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"Ocean Literacy and Public Humanities"

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This paper frames a series of contributions that both argue for the need to integrate the humanities into ocean literacy and stewardship and provide examples of public humanities projects that contribute to this goal. This introductory piece examines the history of the development and subsequent international adoption of ocean literacy principles, then analyzes the content of the ocean literacy framework to reveal that the humanities and arts are largely absent. Ocean history, or couched more broadly, the "blue humanities," can enrich the goals and achievements of ocean literacy. The existence of the ocean literacy framework, and particularly its grassroots origin and culture, invites humanists to contribute to the much-needed project of historicizing our human relationship with the ocean. If we hope to address present environmental challenges, the humanities must complement the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and policy foci of existing articulations of ocean literacy. The public humanities and arts stand to contribute importantly to addressing this lacuna, in part because ocean literacy is aimed at public audiences rather than specialists or academic groups. The urgency of ocean-related environmental challenges heightens the need for humanists to become involved, because ocean literacy must be taught not only through traditional educational institutions but to all members of the global community. (Abstract)

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