

From Salt and Soul to Capitol Hill

The ocean has been a constant backdrop to Diya Comar's life – one for which she has always cared deeply. As she got older, she began to understand the environmental issues that impacted the places she loved most, from coastal erosion and plastic pollution to changes in water quality.

Comar decided to do something about it.

Salt & Soul began as a project in a summer sustainability program at the University of Florida, but the Bolles senior saw an opportunity to take it further. Today, according to Comar, Salt & Soul's mission is "to make environmental advocacy more understandable, accessible and actionable, especially for young people."

"There are already incredible environmental organizations doing important work, so I never wanted Salt & Soul to simply repeat what they were doing. Instead, I wanted it to serve as a bridge between those organizations and people who want to help but may not know where to begin," Comar said.

A senior at The Bolles School, Comar said she designed Salt & Soul to engage young people and meet them wherever they are on their advocacy journey. Advocacy, she said, can seem like a daunting task; Salt & Soul breaks it down into smaller steps to show people that even small impacts can lead to powerful change.

"Salt & Soul tries to show that advocacy can begin much smaller," Comar said. "It can mean volunteering at a cleanup, signing a petition, learning about an issue, changing a habit or sharing a resource with someone else. Those actions can eventually grow into much larger involvement."

On the Salt & Soul website, users can review different resources that Comar curated based on one simple question: "Would this help someone understand an environmental issue differently or give them something they can actually do about it?"

From there, Comar developed informative and interactive tools that both inform and inspire, from the water footprint calculator and ocean plastic tracker to the disappearing coastlines map. She also provides access to different volunteer opportunities, petitions and environmental articles.

"My hope is that people leave the website understanding that environmental issues aren't distant problems happening somewhere else; they are connected to the water we use, the products we buy, the beaches we visit, and the communities we live in," Comar said. "

Because of the platform she created, Comar secured an internship in Congress over the summer, where she saw firsthand how environmental policy is discussed and implemented at the federal level.

"That experience showed me that protecting the environment doesn't have to belong to one political party and made me even more interested in the connection between environmental advocacy and policy," Comar said.

Comar plans to continue expanding Salt & Soul after she graduates high school and begins college, hoping to give other students a launching pad to their own journeys into environmental advocacy and preservation.

"Whether that leads someone to attend their first beach cleanup, become involved in environmental policy, pursue research, or even create an initiative of their own, I want young people to see that caring about an issue can turn into something tangible," Comar said.



Diya Comar on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., during the summer of 2026.



Diya Comar during her summer internship with U.S. Rep. Nick LaLota (NY-01), where she gained firsthand experience with environmental policy and the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus.

Salt & Soul: Healthy Seas. Healthy Lives.
www.saltandsoul.org