

Hello Ocean Explorers!

I hope everyone was able to take a well-deserved break over the Thanksgiving holiday. OEI is wrapping up a busy fall and we are excited to see Year 4 projects get underway. The Year 3 report has been finalized and there is an excellent summary of activities that can be found on the OEI website ([Year 3 Executive Summary](#)). A hard copy of this summary will be distributed to the partners shortly.



One of our key OEI goals is to maximize ocean exploration of the US EEZ for the health, wealth, and security of the United States of America. It is impossible to predict the exciting discoveries that will happen as we continue to explore. One that captured the imagination recently was the discovery of a megalodon tooth among the geological samples collected near Johnston Atoll in the central Pacific, which is part of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. This discovery actually took place once the samples were sent to their final destination at the URI Marine Geological Samples Library. The tooth was completely encased in manganese crust, and only discovered on close inspection. Researchers are now inspecting the sample to see what we can learn about the range of these massive and ancient predators.



I also want to mention the exciting opportunity to discuss the latest innovations in ocean exploration technology provided by the NOAA-led townhall at the Oceans 2022 meeting in Virginia Beach, VA in October. The townhall kicked off with a great overview by NOAA Ocean Exploration Director, Jeremy Weirich, and was followed by a panel discussion moderated by NOAA Chief Scientist Sarah Kapnick. The panel included myself, Brian Connon (Saildrone), Kakani Katija (MBARI), and Tosca Lichtenheld (Sofar Ocean). It was a lively discussion and I was able to share many of the OEI successes with the assembled audience. I'm grateful to NOAA for gathering the group and inviting OEI to participate.

It's a great time of year to reflect on what we are thankful for and without a doubt I am most thankful to work with such a creative, ambitious, and talented group in the OEI and beyond.

Happy Holidays,

Adam



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2023 Launch of the International SeaPerch Challenge- in partnership with the OEI and NOAA Ocean Exploration



The OEI is pleased to announce an exciting partnership with NOAA Ocean Exploration, the OEI, and Robonation, organizers of the SeaPerch underwater robotics competition for the 2023 season.

The 2023 competition theme will focus on ocean exploration and how OEI researchers use innovative technologies to fill gaps in the basic understanding of how we may impact the ocean and how the ocean impacts us. Challenge components for the 2023 International SeaPerch Competition are inspired by these technologies. For all challenge details, resources, and rules, please visit the [2023 International SeaPerch Challenge website](#).

There will be opportunities for OEI faculty, staff, and students to get involved with regional competitions across the U.S. and at the International Competition on May 8, 2023, in College Park, Maryland. Please stay tuned for more information about ways to join this exciting competition and inspire the next generation of ocean explorers and engineers!

OEI and the National Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA)

In late September 2022, the OEI was awarded a new \$7.3M grant to support mapping, habitat assessment, and the rehabilitation of mesophotic and deep benthic communities in the Gulf of Mexico. This award is a small portion of the \$1.2 billion allocated to understand and rehabilitate the Gulf following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. More information on the settlement and the U.S. Government processes which led to this project, called a National Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA), can be found at www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov.

Under this grant, researchers and engineers from three OEI partner institutions will build and deploy subsea landers, operate autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), and assist in translating shallow water coral restoration techniques to deep water species. The lander work, led by the University of Rhode Island's (URI) Dr. Andrew Davies, will help to understand habitats in affected areas near the spill. The URI landers will monitor the environment for up to one year while a team from the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) will develop smaller landers to stay on the bottom for 30 days. In addition, USM will lead a program to better understand the microbiological impact of the spill within seafloor sediment.

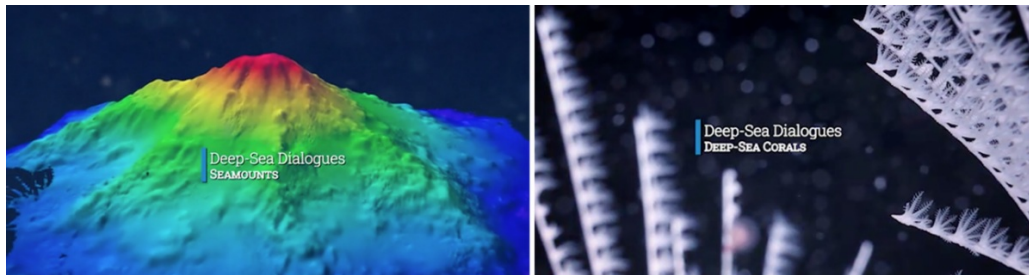
The Oceanographic Sensing Lab at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), URI, and USM have partnered to utilize AUVs in the Gulf to map and characterize existing and previously unknown communities up to 600 m below the surface. The first

AUV task, led by WHOI, integrated a high resolution, synthetic aperture sonar into a REMUS 600 AUV. This WHOI-owned vehicle was successfully deployed this summer and generated imagery that identified new coral communities.

This is the first award on this new grant which is expected to run through 2026.

2022 Deep Sea Dialogues Season complete

The [Deep Sea Dialogues \(DSD\)](#) Series series is a collaborative, OECI- funded effort between the URI Inner Space Center and NOAA Ocean Exploration that examines key content themes in ocean science with engaging videos and interactive professional development (PD) programs with topical experts. The 2022 DSD "series" just wrapped, with video production and PD programming taking place in the Spring and Fall of 2022. Participating educators watch the DSD video in advance of their scheduled, virtual PD program. In addition to engaging with topical experts via interactive Q&A, PD participants also receive an overview of NOAA Ocean Exploration Education resources, and a real-time walk through of a topical activity to be utilized with their students. Virtual and in-person follow up events take place with NOAA Ocean Exploration Education Alliance Partners and PD participants.

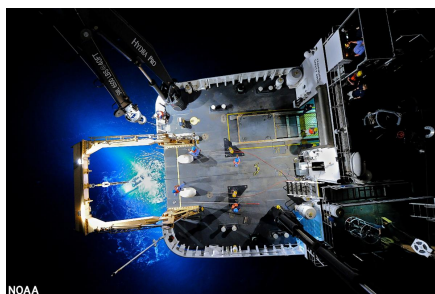


In March/April 2022, content focused on deep sea corals, with Dr. Randi Rotjan as the topical expert in the DSD video; Dr. Heather Coleman, Dr. Sandra Brooke, and Brian Kennedy provided expertise and insight during three virtual PD programs that engaged over 235 educators across the United States and its associated territories.

In October/November 2022, the content focus shifted to seamounts, their geological formation and environmental importance. Over 230 educators were engaged during four, virtual PD events. Dr's Meagan Putts and Thomas Morrow provided their scientific expertise in the DSD video and during several of the virtual PD programs. Dr's Steven Hammond and Santiago Herrera also provided topical expertise during virtual PD programming.

The teams look forward to their next collaborative effort on seeps, planned for Spring 2023. Stay tuned!

Announcements and Opportunities



Release of National Priorities for Ocean Exploration and Characterization within the U.S. EEZ

As of October 31, 2022, the U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Subcommittee and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) approved the release of the ***Strategic Priorities for Ocean Exploration and Characterization of the United States Exclusive***

Economic Zone (EEZ). This report reflects the culmination of input from 92 subject matter experts across 15 different federal agencies and outlines Federal priorities for ocean exploration and characterization. It is the first major milestone and deliverable that the Interagency Working Group for Ocean Exploration and Characterization (IWG-OEC) was tasked with as part of the [National Strategy for Ocean Mapping, Exploration,](#)

Internship Announcements:

The application period for **NOAA's 2023 Lapenta Student Internship Program** is now open. This program offers paid, summer opportunities that provide robust research and/or operational experience that will prepare a student for further study in NOAA fields, for application to fellowships, or for the NOAA-mission workforce. Nearly all program alumni who have completed their degrees are employed in NOAA mission fields and many work for NOAA.

The program is open to those who have just completed their sophomore year through advanced doctoral students. 2023 Lapenta Internships will run from June 5 to August 11, 2023, and provide a stipend of \$6000 per year, travel to/from the host site, and housing. Interested individuals are encouraged to visit and review the [Lapenta Internship Program website](#) before applying. An application link is also available on the website; the **application deadline is January 5, 2023.**

The **Ocean Exploration Trust (OET)** is now seeking students and educators to participate in the 2023 E/V *Nautilus* expedition season in the Central Pacific! Paid internships for community college, undergraduate, or graduate students, and recent graduates are available in ocean science, ROV (remotely operated vehicle) engineering, and video engineering through the [Science & Engineering Internship Program](#). Accepted students will have the chance to sail aboard an open ocean exploration expedition on E/V *Nautilus* for 3-5 weeks learning from experts in the field.

Opportunities for classroom educators, informal educators, and artists are available through OET's [Science Communication Fellowship](#). Accepted fellows attend a science communication training workshop in March, 2023, and sail aboard E/V *Nautilus* for 3-5 weeks to bring the excitement of ocean exploration to students and public audiences around the world through varied outreach platforms.

[Learn more](#) in the application packet and **apply before December 31, 2022.** Questions? Email the [OET Education Team](#).



Credit: OET, ML Parker

Call for **2023 Ocean Explorer internship mentors!**

Tuskegee University (TU) and **The University of Southern Mississippi's (USM) Marine Education Center** collaborate on a paid internship program to increase representation of minority populations in the national ocean science and technology workforce. In this partnership, USM provides resources and access for TU students to work with premier ocean science universities and NOAA through the NOAA OEI.

USM is currently collecting information on potential mentors and internship opportunities across the OEI partners: URI, WHOI, UNH, USM, OET, & NOAA Ocean Exploration. Individuals interested in potentially mentoring a TU student during the summer of 2023 are encouraged to **complete this brief [Google form](#) by January 6, 2023.** Mentors are encouraged to integrate interns into their research with multiple

levels of mentor relationships available (ex: peer mentors, graduate student mentors, additional science mentor for certain skill development).

Questions? Please email Rae Quadara (rachel.quadara@usm.edu).

Job Opportunity: Specialist, Multimedia Production and Web Development

In collaboration with NOAA Ocean Exploration and the OEI, the URI Inner Space Center is hiring a **multimedia specialist/web developer** to support delivery of NOAA Ocean Exploration real-time video & other data streams to the web, develop video and multimedia products to web, and support general web development efforts. For more information on the position and details to apply, please visit: <https://jobs.uri.edu/postings/10890>.

First consideration will be given to **applications received by November 28, 2022**. Please continue to share this opportunity, though, as **second consideration may be given to applications received by December 19, 2022**. Applications received after December 19, 2022, may not be given full consideration.

2022 National Ocean Exploration Forum Report now available!

NOAA Ocean Exploration and the Consortium for Ocean Leadership (now the Center for Ocean Leadership at the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research) jointly organized the 2022 National Ocean Exploration Forum, which took place from March 28-30, 2022. Over 100 representatives from across government, industry, academia, Tribal/Indigenous communities, philanthropy, nonprofits, and other private organizations attended in person, in addition to more than 60, virtual participants.



The outcomes of discussions at the 2022 NOEF were used to synthesize a [community-driven blueprint](#) for the next decade of ocean exploration, and a [full Forum report is now available online](#). A [summary video](#) of the 2022 Forum, which was produced in partnership with the URI Inner Space Center through generous sponsorship by the NOAA OEI, is also available for online viewing via YouTube.

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