

Pre-Workshop Recommendations Sought

For Planning the Maiden Voyage of Discovery for NOAA's Dedicated Ocean Exploration Vessel, *Okeanos Explorer*.

The Science Advisory Board (SAB) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), has formed the Ocean Exploration Advisory Working Group (OEAWG)*, a standing external panel to provide general priorities for ocean exploration, including geographic areas of interest as well as subject matter topics; advice concerning emerging ocean exploration-related technologies; and to conduct periodic reviews of the program for the purpose of assessing program accomplishments and providing guidance and perspective for the program's future.



The OEAWG seeks recommendations for planning the 2008 maiden voyage of the *Okeanos Explorer*, NOAA's new ship dedicated for Ocean Exploration.

Important Dates

February 15, 2007

Deadline for all interested parties to submit a one-page recommendation to the OEAWG, identifying region(s) of the Pacific Ocean Basin where NOAA's *Okeanos Explorer* should first explore and why. These papers should describe what is known about the region(s) and provide a compelling rationale as to why the specific area has the highest potential for discovery. One-page submissions should be e-mailed to OEOffice@noaa.gov.

March 15, 2007

Deadline for the OEAWG to use the one-page recommendations and/or other means to select approximately 25 individuals to participate in a workshop in Washington, D.C. to help the OEAWG make final cruise-track recommendations to the NOAA SAB. Expenses of workshop participants will be provided through a grant from the Lounsberry Foundation to the Institute for Exploration.

May 9-11, 2007

Invited community workshop at the headquarters of the National Geographic Society to finalize recommendations concerning an initial *Okeanos Explorer* cruise-track in preparation for a series of expeditions in 2008.

Fall, 2007

Tentative timeframe for a follow-on workshop in Monterey, CA, to look specifically at the *Okeanos Explorer*'s long-term technical capabilities.

Summer 2008

Expected first voyage of discovery for the *Okeanos Explorer*.

Background: Ocean Exploration and the *Okeanos Explorer*: NOAA's Ocean Exploration (OE) program (<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov>) is NOAA's response to the 2000 *Report of the President's Panel on Ocean Exploration*. The 2004 *U.S. Ocean Action Plan* restated support for ocean exploration for the purpose of discovery. The OE program's mission is:

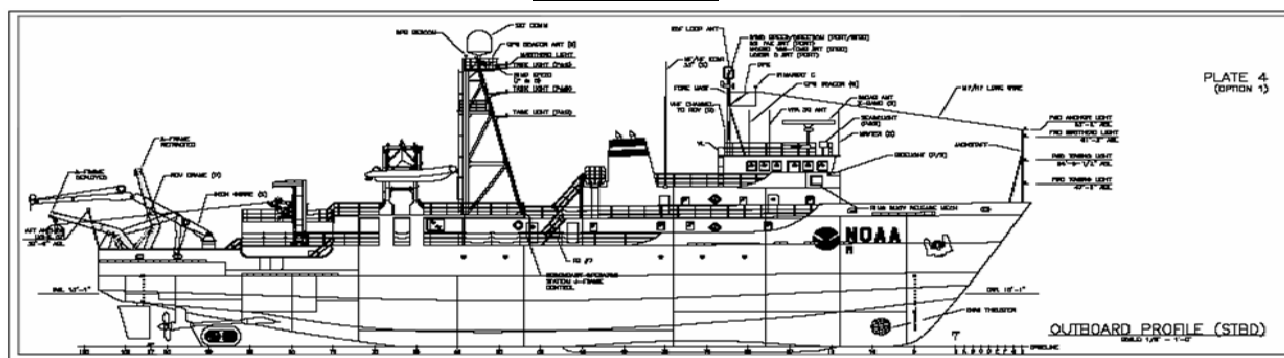
To support national and NOAA objectives by exploring the Earth's largely unknown ocean in all its dimensions for the purpose of discovery and the advancement of knowledge, applying advanced technologies in evolutionary and revolutionary ways.

In the spring of 2008, NOAA expects to commission a dedicated ship of exploration, the *Okeanos Explorer*. This vessel is designed to carry out a systematic, **global** program of exploration in the oceans linked in real time through satellite and internet telepresence technology to the scientific community, educators, the media and the general public. The primary purpose of this announcement is to solicit recommendations for discussion at a workshop designed to make final recommendations to the NOAA Science Advisory Board, for high-priority survey areas for the *Okeanos Explorer*. In its first year, the ship will operate in the Pacific, generally between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

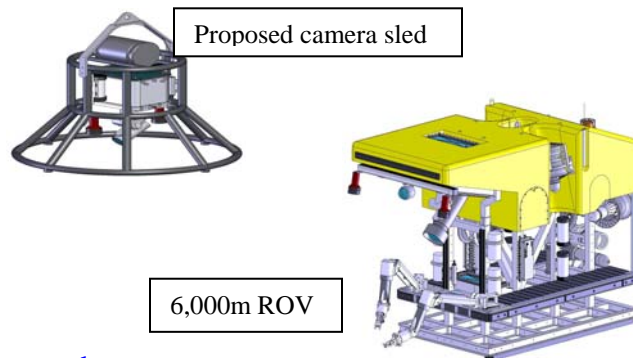
An equally important workshop objective will be to work with invited participants, NOAA staff and members of the OEAWG, to formulate recommendations for the operational paradigm that will guide this vessel efficiently toward exciting and compelling voyages of discovery. This paradigm will mirror the vessel's technical capabilities, and will survey large areas of the seafloor, complemented by layers of follow-on surveys designed to investigate discoveries at higher and higher levels of detail. The *Okeanos Explorer* will be equipped with a modern hull-mounted multibeam system for surveys of the seafloor at cruising speeds of ~10 kts, tool sleds and a compatible array of sensors for discovery-based surveys at speeds of ~1.5-4 kts and ROV/AUV capabilities for detailed studies of small areas.

Okeanos Explorer will push back the frontiers of the unknown, generating hypotheses and making the data of discovery widely available in real time through high-speed Internet2 to the scientific community at Science Command Centers ashore, and via standard Internet to the public. The ship and shore-based exploration teams will then conduct preliminary additional investigations or move on, leaving behind an energized user community poised to use these frontier data for follow-on, hypothesis-based investigations.

Vessel Data



Ship Measurements: Length 224 ft, beam 43 ft, draft 15 ft
Status: In shipyard for retrofit. Operational in 2008
Missions: Reconnaissance, investigation of anomalies, interdisciplinary efforts providing baseline for future research/management and a foundation for education.
ROVs: A two-body system consisting of a camera sled and a 6,000 meter science class ROV, **Multibeam:** Hull-mounted
Telepresence: Live satellite communications
Ship's complement: 46, including both ship's crew mission support.



***Information about the OEAWG and its members:**

http://www.sab.noaa.gov/Working_Groups/Working_Groups.htm