

Putin receives 'prehistoric' water from Antarctic lake

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Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin looks at a glass container containing water from pristine Antarctic lake at his study in Moscow, on February 10, 2012. Putin received the water from a lake hidden under ice for more than a million years after Russian scientists managed to drill down to its surface.

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin was given a water sample Friday taken from a pristine lake hidden under Antarctic ice for over a million years, after Russian scientists drilled down to its surface.

The Russian strongman, who enjoys venturing into the wilderness and has accompanied an expedition to track [polar bears](#) in the Arctic, was the first recipient of a symbolic [water](#) sample.

"The head of the natural resources ministry has given [Vladimir Putin](#) the first sample of prehistoric water the Russian polar expedition extracted from the subglacial [lake](#) in Antarctica," the Russian government said.

"The age of the water could be over 1 million years," it said.

Natural Resources and Ecology Minister Yury Trutnev handed Putin a small glass container containing a yellowish liquid with the inscription "[Lake Vostok](#), aged more than 1 million years," the state RIA Novosti news agency reported.

With characteristic dry humour, Putin asked Trutnev whether he had tried drinking the water.

"No," Trutnev answered.

"That would have been curious. Dinosaurs drank it and Trutnev," Putin said in comments released by the government.

A Russian expedition on Sunday sunk a borehole down to the surface of the pristine subglacial fresh water lake, hidden under almost 4 kilometres (2.3 miles) of ice and raised a column of water for scientists to study.

Putin, who is planning to reclaim his old [Kremlin](#) job in March elections, called for the scientists behind the discovery to be decorated.

"This is a major event. We need to think how to honour these people," he said.

The water given to Putin probably did not come from the main body of the lake, but was frozen lake ice raised from the borehole just before it reached the lake's surface, an expert behind the project told RIA Novosti.

"This water was apparently received when they lifted the ice core from the last section of the [borehole](#). And that really is water from Lake Vostok," said Valery Martyshchenko of the hydrometeorology and environmental monitoring agency.

The costly project is a rare triumph for national science and has excited scientists around the world with its potential for discoveries of new forms of life

and revelations about millions of years of the Earth's history.

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