

## Next in XPRIZE

### UNH-led team qualifies for final round of Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE

Thursday, March 8, 2018



THE GEBCO-NF ALUMNI TEAM, HYDROGRAPHERS AND OCEAN MAPPERS TRAINED AND LED BY UNH'S CENTER FOR COASTAL AND OCEAN MAPPING, CONDUCTED SEA TRIALS AT KONGSBERG MARITIME IN HORTEN, NORWAY, IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE SHELL OCEAN DISCOVERY XPRIZE.

An international team of hydrographers and ocean mappers trained and led by UNH's [Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping \(CCOM\)](#) has progressed to the final round of the Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE, a global competition challenging teams to advance deep-sea technologies for ocean floor exploration.

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The [GEBCO-Nippon Foundation Alumni Team](#) — alumni and industry partners and advisors led by CCOM’s Rochelle Wigley, director of UNH’s [Nippon Foundation/GEBCO](#) (General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans) Ocean Bathymetry training program — is one of just nine of the initial 19 teams to advance to the final round.

“This is an acknowledgement of the investment that The Nippon Foundation has made in building capacity in global ocean mapping, and it reflects the education the team received from the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping at UNH,”

says Wigley, herself an alumna of the GEBCO program. “The [Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE](#) has provided a platform for our alumni to showcase their skillset to the world.”



The [GEBCO-NF Alumni Team’s](#) successful [concept](#) features a new unmanned surface vehicle (USV) called SEA-KIT, designed by the team, to pair with existing autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) technology to autonomously map the seafloor for longer time periods and over wider ranges and environments. The team’s system brings significant potential benefits over traditional mapping missions using multibeam echosounder technology, which typically require large research ships with full scientific crews on board, resulting in costs of tens of thousands of US dollars per day. The USV/AUV model has demonstrated that high-quality bathymetric data can be obtained inexpensively with little to no human involvement at sea.

“This reflects the education the team received from the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping at UNH.”

“We have always maintained that the development of new technology will be a game-changer for achieving the goals of The Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 project. This is our ultimate objective beyond the Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE,” Wigley says. “The concept we have developed allows high-resolution

bathymetry and imagery data to be collected remotely and at significantly reduced costs, thereby advancing the cause of science.”

[Watch a video](#) introducing the team and explaining their concept.

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