

**Minutes**  
**18th Meeting of the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board**  
**December 10, 2020, Virtual**

**Notification and Availability of Meeting Materials**

The 18th meeting of the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board (OEAB) was announced to the public through the *Federal Register* and on the [OEAB website](#). Background materials and presentations prepared for this meeting are posted on the OEAB website.

**Ocean Exploration Advisory Board Members in Attendance**

Ambassador Cameron Hume, Consultant (Interim Chair)  
Amanda Demopoulos, U.S. Geological Survey  
Vicki Ferrini, Columbia University  
Christopher R. German, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution  
Eric King, Schmidt Ocean Institute  
Darlene Lim, NASA Ames Research Center  
Justin Manley, Just Innovation Inc.  
David Millar, Fugro USA  
Dominique Rissolo, University of California at San Diego  
Clara Smart, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory

**Designated Federal Officer for the OEAB**

David McKinnie, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research

**Office of Ocean Exploration and Research Staff in Attendance**

Alan Leonardi, Director  
Gene Fisher, Deputy Director  
Christa Rabenold  
Rachel Gulbraa  
Matt King  
Amanda Netburn

**Invited Speakers**

RDML Tim Gallaudet, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Deputy NOAA Administrator  
Craig McLean, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research

**Observers**

A number of individuals from NOAA and other organizations observed the meeting at various points.<sup>1</sup>

- 1. Meeting Opening.** Designated Federal Officer (DFO) David McKinnie opened the meeting on December 10, 2020. This meeting was held virtually given the COVID-19 pandemic. He mentioned that the application period for new OEAB members closed on December 9, 2020.
- 2. Chair Opening Remarks.** Acting Chair Ambassador Cameron Hume reviewed the meeting [agenda](#), credited the progress made in ocean exploration over the last four years to NOAA leadership and staff, and provided his thoughts on how NOAA could lead a *national* program of ocean exploration at this time. These thoughts included bolstering efforts in the underexplored water column, improving systems to archive and make ocean exploration data accessible, continuing to adopt new technologies and develop human capital for ocean exploration, and looking beyond the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone to what comes next.

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<sup>1</sup> Given the nature of the virtual meeting, it was difficult to tell who was participating and when. Thus, this list may not be complete.

3. **Approval of Minutes.** Chris German made a motion to approve the [minutes from the 17th OEAB meeting](#), held virtually. Dominique Rissolo seconded, and the board approved the minutes.
4. **Remarks from the NOAA Deputy Administrator:** RDML Tim Gallaudet and shared his thoughts about the successes of the past few years and the promise of the future. He once again thanked the board for its contributions to ocean policy development and cited advancements in ocean exploration as some of NOAA's premier contributions during his tenure with NOAA.
5. **Remarks from the OAR Assistant Administrator:** Ocean and Atmospheric Research Assistant Administrator Craig McLean noted the importance of advisory boards during transitional periods and welcomed challenges from the board, encouraging them to keep pushing NOAA to move ocean exploration forward. He also mentioned his work in support of the U.N. Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and stressed that the initiative provides an opportunity to do new things, to think boldly, creatively, cooperatively, and internationally..
6. **OEAB Discussion on Advice for NOAA Leadership:** The chair led a discussion about the direction of the national program and what it needs to achieve over the next 6 to 12 months. The board will share their recommendations with NOAA in a letter to Acting Administrator Neal Jacobs. The discussion emphasized the importance of building on the successes of recent years (as well as lessons learned during the pandemic) and building on initiatives such as the National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone and the forthcoming implementation plan. It also highlighted the need to tie such initiatives to new priorities, stress the role of ocean exploration in economic recovery, embrace new technologies, build new partnerships (including internationally), focus on diversity, and strengthen education programs to generate more interest in the ocean and engage future explorers.
7. **Public Comment Period.** Kristen Yarincik from the Consortium of Ocean Leadership (COL) reinforced that ocean exploration is very important to COL's members and stated that COL will advocate for retention and expansion of the National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing, the United States Exclusive Economic Zone. She also shared that language to reauthorize and increase the efficiency of the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) is in the Defense Act passed by the House and under consideration by the Senate considering and noted that a rejuvenated NOPP would be good for OER. Bob Ballard the University of Rhode Island and the Ocean Exploration Trust introduced Adam Soule as the new director of NOAA's Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute. Soule welcomes the board's feedback regarding ocean exploration priorities.
8. **Next Meeting.** The board agreed the next meeting would be also virtual, likely in March 2021. Topic suggestions included mapping progress and plans, Vicki Ferrini's GEBCO work, an update on NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* and NOAA's plans for the new vessels, *Alvin* science verification cruise proposals, follow up on the Pacific workshop (could be included in the OER update), an OER education update, and a U.S. National Committee for the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development update (e.g., National Academy "ocean shots").
9. **Meeting Close.** The DFO closed the meeting at approximately 5:06 p.m. EST on December 10, 2020.