UNOLS News
Exciting updates from UNOLS & the Academic Research Fleet

October 2026 - Volume 40, No. 4

Community Updates

DeSSC Chair Andrew Thurber Featured in National Geographic Special

Andrew Thurber, chair of the Deep Submergence Science Committee (DeSSC), is among the scientists featured in *Expedition: Saving Our Seas*, a new one-hour National Geographic special premiering Friday, November 13, at 9 p.m. Eastern. It will stream on Disney+ and Hulu the following day. The film follows the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Ocean Expeditions, a multiyear effort to document rapid environmental change across all five ocean basins, from the seashore to the seafloor and from pole to pole.

Thurber appears in the Southern Ocean segment, which was filmed aboard Schmidt Ocean Institute's R/V *Falkor (too)*. There, he joins fellow oceanographers Kim Bernard and Allison Fong in surveying deep waters with the ROV *SuBastian*, working at depths of nearly 13,000 feet. The team reports three first-time discoveries: the most southerly deep-sea hydrothermal vent known, swarms of egg-carrying Antarctic krill at about 3,000 feet, and the first known live sighting of a giant Antarctic gonate squid. Congratulations to Andrew and the full science team. For more about the special, see the ABC announcement: Watch 'Expedition: Saving Our Seas' Premiering November 13 on National Geographic.

Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due: NSF Branding and Acknowledgment

Every research cruise, every instrument, and every dataset supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation represents a public investment in discovery. Visible, consistent acknowledgment of that support is how the public, policymakers, and the broader scientific community come to see the connection between federal funding and the science it makes possible. For NSF grantees, proper branding is part of the award's terms and conditions, and also a way to show that taxpayer-funded research delivers real results for the nation.

In the current funding climate, that visibility matters more than ever. Clear, accurate credit helps make the case for continued investment in ocean science, and it is a simple way to honor the agency that makes our work possible. We encourage all UNOLS institutions and NSF-funded investigators to review the requirements that apply to their awards and to use the official NSF logo and acknowledgment language in publications, presentations, press releases, websites, and on vessels and equipment. Logos, guidance, and related resources are available from NSF here: NSF branding resources.

NSF Prohibition on Collaborations with Restricted Entities

NSF has announced a forthcoming research security policy that prohibits the use of NSF funds for collaboration with entities on U.S. restricted party lists. Under the policy, senior/key personnel on NSF awards may not collaborate with these entities, hold an appointment or position with them, or receive research support from them for the duration of the award. Beginning in January 2027, Chief Scientists will be asked to acknowledge through Marine Facilities Planning (MFP) that no member of their science party is affiliated with a restricted entity. Chief Scientists and their institutions should review the restricted party lists and be ready to address this requirement when they submit their cruise requests. For the full details, see NSF's Dear Colleague Letter, Prohibition on Collaborations with Restricted Entities. Questions about the policy can be sent to researchsecurity@nsf.gov.

Marine Scientific Research Clearances: Updates from the Department of State

The Department of State's marine science team has shared several updates on marine scientific research (MSR) clearances in foreign EEZs, following recent difficulties. The Department is also updating its website with this information. Key points:

- **Apply 7 months ahead.** Submit applications in RATS at least 7 months in advance so the Department and the embassy have time to process them within the 6-month review period under the Law of the Sea. Some coastal States are enforcing that period more strictly, and the British Virgin Islands and Nicaragua have recently denied applications that were submitted late.

- **Spain: port calls need consent.** Spain has revived a 1981 decree requiring diplomatic consent for port calls by MSR vessels, even when no MSR is conducted in Spanish waters. Because port calls without MSR aren't processed through RATS, applicants should email the information listed in Article 14 of the decree to the Department, which will forward it to the embassy.

- **Mexico and Costa Rica: separate applications.** Because of the additional attachments each requires, submit a separate RATS application for each country.

- **Costa Rica: involve local scientists.** Costa Rica is eager to be involved in U.S. MSR. Where feasible, include Costa Rican scientists in cruise planning and in any local events.

- **Coastal State participants onboard.** Requests for a coastal State participant on the cruise are increasing. Vessel operators and scientists should reserve a berth and budget for the participant's travel. A stipend toward a salary is not permitted under Article 249(1)(a) of the Law of the Sea, which gives coastal States the right to participate without payment of remuneration to their scientists and without any obligation to contribute to project costs.

Refer to the DOS website: https://www.state.gov/marine-scientific-research/ and contact the State Department directly at marinescience@state.gov to get started on an MSR application.

Introducing the new SEASAM Facility!

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Seafloor Sampling Facility has recently been initiated to coordinate support of collection, characterization and archival of seafloor samples from the vessels of the Academic Research Fleet (ARF). The facility is an inter-institutional collaboration bringing expertise from across the United States to bear in support of University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS) operations – anchored by the University of Washington, University of California San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Oregon State University, and Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

Led by Director Maureen Walczak, SEASAM enables access to a wide range of seafloor sampling equipment, data infrastructure, technology and expertise in support of NSF research, from dredges and coring devices to cameras and instrumented laboratory vans. The facility emphasizes close collaboration with other NSF/UNOLS facilities supporting seafloor characterization, imaging, and sampling as well as sample and data repositories, with the goal to strengthen coordinated support for NSF-funded research while remaining adaptable to evolving scientific priorities. The facility will also help train the next generation of ocean researchers, supporting continued U.S. leadership in ocean science via robust outreach and workforce development activities.

Researchers and vessel operators planning upcoming expeditions are encouraged to reach out in early stages of planning to discuss sampling needs and raise questions. The facility can be contacted at seasam@unols.org and additional info can be found at www.sea-sam.org.

Featured Photo

How many marine techs can you fit inside a radar dome? On board the *R/V Sikuliaq*.

Photo Credit: Tara Clemente

Upcoming Events

RVTEC Meeting
16 - 20 Nov 2026
Miami, FL

Council Meeting
09 Nov 2026
La Jolla, CA

Annual Meeting
10 Nov 2026
La Jolla, CA

DeSSC NUP
05 Dec 2026
San Francisco, CA

DeSSC Community Meeting
06 Dec 2026
San Francisco, CA

MSROC Community Meeting
06 Dec 2026
San Francisco, CA

Winter AICC Meeting
13 & 14 Jan 2027
Seattle, WA

STEMSEAS launches new Chief Scientist Opportunities (ChOP) program in partnership with WHOI's R/V Atlantis

In an effort to provide more opportunities for early career scientists to gain the skills necessary to be good chief scientists, the STEMSEAS program has piloted the Chief Scientist Opportunities (ChOP) program as a component of its transit expeditions. Supported by a generous grant from the Maxwell-Hanrahan Foundation, ChOP is designed for post-doctoral and early career scientists who have some sea-going experience but have not yet had the opportunity to lead an expedition. Read more about this exciting new program on the UNOLS website: **ChOP**.

Photo credit: Mimi Johnston

MATE 2027 Internship Announcement

UNOLS-MATE MARINE TECHNICAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

UNOLS WILL START ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS NOVEMBER 23, 2026 FOR THE 2027 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
(Pending Funding Approval)
Visit the program website to access the application form, and learn more about the internships and requirements
UNOLS-MATE MARINE TECHNICAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Congratulations to the 2026 UNOLS-MATE Marine Technical Interns who have completed short-term internships this year!

1. **Cate McLeod,** Hosted by the Geophysical Science Team, RV Thompson
2. **Avery Wilson,** Hosted by the Geophysical Science Team, RV Thompson
3. **Benjamin 'Beni' Adler**, Hosted by the Geophysical Science Team, RV Thompson
4. **Mary Somers 'Mimi' Johnston,** Hosted by the STEMSEAS Leadership Team, RV Atlantis
5. **Conrado Acevedo Batiz**, Hosted by the Marine Technical Team, RV Langseth
6. **Paige FitzPatrick**, Hosted by the Marine Technical Team, RV Sikuliaq
7. **Christina Rorres,** Hosted by the Marine Technical Team, RV Armstrong
8. **Aarav Shah**, Hosted by the WHOI NDSF Alvin Group, RV Atlantis

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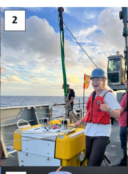
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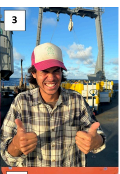
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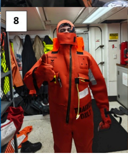
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Read about their weekly experiences: Marine Technical Internship Blog

Committee News

New Paper Outlines a Community Vision for Subsea Data

A new article in *Oceanography*, "Navigating the Data Deluge: A Collaborative Vision for a Unified Subsea Data Ecosystem," reports the outcomes of the Data at Sea workshop. Held in October 2025 in Victoria, Canada, and funded by Schmidt Ocean Institute, the workshop brought together seagoing scientists, submersible operators, shipboard technicians, and data stewards. The article lays out a community-driven vision for improving subsea data workflows, interoperability, and stewardship. Its recommendations include a shared, community-sourced knowledge hub, common tools and standardized products, data processing plans, embedded data specialists, and expanded training. The authors thank past and present DeSSC members for their contributions, both in the pre-workshop panel and throughout the workshop, in shaping the ideas presented.

We look forward to seeing these ideas move forward and contribute to the broader effort to make subsea data more accessible, usable, and impactful. For more information, see the full article by Ferrini, Haskins, and Bassin in *Oceanography*: Navigating the Data Deluge: A Collaborative Vision for a Unified Subsea Data Ecosystem.

UNOLS Marine Technician Training Cruise Aboard R/V Sikuliaq

The UNOLS Marine Technician Training Cruise aboard the *R/V Sikuliaq* brought together marine technicians and technical professionals for 12 days of immersive, hands-on learning and knowledge sharing from August 20-31, 2026 during a transit from Seattle, Washington to Nome, Alaska.

The cruise provided participants with hands-on training in shipboard science systems, instrumentation, maintenance, and troubleshooting, alongside opportunities to learn from experienced marine technicians and vessel crew. The program also highlighted the collaboration and shared expertise that support safe and effective oceanographic research.

Vladek Petrusevich, Ph.D., Marine Science Technician aboard the *R/V Atlantic Explorer* at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences (BIOS), shared his perspective on the training, including key lessons, practical sessions, and experiences from the transit north. You can find his article on the UNOLS website: *R/V Sikuliaq* Training Cruise.

Petrusevich's reflections highlight the value of bringing marine technicians together to exchange expertise, explore new systems, and build professional relationships across the UNOLS fleet. These opportunities strengthen the collective knowledge and practical skills that support safe and effective oceanographic research.

UNOLS thanks the *R/V Sikuliaq* crew, instructors, and participants for making this valuable training opportunity possible and for strengthening the marine technical community through knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Photo credit: Tara Clemente

Save the Date and RSVP – MSROC Annual Community Meeting

Please mark your calendars for the Marine Seismic Research Operations Committee (MSROC) Annual Community Meeting on **Sunday, December 6, 2026, from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM** in San Francisco, just before the AGU Annual Meeting.

We're putting together a program featuring science and technical talks, along with updates from facilities, agencies, and the broader community. We'd love to hear your ideas for agenda topics and presentations as we plan the meeting.

Please use the **MSROC Annual Community Meeting RSVP** form to register and share your ideas by **November 20th, 2026**.

Additional details will be posted on the MSROC Annual Community Meeting Website as they become available.
We look forward to connecting with everyone in person this December!

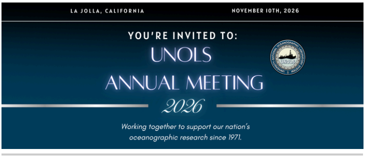
Save the Date and RSVP – DeSSC New User Program and Annual Community Meeting

Please mark your calendars for the 2026 Deep Submergence Science Committee's Annual Community Meeting on **Sunday, December 6, 2026, from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM** in San Francisco, just before the AGU Annual Meeting.

The agenda will feature science talks from researchers who used NDSF vehicles this year, the latest updates on Alvin, Jason, Juno and Sentry from the NDSF team along with the 2027 vehicle schedules, and a look ahead at the future of deep submergence science and how we can shape it together. More information, including the draft agenda and the virtual link can be found at the 2026 DeSSC Community Meeting website.

Please use the **2026 DeSSC Community Meeting RSVP** form to register and share your ideas by **November 20th, 2026**.

2026 Annual/Council Meetings

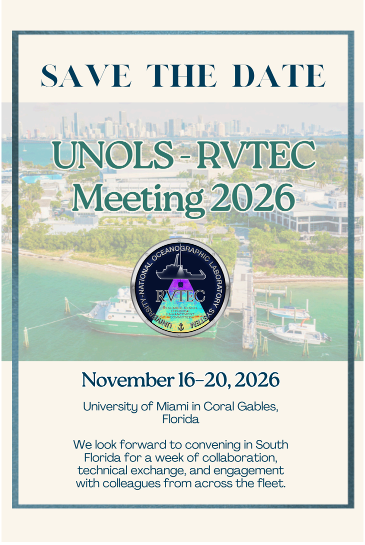


LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA
NOVEMBER 10TH, 2026

YOU'RE INVITED TO:
UNOLS
ANNUAL MEETING
2026

Working together to support our nation's oceanographic research since 1971.

2026 RVTEC Meeting



SAVE THE DATE

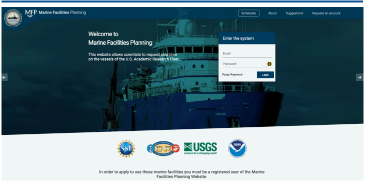
UNOLS - RVTEC
Meeting 2026

November 16–20, 2026

University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida

We look forward to convening in South Florida for a week of collaboration, technical exchange, and engagement with colleagues from across the fleet.

MFP Updates



Welcome to
Marine Facilities Planning

This website allows scientists to request ship time on the vessels of the U.S. Academic Research Fleet.

In order to apply to use these marine facilities you must be a registered user of the Marine Facilities Planning Website.

U.S. ARF Equipment Inventory

We are pleased to announce that the U.S. ARF Equipment Inventory is now publicly available through MFP. Scientists can use the inventory to identify equipment available across the fleet, support cruise planning, and explore opportunities for resource sharing and collaboration.
The inventory provides:

- Visibility into equipment available at UNOLS institutions
- Improved planning for upcoming cruises and projects
- Greater opportunities for equipment sharing across the fleet

We encourage you to explore the inventory and incorporate it into your cruise planning and proposal development efforts.

We Want Your Feedback!

Scientists and cruise planners, we value your feedback and are committed to continuously improving MFP. We welcome suggestions for system enhancements, new features, and opportunities to improve the user experience. Additionally, if you believe you are receiving an excessive number of notifications, we would appreciate hearing your perspective. Please send your feedback to stefani@unols.org or alice@unols.org.

Your input plays an important role in helping us enhance MFP and better serve the research community.

Fleet Highlights

Research Vessel Harassment Reporting Guidance Brochure now available

In response to requests from the UNOLS community, UNOLS spearheaded the effort to develop Harassment Reporting Guidance to assist those who sail on U.S. Academic Research Fleet ships in effectively reporting cases of harassment that may occur onboard ARF vessels. Considerable input was provided by the community, including the Council, ship operators, tech managers, the MERAS committee, and more that was critically important in helping to develop helpful guidance. The *Research Vessel Harassment Reporting Best Practices Brochure* is now complete. It has been reviewed and approved by the UNOLS Council. It is available to all here: *Research Vessel Harassment Reporting Best Practices Brochure*

UNOLS BEST PRACTICES GUIDANCE

Research Vessel Harassment Reporting

Best Practices

Reporting guidance for safe, respectful, and professional working environments aboard multi-institution research vessels

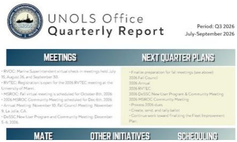
September 2026

UNOLS
UNIVERSITY-NATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHIC LABORATORY SYSTEM

Cover: R/V Neil Armstrong and R/V Atlantis
Photo credit: Capt. Ken Sheasley

Quarterly Report

The UNOLS 2026 Q3 Report can be found **here**.



UNOLS Office
Quarterly Report

Period: Q3 2026
July-September 2026

MEETINGS

- RVOC: Marine Superintendent virtual check in meetings held July 15, August 26, and September 30.
- RVTEC: Registration is open for the 2026 RVTEC meeting at the University of Miami.
- MSROC: Fall virtual meeting is scheduled for October 8th, 2026
- 2026 MSROC Community Meeting scheduled for Dec 6th, 2026
- Annual Meeting: November 10; Fall Council Meeting: November 9, La Jolla, CA.
- DeSSC New User Program and Community Meeting: December 5-6, 2026.

NEXT QUARTER PLANS

- Finalize preparation for fall meetings (see above)
  2026 Fall Council
  2026 Annual
  2026 RVTEC
  2026 DeSSC New User Program & Community Meeting
  2026 MSROC Community Meeting
- Process 2026 dues
- Create, send, and tally ballot
- Continue work toward finalizing the Fleet Improvement Plan.

MATE

OTHER INITIATIVES

SCHEDULING

PDF versions of the Newsletter can be found here. To unsubscribe from UNOLS News, please reply to this email with the word "unsubscribe" in the body. Thank you!