

**Canadian Network for Ocean Education**  
**CaNOE Symposium**  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
15 July 2018  
9:00 – 10:30 am

**World Ocean Day (WOD) Workshop**

Final Summary Report

Carol Amaratunga, Alexandra Vance and Monica Phung

Facilitators:

Carol Amaratunga, Victoria, BC

Alexandra Vance, Halifax, NS

Monica Phung, Halifax NS

The goal of the CaNOE Ocean Literacy Symposium World Ocean Day workshop was 3 fold: (i) to mobilize knowledge regarding the history of World Ocean Day at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), i.e. the Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro, 1992, (ii) to share the Halifax Ocean Week case study as an exemplar of 'best practice' in advancing ocean literacy (OL) across Canada, and (iii) to contribute to citizen science by engaging ocean educators, students and scientists from diverse communities, including Indigenous Peoples, across Canada to envisage a World Ocean Day 'Community of Practice' i.e. a social movement across Canada's 3 oceans to harness momentum for the UN Decade of Ocean Science 2012 – 2030.

The WOD workshop facilitators portrayed ocean literacy as a tool for social change and community engagement. Ocean literacy and citizen science, with a social imperative to change human behavior, hold promise as major drivers of change. They are the first steps towards supporting an environmentally sustainable planet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The 1 ½ hour WOD workshop was structured in 3 parts: (i) a PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the history, principles and spirit of World Ocean Day by Carol Amaratunga, (ii) a PowerPoint

presentation of the Halifax Ocean Week case study presentation by Alexandra Vance and Monica Phung, and (iii) small group break out discussion groups to brainstorm WOD ideas, provide feedback and recommendations to CaNOE and the Ocean Literacy Coalition. Maia Hoeberechts, Ocean Networks Canada, helped to facilitate the small group facilitation and feedback session.

Messages that resounded during the small group sessions were: (i) the need to help youth become ‘ocean ambassadors’ and to be involved in ocean science practice in their communities, (ii) the opportunity to bridge traditional Indigenous and artisanal fishers’ knowledge with school science programs, and (iii) the importance of imbedding Indigenous language, culture and knowledge into future WOD activities and OL programs.

## **World Ocean Day**

Carol Amaratunga, one of the founders of the first World Ocean Day, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the history of this global social movement. Her talk included the following:

“More than a quarter of a century ago, June 08<sup>th</sup>, 1992 at the Earth Summit: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, a dedicated team from Canada’s International Centre for Ocean Development (ICOD) and the Ocean Institute of Canada launched the first world Oceans Day. It was a landmark exercise in foresight planning. Oceans Day 1992 called upon world governments to remediate the early signs of global warming and climate change. Our objective, quite simply was to move the oceans from the fringe to the centre of intergovernmental sustainable development discussions and policy.

We were concerned that the world ocean, so crucial for oxygen production, food, and ultimately for sustaining life on our planet, had not been receiving adequate attention. In 1987, the Brundtland Report, World Commission on Environment and Development, had warned that the oceans were a neglected sector in the debate on sustainable economic development.

World Oceans Day was formally acknowledged and adopted by the United Nations in 2008. The spirit survived, indeed thrived, as a world-wide public engagement and citizen science movement thanks to the efforts of ordinary citizens, including volunteers, school children, NGOs, community organizations, museums, aquaria and participating government agencies. Every year on June 8<sup>th</sup>, citizens around world celebrate and give voice to the ocean sector. World Oceans Day today is a global social movement, a people's movement, one that raises critical awareness about the health of the world's living marine resources and coastal habitats.

As we approach World Oceans Day next year, June 8th, 2019, all Canadians, *a mari usque ad mare ad mare*, are invited to participate and make a commitment to protect the world ocean. The message is essentially the same as it was 26 years ago: our future, indeed the fate of humanity and all living creatures on the blue planet, depends upon conscientious stewardship of the world ocean.

In reflecting back to 1992, it was evident that humanity was beginning to face threats of enormous import, including seminal signs of global warming and climate change. We knew then that the health of the world's populations depends ultimately upon the health of the world ocean. Oceans Day 1992 acknowledged that "the oceans and atmosphere together form the global commons, the common heritage we share." In the words of the late Dr. Arthur May, President of Memorial University: "If our biosphere ceases to be viable, at least for that life form we call human, the other issues won't matter much in the longer term, at least not to our descendants."

In planning Oceans Day 1992 our subject was simply: The Blue Planet and the Earth Summit. Our goal was to engage the public and support scientists, community leaders, and decision makers to affirm the world ocean as a global engine that drives and supports life on this planet.

Today, World Oceans Day is recognized as a public good. Endorsed by the United Nations, it represents a powerful voice for the ocean sector. World Oceans Day 2019 will endorse science and citizenship partnerships. Our objective will be to strengthen co-management and the stewardship of the oceans.

Twenty six years later, the Principles of the 1<sup>st</sup> Oceans Day 1992 charter ring true:

- “Preservation of our Blue Planet will hinge on our collective will and capacity.
- We need to address more concretely how the immediate needs of communities dependent on the oceans can be met.
- A new working vision for the oceans should be formulated. It is clear that the present management regimes are not working. Approaches based on the twin principles of sustainability of the resources and integrity of the ocean environment are needed.
- Sustainable development must be founded on creative and ethical principles of resource use and conservation that will benefit future generations”.

Canada is truly an ocean nation and every year World Oceans Day will engage Canadians and communities around the globe. We share responsibility for the stewardship of not only our 3 oceans – the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific, but also the greater world ocean. World Ocean Day provides an opportunity, indeed a social imperative, to reflect upon the health of our planet and to support marine science. By looking back we have the opportunity to also look forward. The citizen science movement and those who provide mentorship and evidence-informed public education programs deserve our respect and gratitude. Every year, on June 8<sup>th</sup>, we need, more than ever before, to promote and protect the health of the Blue Planet commons.

### **Post Script**

Recently, I came across a box of thank you cards from Oceans Day 1994 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Grade 4 children from Halifax wrote, in their own words and spellings, on little fish made of brightly coloured paper:

“Thank you for inviting us to the Bedford Institute of Oceanography. It was *relly intersting*...I liked when Premier John Savage talked to us. We might have *gotton* a little tired at the end but we still had fun. Thank you for letting us sing at the B.I.O.” From Amanda

“Dear Dr. Amaratunga – I think that you did a wonderful job to get this organized. My favorite thing about the *hole* day was going to the waterfront. I wish you all the best”. From Crystel

“Dear Dr. Amaratunga – I thought of other people to thank. But they aren’t the only fish in sea. Thanks for the speeches”. From André”

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## **Oceans Week Halifax, Nova Scotia**

Monica Phung and Alexandra Vance, the Volunteer Coordinators of Halifax Oceans Week, provided an extensive photographic and narrative overview of World Oceans Week. Having begun the Oceans Week HFX project in 2015 with the vision to connect the many local community members and leaders, ENGOs, academia, private sector, museums, and more to deliver an inclusive, educational, and accessible events to promote ocean literacy, optimism, and stewardship. This is accomplished through one succinct online website ([www.oceansweek.ca](http://www.oceansweek.ca)), social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram), and the #oceansweekhfx hashtag; these umbrella platforms and events calendar captures all the relevant event details and hosting organizations throughout the city of Halifax and, increasingly, throughout the province of NS. The Halifax community continues to show great enthusiasm for OWHFX, as noted by more attendance in-person and by word of mouth (noted by greater social media impressions, reach, comments, and shares) year over year.

On April 12, 2018, Monica and Alexandra hosted an OWHFX workshop and invited broad members of the ocean sector and community to attend and share ideas, resources, and networks of colleagues to make this year’s celebration the best yet. The design of the workshop was similar to what was presented in conjunction with the WOD CaNOE workshop; small break-out discussion groups were asked to brainstorm events that would focus on 4 main categories: films, outdoor activities, youth engagement, and seminars. The workshop hosted 36 individuals representing over 25 organizations, and was graciously hosted by the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

World Oceans Day has been celebrated in Halifax, Nova Scotia, continuously since its creation in 1992. Every year, OWHFX is scheduled to align with WOD so that it falls generally mid-week of the calendar; in instances, OWHFX been as much as 10 days of festivities in

the past. The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic (MMA) has been instrumental in providing an accessible venue since the early days of WOD. Initially called the World Oceans Day (long before becoming internationally recognized in 2008), the event has been hosted on the first Friday of June; when WOD was formally recognized by the UN in 2008 to be on June 8th, the MMA subsequently changed the name of the event to “Oceans + You Exhibit”. Every year, many buses of elementary school students, hundreds of community members, and dozens of exhibitors from various community organizations (including government, First Nations groups, ENGOs, and more). Aligned with WOD objectives, the purpose of this long-standing event is to celebrate the ocean and promote stewardship through interactive learning and hands-on ocean literacy – and to have fun!

Examples and highlights were captured in Monica and Alexandra’s PowerPoint presentation as they other provided examples of public education and school programs from the 2018 Oceans Week HFX. An ocean-themed short-film festival kicked off this year’s OWHFX, with four local organizations (each with broad memberships) were invited to introduce their films and participate in a panel discussion and Q+A following the films. Patagonia HFX, the Surf Association of Nova Scotia, A for Adventure, and East Coast Surf School each hosted a 5-10 minute film, and the event was co-hosted by Alexander Keith’s Brewery, Patagonia HFX, and OWHFX. The event attracted a diverse audience, with over 150 participates throughout the evening. Other events, such as Yoga by the Sea, Seacology (guided sea-kayaking tour with a naturalist), lectures, open-houses (of sites like the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, Dalhousie’s Steele Ocean Science Centre), beach clean-ups, ocean-themed movie nights, panel discussions, and more continue to be well-attended with positive feedback.

Halifax has been fortunate to have had a long term, engaged ocean constituency of scientists, community volunteers, and students. In 2018, OWHFX was the largest yet with 33 events throughout the province, and with over 40 participating groups/organizations. This is a significant increase from 2015 when there were few more than 10 events and 25 participating organizations. OWHFX continues to solicit the sponsorship and participation of the community to make every year larger, more accessible, and far-reaching than the years previous.

## **Small Group Feedback: Big Ideas for World Ocean Day 2019 from across Canada**

### Themes:

#### Youth Activities

Using historical resources

Hosting active hands-on, interactive events

Film: combining photography, videos at events

Connecting ocean art to emotions and values

Sharing WOD community resources through social media – building a virtual community of practice

Providing opportunities for the public to see new things

Providing microscopes, seine nets, boat/canoe trips

#### K – Grade 6 and Grade 12

Link WOD to art and create displays for public places e.g. ferry terminals

Link WOD to beach activities and clean up sessions

Provide debriefings for volunteers and community members

Display garbage and plastics that have been collected

Give away ocean colouring books/games

#### Outdoor and Ocean Side Activities:

Beach side events, public education booths

Register the Great Canadian Ocean Clean Up events

Host guided tours with interactive stations

Canoes, paddling events, races, surfing, yoga by the sea

Meet a “Scientist for a day” events

Sand castle contests

Geocaching

Sunset Walk and Clean ups

Engage fishers to demonstrate their gear and boats  
Nature walks  
Scuba, snorkeling clean ups and demonstrations  
Aquascopes – to see underwater  
Arrange ocean industry tours

#### Photo Contests:

Crowd Sourcing existing events  
Blue Flag crowd source photos  
Create coastline and beach maps, Google Maps  
Canadian Geographic theme for WOD  
Involve and engage local societies, provide promotion support,  
encourage displays,  
Provide Prizes

#### WOD Seminar Series:

Beach clean ups  
Open University lectures  
Public lectures  
Indigenous Knowledge seminars  
Artisanal Fishers' Knowledge and seminars

#### Film:

Short film series – screen ocean films  
Host documentary evenings with panel discussions  
Encourage Digital story telling  
Show Historical films and contribute to Digital Story Telling  
Use Social Media e.g. Facebook Live Music from the Shore line  
Encourage Active Field Trips with filming activity  
Connect music and stories  
Indigenous Peoples' perspectives



## Youth Activity:

Indigenous youth and World Ocean Day

Outdoor events e.g. scavenger hunts

Classroom beach site field trips

Touch tanks with local species

Beach clean up

Citizen science labs with microscopes, plankton, etc.

## Beach Clean Ups:

Indigenous Knowledge Ceremonies to value the ocean – water ceremony, fishers connection

Collecting plastics and invisible garbage

Cross Canada comparisons of collected beach debris, plastics and garbage

## Art and Creativity:

Marine debris exhibits

Capturing emotional and visceral reactions to the ocean

Indigenous Peoples' art

Making connections among peoples

Finding creative solutions

## **Acknowledgements**

- Special thanks to CaNOE, the Ocean Literacy Coalition, the Marine Institute and Ocean Networks Canada for providing the opportunity to convene this workshop on World Ocean Day.

- The support and funding of NSERC PromoScience Supplement Project and Ocean Networks Canada is gratefully acknowledged.
- Thank you to our participants, especially those from Indigenous Communities across Canada who have shared their insight and wisdom.
- This presentation is dedicated to the International Centre for Ocean Development (ICOD) and the Ocean Institute of Canada (OIC) staff and consultants who created the inaugural World Oceans Day at the Earth Summit, UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1992.

## **Appendix 1: World Ocean Day Workshop Agenda**

### **WORLD OCEAN DAY WORKSHOP**

**CaNOE Ocean Literacy Conference  
Marine Institute  
St. John's Newfoundland  
9:00 – 10:30am  
Sunday, July 15, 2018**

Workshop Facilitators: Carol Amaratunga, Alexandra Vance and Monica Phung

1. World Ocean Day (WOD) 2018 overview and history of WOD, a global ocean literacy movement (20 minutes).
2. Oceans Week Halifax Case Study & Lessons Learned – Facilitators: Alexandra Vance & Monica Phung. (25 minutes with video)
3. Small break out groups by geographic regions and event type e.g. Indigenous, youth, educator perspectives, Northern region, Pacific region, Atlantic region to brainstorm and create 'take home' WOD plans, activities and recommendations in cooperation with CaNOE and the Ocean Literacy Coalition (25 minutes).
4. Small group feedback to plenary (15 minutes).

5. Acknowledgements and closure (5 minutes).

## **Appendix 2: Small Group Breakout Questions**

World Ocean Day Workshop  
CaNOE Ocean Literacy Symposium  
St. John's, Newfoundland

Sunday July 15, 2018  
9am – 10:30 am

### Small Break Out Group Questions

1. Given this morning's presentations on the history of World Ocean Day and Halifax Oceans Week, are there some themes, ideas, which you would like to see adopted by your community for World Ocean Day next year?
2. How would you and your colleagues go about organizing a World Ocean Day in your community? How would you engage students, teachers, elders, the business community, the scientific community?
3. What do you think about using social media as a communication tool for World Ocean Day?
4. Do you feel motivated by the workshop presentations to help coordinate or lead a World Ocean Day campaign in your community for 2019?
5. What role do you envisage for CaNOE and the Ocean Literacy Coalition in supporting World Ocean Day. Are there concrete contributions/roles they can play? What recommendations can you make?

**Appendix 3: World Ocean Day 2017 Editorial – see below**

# COMMENT

We are faced with the opportunity of a completely different kind of politics

## SEND US YOUR LETTERS

■ **Mail:** letters to the Editor, Times Colonist,  
2621 Douglas St., Victoria, B.C. V8T 4M2

■ **Fax:** 250-380-5353 ■ **Email:** letters@timescolonist.com

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# Keeping true to the spirit of World Oceans Day

CAROL MALETTE AMARATUNGA

A quarter of a century ago, on June 8, 1992, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, a dedicated team from Canada's International Centre for Ocean Development and the Ocean Institute of Canada launched the first World Oceans Day.

It was a landmark exercise in planning. Oceans Day 1992 called upon world governments to remediate the early signs of global warming and climate change. Our objective was to move the oceans from the fringe to the centre of intergovernmental discussions and policy.

We were concerned that the world ocean, so crucial for oxygen production, food and ultimately for sustaining life on our planet, had not been receiving adequate attention. In 1987, the Brundtland Report, the World Commission on Environment and Development, warned that the oceans were a neglected sector in the debate on sustainable economic development.

World Oceans Day was formally acknowledged and adopted by the United Nations in 2008. The spirit survived, indeed thrived, as a worldwide public engagement and citizen-science movement thanks to the efforts of ordinary citizens, including volunteers, school children, NGOs, community organizations, museums,

aquaria and participating government agencies. Every year on June 8, citizens around the world celebrate and give voice to the ocean sector. World Oceans Day today is a global social movement, a people's movement, one that raises critical awareness about the health of the world's living marine resources and coastal habitats.

As we approach the 25th Oceans Day anniversary on Thursday, all Canadians, *a maritimaque ad mare ad mare*, are invited to participate in World Oceans Day. The message is essentially the same as it was 25 years ago: Our future, indeed the fate of humanity and all living creatures on the blue planet, depends upon conscientious stewardship of the world ocean.

In reflecting back to 1992, it was evident that humanity was beginning to face threats of enormous import, including seminal signs of global warming and climate change. We knew then that the health of the world's populations depends ultimately upon the health of the world ocean.

Oceans Day 1992 acknowledged that "the oceans and atmosphere together form the global commons, the common heritage we share." In the words of the late Arthur May, president of Memorial University: "If our biosphere ceases to be viable, at least for that life form we call human, the other issues won't matter much in the longer term, at least not to our descendants."

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Today, World Oceans Day is recognized as a public good.

Endorsed by the United Nations, it represents a powerful voice for the ocean sector. World Oceans Day 2017 endorses science and citizenship partnerships and strengthens co-management and the stewardship of the oceans.

Twenty-five years later, the principles of the first Oceans Day charter ring true:

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- "We need to address more concretely how the immediate needs of communities dependent on the oceans can be met.

- "A new working vision for the oceans should be formulated. It is clear that the present management regimes are not working. Approaches based on the twin principles of sustainability of the resources and integrity of the ocean environment are needed.

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Oceans Day 2017 will engage Canadians and communities around the globe. We share responsibility for the stewardship of not only our three oceans — the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific — but also the greater world ocean.

Oceans Day 2017 provides an opportunity, indeed a social imperative, to reflect upon the health of our planet and to support marine science. By looking back, we have the opportunity also to look forward. The citizen-science movement and those who provide mentorship and evidence-informed public-education programs deserve our respect and gratitude.

This year, on June 8, as we approach Canada's 150th anniversary, we need, more than ever, to promote and protect the health of the Blue Planet commons.

*Carol Amaratunga, PhD, is a freelance writer and social-policy researcher who lives in Oak Bay. She was the global education and training program director with the International Centre for Ocean Development from 1986 to 1992.*