OCEAN EXPLORATION COOPERATIVE INSTITUTE | EXPLORING THE NATION'S BLUE FRONTIER OCEAN EXPLORATION TRUST | UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE | UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI | WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION

Dear Fellow Explorers,

One aspect of the OECI that I love is its ability to help facilitate connections. This 'feature' of the OECI can be seen in connections between commercial companies and academic technologists, across science disciplines, between data collectors and policy makers, and across the spectrum of students of different ages. I was struck this month by seeing the juxtaposition of our participation and sponsorship of the SeaPerch competition alongside the groundbreaking for the new NOAA Marine Operations Center-Atlantic. It is really spectacular to be able to participate on one end of the spectrum where young students are gaining appreciation and excitement for ocean technologies as well as the other end of the spectrum that is building the infrastructure that will allow those students to pursue their passions in the future in service to national priorities. I'm grateful for both the dedication of the mentors helping young students and the leadership in Washington D.C. for tirelessly pursuing the resources to ensure they will have a place to apply their passions. The web of support for the oceans is made stronger by all of OECI's commitment.

Deepest Regards, Adam

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Ocean Exploration Trust 2023 Field Season Report

The Ocean Exploration Trust (OET) recently published their Annual Report summarizing accomplishments from their 2023 field season on E/V Nautilus, which included thirteen multidisciplinary expeditions aimed at exploring poorly known underwater environments, including many supported by NOAA Ocean Exploration via the Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute (OECI). The report also highlights the many partners that contributed to this work, both in terms of gaining new information about our largely unexplored ocean, but also on how to meaningfully share this knowledge with a wide array of those stakeholders, particularly from geographies where OET operated.



Carbon Sequestration

The Carbon Sequestration project's first expedition, led by Chris Hayes at USM (University of Mississippi), took place in early April with five days at sea. The project aims to investigate carbon flux with depth in muddy shelf margins. These areas are home to mesophotic reefs which rely on sinking carbon as a food source. Chris set out on the R/V *Point Sur* from Gulfport, MS with a team of USM graduate students and Nina Yang from WHOI (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute) to collect water samples at various depths using McLane large volume water sampling pumps. Nina collected eDNA samples while onboard for another OECI project.



The team collected samples at three separate locations (see figure above) - one test location and two suspected mesophotic reef locations. The reef locations correlate with salt domes or carbonate mounds which provide enough elevation to keep the reef in a clean, or less muddy, environment. The team deployed three McLane pumps for the first time, which collect ~200 L of water per hour of pumping. Preliminary observations indicated that sites further from the shelf are influenced by sediment transport from the slope break on the shelf margin.

The team experienced some unexpected weather during the expedition, but they were able to carry on after briefly sheltering west of the sampling locations. Overall, it was a wonderful learning experience for the graduate students onboard. We are excited to learn more about carbon flux in the region as Chris's team continues to work with the data!



The Carbon Sequestration team onboard the R/V Point Sur ready to get underway after muster drills.

NOAA Groundbreaking



The golden shovels were dusted off for the groundbreaking of the new NOAA Marine Operations Center-Atlantic in Newport, RI earlier this month. The new facility will be located on the Naval Base in Newport and is funded in part by the Inflation Reduction Act. Facility construction aims to be complete by 2027. More information on the groundbreaking can be found here.

Image Credit: NOAA

Nautilus Live! Scientist Ashore Webinar

From July 12-August 6, E/VNautilus will conduct a telepresence-enabled expedition to explore the Jarvis Unit of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. We will host a Scientist Ashore webinar on **June 7** at **3 pm ET** that will provide an overview of the science objectives of the expedition, as well as outline the planning process for the mission. We encourage researchers from all disciplines and career levels to attend this webinar, and learn how to participate in the planning and execution of this expedition as Scientists Ashore.

Please register here to attend the webinar. If you would like to register to be a Scientist Ashore for the 2024 season, please fill out this form.

SeaPerch and RoboSub 2024 Competitions

OECI is sponsoring the SeaPerch underwater robotics competition coming up this spring. The international SeaPerch annual competition is May 31-June 1 in College Park, MD, and is a competition for middle and high school aged students.



The course run by the student-created ROVs is based on the activities accomplished on OECI expeditions. OECI will also have a presence at theRoboSub ROV competition in Irvine, CA, from August 5-11 and is a competition for technical high school students and undergraduate students. OECI will have an exhibit at the RoboSub ROV competition from August 8-9. If you have any opportunities, programs, or early career positions that you want to share, this is an excellent opportunity to promote them.

If you are interested in participating or volunteering at either of these events, or have positions that you would like to share, please contact Tara Hicks Johnson at tjohnson@ccom.unh.edu for more information.

Announcements, Events, and Opportunities



NOAAs Ocean Exploration's 2023 Annual Report

NOAA Ocean Exploration's 2023 Annual Report has been published! Take a look to see what happened in the world of ocean exploration in 2023.

OECI and NOAA Ocean Exploration Lead Special Issue of *Frontiers in Marine Sciences*

OECI is pleased to announce a special issue of the journal *Frontiers in Marine Sciences* focused on state of the art technology and research in the field of ocean exploration. The <u>'Advances in Ocean</u> <u>Exploration' special issue</u> was edited by Adam Soule (URI), Leila Hamdan (USM), Daniel Wagner (OET), and Aurora Elmore (NOAA Ocean Exploration) and features 11 articles written by the ocean exploration research community, both within OECI and from other organizations. Research papers from OECI include;<u>Annette Govindarajan (WHOI</u>) and <u>Julie Huber (WHOI</u>) Additionally, a perspective article on <u>Broadening Inclusivity at Sea</u> was published by authors including Lu Wang, Aurora Elmore, Mashkoor Malik, Kelley Suhre, and Liang Wu (NOAA Ocean Exploration); Allison Fundis (OET); Casey Machado (WHOI); and Coralie Rodriquez and Adam Soule (URI).

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.

Deep Ocean Observing Strategy

The Deep Ocean Observing Strategy will hold their third Annual Meeting - 'Missing Pieces: Identifying gaps and prioritizing solutions to address global deep ocean challenges,' will take place virtually May 21-23, 2024.

More information about the meeting, including the agenda and meeting registration, can be found here.

Job Opportunities - National Marine Sanctuary Foundation

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation just announced new job opportunities. See postings and info here!

Inner Space Center | Inner Space Center, University of Rhode Island, Graduate School of Oceanography, Narragansett, RI 02882

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