

## Hello Ocean Explorers!

I'm very excited to see many of you at this week's [National Ocean Exploration Forum](#) in Austin, TX. It has been too long since many of us have had the opportunity to share ideas face-to-face. These conversations about the community's aspirations for the next decade of ocean exploration come at a great time.

For OEI, many of our technological developments, education and training programs, and operations are maturing. In particular, it was exciting to see the first operations of the ASV DriX onboard E/V *Nautilus* this month in preparation for the upcoming exploration season! We are all anticipating a successful season that will address exploration gaps in NOAA Ocean Exploration's priority regions and demonstrate many of the novel systems and approaches that OEI is championing, and that we hope represent an important component of the next decade of ocean exploration.

Best,  
Adam

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### EV *Nautilus* Update: Shakedown Success and Launch of the 2022 Exploration Season!

Ocean Exploration Trust's 2022 E/V *Nautilus* expedition season began with a successful shakedown cruise in Pacific waters from March 1-10, 2022. Shakedown activities are important to assess and evaluate at-sea equipment and associated workflows ahead of official ocean exploration activities. During this shakedown cruise, activities included mapping trials, ROV launch/recovery operations (*Little Herd/Atalanta*; *Hercules/Argus*), ROV maintenance and instrumentation checks, Uncrewed Surface Vessel DriX operation training (crane operations with *DriX*, its Universal Deployment System (UDS), and docking maneuvers) as well as testing and evaluation improvements to data management, video production, science support, and sync to shore workflows and documentation for all onboard teams.



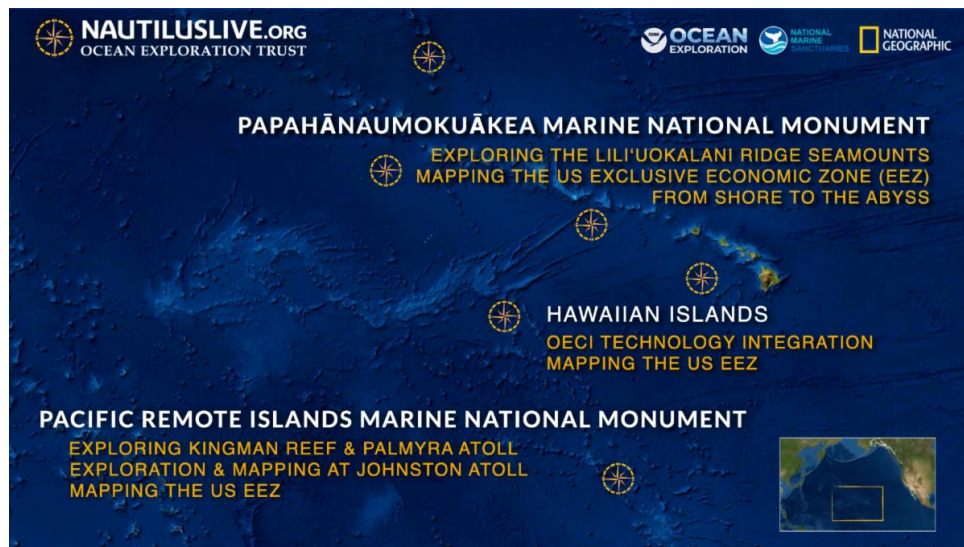
Eight months of scientific exploration onboard the E/V *Nautilus* began on March 14<sup>th</sup> as an OEI-supported expedition set sail to explore the deepwater habitats around Kingman Reef & Palmyra Atoll, one of the largest marine protected areas in the world, the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (PRIMNM). This

expedition will last through April advancing our understanding of the regional ocean by exploring areas in the US Exclusive Economic Zone (US EEZ) both inside and outside the protection of PRIMNM, which have never been surveyed with ROVs or submersibles. This project also directly supports the National Strategy for Ocean Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the US EEZ through high-resolution, in situ exploration and characterization of areas that meet the goals of the OECI.

Exploration areas are within the Prime Crust Zone, an area of the Pacific with oceanographic conditions observed to deposit deep-sea minerals, including economically valuable metals and rare earth elements like iron-manganese (FeMn) and cobalt-rich mineral crusts. ROV *Hercules'* observations and samples will be important to understanding the complex geological history, including the origins of the seamounts of the Line Islands. Additionally, visual surveys will document and characterize sensitive habitats here to support management and conservation efforts. These observations will contribute to understanding the biodiversity and connectivity of deepwater coral and sponge communities in PRIMNM and across the Central Pacific region.

This expedition is enjoying broad participation from the oceanographic community and OECI partners including co-Lead Scientists Ashore Dr. Katie Kelley (URI) and Dr. Adam Soule (OECI). Onboard URI graduate students, [Coralie Rodriguez](#) and [Rebecca Lippett](#), are gaining valuable expedition experience, samples, and training that will further their research.

Be sure to follow along with all 2022 exploration activities via the Nautilus Live website (<https://nautiluslive.org/>).



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## New Director of NOAA Ocean Exploration Announced

Jeremy Weirich has been named as the new Director of [NOAA Ocean Exploration](#). He joins NOAA Ocean Exploration after serving as the Vice President for Corporate Strategy at the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA), where he led policy and advocacy for planning for the next generation of U.S. cutting-edge telescopes. Prior to his leadership at AURA, he worked on the U.S. Senate's Committee on Appropriations in the position of Majority Clerk for the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee. While with the committee, he directly managed multiple astronomical NASA and National Science Foundation science accounts and oversaw much of the Department of Commerce's spending

legislation, including many NOAA priorities such as research vessel acquisitions, fisheries management, cooperative research, and exploration initiatives. Prior to joining the U.S. Senate, he served in the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps aboard ocean-going research and hydrographic vessels and coordinated underwater expeditions for NOAA Ocean Exploration.

With this announcement, Dr. Genevieve Fisher, who had been serving as the acting Director of NOAA Ocean Exploration since May 2021, will now return to her Deputy Director role within the office. The OEI would like to thank Dr. Fisher for her strong leadership and continued support over these last 9+ months.

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## OET Announces Dr. Daniel Wagner as Chief Scientist



On March 14, 2022, the Ocean Exploration Trust (OET) welcomed Dr. Daniel Wagner as its new Chief Scientist. As OET's Chief Scientist, Daniel will liaise with the ocean science community to broadly share exploration results and open data to meet current research, management, and conservation needs in ocean science; develop programs that promote inclusivity and scientific integrity in the field; and work with OET's partners to advance the field of ocean exploration through the Nautilus Exploration Program and the NOAA OEI.

Prior to joining OET, Daniel served as Ocean Science Advisor for Conservation International. He has also worked for the NOAA's Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, and served as the scientific advisor to the U.S. White House Council of Environmental Quality on the Monument expansion. The breadth of Daniel's experience and academic achievements in ocean exploration includes extensive deep-sea field work since 2006, including his participation in 27 multi-disciplinary research expeditions that explored deep-sea habitats throughout the Indo-Pacific, Atlantic, and Southern Oceans.

Welcome Dr. Wagner!

## Opportunities

### *UNOLS Deep Submergence Science Committee (DeSSC) announces application opportunity for 2022 DeSSC New User Program*

The UNOLS Deep Submergence Science Committee (DeSSC) is a committee of scientists who provide recommendations and advice to the operator and supporting funding agencies of the NDSF. The DeSSC meetings are an open forum for scientists and engineers to learn about scientific discoveries and technical advances, as well as to express their opinions both within NDSF and from other deep submergence facility operations.



Interested individuals are invited to participate in a workshop tailored to engage new users of deep submergence science facilities, including **students, early career scientists,**

**engineers and scientists** with little or no previous experience in deep-sea research. The workshop is scheduled for May 24-25, 2022, at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (in MA). **Applications are being accepted through 06 April 2022.** Financial support for travel and lodging will be provided. Participants are limited to those residing in the U.S.

The program is tentatively scheduled from 9:00am to 5:30 pm each day. A group dinner with a guest speaker will be held on the evening of 24 May. Program details, as they become available, will be posted [here](#). Students, post-docs, early career scientists, and engineers should apply. Participants must attend the entire New User Program (Tuesday) and dinner, and at least 1/2 day of the DeSSC meeting (Wednesday 25May). To apply, please complete this [online application form](#).

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***Oceans 2022 (Hampton Roads): Abstract submission window open***

The IEEE Ocean Engineering Society/Marine Technology Society [Oceans 2022 Conference](#) abstract submission portal is now open. This annual meeting of these two ocean technology, innovation and engineering societies is a great chance to highlight work on a wide variety of ocean exploration related activities. OECS community members are encouraged to consider this presentation opportunity. This in person/virtual event will take place October 17-21, 2022 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center.

Note, abstracts and full technical papers **must** fall under one of [these topics](#) for this year's event. To access the abstract portal, please go [here](#).

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