

Honoring and Healing Our Relationship with the Water



Artist Name: Vidya Balasubramanyam (She/Her/Hers)

What prompted you to create this piece? I am actually not the artist but the curator of this exhibit! Working across different coastal states and territories on habitat restoration and so many other projects, I wanted to personalize people's connection and disconnection from the water. I grew up feeling very disconnected to the water due to systemic barriers and it felt so isolating to be in a field that had ableist associations with the outdoors. And so I decided I want to tell my own story and also uplift and amplify others' stories. The actual digital art was made by Lauren Boritzke-Smith with the narrative development being curated by Jothsna Harris.

Biography: I work for the Coastal States Organization as the Program Director. In my role, I facilitate peer learning, inter agency coordination, and lots of different projects across the many coastal states and territories. I love working on topics relating to environmental justice in the coastal context and have been infusing more arts, storytelling, and consensus building emergent modalities into my work. I used to work for the NHDES Coastal Program and then worked in the Great Lakes and now I work nationally. I love thinking about the interconnectivity of different coastal regions and how stories and lessons can percolate and enrich seemingly separate coastal regions. I've learned that our struggles are all so interconnected and the only way to overcome them is to think globally, act locally."

Website: www.coastalstates.org/healing-our-relationship-with-great-lakes-habitats-honoring-our-stories/

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