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Environmental Science 2023
Sustainable Systems Concentration

UConn Climate Corps.

My experience working with UConn's climate adaptation program was very enticing. The independent study course was designed to allow us students to manage our projects at our own pace with weekly check-ins and a few deliverables to keep us on track. Before the semester began, we already had been given our team and resources for our given climate corps project. I had been selected to be a part of the Latimer Point project team working with UConn student Summer Mitchell and project contact Susan Raffetto. Early on in the semester, we immediately wanted to familiarize ourselves with the project site area of Latimer Point and set up a visit. From there we knew we had to provide a land use assessment of the area along with a climate vulnerability assessment to further evaluate the land's composition vulnerability. Along the way in creating these assessments, we had gotten to know some of the residents of the Point and their concerns regarding the site. We took the opportunity to implement their concerns into our project by adding a native plant selection within the climate vulnerability assessment along with printable outreach materials regarding plantings, to disperse among the community. Some of the challenges faced within this project were the freedom of building your own schedule. This was something out of the ordinary, as most classes provided at UConn are set to a strict syllabus. This

course had the luxury of no time constraints other than handing in final presentations by a given date. This challenged me as the organization of materials and data had to be collected well before we could start creating a vulnerability assessment. Besides the struggles of organization, this project was very exciting to be a part of. Latimer Point is a beautiful area settled on the coast of Stonington and Mystic, CT. The experience of being on the point and interacting with residents and getting to know them on a personal level was definitely my favorite part of this project. Latimer Point has a strong sense of community, meaning that this project assessment and outreach had to be tailored to the personal wishes of the residents. This happened to be fairly easy for our team, as our project contact, Susan, kept in touch daily and provided loads of information on the Point even from the early 1940s. Towards the end of the semester, everything had been finding its place in regard to our assessments and outreach materials. Our climate corps instructor Juliana Barrett, with the help of David Dickson and Zbigniew Grabowski, reviewed our project and provided insightful feedback on different plant species, coastal flood zones, and stormwater mitigation. After a finalized review through Susan, we have come to terms with the end of this adaptation project. Throughout this whole process, I have grown as a person in many more ways than I could imagine. Working directly on sight in a hands-on project providing for the future sustainability of communities is something I truly value and hope to continue in the future, wherever I may end up.