

Gas hydrates research expedition begins

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An international team of scientists has started a six-week expedition off the coast of Vancouver Island to conduct research beneath the Earth's crust.

Led by Tim Collett of the U.S. Geological Survey and Michael Riedel of Natural Resources Canada, the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program expedition will investigate how high volumes of carbon and methane gasses trapped in gas hydrate deposits can affect climate change and seafloor stability.

Gas hydrates -- ice-like solids composed of water and natural gas -- are found under Arctic areas and on marine continental shelves.

The science party boarded the U.S.-operated research drilling vessel the JOIDES Resolution last week at Astoria, Ore. The expedition is expected to conclude Oct. 29.

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