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EARTH: U.S. Navy Navigates a Sea Change in the Arctic

Alexandria, VA – The idea that the Arctic is changing is not breaking news. Sea-ice extent has been declining by 12 percent per decade since 1979, and the ice is thinning too. Because of this, new shipping routes are becoming accessible during the summer months, and the Arctic is beginning to attract parties interested in resource exploration, scientific research and tourism. Therefore, a more accessible Arctic not only means environmental changes, but also changes in our economy and our national security.

It is part of the U.S. Navy's mission to provide stability wherever and whenever human activity is occurring in the maritime environment. Toward that mission, the Navy has created a task force, developed a roadmap, and employed a corps of geoscientists to synthesize scientific information about the changing Arctic. About halfway through the roadmap's five-year timeline, planning continues and scientific challenges remain. Find out more and read the rest of this story online now at <http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/us-navy-navigates-sea-change-arctic>.

Read this story and more in the May issue of EARTH Magazine, available online through Zinio on April 19, 2012, at <http://www.earthmagazine.org>. Discover Kilauea's explosive past; learn how the Medici Network measured temperatures during the Little Ice Age; and, find out how silicate minerals power diamond-bearing eruptions.

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The American Geosciences Institute is a nonprofit federation of 49 geoscientific and professional associations that represents more than 250,000 geologists, geophysicists and other earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in the profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of resources, resiliency to natural hazards, and interaction with the environment.