

1/12/04

The Space Life Sciences Lab at the Kennedy Space Center:  
A Critical Facility for Future Space Flight

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On November 19, 2003, Jim Kennedy, KSC Center Director, Winston Scott, former Astronaut and Director of the Florida Space Authority, Dr. Sam Durrance, Director of the Florida Space Research Institute, and Lt. Governor Toni Jennings, dedicated the Space Life Sciences Lab at the Kennedy Space Center. The SLS Lab is a world-class laboratory with all the capability and systems necessary to host International Space Station experiment processing as well as associated biological and life sciences research. Areas include Biotechnology, Microgravity, Space Agriculture, Biomedicine, Conservation Biology, and Microbial Ecology. This unique facility was constructed under a partnership between the State and NASA and provides the capability for researchers from the research consortium led by FSRI and the University of Florida to work closely with NASA researchers and payload developers to make fundamental advances in our understanding of biological systems and lay the ground work for long duration human space missions. This paper describes the unique partnerships, goals, operating capabilities and initial research activities of this important and unique research facility.