

Editors' Acknowledgments

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**- Gulf-Park-on-the-Sound,
April 2017**

Coastlines 2017: Ecoliteracy, or, Nature and Man at Gulf Park

The idea for this 2017 special issue of *Coastlines* grew out of our English 400 class in the fall of 2016. The class itself, an advanced primer in literature and environment was shaped by an uneasy discovery of the dire crisis posed by manmade global warming that faces our civilization and the living planet. The last three years, 2014, 2015 and 2016, have been the warmest on the instrumental record, and the last time atmospheric CO₂ was as high as it is now, 405 parts per million, about four million years ago, crocodiles swam at an ice-free North Pole and sea levels were about one hundred feet higher than now. Researchers have found that almost all research on climate change accepts that human activity is the primary cause of global warming. There is very little research on climate that suggests any other cause, as John Cook and Dana Nuccitelli clarified in 2013:

I recently led a citizen science effort to conduct the most comprehensive analysis of climate research yet done. We analyzed 21 years of peer-reviewed papers from 1991 to 2011, identifying over 4000 abstracts that stated a position on whether humans were causing global warming. Among those papers, 97.1% endorsed the consensus.

This rock solid science connecting human activity, rising temperatures and rising CO₂ concentrations was news to many students in the class, and the discovery lent our work a sense of urgency and importance.

The reality of global warming, however, was just one of many topics raised in the class. We also examined discourses of place, pollution, sustainability and preservation, among others, and were introduced to the germinal writings in English on what Dr. Watson called “the long problem of nature”: Thoreau, Muir, Carson, Leopold, Abbey and many others. Most of the essays in this volume were initially written as course papers for English 400 classes in 2014 and 2016. And all focus on local environmental issues and local impacts. The editors and contributors practice the old Greenpeace slogan,