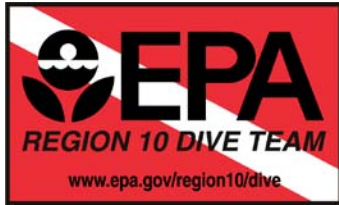


US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



[EPA Region 10 Dive Team](#)

Columbia Shuttle Recovery Dive Support; Winter-Spring 2003

What: The EPA Region 10 Dive Team was called upon by the EPA Region 7 dive team for assistance with in-water recovery of parts of the Columbia Space Shuttle, which disintegrated upon re-entry on Saturday, February 1, 2003. Also involved under the overall direction of the U.S. Navy were divers from EPA's Environmental Response Team, EPA Region 3, FBI, and Texas police search and recovery teams. All diving operations were conducted to support a FEMA request.

Why: Divers were called upon to dive areas suspected of having shuttle debris as determined by sonar search previous to each day of diving. EPA divers have special expertise needed for the many hazardous materials that could be encountered and for the low-visibility diving environment.

Where: Toledo-Bend Reservoir, near Jasper, Texas on the Texas/Louisiana State border.

When: Diving was conducted starting immediately after the accident, and continued for several months.

How: Divers on tether and in constant communication with the surface were directed in search patterns around a DGPS buoy marked "target." Divers searched the bottom in low or zero visibility conditions by sweeping the bottom with legs and arms to locate any suspicious objects. The reservoir contains a submerged forest, so divers had to beware of the constant threat of entanglement with trees, horizontal logs, and stumps.

More Details:

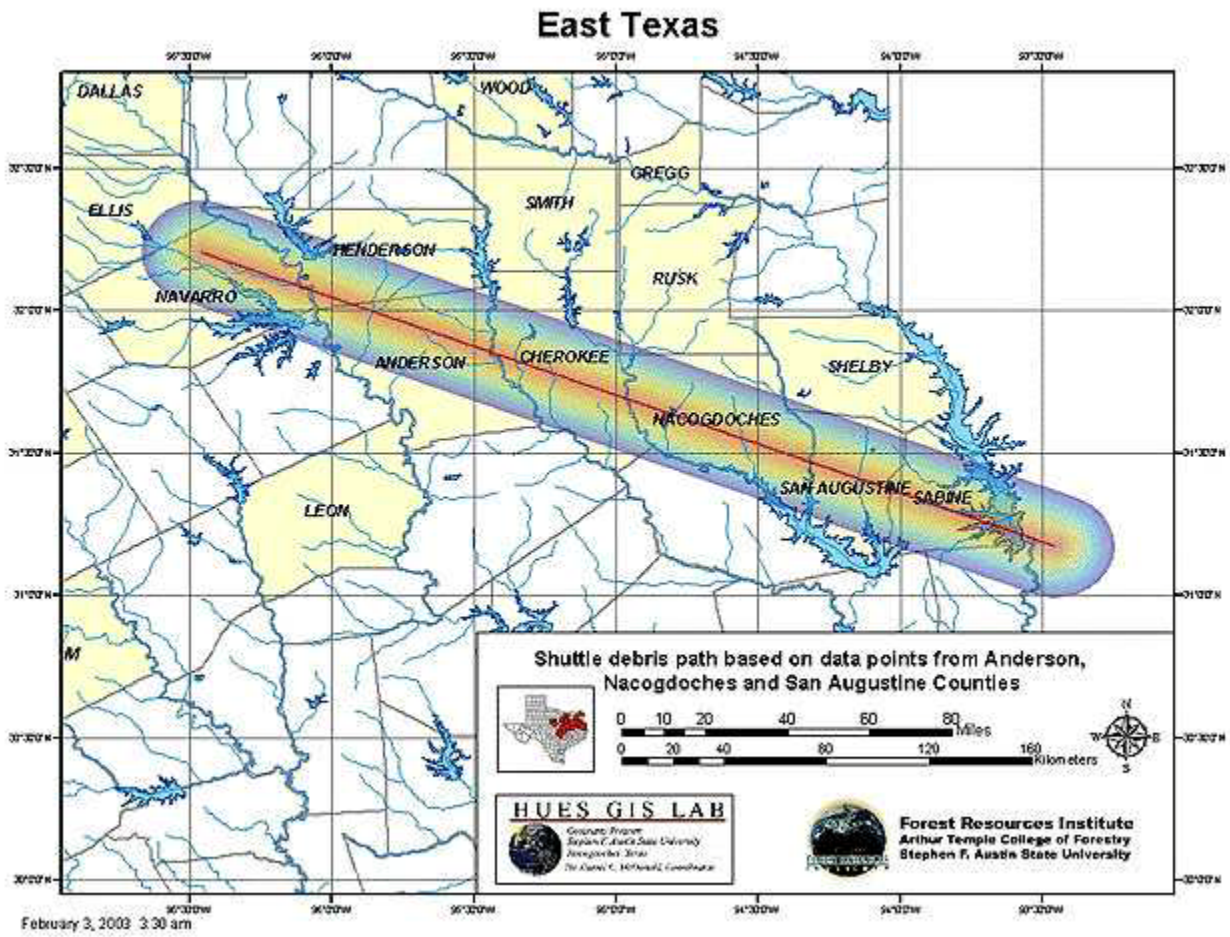
<http://www.nasa.gov/columbia/>

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,78993,00.html>

[Video: Space Shuttle Columbia Recovery \(King 5 News\)](#)

Contact: Sean Sheldrake at sheldrake.sean@epa.gov

Photos:



Region 10 divers assisted in the search at the Toledo-Bend Reservoir at the end of the debris track in



East Texas.

Joe Davis/Divemaster/R7 and Steven Donohue/Working Diver/R3 prepare Sean Sheldrake to enter water and test surface to diver communication.



Bruce Duncan, Alternate UDO/Divemaster/R10 prepares to submerge using a helmet to protect his head against tree stumps encountered on the bottom.



Tenders Bruce Duncan and Joe Goulet assist Lisa Macchio/Working Diver preparing to submerge.



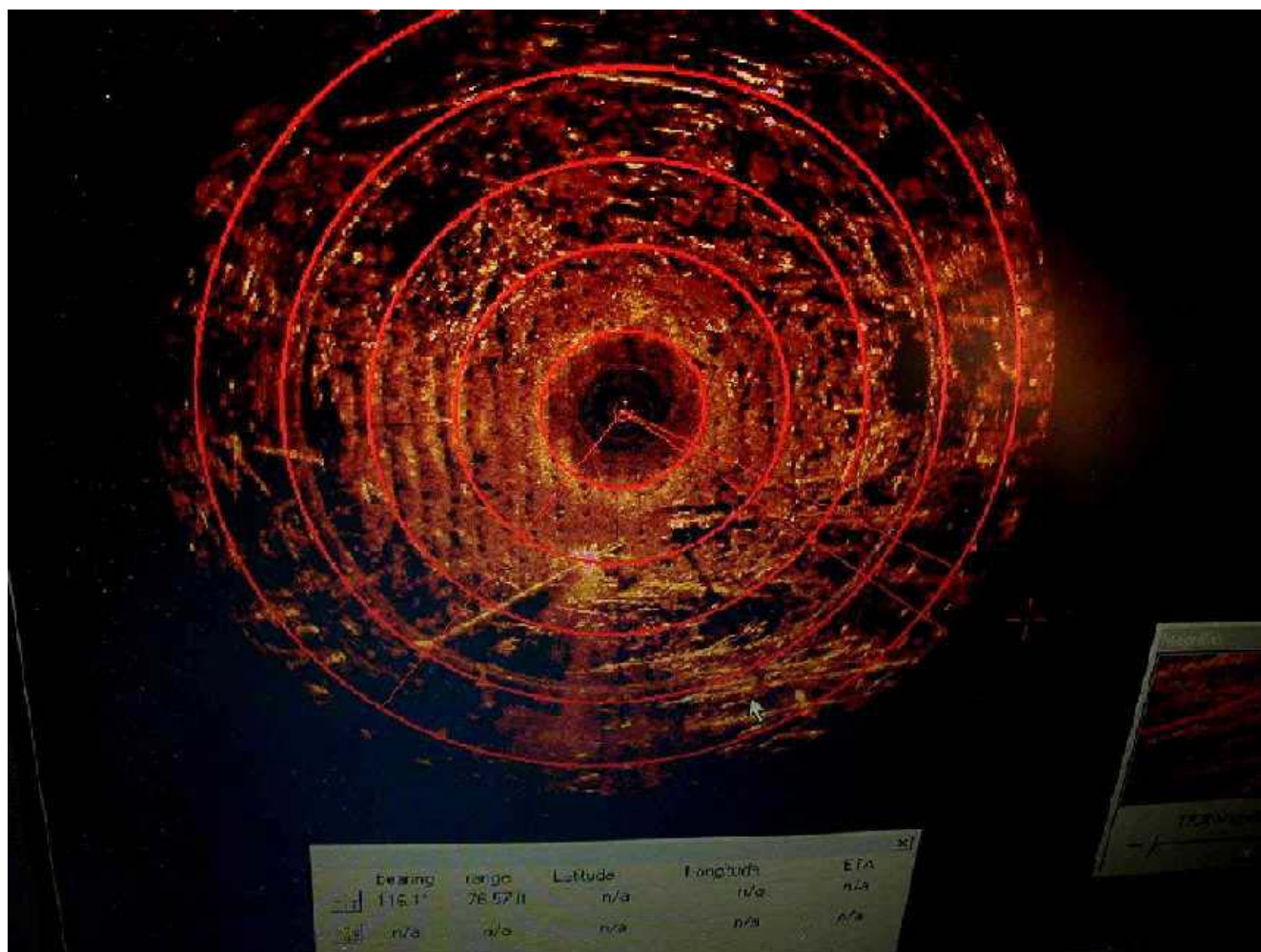
Underwater profile view of a diver searching in shallow water.



Dan Cooke/ERT prepares Rob Pedersen/UDO/Divemaster/R10 to enter water on surface supplied air.



Later into the project, sonar was used aboard each dive platform to assist the diver search around each "target."



The live sonar readout allowed tracking of the diver and selection of targets to search.

Return to [EPA Region 10 Dive Team](#) homepage.