

Dear Colleague:

Join us and contribute your ideas at the “Refreshing Our Ocean Research Priorities” Town Hall at the upcoming Ocean Sciences Meeting in Portland, 11:45am-12:45pm Monday 22 February.

The National Science and Technology Council’s Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST) is seeking input and comment from all interested individuals, institutions, groups, and communities on updating and focusing the national ocean research priorities highlighted in *Charting the Course for Ocean Science in the United States for the Next Decade: An Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy* (*Charting the Course*, available at <http://www.ostp.gov/galleries/NSTC/orppfinal.pdf>). This is particularly important as our nation embarks on the development of a comprehensive national ocean strategy.

This national plan, released in January of 2007, is intended to present ocean research priorities that focus on the most compelling issues in key areas of interaction between society and the ocean. The goal of *Charting the Course* is to formulate priorities for ocean science and technology initiatives across the wide scope of societal interests and to define the fundamental principles for guiding actions and programs in support of the research priorities. This document also provides guidance on how the various ocean science sectors (government, academia, industry, and non-governmental entities) can and should be engaged, individually or through partnerships, to address the areas of greatest research priority and opportunity.

Charting the Course was developed through a collaborative effort involving academia, industry, non-governmental organizations, state and local governments, and anyone with an interest in ocean issues. The JSOST also developed a series of public and conference information sessions to provide updates on the development of the national ocean research priorities.

Charting the Course concisely gathers together and lays out in a single document the issues and priorities agreed to across our varied community. By focusing efforts, it has supported the creation of programs and projects where there were none, and, critically, it has guided priorities in federal agency budget submissions beginning in Fiscal Year 2008. The JSOST recognizes the need to harness momentum and magnify this progress.

In the three years since *Charting the Course* was released, much has changed in our understanding of the ocean, its processes and its role in the Earth system as a whole. Much has also changed in our ability to access, explore, observe, and model the ocean and its communities. In light of these changes, and based on encouragement and input from the federal ocean community’s external advisory body – the Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel (ORRAP) – and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the JSOST is building a way forward to refresh *Charting the Course* and revisit the priorities it sets forth.

During the summer of 2009, public comments were solicited through a Dear Colleague Letter and a Federal Register Notice. A series of Town Hall events at national meetings is being conducted to give members of the ocean S&T community additional opportunities to provide input into the refresh process and discuss progress to date with the chairs of JSOST.

A Town Hall is scheduled for Monday, February 22, 2010, from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at the Ocean Sciences Meeting in Portland, Oregon. Interested persons are encouraged to review the existing Ocean Research Priorities Plan prior to this meeting.

Queries may be addressed to the JSOST Executive Secretaries at lhutto@nsf.gov or ehankin@nsf.gov.

Thank you in advance for your contribution to enhancing our national ocean research priorities. Continued progress depends on a community effort.

Signed,

Tim Killeen
Jerry Miller
Rick Spinrad

JSOST Co-Chairs