

Precious Metals from Deep-Sea Vents: Precious Metals from Deep-Sea Vents



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Deep-Sea Mining of Seafloor Massive Sulfides: A Reality for Science and Society in the 21st Century

Deep-sea hydrothermal vent systems are attracting considerable interest from commercial mining companies. Vent systems precipitate seafloor massive sulfide (SMS) deposits that are rich in copper, gold, silver, and zinc. Although commercial firms are targeting inactive SMS deposits, these deposits are so little studied that it is unknown whether they harbor unique species or ecosystems. The new frontier of deep-sea exploration and mining raises a number of questions about the sustainable use of these resources and potential environmental impacts. This Workshop and Colloquium was held on April 1 - 2, 2009, and brought together scientists, specialists in marine conservation, mineral economics, international law, the International Seabed Authority, national interests in SMS, and representatives of industry and NGOs to inform each other, and the public, about this important topic. The issue of deep-sea mining of SMS is of global importance, connected to the global economy, society, and the conservation of unique marine life.



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Active hydrothermal vents at Roman Ruins vent in the PACMANUS vent field, eastern Manus Basin. (Photo courtesy M. Tivey and WHOI Deep Submergence Lab, Cruise Manus 2006 with ROV Jason II)

Porter Hoagland, Stace Beaulieu, Maurice A. Tivey, Roderick G. Eggert, Christopher German, Lyle Glowka, Jian Lin, [Deep-sea mining of seafloor massive sulfides](#), *Marine Policy* 34 (2010) 728–732.

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