

**NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research  
A Workshop to Plan “Telepresence-Enabled” Expeditions for the Atlantic**

**Workshop Announcement – Pre-Workshop Recommendations Sought**

NOAA’s Office of Ocean Exploration and Research is hosting a workshop to provide an overview of a new program of telepresence-enabled exploration and to identify areas in the Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, where this approach should be applied. Telepresence-enabled exploration is currently being conducted by the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* and the Ocean Exploration Trust’s Exploration Vessel *Nautilus*. Equipped with sonar equipment and remotely operated vehicles outfitted with high-definition video cameras and sensors, the ships transmit information to shore-based Exploration Command Centers, Remote Consoles and over the Internet to broadly distributed teams of explorers.



[www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov](http://www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov)

[www.nautiluslive.com/](http://www.nautiluslive.com/) or <http://isc.gso.uri.edu/>

**Background:** The NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research (OER) was created to increase the Nation’s understanding of unknown and poorly known ocean areas and phenomena, generate new lines of scientific inquiry and research, increase the pace and efficiency of ocean exploration through the use of advanced techniques and technologies, and disseminate discoveries and findings to a broad spectrum of users. The mission of OER is:

*Develop and use state-of-the-art technology to increase our scientific knowledge of the Earth's largely unknown ocean, in all its dimensions, to support NOAA and national objectives.*

OER in collaboration with the Ocean Exploration Trust, the Institute for Exploration (IFE), the University of Rhode Island (URI), the University of New Hampshire (UNH), and with support from the Ocean Exploration Advisory Working Group (OEAWG – a standing subcommittee of the NOAA Science Advisory Board) recently launched a new program of “systematic” exploration. Using the *Okeanos Explorer* and the *Nautilus*, explorers investigate new ocean areas and phenomena from shore-based Exploration Command Centers equipped to receive data and information – including high-definition video – in real-time. In specific situations information also can be transmitted over the Internet to other explorers and interested parties.

The systematic exploration paradigm involves surveying large areas at speeds up to 10 kts to provide high-resolution maps of the seafloor. These maps are used to define areas to be explored in greater detail using advanced remotely operated vehicles outfitted with high-definition video cameras and an array of sensors. In contrast to targeted exploration focused on meeting the objectives of individual projects, systematic exploration is designed to search for, locate, and describe new habitats and phenomena, establishing a rich foundation of information that will catalyze further exploration, research, and education. Systematic exploration is also designed to engage the public and stimulate the imagination by engaging them in the excitement of real-time exploration and discovery.

**Input Sought:** This announcement seeks input from members of the ocean community in the form of one-page descriptions of areas and targets in the Atlantic, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, that have the highest potential for discoveries that can lay the ground work for further scientific investigation. These 1-page descriptions must provide: (1) an overview of the area or region; (2) a brief summary of what is currently known; and (3) rationale for why the area or region warrants exploration. Please use the form included with this announcement for your submission. An extra page with a map or other graphic will be accepted.

These papers will be used to identify approximately 25-30 individuals to attend the workshop and represent the community and groups of ideas for specific sub-regions within the Atlantic including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. The ultimate objective of the workshop is to develop a prioritized inventory of targets that can be used to inform decisions on areas to be explored by the *Okeanos Explorer*, the *Nautilus*, or other telepresence-enabled platforms over the next several years starting in 2012. This will enable OER and partners to develop a long-term strategy for the placement and operation of these assets over time.

**Deadline:** The one-page descriptions must be submitted by Thursday, March 31, 2010 and must be e-mailed to [oar.oe.faq@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.oe.faq@noaa.gov). Please note on your transmittal if you would be available to participate if selected.

**Workshop Location:** University of Rhode Island  
Narragansett Bay Campus  
215 South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI

**Dates:** May 9-10, 2011

Selected participants will be contacted in early April and travel will be funded by OER.