

NOMECE 2022 PROGRESS

In 2022, the NOMECE Council focused on engaging multi-sectoral stakeholders, releasing key reports to guide mapping, exploration, and characterization (MEC) efforts, and conducting several MEC expeditions. These efforts reflect ongoing progress in carrying out the NOMECE Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Outreach and Engagement

1. Presented at American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fall Meeting (December 2021)

NOMECE's Executive Director presented on the NOMECE Strategy to map, explore, and characterize all waters within the U.S. EEZ to engage the scientific community and cross-sectoral stakeholders.

2. Engaged stakeholders on advancing ocean MEC (December 2021)

The NOMECE team participated in a workshop led by the Consortium for Ocean Leadership (COL, now the Center for Ocean Leadership at the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research), on NOMECE and community engagement pathways to advance mapping, exploration, and characterization.

3. Presented at Ocean Sciences Meeting (February-March 2022)

The [Interagency Working Group on Ocean Exploration and Characterization](#) (IWG-OEC) chaired a session on National Priorities for Ocean Exploration and Characterization within the U.S. EEZ. The NOMECE team presented outcomes from the December 2021 COL workshop at the town hall for Advancing Collaboration, Partnerships, and a Community of Practice in Ocean Exploration.

4. Participated in the National Ocean Exploration Forum to envision a blueprint for the next decade of ocean exploration (March 2022)

The NOMECE team attended the Forum, co-organized by NOAA Ocean Exploration and the Consortium for Ocean Leadership (now the Center for Ocean Leadership). The [Forum](#) brought together multi-sectoral stakeholders to envision actionable milestones and ocean exploration priorities over the next decade.

5. Presented at the Pacific Climate Forum on the nexus of ocean exploration and climate solutions (June 2022)

NOMECE's Executive Director gave a talk on Ocean Exploration to Inform Climate Solutions and Biodiversity Conservation at this forum convening policymakers, scientists, academia, and leaders of business and civil society. The recording is available [here](#).

6. Co-hosted a special session at OCEANS 2022 Conference at Hampton Roads (October 2022)

NOAA Ocean Exploration hosted a special session on cross-sectoral partnerships to advance ocean exploration. The session: From Innovation to Collaboration: Propelling Ocean Exploration Forward to Meet the Needs of the Future engaged a panel of industry and academia representatives in a discussion on innovation and advancing ocean exploration through collaboration and partnerships.

7. Supported Regional Ocean Mapping Summits Throughout 2022

[Interagency Working Group on Ocean and Coastal Mapping](#) team members supported a number of regional mapping campaign summits and meetings in order to facilitate mapping coordination and collaboration. Summits included the Alaska Coastal and Ocean Mapping Summit, the Florida Coastal Mapping Annual Summit, and Lakebed 2030. NOMECE was featured in keynotes and discussed during a panel at Lakebed 2030 aimed at bringing together science and research, policy, government, and industry professionals with a focus on technology and data sharing for high-resolution mapping to advance our understanding of the Great Lakes.

8. BlueTech Week (November 2022)

NOMECE's Executive Director gave a talk as a Featured Speaker on the intersection of ocean exploration and U.S. federal ocean policy at the 14th Annual BlueTech Week in San Diego, CA, highlighting the NOMECE Strategy as a key U.S. policy mechanism to partner on ocean mapping, exploration, and characterization and sharing priorities from the newly released OEC [Priorities](#) report.

Reports

1. Released the Strategic Priorities for Ocean Exploration and Characterization of the United States Exclusive Economic Zone report (October 2022)

This [report](#) identifies high-priority focal areas and geographies that will advance forecasting of seafloor hazards, improve understanding of ocean cultural heritage, and uncover new knowledge about previously underexplored habitats and ecosystems. This represents a major deliverable of the [NOMECE Implementation Plan](#).

2. Working on a report for Standard Ocean Mapping Protocols (SOMP) (Ongoing)

The Interagency Working Group on Ocean and Coastal Mapping plans to release the Standard Ocean Mapping Protocols report for NOMECE Council review, followed by public comment, beginning in February 2023.

Expeditions

1. Completion of the NOMECE Blake Plateau Pilot Project (July - August 2022)

The interagency mapping, exploration, and characterization expedition in the Blake Plateau region of the U.S. EEZ concluded. Co-led by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and NOAA Ocean Exploration, the [expedition](#) aimed to better understand the long-term environmental impacts of deep-sea resource extraction through the use of Ocean Infinity's HUGIN 6000 autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) equipped with multibeam and side-scan sonar systems and other instruments. This expedition also contributed to [Seabed 2030](#).

2. Conducting the Aleutians Uncrewed Ocean Exploration expedition (Ongoing)

The [expedition](#) is a public-private partnership facilitated by the NOAA Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute to collect ocean mapping and environmental data in unexplored waters around the Aleutian Islands. This region has been identified as a high priority for U.S. mapping, exploration, and characterization interests. The uncrewed surface vessel has been performing well in the face of challenging weather and tidal currents (including some conditions that may have precluded data gathering on a traditional research vessel). This expedition is an important contributor to the umbrella [Seascape Alaska](#) regional mapping campaign.

3. Mapping of the Great Lakes across several missions (2022)

NOAA's Office of Coast Survey and National Ocean Service conducted several [hydrographic missions](#) in the Great Lakes to increase the percentage of the region mapped to modern standards which currently ranges from 5 to 15%. [NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson](#) surveyed 450 square nautical miles of lake bottom in Lake Erie and 274 square nautical miles in Lake Ontario identifying 42 confirmed and new shipwrecks along with 22 additional features.

4. EXPRESS Regional Mapping of the West Coast (2022)

BOEM, NOAA and USGS continued their regional mapping campaign in West Coast waters under the EXPRESS program (Expanding Pacific Research and Exploration of Submerged Systems). Along with other science partners like MBARI and WHOI, the EXPRESS team ran several expeditions in 2022, including conducting explorations and hydrographic surveys off the coasts of California and Oregon, around the Channel Islands, and in areas under consideration for offshore wind energy for essential fish habitat. EXPRESS data and information are intended to guide wise use of living marine resources and habitats, inform ocean renewable energy and mineral resource decisions, and improve offshore hazard assessments.

For More Information

[NOMECE Website](#) | [NOMECE Strategy](#) | [NOMECE Implementation Plan](#)