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USS *Monitor* Center resumes Wet Lab operations

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. - The Mariners' Museum has resumed active operations in its wet lab, which is part of the USS *Monitor* Center's Batten Conservation Laboratory Complex. The public can once again witness the active treatment of the large artifacts within the lab, including the *Monitor's* iconic revolving gun turret, steam engine and Dahlgren guns.

The lab was closed on Jan. 1, 2014, due to a funding shortfall as a result of the Continuing Resolution, which delayed the passing of a federal budget until January 2014. The total cost to operate the *Monitor* conservation laboratory in 2014 is about \$450,000. At a funding level of \$750,000, conservators project the stabilization of large artifacts in the wet lab can be completed in about 20 years.

Once the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) received its FY14 appropriations, it committed \$200,000 for 2014, with the possibility of additional funds to support the ongoing conservation effort. NOAA and The Mariners' Museum continue to work hand-in-hand to develop a long-term funding solution based on a mix of private and public sources that assures the preservation of these national treasures. The Museum and NOAA are committed to working together to raise the needed funds for conservation. Donations to support this effort can be made directly through The Mariners' Museum.

During the past four months, conservators continued to conserve smaller artifacts in a separate *Monitor* Center laboratory. The large artifacts were covered with tarps, and conservators ceased using wet lab equipment during this period. Artifacts were monitored with a digital corrosion monitoring system to maintain stability.

The Mariners' Museum, an educational, non-profit institution accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, preserves and interprets maritime history through an international collection of ship models, figureheads, paintings and other maritime artifacts. For hours and information, visit www.MarinersMuseum.org, call (757) 596-2222 or write to The Mariners' Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA 23606.