

Taylor Heyl/ WHOI Exploration Command Center/WHOI/theyl@whoi.edu
Lucy C. Stewart/ UMASS Amherst/lstewart@cns.umass.edu
Mashkoor Malik/ NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration & Research/mashkoor.malik@noaa.gov
Meme Lobecker/ NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration & Research/ Elizabeth.Lobecker@noaa.gov

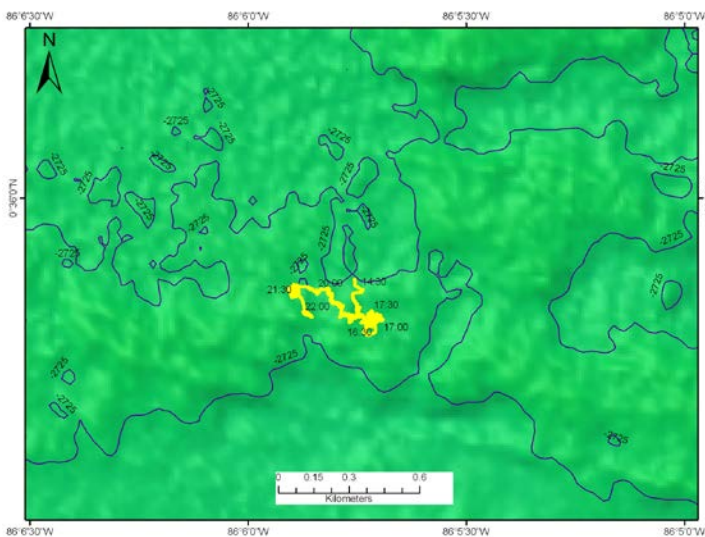
Purpose of the Dive

To locate and explore the Off-Axis Sulfide Mounds.

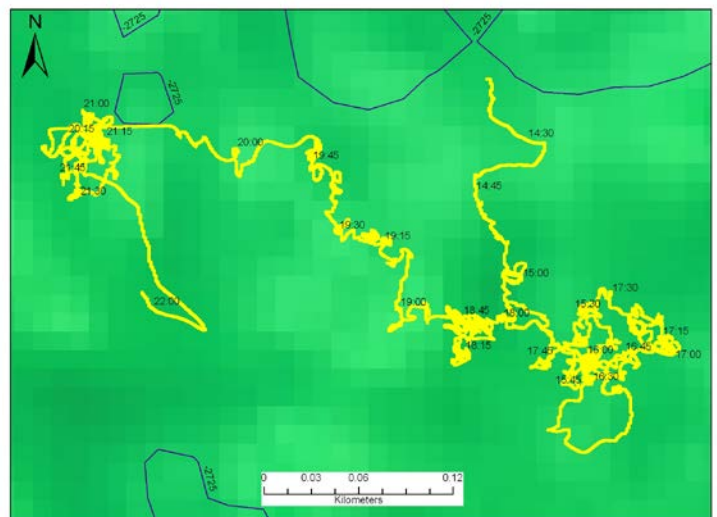
Description of the Dive:

Little Hercules surveyed a gently sloping mound with corals, sponges, holothurians and imaged yellow mineral deposits in sediments before continuing to the NE to the next cluster of sulfide mounds. ROV then headed west to follow a line of sonar targets and found mounds with similar faunal composition and more yellow staining around cracks/orifices at the base of rocky outcrops. Sponges were abundant at the top of the mound. *Little Hercules* explored to the west and traversed over a mound similar to ones seen previously with fractured crust and Mn staining, before turning North. Here, *Little Hercules* imaged on old clam shell that appeared to be ~8 cm in length with no trail marks nearby. The surrounding sediment was platy and meter-high mounds were observed with no staining or sulfide.

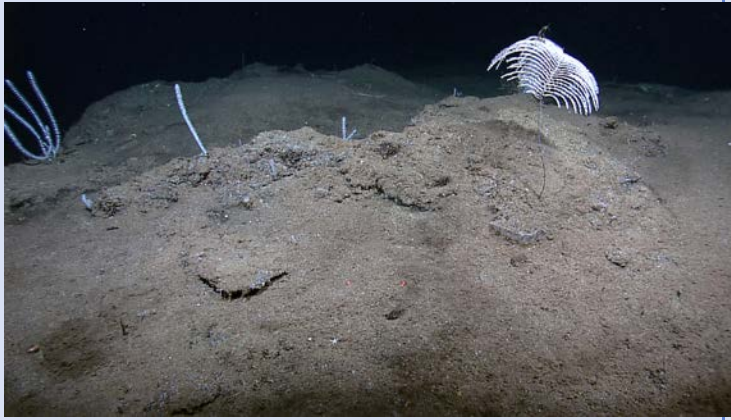
Overall Map of ROV Dive Area



Close-up Map of Main Dive Site



Representative Photos of the Dive



One of the gently sloping mounds imaged during the dive.



Several small areas or yellow mineral deposits are visible at the base of the small ledge.

Please direct inquiries to:

NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration & Research
1315 East-West Highway (SSMC3 10th Floor)
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 734-1014