11	alder shrublands	18	5	hemic material	+	15	
3	3-11	circle	2	10	fibric material	-	38	
6	4-11	circle	3	10	fibric material	-	30	
4	5-11	boil	0	10	-	-	28	
		interboil	12	10	fibric material	-	21	
5	6-11	alder shrublands	8	5	hemic material	-	10	
7	7-11	circle	7	5	hemic material	+	40(*)	
		intercircle	45	5	fibric material	-	40(*)	
8	8-11	circle	5	10	fibric material	-	8	
		intercircle	15	10	hemic material	-	30	
9	9a-11	circle	5	3	hemic material	-	20	
		intercircle	30	3	fibric material	-	30	
13	9b-11	alder shrublands	12	3	hemic material	+++	12	
14	10-11	circle	20	3	sapric material	+++	20	
		intercircle	11	3	hemic material	-	10	
15	11-11	circle	8	3	hemic material	-	20	
		intercircle	17	3	fibric material	+++	18	
16	12-11	circle	16	3	fibric material	+++	17	
		intercircle	20	3	hemic material	-	17	

## References

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2. Munsell soil color charts. Determination of soil color quoted in part from U.S. Dept. Agriculture Handbook 18-Soil Survey Manual
3. Soil Taxonomy. A Basic System of Soil Classification for Making and Interpreting Soil Surveys; Second Edition, 1999
4. Atlas Yamalo-Nenetskogo Autonomnogo okruga .-Tyumen – Salekhard.- Omsk:FGUP «Omskaja cartographicheskaja fabrika», 2004.- 240 p.

Appendix C. Species cover-abundance in vegetation study plots (relevés). Nomenclature for vascular plants followed Elven et al. 2007: Checklist of the Panarctic Flora (PAF). Vascular plants. -Draft. University of Oslo. Lichens followed H. Kristinsson & M. Zhurbenko 2006: Panarctic lichen checklist ([http://archive.arcticportal.org/276/01/Panarctic\\_lichen\\_checklist.pdf](http://archive.arcticportal.org/276/01/Panarctic_lichen_checklist.pdf)). Mosses followed M.S. Ignatov, O.M. Afonina & E.A. Ignatova 2006: Check-list of mosses of East Europe and North Asia. Arctoa 15: 1-130 and for liverworts N.A. Konstantinova & A.D. Potemkin 1996: Liverworts of Russian Arctic: an annotated check-list and bibliography. Arctoa 6: 125-150. Cover-abundance scores: << = rare, < = <0.1% cover, + = 1%, 1 = 1-5%, 2 = 6-25%, 3 = 26-50% 4 = 51-75%, 5 = 76-100%. Cover-abundance codes were used for vascular plants, and % cover estimates were used for nonvascular NOTES: Ks-16 (all cells): circle near T10-1; Lichen, T12-1: 65% with lichen on rocks; Arctoparmelia separata (Th.Fr.) Hale, T3-2, T6-1, T12-2: from rocks; Hypogymnia physodes (L.) Nyl., T3-3: on the dead branches.

## Appendix C. Species cover-abundance in vegetation study plots.

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## Appendix D. List of birds observed in Kharp study area and their breeding status.

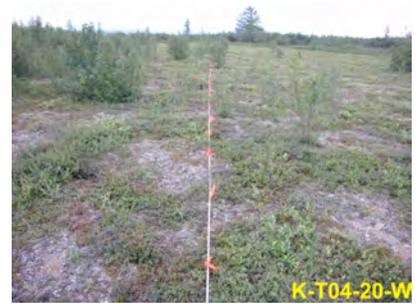
Common Name	Scientific Name	Breeding status
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	confirmed
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	confirmed
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	
Willow Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>	confirmed
Arctic Loon	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	confirmed
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	
Eurasian Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	
European Golden-Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	confirmed
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	confirmed
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	
unidentified snipe	<i>Gallinago sp.</i>	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	
Common Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	
Heuglin's Gull	<i>Larus heuglini</i>	probable
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	confirmed
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	confirmed
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livida</i>	
Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	confirmed
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	confirmed
Northern Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	
European Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	probable
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	confirmed
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	confirmed
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	confirmed
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	confirmed
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	confirmed
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	confirmed
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	confirmed
Brambling	<i>Fringilla monifringilla</i>	
Common Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	confirmed
Little Bunting	<i>Ocyris pusillus</i>	confirmed

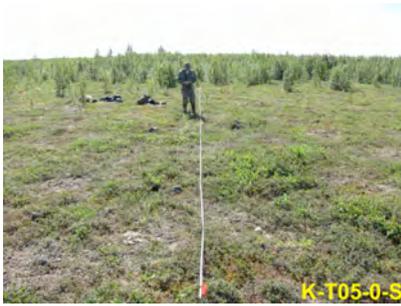
**Appendix. E. Texture and chemistry properties of soil samples from Kharp. Chemical analyses were conducted after oven-drying to 100° C. Analyses performed by University of Alaska Palmer Research Center, Palmer, AK.**

Plot ID	Microsite	Soil texture					USDA texture	Soil chemistry							
		% Gravel >2mm	% Sand	% Silt	% Clay	% C		% N	pH	meq/100g CEC	meq/100g K	meq/100g Ca	meq/100g Mg	meq/100g Na	
K-T01	Boil	8.36	17.20	56.00	26.80	SiL	0.41	0.02	3.95	12.28	0.12	4.44	2.86	0.09	
K-T01	Interboil	5.13	37.20	44.00	18.80	L	2.58	0.15	3.65	16.65	0.11	3.36	2.09	0.07	
K-T02	nd	<.01	65.33	23.33	11.33	SaL	11.90	0.80	3.83	46.25	0.35	6.61	4.15	0.06	
K-T03	Boil	13.12	21.20	54.00	24.80	SiL	0.60	0.01	4.18	15.45	0.11	6.28	2.01	0.18	
K-T04	Boil	5.57	19.20	52.00	28.80	SiCL	0.59	0.01	3.81	17.40	0.12	4.23	4.39	0.10	
K-T04	Interboil	4.14	29.20	44.00	26.80	L	3.00	0.16	3.67	13.58	0.15	3.72	3.59	0.07	
K-T05	Interboil	15.06	67.43	22.86	9.71	SaL	12.65	0.63	3.58	39.10	0.15	1.90	1.13	0.08	
K-T06	Boil	9.66	29.20	46.00	24.80	L	1.87	0.08	3.80	18.88	0.16	6.08	2.93	0.05	
K-T07	Boil	<.01	25.20	46.00	28.80	CL	1.99	0.06	3.71	20.41	0.16	6.93	3.73	0.10	
K-T07	Interboil	4.75	na	na	na	org	47.57	1.19	3.72	70.51	0.42	5.88	1.97	<.01	
K-T08	Boil	20.79	31.20	50.00	18.80	SiL	4.37	0.10	3.54	19.77	0.18	3.97	1.76	0.04	
K-T08	Interboil	19.61	17.20	52.00	30.80	SiCL	0.79	<.01	3.86	5.89	0.19	7.05	3.12	0.09	
K-T09	Boil	2.54	21.20	50.00	28.80	CL	1.62	0.06	3.38	23.43	0.23	3.86	4.73	0.05	
K-T09	Interboil	<.01	na	na	na	org	42.18	0.75	3.78	69.87	0.19	6.21	3.96	0.06	
K-T10	Boil	20.32	33.20	50.00	16.80	SiL	0.11	<.01	6.09	19.38	0.42	12.00	9.83	0.13	
K-T13	Oe	0.81	na	na	na	org	47.20	1.36	4.45	24.00	0.31	5.23	8.13	0.02	
K-T14	nd	33.19	33.20	46.00	20.80	L	4.40	0.22	4.07	16.53	0.09	4.34	1.91	0.07	
K-T15	Interboil	<.01	52.00	36.67	11.33	L	20.37	1.22	4.44	85.88	0.30	16.47	22.22	0.12	
K-T15	Boil	6.30	29.20	50.00	20.80	SiL	2.54	0.06	3.83	20.28	0.07	2.77	4.71	0.07	
K-T16	Interboil	<.01	45.33	40.00	14.67	L	16.61	0.99	4.82	75.76	0.34	28.53	24.95	0.15	
K-T16	Boil	1.06	27.20	46.00	26.80	L	3.47	0.22	4.43	36.36	0.22	11.48	12.42	0.11	

**Appendix F. Photos of Kharp transects, July-August 2011. The photo identifiers consist of the transect number, followed by the location (m) on each transect that the photo was taken, followed by a cardinal direction indicating the approximate photo azimuth.**







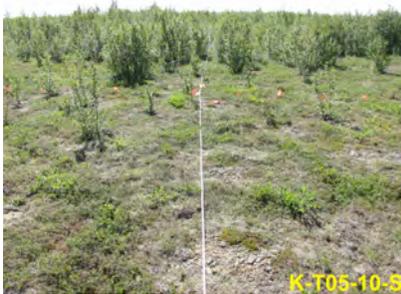
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K-T05-40-S



K-T05-40-N



K-T05-10-S



K-T05-40-N



K-T05-70-N



K-T05-20-S



K-T05-50-S



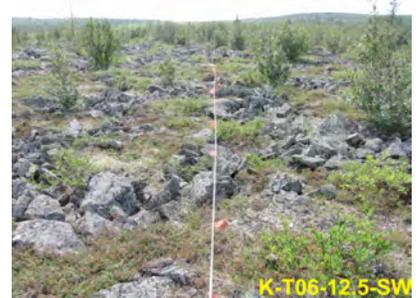
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K-T05-30-S



K-T05-50-N



K-T06-12.5-SW



K-T05-30-N



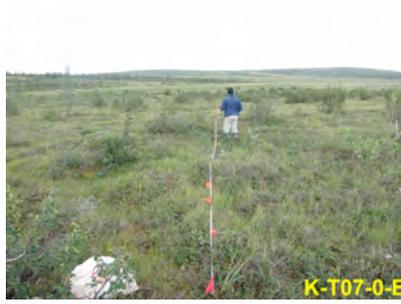
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K-T06-12.5-NE



K-T06-25-SW



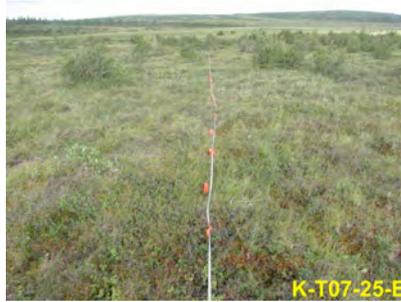
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K-T07-75-E



K-T06-25-NE



K-T07-25-E



K-T07-75-W



K-T06-37.5-SW



K-T07-25-W



K-T07-100-W



K-T06-37.5-NE



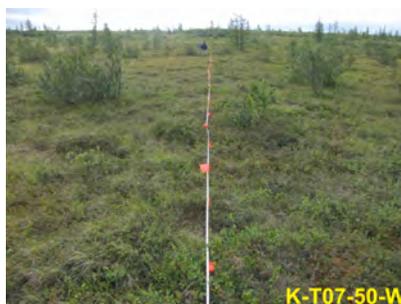
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K-T08-0-S



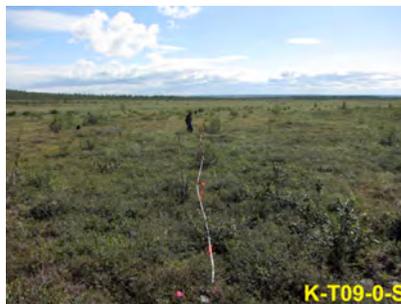
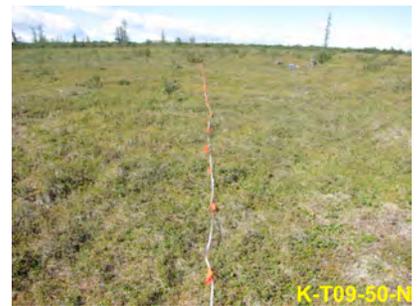
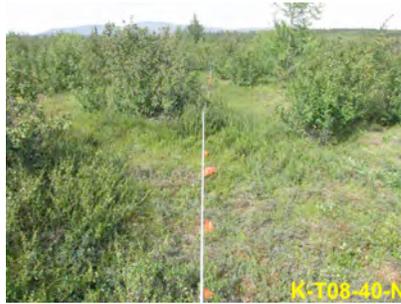
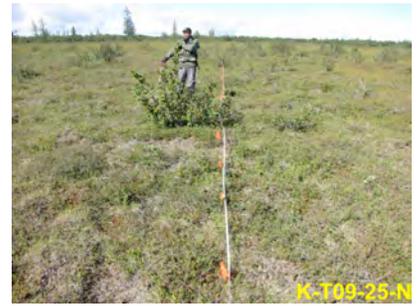
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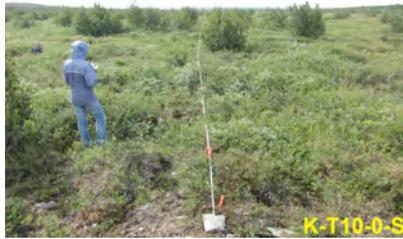
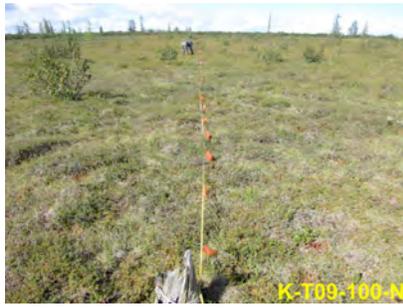


K-T07-50-W



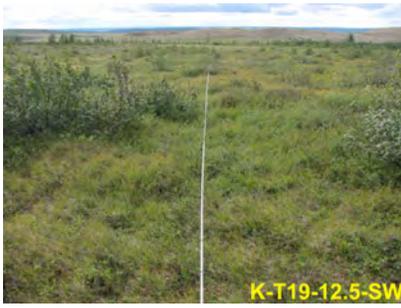
K-T08-10-S













K-T21-25-W



K-T21-50-W



K-T22-18.5-W



K-T21-37.5-E



K-T22-0-E



K-T22-20-W



K-T21-37.5-W



K-T22-12.5-E