

Current information: ofvila@ncsu.edu | oliviafvila@gmail.com
Current affiliation: North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC

Education

- 2018 — Present **PhD in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management (PRTM)**, College of Natural Resources (CNR), *North Carolina State University (NCSU)*
Dissertation: Equity in disaster recovery and hazard mitigation: The role recognition and leadership
Committee: Dr. Bethany Cutts (chair), Dr. Gavin Smith, Dr. Whitney Knollenberg, Dr. Louie Rivers
- 2016 — 2018 **Master of Science in Geography**
Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN)
Thesis: Experiences of natural climate variability in Newfoundland and Labrador
Committee Members: Dr. Joel Finnis (chair), Dr. Mark CJ Stoddart, Dr. Atanu Sarkar
- 2016 — 2018 **Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Psychology *Cum Laude***
Colorado State University (CSU)
Thesis: Public response to severe weather warnings: A pilot study
Committee Members: Dr. Lori Peek, Dr. Ernest Chavez

Research and Professional Interests

Keywords: hazard mitigation; disaster recovery; environmental justice; social vulnerability; recognition; participatory democracy; policy process; leadership; all-hazards; climate change

Publications

Peer reviewed publications

- Smith, G., Saunders, W., **Vilá, O.**, Gyawali, S., Bhattarai, S., & Lawdley, E. (2021). A Comparative Analysis of Hazard-Prone Housing Acquisition Programs in United States and New Zealand Communities. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*.
- Smith, G., & **Vilá, O.** (2020). A National Evaluation of State and Territory Roles in Hazard Mitigation: Building Local Capacity to Implement FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants. *Sustainability*, 12(23).

Other publications

- Brune, S., **Vilá, O.**, Lawson, D., & Knollenberg, W. (Forthcoming). Family Farms' Resilience under COVID-19 Restrictions in North Carolina. *Quick Response Research Report*. Boulder, CO: Natural Hazards Center.
- Brune, S., **Vilá, O.**, Lawson, D., & Knollenberg, W. (2021) *Four Lessons to Build Resilience in Agritourism*. Agricultural Publication AG-901 (Factsheet). North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, Raleigh, NC. Available on-line at: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/four-lessons-to-build-resilience-in-agritourism>
- Vilá, O.** (2020, December). The Winding Path of Research: Flood Risk, Recognition, and the Latino and Latina Community in Wilmington, NC. *Coastwatch. Winter 2020(4)*.
- Smith, G., **Vilá, O.**, & Caverly, G., (2020). A National Evaluation of State Roles in Hazard Mitigation: Building Local Capacity to Implement FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants. DesignSafe-CI (Research Instrument). <https://doi.org/10.17603/ds2-sjbv-eg87>.
- Vilá, O.**, Bray, L. A., Cutts B., Harris, A., & Hornsby, G., (2020). Citizen Science in the Post-Disaster Context. *Quick Response Research Report*. Boulder, CO: Natural Hazards Center.
- Bray, L, **Vilá, O.**, Cutts, B., Lowry, D., Crites, M., Goins, H., McMenamin, N., Legerton, M., & Harris, A., (2020). "Promoting Environmental Justice through Participatory Disaster Research: Hurricane Recovery in Robeson County, North Carolina." *Carolina Planning Journal*.
- Vilá, O.** & Higgs, I. (2019, May 13). *Minority SURGE capacity in disasters*. STEM for All Multiplex (Video Showcase). Available online at: <https://multiplex.videohall.com/presentations/1439?search=d761b805938e12ed8a6f18acbfa11a43828bd90e>

Manuscripts in preparation

- Vilá, O.**, Bray, L. A., Cutts B., Harris, A., & Hornsby, G. (*In preparation*). Shifting Terrains: Soil and Environmental Health Risk Perceptions Following Floods.
- Vilá, O.**, Finnis, J., Koitnurm, M., Stoddart, M., & Sarkar, A. (*In preparation*). Climate Autobiography Timeline: Adapting Timeline Research Methods to the Study of Climate Perceptions and Local Climate Knowledge.

Research Grants

- 2020 Brune, S., **Vilá, O.**, Lawson, D., Knollenberg, W. (PI). Quick-Response Research Grant. Funded by the Natural Hazards Center for "Family Farms' Resilience and Challenges under COVID-19 Containment Measures in North Carolina". \$2285.
- 2019 **Vilá, O.**, Cutts, B. (PI). Graduate Student Research Grant. Funded by the Water Resources Research Institute (WRRI) and North Carolina Sea Grant (NCSG) for "Participatory asset and problem mapping: A citizen science approach for documenting post disaster flooding and priorities in coastal North Carolina". \$9569.

- 2018 **Vilá, O.**, Cutts, B. (PI). Quick-Response Research Grant. Funded by the Natural Hazards Center for “*Environmental justice and recovery: Citizen science in the post-disaster context*”. \$2427.
- 2017 **Vilá, O.**, Stoddart, M. (PI). Quick-Response Research Grant (declined). Funded by the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction for “*A snapshot of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico: How locals prepared, experienced, and responded*”. \$4494.
- 2017 **Vilá, O.**, Koitnurm, M., Finnis, J. (PI). Research Grant. Funded by the Institute for Social and Economic Research for “*Perceiving climate variability: A community-based study for understanding and interpretation*”. \$3800.

Awards, Honors, and Fellowships

- 2021 CNR Graduate Research Symposium 3MT first place winner
- 2021 Honorable Mention for the Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship
- 2020 Extraordinary Achievements Award, Department of Landscape Architecture, NCSU
- 2020 Graduate Student Association Travel Assistance Award
- 2020 CNR Graduate Student Research Symposium 3MT second place winner
- 2019 Chancellors Creating Community Award for Outstanding Graduate Student
- 2019 Diversity Enhancement Grant. Funded by The Graduate School at NCSU
- 2019 UNC Campus Scholarship
- 2019 CitiSci19 Environmental Justice Conference Scholarship. Funded by the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences.
- 2018 Southern Regional Education Board Fellowship (SREB). Funded by the Institutional Doctoral Scholars Program at NCSU
- 2018 Minority Scholars from Under-Represented Groups in Engineering and Social Science (**SURGE**) Capacity in Disasters Fellowship, NSF INCLUDES project
- 2018 University Graduate Fellowship. Funded by the Office of the Provost at North Carolina State University
- 2016 Master’s Fellowship. Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Marine Environmental Observation Prediction and Response Network

Presentations at Professional Meetings

Oral Presentations

- 2021 **Vilá, O.** “Environmental justice and disaster recovery: The role of leadership in fostering recognition of the Latinx community in Wilmington, NC”. 2021 Carolinas Climate Resilience Conference, Durham, NC.
- 2021 **Vilá, O.** “Promoting equity in disaster recovery and hazard mitigation through leadership”. American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting (virtual).

- 2021 **Vilá, O.**, Smith, G., Gyawali, S., Bhattarai, S. “Using environmental justice to think about equity in FEMA HMA participation”. Texas A&M University 2021 Disaster PRIMR Conference (virtual).
- 2021 **Vilá, O.** “Project BRIDGE in Robeson County, NC”. Southeast & Caribbean Disaster Recovery Partnership (SCDRP) 2021 Meeting (virtual).
- 2020 **Vilá, O.**, Bray, L., Cutts., “Using ethics to inform post-disaster research design: The case of project BRIDGE in Robeson County, North Carolina”. 45th Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop, Broomfield, CO (virtual).
- 2018 **Vilá, O.** & Cutts, B. “Climate justice in cyberspace: Can the internet amplify and connect marginalized voices?” 2018 Carolinas Climate Resilience Conference, Columbia, SC
- 2018 **Vilá, O.** “Lessons from local discussions on the subject of natural climate variability”. American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA
- 2018 **Vilá, O.** “Lessons from local discussions on the subject of natural climate variability”. 20th Annual Aldrich Multidisciplinary Graduate Research Conference, St. John’s, NL
- 2017 **Vilá, O.** “Weather and Climate Narratives in Newfoundland”. Small Island Cultures Conference, St. John’s, NL
- 2017 **Vilá, O.** “The unexplored potential of natural climate variability in social science climate change research”. Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers, Toronto, ON
- 2017 **Vilá, O.** (2017) “Proposal for perceiving climate variability: A community based study to identify frameworks for understanding and interpretation”. 19th Annual Aldrich Multidisciplinary Graduate Research Conference, St. John’s, NL

Posters

- 2021 Gyawali, D., **Vilá, O.**, Bhattarai, S., Vaughn, B., Henkel, C., Smith., G. “Capacity to Implement FEMA HMA Grants: A Survey of State Hazard Mitigation Officers”. Coastal Resilience Center Annual Meeting (virtual).
- 2020 Gyawali, S., Allen, J., **Vilá, O.**, Caverly, G., Smith, G., “Capacity to Implement FEMA HMA Grants: A Survey of State Hazard Mitigation Officers”. 45th Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop, Broomfield CO
- 2020 **Vilá, O.** Bray, L., Cutts, B., (2020) “Using Ethics to Inform Post-Disaster Research Design”. CNR Research Symposium. Raleigh, NC
- 2019 **Vilá, O.**, Bray, L., Cutts, B., Harris, A., Hornsby, G., “Environmental Risk and Recovery: Citizen Science in the Post-Disaster Context”. 44th Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop, Broomfield, CO
- 2019 Hornsby, G., **Vila, O.**, Bray, L., Harris, A., Cutts, B., “Environmental Justice and Disaster Recovery: The Role of Citizen Science and Fecal Indicator Bacteria”. UNC Water and Health Conference: Where Science Meets Policy, Chapel Hill, NC
- 2019 Alvarez-Rosario, G., Agudelo, L., Adegoke, M., Buchanan, P., Bui, L., Commodore-Mensah, M., Derakhshan, S., Higgs, I., Jones, J., Jones, M., Lane, R., Méndez, A., Montes-Berríos, K., McDermot, C., Nibbs, F., Nicholson, D., Omoya, M., Kaululani, C., Tesfay, M., & **Vilá, O.** “SURGE Scholars Experience: A Service Learning Approach to

- Assessing Disaster Recovery in the U.S. Virgin Islands”. 44th Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop, Broomfield, CO
- 2019 **Vilá, O.**, Randall, J., Dinan, M., “Political mobilization via Twitter: A case study on #AltNPS”. National Environment and Recreation Research Symposium, Annapolis, MD
- 2019 **Vilá, O.**, Bray, L., Cutts, B., Harris, A., Hornsby, G., “Environmental recovery: Citizen science in the post-disaster context”. RISING NC, Raleigh, NC
- 2019 **Vilá, O.**, Cutts, B., Harris, A., Hornsby, G., “Environmental recovery: Citizen science in the post-disaster context”. 6th Latin American Student Association Research Symposium (NCSU), Raleigh, NC
- 2017 **Vilá, O.** (2017) “We’re always talking about it: Climate variability in Newfoundland and Labrador”. MEOPAR Annual Scientific Meeting. Montreal, QB.
- 2015 **Vilá, O.**, Fast, L., Weaver, J., & Miller, S. (2015) “Severe weather warnings: Lifetime experiences and resilience help determine response.” Association for Psychological Science 27th Annual Convention, New York, NY.

Invited Presentations and Talks

- 2021 Selected speaker. FEMA’s Resilient Nation Partnership Network Next Generation of Resilience Student Showcase. Presenting: Leadership and Environmental Justice: Insights for Equitable Mitigation and Recovery.
- 2020 Plenary speaker. The Data Revolution—Ethical Imperatives and Methodological Considerations for Hazards and Disaster Research, 44th Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop and Researcher Meeting, Broomfield, CO.
- 2020 Session speaker. Implementation of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act (DRRA), 44th Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop and Researcher Meeting, Broomfield, CO.
- 2019 Invited speaker. Hurricane Lightning Talk, Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center.
- 2019 Invited speaker. Research Lightning Talk, WRRI Fall Advisory Committee Meeting.

Research and Fieldwork

- 2020 — Present Research Assistant and Project Manager. State capacity to implement FEMA-funded Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants, and policy innovation in US hazard-prone housing acquisition programs, under the direction of Dr. Gavin Smith. Funded by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate.
- 2019 — Present Lead Researcher. Participatory asset and problem mapping: A citizen science approach for documenting post disaster flooding and priorities in coastal North Carolina, under direction of Dr. Bethany Cutts. Funded by North Carolina Sea Grant and Water Resources Research Institute.

- 2019 Intern, AECOM. Technical assistance contract on-site at FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance Division in Washington, D.C., analyzing and reporting on stakeholder outreach data for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program, the under the direction of Dr. Jae Park, Associate Vice President, Risk Management & Resilience for AECOM.
- 2018 — Present Research Assistant. Building Resilience and Innovation through Diverse Group Engagement (BRIDGE), under the direction of Dr. Bethany Cutts. Funded by North Carolina Sea Grant, Foundation for the Carolinas, and The Natural Hazards Center.
- 2017 Research Assistant. Energy, Risk, and Governance, under the direction of Dr. Catherine Wong. Funded by the University of Luxembourg.
- 2016 — 2018 Research Assistant. Climatology lab, under the direction of Dr. Joel Finnis. Funded by Marine Environmental, Observation, Protection, and Response network (MEOPAR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.
- 2015 Research Assistant. Center for Disaster and Risk Analysis (CDRA) at Colorado State University, under the supervision of Dr. Lori Peek, Co-Director of the CDRA.
- 2013 — 2015 Research Assistant. Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere (CIRA) at Colorado State University, under the supervision of John Weaver, Societal Impacts Project Coordinator.
- 2013 — 2015 Honor’s Student Researcher. Department of Psychology at Colorado State University, under the supervision of Dr. Lori Peek and Dr. Ernest Chavez.
- 2012 — 2013 Research Assistant. Social Psychology Lab at Colorado State University, under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Harman.

Teaching, Tutoring, and Mentorship

Instructor of Record

- Spring 2021 Instructor. Humans and the Environment (NR/IDS 303). NCSU
- April 2018 Instructor. Social Science Research Methods Mini Course for Middle School students, Newfoundland and Labrador School District

Teaching Assistantships

- 2019 Teaching assistant. Graduate Strategic Marketing Management in Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Sport, NCSU
- 2017 Teaching assistant. Urban Planning Theory and Design, MUN
- 2016 Teaching assistant. Geographies of Global Change, MUN
- 2012 Teaching assistant. Psychology of Gender, CSU

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2011 — 2012 Teaching assistant. General Psychology, CSU

Tutoring

2017 — 2018 Graduate tutor. The Writing Centre, MUN

2012 — 2014 Undergraduate tutor. Academic Advancement Center, CSU

Mentorship

2020—2021 Graduate mentor. Ben Schwarz (undergraduate); Environmental Science Program, NCSU

2019 — 2020 Graduate mentor. Gracie Hornsby (undergraduate), Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering, NCSU

2018 Graduate mentor. James Britt (undergraduate), Department of PRTM, NCSU

2013 Undergraduate peer mentor. Twenty first-year honors students for the Honors Program at CSU

Published Teaching Materials

Vilá, O. (2020, May 18). *Social dimensions of natural hazards training module assignment*. CONVERGE. <https://converge.colorado.edu/v1/uploads/documents/social-dimensions-of-natural-hazards.pdf>

Service and Review

Service

2021 Natural Hazards Center Annual Researchers Meeting Organizing Committee

2019 — Present Founder and President. HazNerds, NCSU

2019 — 2020 Co-President. PRTM Graduate Student Association, NCSU

2019 Co-organizer. Global Change and Resilience Reading Group

2018— 2020 Facilitator. PRTM Graduate Student Writing Retreats, NCSU

2018 — 2019 Secretary. PRTM Graduate Student Association, NSCU

2019 Organizer. Multilingual Research Symposium, NCSU

2019 Panelist, McNair Scholars Visit

2019 Committee member. CNR Enrichment Fund Committee, NCSU

2019 Graduate representative. Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Interviews

2019 Panelist, Campus Visitation Program for Prospective Graduate Students

Review

2019 Reviewer. Agriculture Journal

2018 Reviewer. National Environment and Recreation Research Symposium

2018 Reviewer. Citizen Science Association Conference

Olivia Vilá

News and Media

- 2019 News release, Coastal Resilience Center, [CRC student highlights in 2019](#)
- 2019 News release, Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center (SE CASC), [Seminar panel demonstrates the disciplinary diversity of hurricane related research](#)
- 2019 News release, Water Resources Research Institute, [New WRI and NC Sea Grant Graduate Fellows Focus on Diversity](#)
- 2019 News release, NC Sea Grant, [Rising Stars: New Fellows Fuel Scientific Discovery](#)

Certificates

- 2021 Teaching and Communication Certificate (in progress)
- 2020 Reflective Educational Design Inclusive Teaching Certification at NCSU
- 2020 CONVERGE Disaster Training Modules, Natural Hazards Center
 - Social Vulnerability and Disasters
 - Disaster Mental Health
 - Cultural Competency in Hazards and Disaster Research
 - IRB Procedures and Extreme Events Research
- 2019 Natural Hazards Resilience Certificate, University of North Carolina

Affiliations

- Member, National Emergency Management Association
- Member, International Association of Emergency Managers
- Affiliate, Coastal Resilience Center
- Member, Social Science Extreme Events Research (SSEER)

Languages

Spanish (speaking: advanced, reading: advanced, writing: intermediate)