



Ice core may provide unique climate record

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DURHAM, N.H., Jan. 28 (UPI) -- U.S. scientists said a record of thousands of years of Earth's greenhouse gases might be preserved in a recently recovered 1,900-foot Antarctic ice core.

Working as part of the National Science Foundation's West Antarctic Ice Sheet Divide Ice Core Project, scientists from multiple U.S. institutions said the ice core is the first section of what is hoped to be an 11,360-foot column of ice detailing 100,000 years of Earth's climate history, including a precise year-by-year record of the last 40,000 years.

The dust, chemicals, and air trapped in the two-mile-long ice core will provide critical information for scientists working to predict the extent to which human activity will alter Earth's climate, said Kendrick Taylor of the Desert Research Institute, the project's chief scientist. DRI, along with the University of New Hampshire, operates the Antarctic project's science coordination office.

Researchers said the core was taken from a high-elevation region that is the boundary separating opposing flow directions on the Antarctic ice sheet. It is believed to be the best spot on Earth to recover ancient ice containing trapped air bubbles -- samples of the Earth's atmosphere from the present to as far back as 100,000 years ago.

