

Craig N. McLean



Craig McLean is the deputy for NOAA's Oceanic and Atmospheric Research programs and administration. He is responsible for daily operations and administration of NOAA's research enterprise, and the execution of NOAA programs including the Climate program, the National Sea Grant Program, Ocean Exploration and Research, and Weather and Air Quality research.

He has previously served in NOAA as Executive Officer of the National Ocean Service, and was the founding Director of NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration. McLean served in uniform for nearly 25 years, retiring from NOAA's Commissioned Corps in the grade of Captain after service at sea, underwater, and in operational, legal, and marine resource management positions. McLean served aboard hydrographic, oceanographic, and fisheries research ships and was the first commanding officer of NOAA's largest fisheries research vessel, the 224-foot *Gordon Gunter*. He led NOAA's innovation and planning for the Smithsonian Institution's Ocean Hall, and achieved a National Ocean Action Plan goal of securing a permanent, dedicated ship for the national ocean exploration program, the *NOAA Ship Okeanos Explorer*.

A life long diver, he began exploring deep shipwrecks through decompression diving while in junior high school. These experiences have taken him to the Amazon River searching for freshwater dolphins, and to the *USS MONITOR* and *RMS TITANIC* searching for solutions in historic shipwreck management.

Craig McLean is also an attorney and has practiced marine resource law for NOAA. He has been awarded the Departmental Silver and Bronze Medals, the NOAA Corps Commendation Medal, and Special Achievement Medal. He is a frequent speaker on ocean related subjects, rooted in his diverse NOAA career experience in fisheries, coastal and marine area management, directing research, law, and both surface and submerged marine operations. He is a Fellow of the Explorers Club, and of the Marine Technology Society, and a Past-President and Chairman of the Sea-Space Symposium.