

Tara M Ruttley, PhD is currently Blue Origin's Chief Scientist for the developing space station, Orbital Reef. Prior to joining Blue Origin, she spent 20 years at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) designing, managing, and communicating about science and exploration activities for the International Space Station (ISS).

Combining her love for Biology and human spaceflight, Dr. Ruttley completed her BS degree in Biology and an MS in Mechanical Engineering from Colorado State University before beginning her NASA career at the Johnson Space Center (JSC) in 2001. There, she joined as an engineer, designing the medical equipment and human research hardware used on the ISS. She concurrently pursued her PhD in Neuroscience and then joined the ISS Program Science Office, where she managed and communicated about ISS science activities as ISS Associate Program Scientist. After almost two decades at JSC, Dr. Ruttley and her family moved to Washington, DC, where she joined NASA's Chief Scientist Office as NASA's Associate Chief Scientist for Microgravity Research. In 2022, she left NASA to join Blue Origin to lead the development of Orbital Reef's science strategy.

Dr. Ruttley also completed a MA degree in Anthropology-Archaeology from the University of Houston, where her research was on the role of religion in slavery and social control on US plantations prior to the Civil War. She has authored publications ranging from hardware design to neurological science, and also holds a U.S. utility patent. She's been an astronaut selection finalist, and she's a frequent speaker for topics ranging from science to leadership.

