

Drilling set at Chesapeake Bay meteor site

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Scientists will drill more than a mile under Chesapeake Bay this fall to study a 35-million-year-old meteorite impact, the Baltimore Sun reported Monday.

The meteorite struck what is now the lower Chesapeake Bay off Virginia with such force it threw debris for thousands of miles and created a Rhode Island-sized crater, the newspaper noted.

"Whatever we find is going to be interesting," Charles Cockell, a professor of geomicrobiology at England's Open University, told the Sun.

Since the impact crater was discovered in 1993, scientists have drilled at least 12 holes, mainly to assess the crater's effect on groundwater supplies.. This fall's deeper drilling is designed to allow a better determination of how fast the meteorite was traveling, its size, effect on surrounding rocks and whether it was an asteroid or comet.

More than 40 researchers from the United States, Austria, South Africa and Japan will take part in the \$1.3 million study. The bay crater is the largest in the United States and the sixth largest of 170 known impact craters in the world, the newspaper reported.

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