

NOAA picks URI to host its new ocean exploration institute

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The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced Monday that it has picked the University of Rhode Island as the home of a new institute for ocean exploration.

NOAA said URI will host its Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute and Titanic discoverer Robert Ballard will lead it.

The institute will work with NOAA to explore unknown undersea areas, deploy remotely operated vehicles in deeper and shallower waters, adopt and integrate various autonomous vehicles for [exploration](#) and improve the utility of the data. The University of New Hampshire, University of Southern Mississippi, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and nonprofit Ocean Exploration Trust will participate.

Ballard directs URI's Center for Ocean Exploration at the Graduate School of Oceanography. He's also president of Ocean Exploration Trust.

"There is another half of America, beneath the ocean's surface, that we know very little about," Ballard said in a statement, describing their work as the "next Lewis and Clark expedition, only six times over."

NOAA is awarding \$94 million for a five-year effort, which could be renewed for five years.

URI President David Dooley said they look forward to working with

their partners to explore our nation's vast [ocean](#) resources, to increase understanding and ensure their responsible and sustainable use. The university is based in South Kingstown, Rhode Island.

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