

Press Release
For immediate release
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The Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition launches
Land, Water, Ocean, Us: A Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy

Watch the launch event here: [facebook.com/CANoceanlitCO](https://www.facebook.com/CANoceanlitCO)

Today, the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition (COLC) launched *Land, Water, Ocean, Us: A Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy*, a collaborative framework for action to advance ocean literacy in Canada over the course of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). The Strategy is accompanied by the *Implementation Plan: Pathways for Collaboration*.

The Strategy and Implementation Plan are shaped by three overarching goals: (1) to advance **ocean knowledge** by increasing understanding of how the ocean influences us and how our behaviours, decisions, and actions impact the ocean; (2) to foster **ocean values** by strengthening positive public and organizational perceptions of the ocean; and (3) to empower **ocean actions** by reducing barriers and increasing engagement to support ocean health, community livelihoods, and human well-being. Nine Action Streams have been co-developed to achieve these goals.

Fundamentally, ocean literacy is about our relationship with the ocean. Ocean literacy is often understood as a means to raise awareness and share knowledge, but it must also include broad access to experiences, skill development opportunities, and tools that empower action, change behaviour, drive innovation, promote ocean sustainability, and integrate knowledge and values of Indigenous peoples. Ocean literacy directly contributes to growing an equitable and sustainable blue economy by increasing awareness of marine career opportunities, attracting talent, removing barriers, and strengthening workforce diversity.

The world is facing an ocean and climate crisis, and we need to change our relationship with the global ocean and Canada's waterways. We need a just transition to a healthy and equitable relationship with the ocean and our waterways to ensure the sustainability of human populations and all biodiversity. Ocean literacy, which includes water and climate literacy, is a key component of this transition.

The Strategy and Implementation Plan were co-developed based on the findings from the *Understanding Ocean Literacy in Canada* study (2019-2020). Led by COLC, the study was shaped through a bottom-up and community-led engagement process from coast to coast to coast, with over 3,000 Canadians and more than 400 organizations participating. This research yielded the first baseline of ocean literacy in Canada.

The implementation of *Land, Water, Ocean, Us: A Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy* is not possible by any one organization, level of government, or region. It will be overseen by COLC's national project office, but measured progress and impact will be achieved through collaboration

to ensure both a national coordinating and community-led approach in advancing the Strategy's nine Action Streams and three overarching goals.

As the first country to launch a multisectoral national ocean literacy strategy, Canada will be better positioned to collaboratively support and contribute to advancing global ocean literacy efforts as part of the United Nations Decade framework and beyond.

Testimonials

“Knowledge is power. As more Canadians learn about our changing oceans, we strengthen our collective ability to ensure they remain healthy. Healthy oceans have more to give – they feed more mouths, employ more people, and clean the air we breathe. I applaud the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition for their work on this important initiative. It is through projects like this that we get more people involved in our growing, sustainable Blue Economy, and deepen our understanding and our relationship to our oceans. That is what will empower Canadians to make choices that will keep our oceans thriving for generations to come.”

Hon. Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard

“Over millennia, Inuit lived, breathed, and ate near or from the ocean and lived in relative harmony with animals and seasons. Inuit language interweaves values and numerous words for elements of the ocean that are based on thousands of years of experience, knowledge, and observations. As Canada moves forward on increasing ocean literacy for all, integrating Inuit and Indigenous knowledge can not only improve literacy, it can be a path towards shared values in ocean and coastal management and protection. The experience of climate change in the Arctic makes this integration all the more urgent.”

Mary Simon, OC, OQ, Inuit rights advocate and former diplomat

“As a collaborating member since it began Ocean Networks Canada is delighted to become the administrative home of the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition. An initiative of the University of Victoria, Ocean Networks Canada supports Canadians from coast to coast to coast to #knowtheocean across science, society, and industry through ocean observing technology and data, for which ocean literacy is fundamental.”

Kate Moran, President and CEO, Ocean Networks Canada

The Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition (COLC) is an alliance of organizations, networks, institutions, communities, and individuals working together to better understand and advance ocean literacy in Canada. COLC launched in September 2018 at the Oceans Inspiration Expo, as part of the G7 Ministerial Meetings in Halifax, Nova Scotia. COLC operates as an independent national project office with an administrative home at Ocean Networks Canada (as of April 1). To learn more, visit www.colcoalition.ca

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