

From the field...

Drilling Into the Depths of Discovery: *In Search of Earth's Secrets* Traveling Exhibit

written by Catherine Diaz (Oregon Museum of Science and Industry)

I've been fortunate to be involved with the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry's (OMSI) traveling exhibits program for the last eight years. OMSI has toured dozens of traveling exhibits since the program's inception in the early 80's but never one like *In Search of Earth's Secrets*. I'm excited to share the opportunity to bring the magic of deep-sea research and the mysteries of our planet to cultural centers around the country.

The *In Search of Earth's Secrets* traveling exhibit, developed by a team that included IODP staff and researchers at Columbia University, Rutgers University, University of Hawaii, Texas A&M University, Consortium for Ocean Leadership, and a group of independent freelancers; and supported by an independent grant from the National Science Foundation, is a testament to the pioneering spirit of scientific exploration. After its grant period concluded, this engaging exhibit was recently transferred to OMSI for management into the future. It provides audiences of all ages with a unique hands-on experience, allowing them to dive into intriguing science topics researched by the celebrated drilling ship, *JOIDES Resolution* (JR).

OMSI has a history spanning almost 40 years of producing and touring exhibits that travel across North America. Our organization's commitment to informal science education and the dissemination of scientific research distilled for easy access by the public has long been at the forefront of our mission. The exhibits developed and toured by OMSI are not just informative; they're experiential learning opportunities, connecting people from all walks of life to the wonders of science.

The research from IODP that forms the basis of *In Search of Earth's Secrets* represents the pinnacle of scientific ocean drilling. The ship, with its state-of-the-art research facilities, has been a beacon of discovery, shedding light on some of the most intricate and crucial aspects of our planet's history and geology.



In Search of Earth's Secrets is a versatile traveling exhibit that engages audiences of all ages in the wonders of scientific ocean drilling (Credits: Sharon Cooper).



A traveling exhibit like *In Search of Earth's Secrets* is more than just a temporary show; it's a mission. With a projection of reaching more than 300,000 cultural and community center visitors over the next five years, this exhibit aims to disseminate groundbreaking scientific research to communities all across North America. It offers a gateway to understanding our planet better, inspiring the next generation, and fostering a deeper appreciation for the tireless endeavors of scientists.



The exhibit offers a hands-on experience, revealing ancient events and deep-sea wonders. It ignites curiosity, enhances understanding of global events like tsunamis, and showcases the planet's interconnected systems. Aimed at inspiring the next generation, it highlights the realms of geology, oceanography, and biology, while celebrating human ingenuity and perseverance in scientific exploration. Beyond immediate knowledge, it invites visitors to reflect on the broader implications of human actions on Earth's future.



In addition to the pop-up exhibit itself and included in the rental fee, JR researchers and scientists offer programming support to organizations that host the exhibit. Bringing the experts behind the *In Search of Earth's Secrets* exhibit to your institution adds a layer of enrichment to the visitor experience. These dedicated researchers can provide in-depth insights, engaging discussions, and perhaps even hands-on demonstrations related to the deep-sea research and geological discoveries featured in the exhibit. By fostering direct interactions between scientists and the public, we aim to bridge the gap between academia and the broader community, encouraging a deeper appreciation for scientific exploration and nurturing curiosity about the mysteries of our planet. This collaboration offers a unique opportunity for cultural institutions to offer their audiences a truly immersive and educational experience that goes beyond the exhibit itself.



Since the exhibit has been on display at OMSI I've witnessed first-hand the awe, fascination, and wonder it sparks in visitors. This exhibit doesn't just display information; it ignites imaginations, and it beckons all to embark on an unforgettable journey into the heart of Earth's most profound mysteries.

Don't miss this chance. Let's come together, share the wonders of our planet, and delve deep in search of Earth's secrets. To learn more about how you can bring *In Search of Earth's Secrets* to your institution, visit the [OMSI website](#).

Visitors can explore hands-on kiosks and talk to IODP researchers to learn how scientific ocean drilling has contributed to a deeper understanding of geology, climate change, Earth's history, and the origins of life (Credits: Sharon Cooper).