

Maritime Heritage in the Service of Environmental Action

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Session Description

In the 21st century, maritime heritage, including all tangible and intangible elements of culture related to human activities on, in and around aquatic environments is closely linked to climate change and environmental deterioration. Coastal erosion, extreme storminess, storm surges, flooding, sea-level rise, sea-temperature increase, pollution, ocean acidification have damaged underwater and coastal archaeological sites and historic buildings. Adding to that is a large number of potentially polluting wrecks that are not consistently managed and regulated around the world. Concurrently, the decline of traditional maritime livelihoods, such as fishing, sailing and shipbuilding, the rise of unsustainable tourism, along with the loss of associated local knowledge within communities and their empirical understanding of maritime landscapes, have isolated people from their natural environment increasing their vulnerability to environmental and socio-economic shocks.

History, heritage and archaeology have been identified as significant disciplines that raise awareness for environmental issues and encourage communities to act to improve their watery environments and lives within dynamic maritime landscapes. Knowledge exchange has been helping communities realise the significance of living by the water with the risks and advantages that it brings. Stories from the past have been assisting people to understand environmental deterioration, reconnect with their seas, rivers, lakes and wetlands while advocating for their better preservation, and revival of local and indigenous knowledge.

This session invites presentations on projects and initiatives utilising maritime heritage to engage the public with current issues related to aquatic environments. It is meant as a celebration of what heritage and archaeology can accomplish for local communities, creating thus a momentum for hydrocitizenship and safeguarding both natural and cultural heritage as recommended by UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 11.4. We invite papers on

initiatives run by academics, community groups or charities hoping to illustrate the significant work of maritime archaeology in addressing environmental challenges.

Keywords

Maritime Heritage; Local Knowledge; Environmental Awareness; Hydrocitizenship