

Office of Ocean Exploration and Research
Program Review
Presenter Short Bios

Office of Ocean Exploration and Research Director's Office

Alan Leonardi, Director

Alan joined OER as director in October 2014, returning to the Washington, D.C. area from Miami, where he was deputy director of NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory. A meteorologist and oceanographer, Leonardi has been with NOAA since 2003. He began his career as the first Program Coordinator for NOAA's Environmental Modeling Program and subsequently also served as an advocate and coordinator of a broad spectrum of oceanic and atmospheric research across NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR). He eventually assumed the role of Environmental Modeling Program Manager and served as the Deputy Director of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation at OAR Headquarters. He earned his undergraduate degree in meteorology from the University of Wisconsin, and his master's and doctorate degrees in physical oceanography from the Florida State University.

Frank Cantelas, Deputy Director (acting)

Frank manages OER's administrative, personnel, and budget functions. Before becoming deputy in December 2018, he was a member of the Science and Technology Division as the marine archaeology lead for the office. In that role he developed archaeology themes for the annual funding announcement and coordinated the broader marine archaeology community for participation on Okeanos Explorer missions. He also leads and participates in federal interagency working group on underwater cultural heritage and in the use of new tools and technology for underwater archaeology.

Expeditions and Exploration Division

Ocean Exploration: Mapping and Characterization

Rachel Medley, Chief

Rachel worked for NOAA's Office of Coast Survey for 12 years before joining OER in 2018. Ms. Medley received her MS in Ocean Mapping and IHO-Category A certification from the University of New Hampshire, CCOM/JHC in 2009. She also holds an MS in Geosciences with a focus on isotope geochemistry from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Kelley Elliot

Kelley has been with NOAA OER since 2004. She has more than a decade of experience coordinating and managing ocean exploration projects and expeditions around the globe. She was a lead planner for CAPSTONE; led efforts from 2013 to 2018 to identify deep-water data collection priorities in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic Canyons, Hawaiian Archipelago,

American Samoa, Guam and CNMI; and has conducted 13 successful expeditions on NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*, including 10 with the majority of the science team participating via telepresence.

Craig Russell

Craig joined OER in 2001 and leads OER's systematic telepresence-enabled explorations with NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*. He joined NOAA in 1996. Craig helped establish OER's field operations program and while with the National Ocean Service, helped to develop innovative data stewardship best-practices and contributed to national and regional strategic initiatives on ocean governance, ecosystem based-management, and environmental restoration.

Science and Technology Division
Technology: Development, Application, and Program Use

Steve Hammond, Senior Science Advisor

Steve has been with OER from its inception in 2002. He served as the Office's chief scientist, with a four-year stint as Acting Director, until 2013 when he retired from federal service after a nearly 40-year career in NOAA. He was the lead for PMEL's Ocean Environmental Research Division for 30 years and the Director of the Vents program. He currently serves as a senior science advisor for OER's Science and Technology Division.

Amanda Netburn

Amanda manages OER's annual competitive grants program and is the office lead on water column exploration. As a Presidential Management Fellow, she recently staffed the NOAA Administrator to advance interagency and cross-sector partnerships for ocean exploration. Amanda has a PhD in Oceanography and a Masters degree in Marine Conservation and Biodiversity from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Chris Beaverson

Chris is the technology lead within the Science and Technology Division. He has been with OER since 2012. He supports the OER Director for the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) and the development of NOAA's unmanned systems strategy. Prior to joining OER, he was an active duty NOAA Corps officer with the rank of Captain and served as Executive Officer of NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) following a 25 year career providing management, operations and research support to NOAA."

Katharine Egan

Katharine is the current Sea Grant Knauss Fellow with OER. She leads the Primary Observations team, which was tasked with assisting OER in its mandate to provide data outputs of unexplored areas. She completed her Master's at the University of the Virgin Islands with a focus on coral reef ecology, and worked for several years as a GIS Analyst with the NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science.

Engagement Division
Engagement: Reaching the Public

David McKinnie, Lead (acting); Program Review Lead

David has been with OER since 2010. He leads the Engagement Division, is the designated federal official for the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board, and serves as senior advisor to the office director. Prior to joining the office, he was technical manager of the U.S. Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System program and served as the U.S. representative to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission on tsunami warning and mitigation issues.

Emily Crum

Emily Crum joined OER in 2012 as the Web Team lead, managing the OceanExplorer.NOAA.gov website and OER's social media presence. She is also currently the OER media contact and supports office communication efforts. Prior to joining OER, Emily was the Chief of the External Affairs Branch of NOAA's National Ocean Service, guiding the Line Office's communications strategy and overseeing NOS web, social media, outreach events, and internal communications.

National Centers for Environmental Information
Data and Information: Availability and Access

Sharon Mesick, Chief of Information for Coastal, Ocean, and Geophysics

Sharon leads a workforce of more than 30 Federal, contract and affiliated staff in providing collections of scientific data and information-rich products to NCEI users throughout the U.S. and the world. She is an advocate for open access to multidisciplinary scientific data, and enjoys developing partnerships across NOAA's diverse constituent base. Sharon began her professional career at the Naval Oceanographic Office. During her 15 year tenure at NAVO she supported the Ocean Survey Program, the Mine Warfare Command, and the Navy Requirements office.

Megan Cromwell

Megan is a Research Program Manager for NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) through the Northern Gulf Institute. She serves as the NCEI team lead for the *Okeanos Explorer* end-to-end data management activities. Megan has been with the NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research Data Management Team since her start as a student intern. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Oceanography with a minor in Geographical Information Systems from the University of Southern Mississippi and is currently working towards a Master's degree in Environmental Geoscience. Megan's passion for competitive sailing and love for the ocean have been intertwined since childhood.