

Scientists to use blimp to look for meteorites

May 3 2012

(AP) -- A group of scientists will board a blimp to search for meteorites that rained over California's gold country last month.

The researchers from NASA and the [SETI Institute](#) plan to depart from a Sacramento airfield sometime Thursday. From the air, they hope to spot sites where large fragments fell and follow up with a search party.

Since the meteor exploded in the atmosphere over the [Sierra Nevada](#) in late April, swarms of scientists and amateur [meteorite hunters](#) have recovered tiny pieces from the event, mostly in a region where James W. Marshall first discovered gold in California in 1848.

NASA estimates the minivan-sized meteor released energy equal to one-third the explosive force of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It was seen from Sacramento to Las Vegas.

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