

Two Minn. residents reach North Pole on foot

July 3 2006

Two Minnesota residents have become the first Arctic explorers to reach the North Pole on foot during summer.

Lonnie Dupre and Eric Larsen found open water and some drifting ice when they arrived -- no solid ice cap, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported Monday.

Funded primarily by Greenpeace International, the expedition was intended to draw public attention to the impact of global warming on the Arctic environment.

Throughout their journey Dupre and Larsen kept in touch with family and friends through daily Weblog entries.

They reached the North Pole at noon Saturday after being awakened early that morning by the sound of a polar bear outside their tent.

"It wasn't in a big hurry to leave and stopped frequently to sniff the air," the pair wrote in their blog. "The bear had followed our ski tracks into camp. It came downwind to disguise its scent and used several small drifts to hide behind as it stalked us. Then it circled slowly around the tent, coming five feet from Lonnie's head."

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Citation: Two Minn. residents reach North Pole on foot (2006, July 3) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-07-minn-residents-north-pole-foot.html>

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