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## 'Welcome to the Anthropocene': Public Environmental History

Anne Brædder

Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark

**Corresponding author:** Anne Brædder, [annebra@ruc.dk](mailto:annebra@ruc.dk)

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'Welcome to the Anthropocene: The Earth in Our Hands'. This is how museum visitors were greeted entering an ambitious special exhibition in Deutsches Museum in München in 2014–2016 that included a diverse cultural program in House of World Cultures in Berlin.<sup>1</sup> The Anthropocene is an academic concept developed within Earth System Science. The basic idea is to describe a geological age where our planet is dominated by human activity, ending the epoch of the Holocene. Numerous impacts on Earth and its atmosphere have made mankind a 'major geological force' in recent history, the biologist Eugene F. Stoermer and atmospheric chemist Paul J. Crutzen proclaimed in 2000 when they originally suggested the use of the concept.<sup>2</sup>

The Anthropocene, however, is not yet an official stratigraphic epoch but a proposal is in process. Thus, officially we are still in the Holocene. Nevertheless, the concept has already proven to be powerful. It has travelled from Earth System Sciences to other academic disciplines even within humanities and social sciences as well as to the public to a degree rarely seen with academic concepts and interests. The exhibition in München exemplifies this, even if Anthropocene has become integrated into museum communities across several continents.<sup>3</sup> But the public life of the Anthropocene does not only play out in museums. It is in the public media, popular science books, among arts and cultural organizations and in protests of political activists. As the German historian Christian Wicke recently noted, it only took 'a few years for the Anthropocene to become vogue'.<sup>4</sup>

It seems obvious for public historians today working with environmental history to engage with a concept that not only successfully and popularly bridges academic and public interests, but also describes connections between the past, present and future, and further warns us

about conditions of Earth and atmosphere. This is consistent with three connected areas of expertise within public history: linking academia and the public, temporal past-present-future connections – often rooted in concepts like historical culture or consciousness, cultural memory and people’s memory work – and historians’ engagement in contemporary debates.

This article discusses the concept of the Anthropocene within the historiography of public environmental history.<sup>5</sup> I argue that it is important to consider the Anthropocene’s implications for engaging with the public – just as it is equally important to consider implications of other concepts and methodological approaches that have been used in public environmental history since the field’s emergence in the 1990s. The Anthropocene is a temporal concept because it deals with geology, and the implications of using it within public environmental history are thus primarily of temporal character. For years there have been discussions of the Anthropocene’s non-synchronicity with historical thinking due to its geological temporality within the academic field of history and theory relevant for public historians. I will address the most influential ones. However, public historians do not only work with historical time but also with memory which is a temporality not considered in these discussions. I will end with a reflection on a diverse set of public environmental history concepts and methodologies that have different implications for public societal engagements on environmental concerns and as such for public history’s relationships to publics – not the least due to their embedded temporalities.

The article contributes to public history in two different but related ways. Firstly, it provides a rare historiographical overview of environmental history within public history strengthening the field methodologically by identifying different approaches to environmental concerns and their implications for engaging with the public.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, it discusses the Anthropocene within a public history framework.

## Public Environmental History

Three conceptually and methodologically different approaches have been used in the field over the last few decades: landscapes, physical environments and human-nature interactions; climate change and sustainability; and the Anthropocene and geology. Here I consider the implications for engaging with the public using this methodological framework. I also identify an applied approach to public environmental history illuminating the employment and collaborations of historians working with environmental issues in different sectors outside academia and with specific groups of professionals and institutions in the public.<sup>7</sup> The approach describing historians’ employment outside academia has always been implied in public history. It has been definitory particularly for the field in the United States.<sup>8</sup> Public history has as well always been defined by something aside from the applied approach. ‘Practice’ is often mentioned as another component.<sup>9</sup> James B. Gardner and Paula Hamilton see this as public history’s ‘raison d’être’: it is ‘the activity of doing, presenting, or making history in a range of forms for many different purposes and communicating it to multiple audiences or “publics”’.<sup>10</sup> Practices engaging *with publics* and applied history *in the public* are two defining components of public history familiar to most public historians.<sup>11</sup>

## Landscapes, Physical Environments and Human-Nature Interactions

Martin V. Melosi, an American environmental historian and founding director of Center for Public History at University of Houston, has since the early 1990s played a central role in bringing environmental history and public history together to develop an intersecting field.<sup>12</sup> He began this work with the article ‘Public History and the Environment’ published in 1993<sup>13</sup> and continued it in an anthology edited in collaboration with Philip Scarpino – also an American historian preoccupied with environmental history, public history and oral history – published about a decade later.<sup>14</sup> In his article, Melosi unfolded the potentials and obstacles for merging public history and environmental history.<sup>15</sup> Here, he lamented that, even though environmental history rooted in the modern environmental movement in the 1960s and as such was

born out of moral and political purposes and commitments – and thus also ‘advocacy’<sup>16</sup> environmental history was still in the 1990s closely linked with academia. It had not attained a powerful public voice.<sup>17</sup> When environmental history developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was without a ‘public history dimension’<sup>18</sup> although there had been obvious reasons for connecting environmental history and public history from the beginning. Melosi argued that public historians are keen to connect the past with the present by using history to give context and insight on contemporary discussions – the future of the environment being an exemplary issue – and historians and institutions outside academia already work with environmental projects.<sup>19</sup>

These shared interests between environmental historians and public historians pointed to the potential for merging public and environmental history. The main obstacle was the question of advocacy. This was perceived differently in academic environmental history and in the public history arena – as ‘bias’ in the latter and ‘conviction’ in the former.<sup>20</sup> In Melosi’s words, there was ‘a need to address frontally the question of advocacy.’<sup>21</sup> It imposed limits on all historians interested in the environment. Instead, he argued for a different approach and methodology for the intersecting field: Environmental history should not be a ‘field of study’ (a point of view) but rather a ‘mode of thinking’ (a perspective) – a ‘tool [...] for studying human interaction with the physical environment (natural and built) that emphasizes communication and audience.’<sup>22</sup> This required highlighting not only time and chronology but also place (space). Landscapes in the public realm, as well as written documents, should be considered essential research tools. This framework would offer an understanding of humans’ relationships to their physical worlds, according to Melosi.<sup>23</sup>

Although an explicit use of Melosi’s methodological approach is rare, several public environmental historians, especially in the beginning of the 2000s, were interested in humans’ and communities’ relations to their landscapes and physical environments.<sup>24</sup> American historian David Glassberg’s article about public historians’ engagement in landscape interpretation provides a good example of how such an approach was carried out. Glassberg convincingly demonstrates how landscapes are products of human interaction with natural environments over time and how public historians detect nature-culture interactions and reveal how humans have shaped land for mostly economic reasons when various groups of people in the past have made use of land in several ways and perceived land and given it meaning.<sup>25</sup> He categorizes three professional situations where public historians typically engage in landscape interpretation: analyzing previous land uses on a site. Sometimes to testify as experts in land use conflicts; interpreting landscapes to determine a potential case of preservation; and interpreting and communicating landscapes directly to the public by creating exhibitions, walking tours and public programs.<sup>26</sup> Glassberg is particularly preoccupied with how public historians can deepen residents’ perception of their contemporary surrounding environment by identifying natural, economic and cultural forces that have shaped their surroundings over time. He argues that public historians thus can ‘add a critical sense of location’ to residents’ more common and widespread practice of attaching emotions and memories to locations determining their interpretations.<sup>27</sup>

Philip Scarpino’s article about environmental themes in exhibitions that are ‘literally as big as all outdoors’<sup>28</sup> demonstrates his material or physical interpretation of environmental surroundings. Scarpino argues for a historical interpretation of relationships between humans and nature amongst public historians to emphasize nature as a cultural construction in their communication to the public. For instance, he develops a series of questions about people’s past relationship with nature and the outcome of their actions based on their definitions and understandings of nature.<sup>29</sup> Scarpino does not perceive of this as an easy task. Museum visitors are not passive recipients of information, he reminds the reader, but bring with them their own knowledges and experiences. It is thus a challenge for public historians to make clear that for most contemporary people an interpretative angle on human-nature interactions is influenced by concepts of environment and ecology. But people in the past likewise made their interpretations in their own time.<sup>30</sup>

In my interpretation, implications of using a methodological approach grounded in concepts like landscapes, physical environments and human-nature interactions emphasize a spatial and local

understanding of the environment as well as an understanding of the environment as a vulnerable entity subject to human influence. Even though human-nature interactions are considered related, the implication of this understanding is still dualistic and separates the human from nature. The basic idea seems to be that nature appeared a certain (stable) way until humans changed it to something else. However, not only spatiality but also temporality plays a role in this approach. Historical thinking is evident in the interpretation of landscapes and ideas about nature changing over time evident in Glassberg's and Scarpino's preoccupation with connecting past and present issues: Glassberg through memory and emotions and Scarpino through experiences and ideas.

## Climate Change and Sustainability

The above-outlined approach was widespread in the early 2000s until the American journal *The Public Historian* issued a themed issue on environmental sustainability and climate change in 2014. It marked a turning point in public environmental history as it explicitly introduced new concepts and frameworks to the field which are still in use today.<sup>31</sup> 'Sustainable development' is a concept made famous by the UN-Brundtland report *Our Common Future* (1987) that formulated the demand 'to ensure [the world] meets the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'<sup>32</sup> 'Climate change' was likewise brought to prominence by the UN and its environmental network Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, founded in 1988) to provide policymakers with scientific assessments on climate change. Both concepts became influential in the late twentieth century.<sup>33</sup> Even though they share characteristics of being influential, rooted in the UN and made famous in the same period although they have longer histories, they were developed for different purposes and imply different perspectives – yet combined in *The Public Historian's* theme issue. In the following, I will unfold an example of an approach making use of climate change and reflect more broadly on the experiences within public environmental history of using the framework of sustainability.

Based on research from environmental history and broadly the humanities on issues about nature, ecology and climate change, David Glassberg presents three ways historians can challenge public ideas about nature and climate and narrate new ones:

- Nature and ecologies are not stable or balanced but rather characterized by discontinuity, disturbance, contingency and constant change. Global temperature swings as well occur over time.
- Rises of temperatures above their historical range of variability is caused by humans (but effect humans unequally, globally as well as locally). The idea about anthropogenic climate change thus brings forward the idea that nature cannot be disentangled from culture.
- Although the public is used to encountering climate models (most famously the 'hockey-stick' graph) predicting the future, changes can appear, because changes in human values and cultures are not incorporated in the models.<sup>34</sup>

Glassberg, however, is critical of the narratives historians so far have provided to public conversation on climate change:

- Stories of past civilizations collapsing due to failed environmental adjustments consequently drawing attention to crisis.
- Stories of environmentally sustainable communities, often in indigenous cultures before the expansion of capitalism, offering the public a (romantic and nostalgic) hope that harmony with nature could be rediscovered. These stories appeared disconnected from the reality of the present.

- Stories of past societies' resilience in recovering from wrenching environmental changes demonstrating adaptability and courage.<sup>35</sup>

Glassberg introduces an alternative interpretation and approach arguing that climate change 'fundamentally challenges a community's sense of place, and assumptions that their familiar natural surroundings will continue to exist as they remember.'<sup>36</sup> Hence, public historians ought to intervene responsibly in this memory work to support communities relating their past and present. As publics are not accustomed to think of environments in terms of change and unstableness, it is challenging to think of them behaving differently from how people remember them. Nevertheless, this is the process public historians should engage with.<sup>37</sup>

Sustainability seems to be a slippery concept within public environmental history. The introduction to the themed issue of *The Public Historian* explicitly acknowledged this and discussed the concept being vulgarized.<sup>38</sup> The fact that several of the contributions did not make use of it or only referred to it descriptively, which also seems to be the case with later examples, supports my interpretation that it is mostly used superficially in public environmental history. The concept does, though, appear to be more productively used in relation to discussions of preservation in public environmental history. But it does not seem to include reflections of engaging with publics but rather with buildings and historic areas in the public.<sup>39</sup>

The concept of climate change moved public environmental historians' focus away from local as well as spatial and temporal understandings of physical environments and oriented them towards global issues of climate, weather and critical or even crisis matters that were experienced locally. This strengthened the local-global connection as well as the entanglement of human and natural history and entailed a focus on environmental instability. In this approach, too, temporality – especially change, historical time and memory – is evident. Glassberg was especially preoccupied with connecting historical time with people's memory in novel ways to support their thinking about changes in the future. The concept of sustainability has other implications. In temporal terms, sustainability primarily emphasizes the future and less about the past. Even though it is used more descriptively in public environmental history, it still implies something when public environmental historians make use of it. The title of the afterword in *The Public Historian's* themed issue, 'Let's Sustain This', is illustrative. I interpret this to be an inviting message to public historians that re-introduces the question of advocacy. It implies a tone of concern and agency which the concept of climate change does not. Rather than implying unpredictable weather phenomena that humans cannot handle or hinder, it indicates that environmental issues can be dealt with by humans – in particular by public environmental historians.

## The Anthropocene and Geology

Another conceptual reorientation has happened in recent years when the Anthropocene as a geological concept came into use in public environmental history. Taking the public and academic popularity of the concept into consideration, I expect interest in the Anthropocene to increase amongst public environmental historians in the coming years.

To explore the potential of powerful historical knowledge, Swedish historian Kenneth Nordgren is concerned with how the Anthropocene is narrated publicly, specifically in history education. He argues that the geological and historical should be combined, although the Anthropocene implies a different periodization that does not begin with traditional topics like empires, nation building or information technology, but instead begins with what he considers the wicked problem of identifying humanity as a geological force and making the Earth a historical actor. He also makes another point troubling historical temporality. The Anthropocene pushes in two temporal directions: the geological dimension

directs attention towards humanity's early history and climatic and natural changes; the beginning of the Anthropocene as an epoqe directs attention towards contemporary history.<sup>40</sup> (I will return to this doubleness related to the entwinement of geological and historical time later.) Nordgren's article is short and concise. But it clearly signals that an implication of engaging with the Anthropocene challenges how history is often narrated publicly and by public historians and that it implies a difference between historical and geological thinking.

This is also evident in British historian Ross J. Wilson's article about publics' encounters with dinosaur parks. He argues that '[t]here is a great need for public historians and heritage professionals to take dinosaurs very seriously',<sup>41</sup> signalling a notion of natural history and geological time being alien to public history. Wilson analyzes the interpretative communication in numerous dinosaur parks across Europe and Northern America making these distinct points:

- The parks place visitors in scenarios providing a space that challenge the idea of being human and prompting visitors to think beyond the present and beyond anthropocentric systems because they are reminded of being just one of a number of species that have lived on Earth.
- Communicating this distant past as a 'lived experience' and a journey back in time serves the point of emphasizing an emotional attachment rather than an alienation to the 'deep time' of Earth's history.
- Fear and danger characterize the communication demonstrating that humans are not dominant but rather threatened. This supports the engagement with the threat of human extinction.

As such the parks demonstrate that life on Earth is precarious, and that the Anthropocene is one geological phase amongst others of the planet which makes the planet's current inhabitants potentially faced with extinction.<sup>42</sup> Wilson further argues that dinosaur parks have the potential to transform the public's current relation with environments but that this environmental history engagement has been neglected. Public history and environmental heritage can intersect and the engagement with natural heritage can be fertilized.<sup>43</sup>

In very different ways, the two examples make clear that dealing with the Anthropocene implies dealing with the unfamiliar time of geology for public environmental history. Within academic history and particularly within the field of history and theory, the Anthropocene has been widely discussed, not the least due to the implications of dealing with a geological temporality fundamentally different to that of historical time. This discussion is relevant for public environmental history as it can stimulate reflections on the implications of an Anthropocene methodological approach to environmental issues and engagements with publics.

## Geological and Historical Thinking about the Anthropocene

Although the Indian global historian Dipesh Chakrabarty was not the first to discuss the Anthropocene in relation to history as a discipline, he has raised a greater interest among historians about the idea, and persistently and most profoundly has reflected on the implications of the concept within academic history.<sup>44</sup> He particularly considers how the concept challenges historical thinking in his much-cited 2009 article 'The Climate of History: Four Theses', where he argues for a new methodology incorporating deep history and species history but even more explicitly in his 2018 article 'Anthropocene Time'. In the latter, Chakrabarty focuses on geological and historical temporalities in scientific and political debates about the Anthropocene by further developing ideas about human-centered versus planet-centered thinking put forward by Jan Zalasiewicz, the British-Polish geologist and current member as well as former chair of Anthropocene Working Group (the group preparing the official proposal suggesting the Anthropocene).

Basically, quoting Zalasiewicz, geological time ‘at heart ... is *simply time* – albeit in very large amounts’.<sup>45</sup> He pursues Zalasiewicz’ differentiation between planet-centered geological time (which Chakrabarty calls ‘Earth history’) and human-centered historical time (which he calls ‘world history’, ‘human history’ or ‘human world history’) and further develops this by focusing specifically on their temporal implications. There are some tangible differences between the two temporal ways of thinking. For example, Earth history involves tens of millions of years whereas world history deals with a much shorter period – usually, the last four thousand years.<sup>46</sup> World history most often covers the last five hundred years at most that constitutes the history of capitalism. The invention of agriculture, Europe’s colonization, the Industrial Revolution or the first testing of the atomic bomb are often pointed to in periodisation.<sup>47</sup> The periodisation of the Anthropocene is still being debated. Also, in terms of futurity and speed, Earth history differs from human history. Earth processes appear extremely slow (for example the renewal of soil, fossil fuel and biodiversity) compared to how humans are used to thinking about time. This long-drawn-out perspective has to do with a critical question in planet-centered thinking, namely if the planet in the future will be habitable for complex life in general – not necessarily for human life.<sup>48</sup> Concretely, this challenges historical thinking and disputes most people’s sense of history. It is a common idea in historical thinking that the past, present and future are connected by a certain continuity of human experience. But the current planetary climate crisis suggests that this continuity could be disrupted as the future might be without humans.<sup>49</sup>

Abstractly, the Anthropocene also challenges historical thinking because it entwines two different time scales – geological and historical time – and demands that people think in a framework of non-synchronous temporalities.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps because of this, the Anthropocene has always been understood and debated within both time scales even amongst natural scientists. The Anthropocene has had two focal points since Crutzen and Stoermer suggested it: a scientific one involving measurements and a moral-political one involving questions about culpability and responsibility for global warming so far and an ethical horizon for humanity’s future.<sup>51</sup> As such, the Anthropocene debate has always been heavily preoccupied with issues such as capitalism, rich nations, colonialism, global inequality and climate justice. Alternative terms such as ‘the Capitalocene’, emphasizing capitalism and not humanity in general as the guilty party, has also been suggested.<sup>52</sup>

Chakrabarty is critical of the moral-political focus’ domination because it leaves out questions of geological time.<sup>53</sup> He recognizes that capitalist globalization exists as well as its critiques, but this critique and environmental history and historical thinking about the Anthropocene is not sufficient.<sup>54</sup> Without Earth system science we would not know about planetary climate change. And even more importantly, if Earth-history processes that challenge a human sense of time are not considered, we disregard the predicament – a mass extinction of species – that confronts humans today.<sup>55</sup> Hence, geological temporality, which is fundamentally different from historical thinking, is indispensable for historians.

The Anthropocene is good at alerting humans of danger. The current dissemination of the Anthropocene in public culture is thus, according to Chakrabarty, productive. It orients humans’ everyday thoughts towards geological facts about the Earth’s instability and drives us to perceive humans as geological agents although it is difficult to experience ourselves as such.<sup>56</sup>

## Environmental Engagement and Public History’s Relation to the Public

My mapping of public environmental history indicates that we have a plurality of concepts and methodologies to productively address environmental concerns in public and to engage with publics about them.

In the last three decades, public historians have raised several different environmental concerns publically and engaged with different publics about them. There has been a development in concepts and

methodologies that have moved thinking about them from landscapes and other local environments and ideas about nature to climate change, environmental instabilities and contingencies, local-global connections and human-nature entanglements, ending with concerns about the Earth and human extinction. Laying it out like that runs the risk of producing a hierarchy in environmental concerns within public environmental history where some environmental issues and societal engagements might appear old-fashioned and others more contemporary and progressive. This is not my intention. All environmental issues are valid. It is still relevant to engage with local publics about the natural, economic and cultural forces that have shaped and still shape their surroundings, just like it is to engage with publics about a potential sixth extinction and planetary issues.

There is also room for more environmental issues to be aired. My historiographical overview gives priority to concepts and approaches which means it does not reveal all environmental issues dealt with by public environmental historians. Pollution, waste, toxicity, food security, biodiversity, energy, resources, consumption, industrial and agricultural production, and many more issues, are all legitimate topics for public environmental history. The more the merrier. Obviously, it is important, though, to consider a relevant connection between environmental concern and concept.

Likewise, it is important to reflect on the implications of concepts and concerns when it comes to societal engagement with publics. Focusing on landscapes shaped over time or cases of pollution supports a local environmental understanding which probably appeals to some publics but might appear limited in scope to others who would rather engage in global issues like climate change or environmental justice that are stronger in public media and environmental agendas. Although it remains important to communicate environmental local-global connections, an implication of focusing on local surroundings 'out there' might be a risk of imposing a dualistic human-nature view to publics. On the other hand, it can spark greater environmental interest that potentially can stimulate environmental changes on a local level which is easier than on a national or global level.

The implications of making use of the concept of climate change are many. Glassberg unfolds them competently in his 2014 article showing us that there are several public ideas about the concept of climate change that needs to be challenged and re-narrated. This tells us that an implication of using climate change as a methodological approach and framework is that there are embedded stories particularly about a global crisis, an already predicted and inevitable (hotter) future and misconceptions of nature as balanced and stable that are strong in the public mind. It is difficult to estimate the consequences of questioning or discussing such stories and it might differ between publics and even between individuals in terms of what it means to have ideas contested or challenged.

The Anthropocene is probably the most complicated concept for public environmental historians to use. It poses several challenges and even a paradox to public history not yet considered within the field but discussed in outline by Chakrabarty's. Not only is the Anthropocene's geological temporality a challenge to historical thinking because it entwines the timescales of geology and history, as he argues. Besides historical thinking, memory is another temporality that is strong within public history. A serious implication of the Anthropocene is that it squeezes collective memories as well as individual memory work out of view or at least makes it difficult to include them. Memory as a temporality is well-incorporated into the field of public history and fundamental for all publics and human in general. Poor possibilities for this temporality to thrive runs the risk of creating a distance between public history and publics. Perhaps public historians can develop methods to stimulate memories and experiences of being geological agents or find other ways of supporting the connection between memory and geology like Glassberg has developed methods to connect place and memory in the framework of landscape and climate change.

Another implication of the Anthropocene is that it imposes an extremely slow and long chronological timeframe that is unfamiliar if not foreign to ordinary people. Public environmental historians might



consider how they can support this way of thinking. Wilson suggests that public encounters with simulated dinosaurs develop this understanding but there are probably other ways of communicating and other environmental topics that can be effective too. A third implication is that the Anthropocene carries with it the idea about a future without humans and other species of today – a mass extinction of species. This future-orientation highlights its temporal character. It is difficult to estimate if this implication is a strength or a weakness. What does this dystopian future scenario (clashing with the concept of sustainability) do to people?

Chakrabarty considers this idea a strength because it alerts humans of danger, and without this threat he believes we disregard today's fundamental predicament. He might be right. The tone of alarm might even induce an increase in environmental societal engagement (if not sustain, let's at least improve conditions) which has the potential of improving public history's relationship with publics. On the other hand, if the future (without humans) is already predicted anyway, the tone of alarm can lead to a feeling of despondency and despair and limit possible scopes for action. This runs the risk of challenging or even dismantling public history's relationship with the public. Thus the Anthropocene is a paradox to public environmental history, but also a framework for further developing the field.

## Endnotes

1. Finn Arne Jørgensen and Dolly Jørgensen, 'The Anthropocene as a History of Technology', *Technology and Culture*, vol 57, no 1, 2016, p231.
2. Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer, 'The "Anthropocene"', in *Global Change Newsletter*, no 41, 2000, p18.
3. Jeffrey Stine, 'Public History and the Environment', in James B. Gardner and Paula Hamilton (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Public History*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2017, p194. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199766024.013.10>
4. Christian Wicke, 'The Anthropocene in History and Historiography', in *Bloomsbury Theory and Method*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2022, np. Others have made similar observations. For instance Marit Ruge Bjærke and Kyrre Kverndokk, *Fremtiden er nå. Klimaendringenes tider*, Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo, 2022, p21.
5. Jeffrey Stine uses 'public environmental history' and 'public environmental historians' in his description of how environmental history became an area of expertise and employment for public historians. Although it occurs meaningful and evident, it does not seem to be a widespread expression. Stine neither explains nor claims it. He does not comment on his use of it at all. I understand 'public environmental history' as a field where public historians communicate environmental history to an audience and/or when historians work with environmental issues outside academia. Jeffrey Stine, 'Public History and the Environment', in Gardner and Hamilton (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Public History*, p190.
6. For other historical overviews of the intersecting field of public history and environmental history, see Stine 2017; Fabíula Sevilha, 'Environmental History and Public History: Perspectives for (re)igniting the dialogue in Brazil', *Revista Brasileira de História*, vol 43, no 93, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-93472023v43n93-15-a>
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9. Gardner and Hamilton 2017, p1; Kean and Ashton, 2012, p15; Hilda Kean, 'Introduction', in Hilda Kean and Paul Martin (eds), *The Public History Reader*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2013, pxiii.
10. Gardner and Hamilton 2017, p1.
11. For a deeper exposition, see for instance Gardner and Hamilton 2017, pp1-22; Kean and Ashton 2012, pp9-15.
12. A similar effort was later done in Australia by Peter Osborne in 'Environmental history method in public history: opportunities and obstacles in south-west Queensland', in *Public History Review*, vol 11, 2004, and recently in a Brazilian public history context by Sevilha 2023.
13. Martin V. Melosi, 'Public History and the Environment', *The Public Historian*, vol 15, no 1.
14. Melosi and Scarpino, *Public History and the Environment*.
15. Some of them are briefly summarized in the anthology's introduction too, exposing a moderate overlap of the two publications.
16. Melosi 1993, p11. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3378632>
17. *ibid*, pp11-14.
18. *ibid*, p14.
19. *ibid*, p15.
20. *ibid*, p15.
21. *ibid*, p17.
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23. *ibid*, pp18; 20.
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37. *ibid*, p27-29.
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46. Chakrabarty, 2009, p212.
47. Chakrabarty, 2018, p6.
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49. Chakrabarty, 2009, pp197-198.
50. *ibid*, p212; Chakrabarty, 2018, p6.
51. *ibid*, p9.
52. *ibid*, pp9-11.
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