

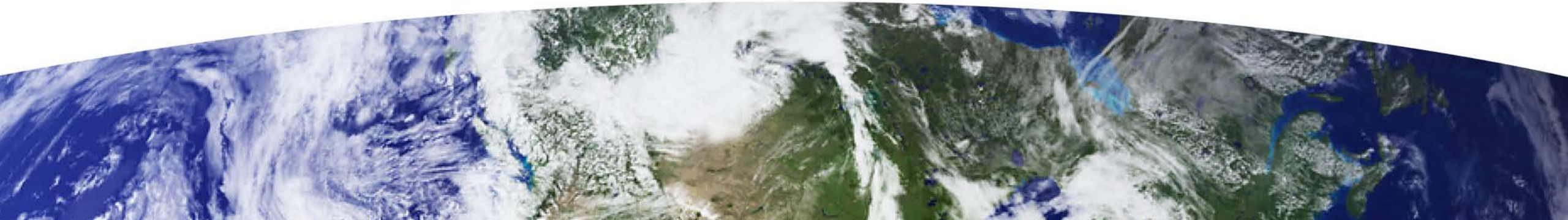
# Pitching Fall Meeting Press Events to AGU



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AGU Public Information Office

August 22, 2018



# Who we are



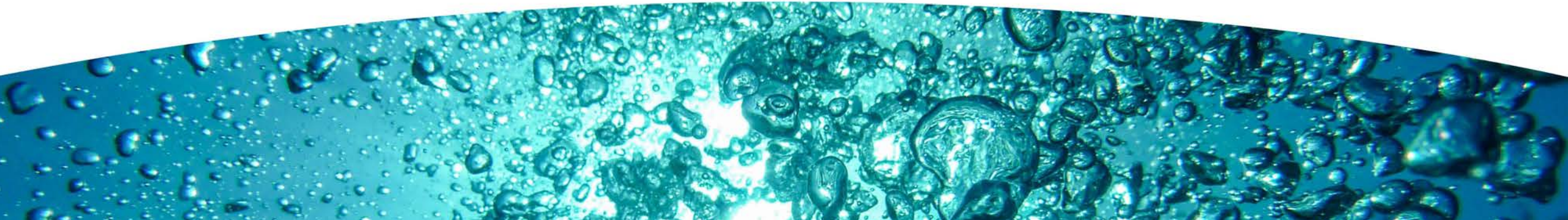
Nanci Bompey



Lauren Lipuma



Liza Lester





# Outline

- About the Fall Meeting and the press operation
- Types of press events at Fall Meeting
- What we're looking for in a pitch
- How to search for presentations
- Tips for success
- Examples
- What's next?
- Q&A



# About Fall Meeting

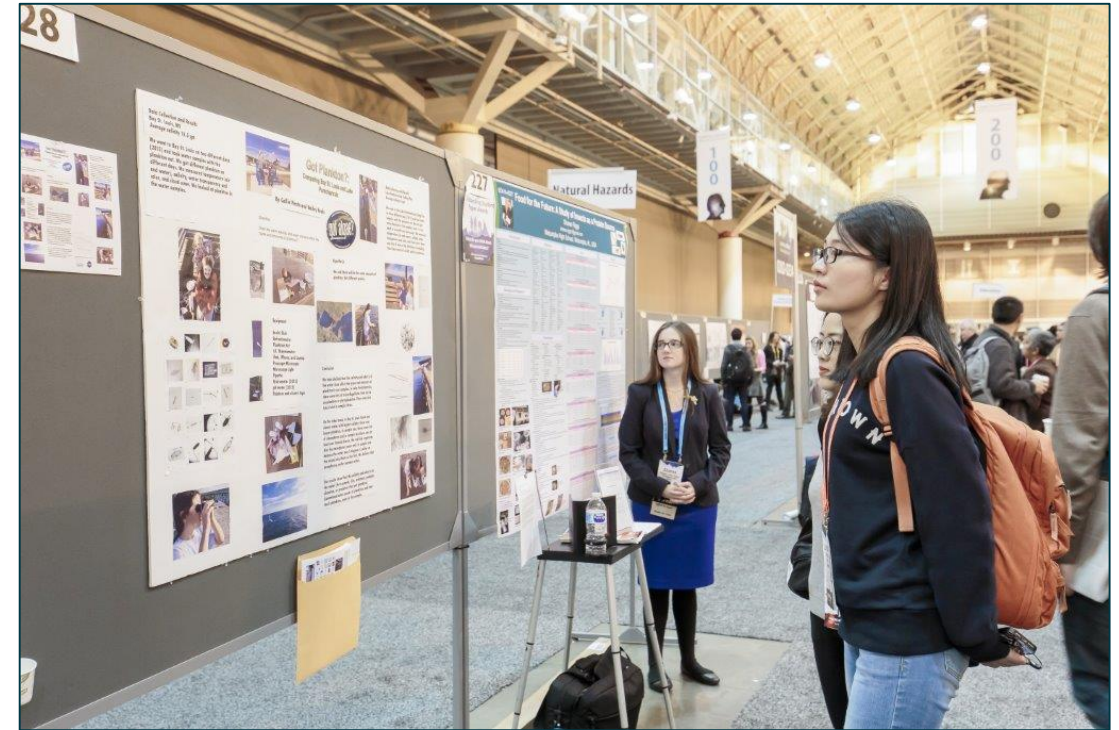


- Largest gathering of Earth and space scientists
- 20,000+ attendees
- 1,800+ sessions
- 26,000+ abstracts
- 5 full days (Monday – Friday)
- This year: December 10-14 in Washington, DC



# The scientific program

- 26 scientific disciplines  
Atmospheric science, ocean science, natural hazards, planetary science, etc.
- Keynote lectures
- Union and town hall sessions
- Education and public affairs sessions
- Two-thirds of presentations are poster, one-third are oral presentations



# Press at Fall Meeting



- 250+ members of the media
- Reporters, bloggers, public information officers, authors, filmmakers, photo and video journalists, journalism students and educators
- Our Public Information office plans a series of press conferences to highlight new research presented and help reporters cover the meeting



# Press events at Fall Meeting

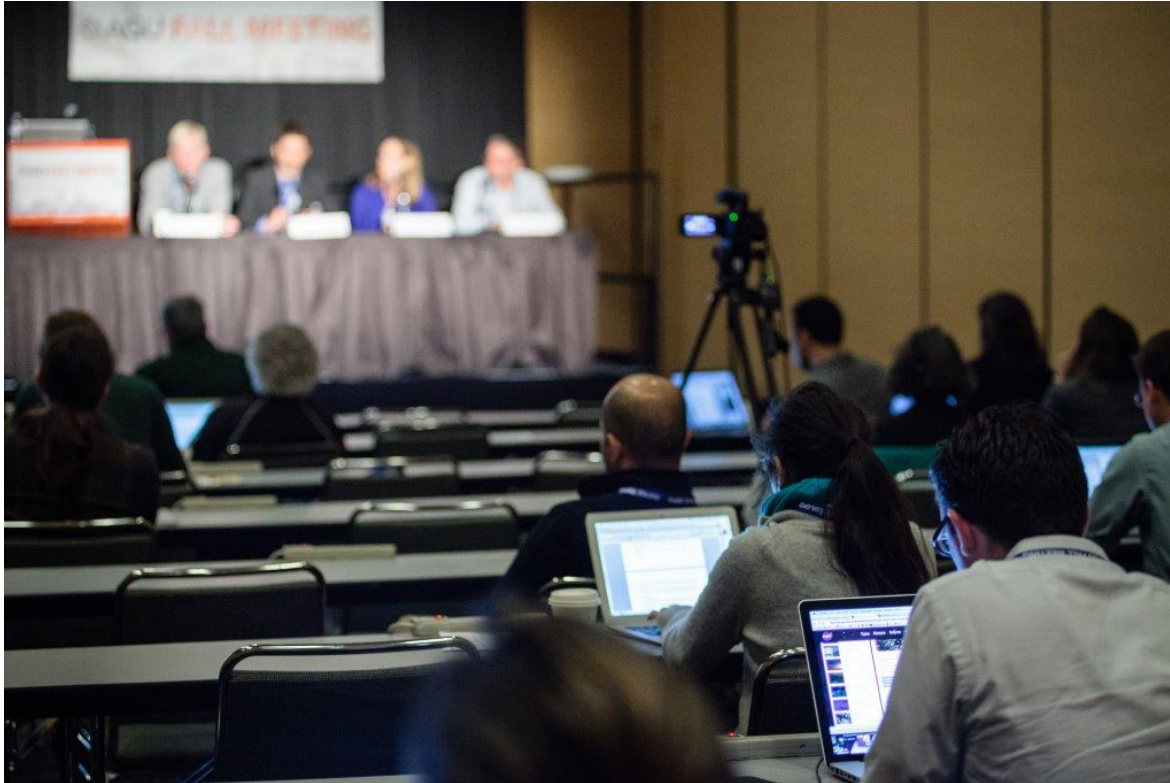
- **Press conferences**
  - Break research news
- **Workshops**
  - Provide background
- **Media availabilities**
  - Prominent scientists do Q&A







# Our focus: Disseminate research news



- Majority of events are press conferences that:
  - Break the biggest research news of the meeting
  - Appeal to the widest possible audience
- We plan press conferences but also accept pitches from PIOs



# What we're looking for in a pitch



Research that stands out among the 26,000+ presentations

- New
- Timely
- Significant
- Odd or unusual
- Has human interest
- Superlatives  
(first, best, longest, oldest)
- Covers a range of topics



## **NEWSWORTHY** RESULTS

- Are new or previously unknown
- Advance a field significantly
- Impact our daily lives
- Relate to current events
- Are unexpected or eye-catching
- Go against the current consensus
- Include striking videos or photographs



## **NON-NEWSWORTHY** RESULTS

- Are an incremental advance
- Improve a model or technique
- Confirm what is already known
- Have already been reported
- Summarize the latest in a field (review paper)



# Info we need

- Description of the event (2-3 paragraphs)
- Main, new research findings (Be specific!)
  - Interview the scientists (but don't promise anything)
- Why are these findings newsworthy? Why should we care?
- What is new compared to what is already known?
- Have these findings been previously:
  - Presented at a scientific conference?
  - Published in or submitted to a journal?
  - Publicized by your institution?
  - Reported on by the mainstream media?



# How to search for presentations from researchers at your institution

## **Preliminary program:**

<https://fallmeeting.agu.org/2018/pio-abstract-search/>

## **List of scientific disciplines:**

<https://agu.confex.com/agu/fm18/preliminaryview.cgi/programs.html>

## **Remember:**

- This program is preliminary!
- Please don't share it
- Use keywords



# Tips for success: Press conference pitches



- Focus on the science
  - **Must have new results!**
- Think about what the story would be
- Work with other institutions if needed
- Be cognizant of diversity
- Think about panelists who are good communicators
- A panel can cover studies connected by a theme
- Think outside of climate and planetary science
- Associated journal papers can help

# Tips for success: Workshop and media availability pitches

- Our main focus is disseminating research news
- We only accept 1-2 workshop and media availability pitches per year
- Not the same as having a scientist available as an expert
- Think about how it would be useful to reporters





# Tips for success: Crafting your pitch



- Write it as if you're writing a news story
- Be specific! Have concrete results, numbers
- Interview scientists beforehand (but don't promise anything)
- If working with another institution, have a point person
- We cannot accept any pitches for research that has already been:
  - Publicized by your institution
  - Widely covered by the mainstream media

# Pitch example

## **Title:**

Temperatures rise at the top of the world

## **Description:**

The mountaintop glaciers of Tibet are beyond the reach of most humans, but they are not beyond the reach of climate change.

In this panel, researchers present the latest ice cores taken from the Guliya Ice Cap in western Tibet's Kunlun Mountains, which show that there has been a persistent increase in temperature and precipitation there over the last few centuries.



# Pitch example

## **Main, new findings:**

- Isotope analysis of ice cores taken from Guliya Ice Cap in 2015 document substantial warming since 1992
- Temperatures rising faster at the high altitudes than at sea level
- Links between tropical ice and faraway oceanic/atmospheric processes and storms (for the first time)

## **Why are these findings newsworthy?**

- Provide dramatic evidence of rapid temperature rise at some of the highest, coldest peaks in the world
- Records document large scale ice loss. These are regions of the planet where hundreds of millions of people depend on ice for their water supply

# Press conference example

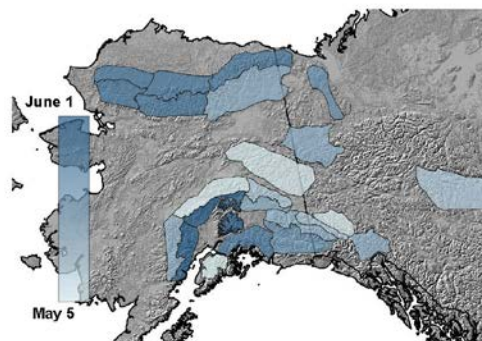
## 2017: Climate change has unexpected consequences for animal populations

### Beaver colonization of Arctic Alaska



- Beavers have historically been absent from the arctic tundra.
- Using satellite imagery, we detected scores of new beaver dams and ponds since 1999 in a large tundra region of NW Alaska, where few ponds existed in 1999; similar observations exist for other Alaskan tundra regions.

### Changing snow conditions are affecting Dall sheep



Average last day of spring snow cover, 2000-2015



lm and carrion

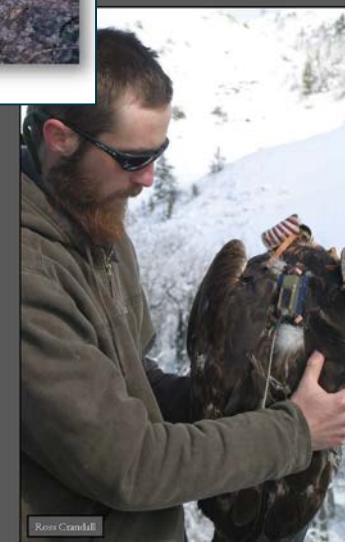
- Possibly sustaining the species
- Lost food source
- Currently running models which incorporate these for a more comprehensive view



### Golden eagle tracking data

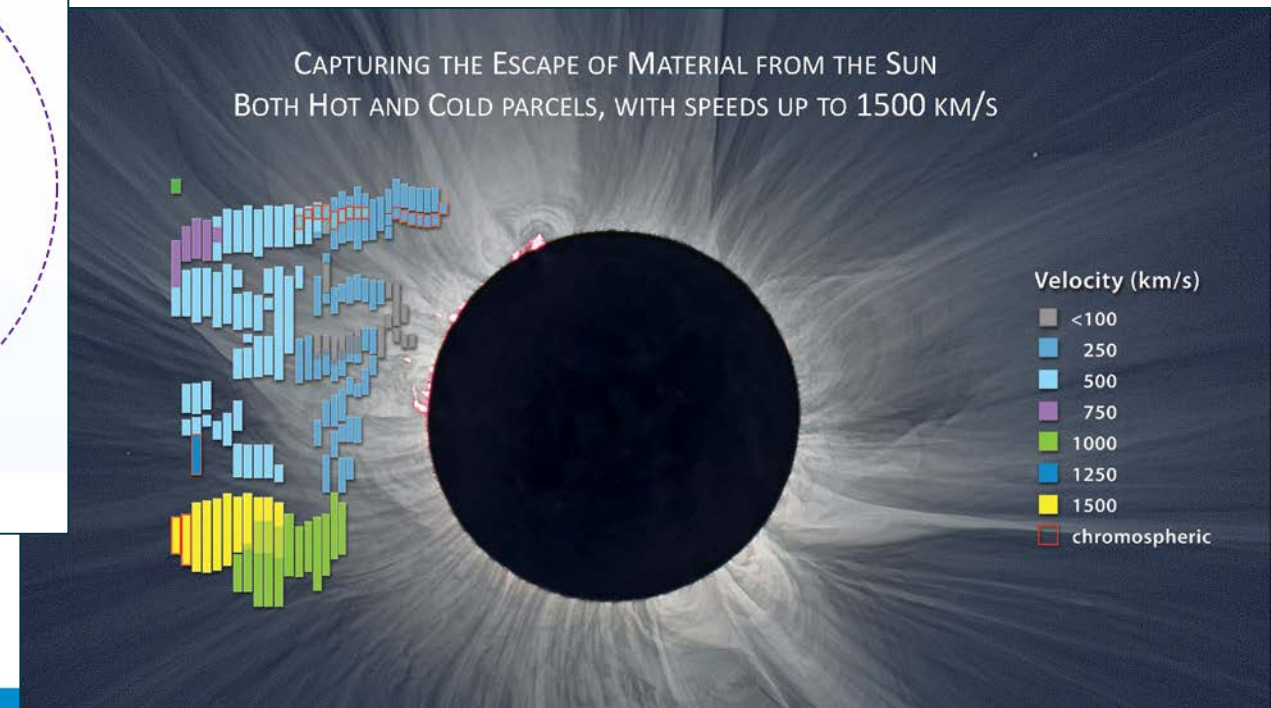
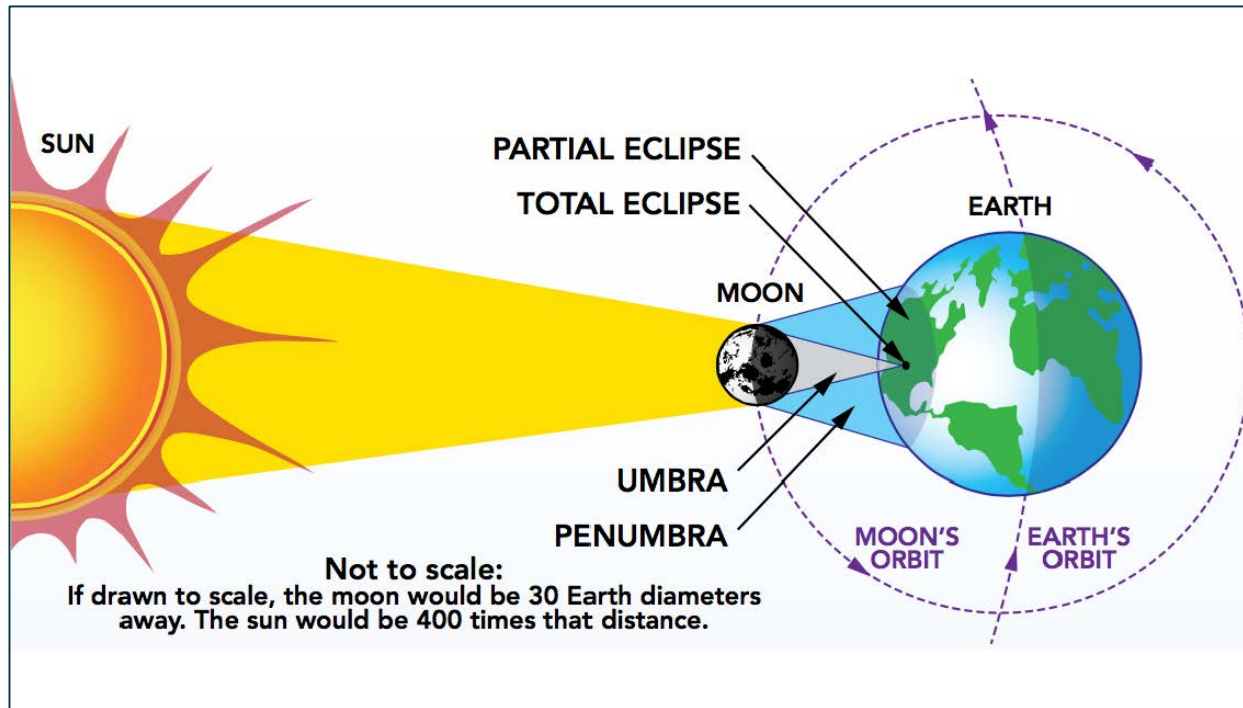
~ 520,000 locations  
> 80 eagles  
1993 – 2017

Irvaluable data owners and contributors: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Booms, Brainerd), Aquila Environmental (E & T Craig), Craighead Beringia South (Crandall), H.T. Harvey & Associates (J. Smith), National Park Service (Joly, McIntyre), Raptor View Research Institute (Domenech, Shreading), Teton Research Center (Bedrosian), US Fish and Wildlife Service (B. Smith, Lewis), US Geological Survey (Katzner, Fuller), University of Alaska Fairbanks (Breed, Eisaguirre), University of Nevada Reno (Brown), West Virginia University (Miller), & the Western Golden Eagle Conservation Trust (Powell, Woodbridge).



# Workshop example

## 2016: Preparing for the 2017 total solar eclipse







# What's next?

Expect to hear from us 1-2 weeks after the deadline

**If we accept your pitch, next steps are:**

- Scheduling
- Preparing the scientists
- Onsite logistics

**If we don't accept your pitch, you still have options!**

- Write a press release and distribute online and in the press room
- Have your scientists be on-call experts
- Create a tipsheet
- Pitch to specific reporters
  - Look at our “Who’s Coming” list

# Summary

## Do:

- Submit on time
- Be specific
- Think about what the story would be
- Interview scientists beforehand
- Think outside climate and planetary science
- Be cognizant of diversity
- Research what we've done in previous years
- Contact us early and often!

## Don't:

- Pitch us research already publicized or covered by the mainstream media
- Promise any publicity to scientists
- Include scientists only from your institution
- Hesitate to reach out if you have questions!

# Friendly reminders

The screenshot shows the AGU 100 website header with navigation links (About, Membership, AGU Centennial, Publications, Meetings, Data Services, Careers, Honors, Science Policy, Education, Newsroom) and buttons for Member Login, Donate, Search Pubs, and Join/Renew. A search bar is also present. The main content area is titled 'PROPOSE A PRESS EVENT TO AGU' and contains text about submitting proposals for press events at AGU meetings. It mentions that proposals for the 2018 AGU Fall Meeting will open in mid-August. A 'Resources' sidebar on the right lists links such as 'Fall Meeting Media Center', 'Ocean Sciences Media Center', 'Journalism Awards', 'Sign Up for Press Releases', 'Register for Journal Paper Access', 'Find an Expert', 'How to Speak to the Media', 'Publicity Form for Journal Authors', 'AGU Building Renovation Project', and 'Propose a Press Event'.

## How to search abstracts:

<https://fallmeeting.agu.org/2018/pio-abstract-search/>

## How to submit your pitch:

<https://news.agu.org/agu-press-event-proposal-form/>

Contact us at [news@agu.org](mailto:news@agu.org)

# Deadline: Friday, September 28



Questions?

