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Erica Rule earned a Bachelor of Science in biology at the University of Mary Washington in 1997, then came to the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science to study marine affairs and policy. She graduated in 1999 with a Master of Arts and began her career at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Miami.

As communications director at NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory, Rule played a vital role in expanding the local and national visibility of ocean and climate research, and was a key figure in their science reviews and strategic planning.

In August of 2020, Rule joined NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center as chief of staff for science planning and operations. As a member of the leadership team, she coordinates and implements the strategic planning process and priority-based resourcing, and standardizes policies and protocols to support organizational excellence across the science center.