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THE FIRST SETI OBSERVATIONS WITH THE ALLEN TELESCOPE ARRAY

Abstract

The Allen Telescope Array (ATA) in Northern California was dedicated on October 11, 2007. This array, which will eventually be comprised of 350 small radio antennas, each 6 meters in diameter, is being built as a partnership between the SETI Institute and the University of California Radio Astronomy Laboratory. Last October, Paul G. Allen (who provided the funds for the technology development and the first phase of array construction) pushed a silver button and all 42 antennas of the current ATA-42 slewed to point in the direction of the distant galaxy M81. Specialized electronic backend detectors attached to the ATA began making a radio map of that galaxy and simultaneously began SETI observations of HIP48573, a G5 V star near M81 on the sky and a distance of 264 light years from Earth. The Allen Telescope Array will greatly improve the speed of conducting SETI searches over the next few decades, and it will allow a suite of different search strategies to be undertaken. This talk will summarize some of the earliest SETI observations from the array, and describe the search strategies currently being planned.