

Dear Fellow Explorers,

I am about to head out to sea for the second expedition leg in American Samoa. The first leg saw the combined efforts of UNH, WHOI, and URI vehicles working to collect unique ocean exploration data from the seabed to the sea surface. The upcoming expedition will partner OET and WHOI vehicles. These expeditions show the realization of one of OEI's missions: to enhance ocean exploration through multi-vehicle operations. This could only occur through tremendous collaboration within OEI and the ongoing support of NOAA Ocean Exploration. This is only one example of the great outcomes that arise from cooperation within and beyond OEI. My thanks to the OEI engineers, NOAA sponsors, and collaborators for bringing their very best to ocean exploration.

Deepest Regards,
Adam

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OEI Focused NOAA Ocean Exploration Science Seminar Series

Since August 23rd, URI's Inner Space Center (ISC) has been producing another seminar series hosted by NOAA Ocean Exploration! Each of the science seminars are available to watch live on the ISC's YouTube page. If you cannot join us live, the recorded broadcast can be accessed through ISC's YouTube as well. Audience members will have the ability to ask questions and learn about OEI's strengths and key projects over the past five years. Please join the upcoming seminars (and rewatch those you may have missed this past month)!

[Seminar 1: Preparing for the Ocean Data Revolution](#) – Friday, August 23rd at 2 pm ET

- Featuring: Dr. Adam Soule (OEI Director/URI), Deborah Smith (OEI/URI), Dr. Henry Jones (USM), and Puja Banerjee (URI)

[Seminar 2: Midwater Exploration through Multi-Vehicle Operations](#) – Tuesday, August 27th at 4 pm ET

- Featuring: Jason Fahy (URI), Dr. Aurora Elmore (NOAA), Dr. Annette Govindarajan (WHOI), Dr. Luke McCartin (LU), and Val Schmidt (UNH)

[Seminar 3: Education and Outreach- Building the Blue Economy](#) – Friday, September 20th at 2 pm ET

- Featuring: Dr. Adam Soule (OEI/URI), Holly Morin (URI), Allison Fundis (OET), Megan Cook (OET), Tara Hicks Johnson (UNH), and Jesse Kastler (USM)

[Seminar 4: Operational Exploration](#) – Wednesday, October 30th at 2 pm ET

- Featuring: TBD speakers

The E/V *Nautilus* is currently in American Samoa for E Mamana Ou Gataifale I (NA164). OECI is conducting multi-vehicle exploration to explore the midwater twilight zone in an expedition funded by NOAA Ocean Exploration via the OECI. During this expedition *DriX*, *Mesobot*, and the Deep Autonomous Profiler (DAP) have been deployed from OET's E/V *Nautilus* to investigate midwater ecosystems within American Samoan waters. The expedition will also explore the Vailulu'u seamount in the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSAS).

To read more about [NA164](#) on the NautilusLive blog.

Ocean Explorers Student Summer Colloquium

The Ocean Explorers Program brought together students from Tuskegee University and Jackson State University at the University of Southern Mississippi for summer-long research projects. This cohort of students were paired with mentors and undertook projects investigating the wetlands of southern Mississippi, microplastics, and sensor integration on uncrewed surface vessels to name a few. The students culminated their projects with presentations during the OECI colloquium on August 9th. Professors, mentors, family members, and the broader OECI community gathered to watch the presentations and ask questions.

Below: Ocean Explorer students onboard the R/V *Point Sur*.



New Fact Sheet Aims to Introduce Maritime Heritage Community to Potential of SeaTube

NOAA Ocean Exploration uses SeaTube (Ocean Networks Canada) to host annotations made by at-sea and shoreside experts, both during and after remotely operated vehicle expeditions. Traditionally, we've used SeaTube for annotations — time-stamped records of observations made in video — associated with marine science dives. The maritime heritage community is less familiar with video annotations. To encourage the maritime heritage community's use of SeaTube to annotate dives on maritime heritage sites and resources, Aidan Barlow-Diemer, a 2024 explorer-in-training, led the production of [SeaTube: A Collaborative Tool for Maritime Heritage Analysis](#).



NOAA Ocean Exploration is committed to exploring deepwater sites and making data available to the public. We explore, investigate, and characterize maritime heritage sites and resources and support the technologies that make it possible to do so. This entails considering how maritime heritage data is recorded, collaboratively interpreted, and distributed.

NOAA Ocean Exploration works closely with Ocean Networks Canada to implement SeaTube, a web-based annotation interface for ship-based remotely operated vehicle (ROV) operations. SeaTube is used by shipboard and shoreside expedition participants to log a variety of real-time observations during an ROV dive. Researchers are also invited to annotate observations after an expedition. After an expedition, annotations are reviewed for quality control and are archived to make video data more discoverable. As a result, maritime heritage video is a much more valuable, accessible, and usable data type than it has been in the past.



SeaTube and Maritime Heritage
SeaTube makes maritime heritage sites accessible to all users, providing tangible, guided experiences and enriching the underwater exploration and maritime heritage management experience. Some of the benefits of SeaTube are:

- SeaTube can be used to access collections of annotations associated with individual dive sites that can inform vernacular, regional, and thematic typologies.
- SeaTube eases the access to and use of valuable information in video, enhancing the efficiency of video as an interpretive tool for maritime heritage research.
- SeaTube supports and expands the multidisciplinary nature of maritime heritage research by enabling researchers from other disciplines to contribute to the analysis of maritime heritage sites.

Annotations

SeaTube annotations are time-stamped records of observations made in video collected during remotely operated vehicle dives. These observations are typically of biological, geological, or maritime heritage features.

- SeaTube users can annotate anything they see in these videos using standard vocabularies (or taxonomies).

This fact sheet is being released alongside concurrent community efforts to annotate video data on the aircraft carriers *USS Yorktown*, *Akagi*, and *Kaga* collected by the Ocean Exploration Trust on Exploration Vessel *Nautilus* in September 2023.

Announcements, Events, and Opportunities

RobotX Competition Looking for Volunteer Judges

OECI has been invited to participate in the RoboNation network of robotic competitions as volunteer judges. There are many competitions and opportunities to participate, with the next one coming up this November in Sarasota, Florida. The 2024 Maritime RobotX Challenge is an autonomous robotic competition where 20 undergraduate teams from around the world will compete in Sarasota, Florida November 3rd-9th. (There are also opportunities to pre-judge design documentation and presentations if you are unable to travel).

For more information, please visit <https://robotx.org/judge-invite>



Background: The Maritime RobotX Challenge is an international, university-level competition designed to foster student interest in autonomous robotic systems operating in the maritime domain, with an emphasis on the science and engineering of cooperative autonomy. This competition facilitates the building of international relationships between students, academic institutions, and industry partners.

FY26
Rear Admiral
Richard T. Brennan
Ocean Mapping Fund

In honor of RDML Richard T. Brennan

The FY26 Brennan Matching Fund opportunity is now open and invites non-Federal entities to partner with the ocean and coastal mapping programs of NOAA's National Ocean Service on jointly-funded projects of mutual interest, and establishes selection criteria and submission requirements for such projects under the NOAA Rear Admiral Richard T. Brennan Ocean Mapping Fund program.

September 13, 2024: Virtual office hours between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. by emailing iwgocm.staff@noaa.gov.

October 11, 2024 by 5 p.m. Eastern Time (ET): All application materials due to iwgocm.staff@noaa.gov.

Funding Solicitation

The National Offshore Wind Research & Development Consortium intends to run a competitive

solicitation titled "Solicitation 4.0 – Innovations in Floating Offshore Wind," with a funding pool of \$10.6 million. Find more information here:

<https://nationaloffshorewind.org/solicitations/>

Hydrographic Services Review Panel

The solicitation period for new Hydrographic Services Review Panel members is now open!

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/06/03/2024-12106/hydrographic-services-review-panel>

2025 is a "bye" year, so the closing date for this solicitation is February 21, 2025 with new members, if selected, starting their four year term on January 1, 2026.

Please see the linked Federal Register Notice above for more information and please share broadly! We are looking for an array of experts in the disciplines related to hydrographic data and services, marine transportation, port administration, vessel pilotage, coastal and fishery management, and others from all regions of the country.

Schmidt Ocean Institute Expression of Interest

Schmidt Ocean Institute (SOI) is soliciting Expressions of Interest (EOI) for collaborative, multidisciplinary research at any time and for any location and year identified as an area of operation for R/V *Falkor (too)*. EOIs and full proposals are accepted on a rolling basis and are reviewed twice per year. Investigators may request R/V *Falkor (too)*'s full berthing allotment for science in an EOI or may be partnered with additional projects at the full proposal stage to maximize the use of the vessel.

Find submission details [here](#)! The deadline for submission is **September 30, 2024**.

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