



MASTERS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES
**EVSS CURRENT STUDENT HIGHLIGHT:
JUDY TAYLOR**

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" I grew up in Connecticut, near New Haven (a.k.a. the land of good pizza) and went to the University of Connecticut to study geoscience, environmental studies, and GIS. After I graduated, I moved to Boston and worked in catastrophe risk management for a small insurance company, which got me interested in natural disasters and their impacts on people.

While working with Dr. Sandifer at CofC, I've had the opportunity to be involved in an initiative called EJ Strong, which is a collaboration between researchers from DHEC, CofC, Univ. of SC, and Clemson that has been holding educational workshops to train leaders in underserved communities across South Carolina in disaster risk reduction and self-assessment. This has been a great experience for me, as I've been able to meet and collaborate with a wonderful, diverse group of people, and I've also learned a lot about on-the-ground environmental justice work and hazard management from the perspective of the communities facing these issues.

Dr. Sandifer has also been helping me develop my thesis, which is a participatory study that seeks to gather and assess concerns from residents in the neck of the peninsula towards the proposed Charleston seawall, which is planned to terminate just shy of these neck communities.



All quotes from Judy Taylor.

I have been interviewing residents and plan to develop educational material using GIS to investigate and visualize people's concerns, which will eventually contribute to a discussion on next steps and how to mitigate potential impacts.

I first became interested in environmental justice after taking a few classes throughout undergrad and grad school that got me out of the classroom and allowed me to work with communities and their concerns related to climate change and disasters. These hands-on experiences were eye-opening, and I quickly learned that certain groups of people, due to both historical marginalization and social barriers to empowerment, are bearing the brunt of climate change impacts while also having the least access to resources needed to mitigate and recover from these impacts. While I was learning more about these issues, the Black Lives Matter movement was gaining momentum, and I realized I could use my background and position as a student in environmental studies to contribute in a small way to the recognition and resolution of the struggle facing communities of color in our country."



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