



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Science cable to be laid in Monterey Bay

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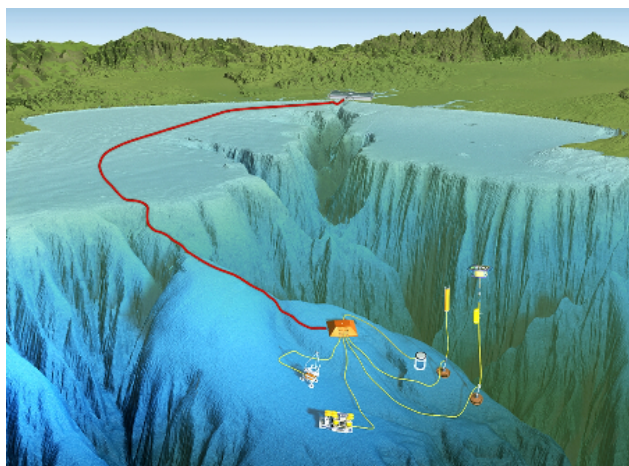
MOSS LANDING, CA—A large ship, the *Global Sentinel*, will be laying cable along the seafloor of Monterey Bay from about March 10 through March 31, 2007. This cable is a major component of the Monterey Accelerated Research System (MARS) ocean observatory, which will provide ocean scientists with 24-hour-a-day access to instruments in the deep sea. The Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) coordinated this ambitious project, which was initiated in 2002 through a 7 million dollar grant from the National Science Foundation.

The MARS cable will be about 52 kilometers (32 miles) long and will extend from Moss Landing out to Smooth Ridge, a broad plateau about 30 kilometers (18 miles) northwest of Monterey. Slightly thicker than a garden hose, the cable will contain fiber-optic strands that will carry data and copper wire that will carry 10 kilowatts of electrical power to instruments on the seafloor.

For most of its length, the cable will be buried about a meter (3 feet) below the seafloor to minimize impacts on seafloor animals and to reduce the risk of being snagged by anchors or fishing gear. Its route curves around the deep water of the Monterey Canyon, where undersea sediment movement could endanger the cable. MBARI worked closely with scientists, government agencies, and fishing interests to ensure that this project will have a minimal effect on the marine environment.

The MARS ocean observatory will be located at the seaward end of the undersea cable, on Smooth Ridge, in water that is about 900 meters (3,000 feet) deep. As its full name suggests, the Monterey Accelerated Research System is intended to help engineers and oceanographers develop and test new oceanographic instruments that can be used on ocean observatories elsewhere in the US, as well as in Monterey Bay. It will also provide scientists with new ways of monitoring conditions in the deep sea and help them understand how this environment changes over time.

For more information, please see the MARS web site - <http://www.mbari.org/mars>



The Monterey Accelerated Research System (MARS) will allow scientists to perform long-term and real-time experiments 900 meters below the surface of Monterey Bay. The main MARS science node (orange box with sloping sides) will connect to shore through a 52-km-long power and fiber-optic cable. MARS will serve as an engineering, science, and education test bed for even more extensive ocean observatories in the US and Canada.

Illustration by David Fierstein (c) 2005 MBARI