MEDIA ADVISORY: Google Hangout On Air

March 18, 2015, 2:00 PM EDT

Google Event Page: http://bit.ly/1F3F8Nv
YouTube Page: http://bit.ly/1Fvx3kH

Hear from leading Southern Ocean scientists as they discuss their experiences with an innovative new technology that's making it possible to better understand how the vast, remote Southern Ocean is shaping climate, and how global warming is affecting this critically important ocean.

WHO

Hans Jannasch (Senior Research Specialist, MBARI)
Rick Rupan (Research Engineer, School of Oceanography, University of Washington)
Alison Gray (NOAA Climate & Global Change Postdoctoral Fellow, Princeton University)
Hannah Zanowski (Ph.D. Candidate, AOS, Princeton University)
Heidi Cullen (Chief Scientist, Climate Central)

WHAT

The research vessel Investigator sets sail from Hobart, Australia this weekend carrying with it special cargo. On board will be robotic floats, deployed over the course of 10 days into the Southern Ocean. These autonomous floats are outfitted with sensors designed to collect data that will help create a biogeochemical and physical portrait of the ocean. That portrait is critical for a better understanding of the role the Southern Ocean plays in the global climate picture. The Southern Ocean, a vast body of water that encircles Antarctica, lends a considerable hand in keeping Earth's temperature livable, accounting for half of the ocean's uptake of manmade carbon from the atmosphere and the majority of the planet's excess heat. Yet, the inner workings — and global importance — of this ocean that accounts for 30 percent of the world's ocean area remains relatively unknown to scientists, as observations remain hindered by dangerous seas.

The specially equipped floats are part of a $21 million NSF-funded initiative called the Southern Ocean Carbon and Climate Observations and Modeling (SOCCOM). Headquartered at Princeton University and involving 11 institutions, SOCCOM seeks to use these floats to make the Southern Ocean better known scientifically and publicly.