

# Telescope funding in peril

September 10 2007

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Earth's largest radio telescope, located in Puerto Rico, is in danger of closing for lack of money.

Since its construction in 1963, Arecibo Observatory has led to a string of discoveries about the universe and its 1,000-foot-wide aluminum bowl is also the only one sensitive enough to track asteroids.

But the National Science Foundation has told Cornell University, which operates the facility, that if it cannot find \$4 million in outside funding in the next three years, Arecibo will be shut down, The Washington Post reported Sunday.

The foundation says its goal is to free up some of its \$200 million astronomy budget for newer projects.

Others, however, say the real problem is that Puerto Rico does not have champions in Congress to protect its funding for such facilities, the Post said.

Arecibo site director Robert B. Kerr says rather than count on Congress, he is trying to get creative when it comes to funding sources. One idea: selling naming rights to a private corporation, much the way sports venues do.

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Citation: Telescope funding in peril (2007, September 10) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2007-09-telescope-funding-peril.html>

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