Geologists to discuss historic ice core

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An Antarctic core with unprecedented geological detail of the Ross Ice Shelf will be featured during a U.S. international geology meeting.

Geologists, students and educators from Germany, Italy, New Zealand and the United States will meet at Marine Geology Research Facility at Florida State University next Tuesday through Friday. The facility is the U.S. repository for geological material from the Southern Ocean.

The core was extracted during the recent Antarctic summer from a record 4,214 feet below the sea floor beneath Antarctica's Ross Ice Shelf, the Earth's largest floating ice body. Laced with sediment dating to about 10 million years, the core suggests the Ross Ice Shelf retreated and advanced perhaps as many as 50 times during the last 5 million years in response to climate changes, said facility curator Matthew Olney.

He said such signs of fluctuations are critical since the Ross Sea ice is a floating extension of the even bigger West Antarctic Ice Sheet -- an area so unstable scientists foresee its collapse from global warming. Such a collapse could raise sea levels worldwide by a catastrophic 20 feet.

The core was featured in the March edition of the journal Nature.

https://phys.org/news/2007-04-geologists-discuss-historic-ice-core.html