

June 17, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

Founded in the United States in 1976, the National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) is a member-based organization of teachers, informal educators, professors, scientists, government agency staff, and other stakeholders from around the world working together to “make known the world of water, both fresh and salt.” Our members represent over 300 organizations and more than 20 countries. NMEA is an influential leader in the global Ocean Literacy campaign and is one of the original partner organizations in developing the Ocean Literacy definition, Essential Principles, and Fundamental Concepts.

Ocean Literacy is an understanding of the ocean’s influence on you—and your influence on the ocean. An ocean-literate person understands the Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts about the ocean, can communicate about the ocean in a meaningful way, and is able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding the ocean and its resources. The Essential Principles of Ocean Literacy are:

1. Earth has one big ocean with many features.
2. The ocean and life in the ocean shape the features of Earth.
3. The ocean is a major influence on weather and climate.
4. The ocean makes Earth habitable.
5. The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.
6. The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.
7. The ocean is largely unexplored.

NMEA collaborated on the development of the original Ocean Literacy Guide, published in 2005 and presented at the NMEA annual conference the same year. NMEA has co-developed Ocean Literacy resources including the UN Ocean Decade-endorsed *Handbook for Increasing Ocean Literacy*, a Scope and Sequence, presentations, webinars, journal articles, books, and curricular materials. The organization also publishes *Current: The Journal of Marine Education*, a peer-reviewed journal that explores the latest in marine and aquatic education research, ocean literacy, classroom and free-choice learning activities, marine science, art, maritime history and literature.

NMEA and Ocean Literacy inspired the creation of the International Pacific Educators Network (IMPEN), European Marine Science Education Association (EMSEA), and Asia Marine Educators Association (AMEA) among others. We continue to collaborate regularly with these and similar organizations in Australia (MESA), Canada (CaNOE) and beyond. NMEA members are involved in Ocean Decade activities, including the UN Decade programme Ocean Literacy With All (OLWA) and the US Blue Schools initiative.

The mission of the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) is to support and drive the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The UNOC is a key component of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Decade), which seeks to develop “the science we need for the ocean we want.” Ocean Literacy is the cornerstone to achieving the goals of the Decade. Accordingly, UNESCO states, “...through stronger international cooperation, the Decade will bolster scientific research to ensure science responds to the needs of society” and we need, as stated as an Ocean Decade outcome, “An engaging and inspiring ocean where society understands and values the ocean.” Ocean literacy is critical to the success of the Decade. It *requires* an ocean literate global citizenry. The Decade will provide opportunities for networks of scientists, educators, policy makers, artists, communicators, and others to collaborate and ensure we reach everyone—a critical step in the global effort toward “the ocean we want” on our Blue Planet.

Ocean literacy is the foundation of everything we all do in support of the Ocean Decade—reaching its goals and addressing its challenges. Ocean Decade Challenge 10 specifically calls for a fundamental change in humanity’s relationship with the ocean. To address this greatest of challenges, we must develop stronger, more consistent, and more inclusive ways to communicate and share resources, develop products, and enhance mutually beneficial partnerships. A truly ocean literate person not only understands ocean science content, but can effectively communicate about the ocean and make informed and responsible decisions regarding the ocean and its resources. With this ambitious goal in mind, together we can advance global ocean literacy. Our collective future as global citizens, and the future of our ocean planet, depends upon it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lauren Rader
NMEA Past-President