Ocean Visions Awards New Funding for Research on Novel Approaches to Protect and Restore Arctic Sea Ice

Six projects will investigate innovative approaches that could help slow Arctic sea ice loss and reduce escalating climate risk

Ocean Visions logo

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, February 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ocean Visions has selected six research projects through a highly competitive process to receive funding through its Arctic Sea Ice Restoration Research Fund. The Fund was created to identify, prioritize, and support research on cutting-edge ideas to slow the loss of Arctic sea ice.

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> *Dr. Ginny Selz, Senior Program Director at Ocean Visions*

Arctic summer sea ice is critical to global climate regulation and regional climate stability, but it is projected to disappear by 2050. Current declines in summer sea ice have accelerated regional warming in the Arctic, which is increasing melt of the Greenland Ice Sheet and thaw of Arctic permafrost. Changes in these two globally important systems in turn contribute to increased sea level rise and release of additional greenhouse gases, with corresponding disruption of Arctic ecosystems, ocean circulation, global weather patterns, and societal systems. Determining whether there are any actions that might feasibly help maintain and restore Arctic summer sea ice could significantly reduce the risk of irreversible and non-linear change.

While the only durable way to halt and ultimately reverse global warming is through emissions reductions and carbon removal, most projections show these actions are unlikely to have an effect in time to prevent the complete disappearance of summer sea ice in the Arctic. Given the large risks associated with a seasonally ice-free Arctic Ocean, Ocean Visions is catalyzing research efforts to examine the potential of proposed approaches to help slow and reverse summer sea

ice decline.

“Arctic summer sea ice is a critical foundation of the global ocean and climate system, and its rapid loss is creating a series of severe risks to nature and people across the planet,” said Brad Ack, CEO at Ocean Visions. “These research projects, and others to come, are intended to help answer the glaring question: Is there anything else we can do to forestall these potentially irreversible outcomes?”

The funded projects build from Ocean Visions’ Arctic Sea Ice Road Maps, which assess 21 potential approaches to slow the loss of Arctic sea ice. For each approach, the road maps look at social and environmental risks and co-benefits, governance considerations, and critical knowledge gaps.

“We are pleased to see these projects advance,” said Dr. Mark Symes, Programme Director at the UK's Advanced Research and Invention Agency, which has also funded research on sea ice restoration. “There is a pressing need for responsible research to inform society about what is feasible, safe, and ecologically sound, allowing communities to identify approaches that might work, as well as ones that should be paused or abandoned.”

Four of the funded teams will use different methods to explore whether and how clouds and their heat-trapping or heat-reflecting properties influence sea ice. The goal is to improve understanding of the potential for "mixed phase cloud thinning" (which would enhance the release of trapped heat) or "marine cloud brightening" (which would increase the reflection of solar energy back to space). Two additional teams will evaluate proposed approaches for keeping sea ice in the Arctic that include reducing or blocking sea ice export through the Nares or Fram Straits. Projects will use historical or model data and do not include any fieldwork or collection of new observations.

Ocean Visions selected these research areas as priorities and solicited proposals through an open call: Advancing Understanding of Approaches to Protect and Restore Arctic Sea Ice. Proposals were selected through a competitive process, including review by an independent international expert panel, with final award decisions made by Ocean Visions.

The research to be conducted will provide the foundation for future work, if warranted, to further advance knowledge and address ecological, social, and ethical dimensions, as well as develop guidance on safeguards or stage gates for future research.

"The research supported through the Arctic Sea Ice Restoration Research Fund prioritizes scientific merit, interdisciplinary approaches, and careful risk assessment through a rigorous review," said Dr. Ginny Selz, Senior Program Director at Ocean Visions. "We are excited to watch this research progress and see how it expands our understanding of potential approaches to protect and restore Arctic sea ice."

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About Ocean Visions
Ocean Visions is a nonprofit ocean conservation organization pursuing bold solutions to counter and reverse climate impacts on ocean health. Working with a global network of partners, we explore, evaluate, and advance innovations to address climate-driven harm to the ocean. Learn more at www.oceanvisions.org

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