

July 13, 2006



WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION

Dear All,

You have recently seen the Letter to the Community posted to this mailing list concerning the addition of *ABE/Sentry* to the National Deep Submergence Facility (NDSF). That letter included the simultaneous announcement that the deep-tow sonar system DSL-120A would cease to be a formal component of the NDSF in 2007. A very pertinent question arising from that message is: How will access to state-of-the-art deep-tow sidescan sonar be provided to the US marine research community in future? The purpose of this message is to answer that question for the specific case of potential users developing programs for NSF sponsorship in which case the DSL-120A will continue to be available for use at no additional cost to science program budgets.

Since 1999, the Deep Submergence Laboratory of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the Hawaii Mapping Research Group (HMRG) of the University of Hawaii have collaborated on designing and fabricating hardware and software for seafloor mapping systems and operating these systems at sea. One direct result is that the DSL-120A and HMRG's IMI-30 exhibit great similarity in terms of sonars, electronics, and data acquisition, processing and management. Further, HMRG participants have sailed on every DSL-120A cruise to date, and the two groups meet frequently to continually improve their joint efforts.

Consequently, it has been agreed that in 2007, HMRG will take over prime responsibility for, and become the "home port" of the DSL-120A as part of the continuing DSL-HMRG partnership. Thus, the key contact for future use of the system (e.g., for all proposals submitted to NSF on or after 15 August 2006) will now be Margo Edwards (margo@soest.hawaii.edu). Although outside the NDSF, the DSL-120A will continue to be available for scientists to request as shared-use instrumentation with no impact on science program budgets for NSF-funded projects. Other agencies sponsoring research that uses the DSL-120A will continue to be required to pay their share of costs for the operating year, as is true for all other UNOLS systems (e.g., ships, submersibles, ROVs, technicians, etc.). For NSF-sponsored programs, participation of the DSL-120A will be funded through the University of Hawaii's Specialized Services Facility.

Very best wishes,

Margo Edwards
Director
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Chris German
Chief Scientist for Deep Submergence
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