

WALKING THE WRACK LINE

Matt Roberts & Terri Witek

Walking the Wrack Line is a cooperative venture: between Canaveral National Seashore, the US National Park system, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, and Stetson University's Institute for Water and Environmental Resilience, whose grant funded the project. In environmental terms, Walking the Wrack Line considers the interspecies entanglements we witnessed as both highly problematic and rich in possibilities. Philosophically, the wrack line reads like a long, connected treatise on both beauty and danger. As Dr. Wendy Anderson reminds us: "At a certain size, plastic and silica glint the same." "Until you eat it," veteran Canaveral ranger and Chief of Interpretation Laura Henning adds, pointing out how ocean and land continue both to toxify and sustain each other. As a visible reminder of how species interact, the wrack line has become, it seems to Roberts and Witek now, an EKG of our time on the planet.

What is a Wrack Line? The word wrack is believed to come from the word "wreck" as in shipwreck. It identifies as a line of debris on the beach left by the last highest tide. The wrack can be made up of different seaweeds, seeds, seashells, feathers, bits and pieces of anything tossed in by the waves. Human-made litter and refuse as well as bones and sometimes live creatures can be discovered in the wrack line. To beachcombers it is a treasure trove to be lovingly sifted through, to the casual beach visitor it may seem like a sticky, smelly nuisance. Please visit "**Walking the Wrack Line**" decide for yourself. Whether art or junk, it is a peek into what comes from the sea because of humans or in spite of them.

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Between January and August 2018, new media artist Matt Roberts and poet Terri Witek traversed Canaveral National Seashore from the north boundary at Apollo Beach (New Smyrna) to the southern boundary at Playalinda Beach (Titusville). Their wanderings covered 24 miles of shoreline and an ever-changing wrack line. Roberts translated their experiences via video and still photography; Witek used text and voice: their collaborative show combines image, text, and sound in a site-specific installation at Canaveral's historic Shultz-Leeper house (formally owned by artist Doris Leeper).

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