

### **Topic: Glaciers Introduction**

Glaciers are areas of snow and ice that have accumulated over many years and have at some time “flowed”. The snow that falls each winter accumulates in annual layers that, similar to the rings of trees, represent one year growth.

Glaciers can be found anywhere that the average annual temperature is sufficiently cool enough to allow snow to last from one winter, through the summer and into the next winter, for many continuous years.

Glaciers are studied by glaciologists, glacial geologists, meteorologists, geographers, botanists, students, insurance companies, economists, and farmers. Scientists from around the world are doing research on many aspects of glaciers.

Studying glaciers will not give you the weather forecast, but glaciers do contain an excellent historical record of the climate on the Earth. A glacier acts like a “canary in a coal mine” and the glacier’s health serves as an indicator of how the climate on the Earth has changed and is changing.

Glaciers have been identified on other planets and may give us an idea of how the atmosphere and climate has varied over time. This will be a useful tool in understanding our own planet’s climate.