



AWSFL008-DS3

NSF Award Abstract
- #0208012

Li Isotopic Investigations of the Crust and Mantle

NSF Org EAR

Latest Amendment Date May 24, 2002

Award Number 0208012

Award Instrument Standard Grant

Program Manager Glen S. Mattioli

EAR DIVISION OF EARTH
SCIENCES
GEO DIRECTORATE FOR
GEOSCIENCES

Start Date June 1, 2002

Expires May 31, 2005 (Estimated)

Expected Total Amount \$279922 (Estimated)

Investigator Roberta L. Rudnick

rudnick@geol.umd.edu (Principal
Investigator current)

Paul B. Tomascak (Co-Principal
Investigator current)

William F. McDonough
(Co-Principal Investigator current)

Sponsor U of MD College Park

3112 Lee Building
College Park, MD 207425141
301/405-6269

NSF Program 1573 PETROLOGY AND
GEOCHEMISTRY

Abstract

Li Isotopic Investigations of the Crust and Mantle

EAR-0208012 PIs: Rudnick, McDonough,
Tomascak

Lithium, the lightest lithophile element, is fluid mobile. The large mass difference between its two isotopes makes measurement of the Li isotopic ratio a powerful tool for tracing fluid processes in the Earth. This project will complete Li isotope investigations of peridotite and eclogite xenoliths from the mantle and sedimentary and granitic rocks from the continents. The goal is to understand the role that fluid processes play in the growth of the continental lithosphere and to evaluate the inventory of Li isotopes in major solid Earth reservoirs in order to constrain Li isotope mass balance in the Earth system. The Li isotopic measurements will be performed using MC-ICP-MS methodology on solutions of rocks and minerals. The PIs have established this technique at Maryland and are routinely able to measure 40 ng or smaller Li fractions to plus or minus 1 per mil precision (2 sigma). The newly acquired data sets will provide insights into the processes that control the Li isotopic composition of the crust and mantle, define the $\delta^{7}\text{Li}$ of potential contributors to subduction zone magmas and, ultimately, the influence of crustal recycling on $\delta^{7}\text{Li}$ of the mantle over time.

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