

Whose Land is it Anyway:

The Fight for the Carolina Coast

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Individual Website

Growing up in South Carolina, I have seen all that the coast has to offer: development up to the shoreline, destruction in the aftermath of a hurricane, and yet again the reconstruction of all that was lost. This continued cycle of destruction and reconstruction sparked an interest because, in my mind, someone should have stepped in and advised individuals to break the cycle and stop building along the coast. After some research, I found the 1992 *Lucas v. South Carolina Coastal Council* case that was the initial basis of my project.

I began conducting research by examining the *Lucas* case. After reading through the opinion of the Supreme Court, I realized that this was a much broader issue. Slowly, I began to backtrack through South Carolina history and find the roots of the battle for the coast. To my surprise, I learned that there have been issues over the coast since the earliest days of settlement. After looking at key points such as the Carolina Charter, the Sea Islands Hurricane, and Hurricane Hazel, I began to realize that this was a much larger issue than I thought. It was then that I expanded my project to encompass the total "fight for the Carolina coast" throughout the history of the state.

I elected to present my information in the form of a website because it allows the viewer to be in control of the presentation. Websites enable the audience to be interactive by watching videos, seeing photographs up close, and being able to read primary source documents for themselves in conjunction with the analysis. I began to "tell my story" across the website and interspersed interactive elements throughout to further the content and to keep the audience engaged. In addition, I added transcripts of primary source documents to allow for viewers to read the history for themselves.

My project analyzes the rights of the individual to live along the coast versus the responsibility of the state to protect the citizens and their property. From the earliest days of the Carolina colony, citizens have felt as though it was their right to occupy and modify the land. South Carolinians had to leave for the coast during the summer months because of the mosquito-borne disease that was common along the artificial bodies of water that were created to yield better harvests. Even when presented with hurricanes and destruction, South Carolinians kept going back to the coast simply because they could. In the 1970s, the state took the first steps to protect the citizens and the land through the Coastal Zone Management Act and the Beachfront Management Act. However, individuals such as David Lucas believed that it was their right to build along the coast in the late 1980s. The *Lucas vs. South Carolina Coastal Council* case epitomizes the right of the individual versus the responsibility of the state in the fight for the Carolina coast. This issue is still relevant today as the government is reconsidering and allowing development along the coast.