

## Call for Contributions

The Fryske Akademy is inviting researchers to submit a paper proposal to the multi-disciplinary workshop:

### Coastal wilderness *and* cultural landscape?

**Repositioning the coastal and tidal area as a cross-disciplinary research topic.**

26-28 March 2024, Terschelling, the Netherlands

Deadline for submission: **1 October 2023**

Acceptance is based on available number of spaces and prioritized in relevance to the programme and group composition. Notifications of acceptance or decline will be sent later in October.

#### *Theme of the workshop*

Historians and Ecologists alike agree that coastal and tidal areas are important landscapes, but ostensibly for very different and even incompatible qualities. From an ecological point of view, the landscapes are crucial zones of wilderness, whereas from the point of view of human history, they are key cultural landscapes of activity and communication. Natural scientists study these areas as 'natural' ecosystems, without taking into account that they have for centuries been cultural landscapes where the human hand has played a shaping role. Cultural historians study the human hand in processes, but focus on human action in specific periods without understanding the long-term dynamic of the natural environment in this 'cultural landscape'. In general perception, these views and values are opposed to each other, a perception that is fortified by the fact that the humanities and ecological disciplines speak different scientific languages and rarely collaborate.

Yet when we zoom in, for example on the coasts of the Unesco World Heritage Wadden Sea area, we see there are many similarities in their approach to the coastal zone, which is remarkably different from the inland. In the ecological discourse, the coastal and tidal areas are the zones where migratory birds gather, feed and breed seasonally, before they move on to the next coastal area, creating a network of habitats. For the various disciplines studying the human past the coastal zone is an area of particular habitation, adaptation, of migration and exchange, by which it is connected to other coasts, forming a network of cultural zones. In both cases, it are the changes in patterns of activity that are of particular interest to researchers, and it must be recognized that these changes often are the result of, or result in, an interplay between the natural world and cultural developments. In other words: the coastal area is at the same time a natural wilderness *and* a cultural landscape.

#### *Approach*

Coastal and tidal zones are thus particularly layered landscapes of meaning, in which the perspectives of wilderness and culture are not competing, but co-exist. In order to study this layered landscape of meaning, we need to learn to approach it in a non-disciplinary way.

Not as the backdrop to the ecological and cultural changes over time, not as the scene of a particular bird type or historic event, but as a multi-disciplinary research topic itself, through the eyes of birds and historic people and in a shared language.

To quote famous Cambridge professor Lord Acton, ‘historians should study problems, not periods’. In this workshop, departing from various disciplines that don’t often find each other, the ‘problem’ that is central is the complex coastal systems as connected landscapes, layered with meaning. Point of departure will be European coasts. The research question through which we approach this is: Can we use what humans and birds teach us through the centuries to get achieve a more balanced approach of the constantly changing coastal and tidal area as system of meaning? Related to this: What do we see if we simultaneously look through the eyes of migratory birds and migratory people? What layers of meaning can we discern and how do they interact?

### *Aim of the workshop*

The aim of the workshop is to explore and develop this approach, leading to a *white paper* in which the coastal and tidal area as multi-disciplinary and layered research topic is formulated and theorized in a shared language.

Through presentations of recent research, discussion and a workshop, we want to introduce researchers from a range of disciplines to each other’s perspectives, challenging them to look at their familiar research area through the eyes of the other. As such, we aim to develop a holistic view of the research topic and explore approaches that incorporate the interaction between the natural ecosystem and human cultural development.

The workshop is set up as a gathering of maximum 20 people over 3 days, with a lot of time for discussion and networking. Through this we hope to build a network of people who are keen to contribute to the topic in the future.

### *Participants*

There is a maximum of 20 participants to the workshop. The group will consist of invited speakers and those responding to this Call for Papers.

Call for papers: researchers in any stage of their career are invited to contribute to the presentations and discussions by sharing their expertise, presenting their recent research and share thoughts on the theme as formulated in this brief. We ask of participants to consider and address the following within this: What are the developments in your field relevant to the study of coastal and tidal areas? Where are the opportunities, these and questions to address? What could be useful knowledge to other disciplines? Where are the gaps in knowledge or in language? What would we need to bridge the gaps? What would you want to learn from other disciplines?

### *Disciplines*

We are open to all disciplines in humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. We especially invite those in subfields of archaeology, history, linguistics, biology and ecology.

### *Preliminary program and Practicalities*

Day 1 26 March 2024

*Arrival – morning ferry from Harlingen to Terschelling. Transfer to venue.*

- Setting the Scene *Dr. Nelleke IJssennagger-van der Pluijm* and *Prof. Dr. Theunis Piersma*
  - Session 1 (Research Presentations and Discussions)
  - Session 2 (Research Presentations and Discussions)
  - Reflection and summing up of day 1
- Day 2 27 March 2024
- A philosopher's view - *Johan van de Gronden*
  - Session 3 (Research Presentations and Discussions)
  - Session 4 (Research Presentations and Discussions)
  - Reflection and summing up of day 2
  - Excursion on the island.
- Day 3 28 March 2024
- Workshop: *White Paper*

### Venue

The workshop takes place at the Folkshegeskoalle Skylgerlân (<https://folkshegeskoalle.nl/>) on the island of Terschelling, the Netherlands. Simple, private rooms are provided for all participants at the venue. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, coffee and tea are provided.

### Transport

Ferry transport from the mainland (Harlingen) to the island of Terschelling will be provided. On Terschelling transport to the venue will be provided. Participants are expected to arrange their own travel to and from Harlingen. Should there be any issues with this, they can contact Ida van der Velde (see below) for support.

### Queries

For any queries relating to the content of the workshop, please contact Nelleke IJssennagger-van der Pluijm ([nijssennagger@fryske-akademy.nl](mailto:nijssennagger@fryske-akademy.nl)) until 16 October 2023 – thereafter please contact Ida van der Velde ([ivandervelde@fryske-akademy.nl](mailto:ivandervelde@fryske-akademy.nl)) or Theunis Piersma ([Theunis.Piersma@nioz.nl](mailto:Theunis.Piersma@nioz.nl)). Please contact Ida van der Velde for any practical information.

*The event is made possible by the KNAW Early Career Partnership 2023 awarded to dr. Nelleke IJssennagger-van der Pluijm, Fryske Akademy, Leeuwarden. The workshop is organized in collaboration with prof. Theunis Piersma, BirdEyes/NioZ, Leeuwarden/Texel.*