



In collaboration with
DANNA SMITH,
Executive Director, Dogwood Alliance

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Interviewer(s): Amanda Ostuni & Meghna
Parameswaran

- 00:04** **Amanda Ostuni** **If you want to start off by just telling us who you are, and the overview of what you do, that would be great .**
- 00:14** **Danna Smith** Sure. So, I'm, Danna Smith and I'm the executive director here at Dogwood Alliance. Our mission is to advance environmental justice and climate action through protecting the forest and communities of the Southern U.S. from destructive industrial logging practices. And as executive director, I'm the person who oversees all of our programs, our fundraising and marketing, I manage the board and make sure that our organization is on task with the best possible strategies to achieving our mission.
- 00:51** **Amanda Ostuni** **Okay. Well, I look forward to getting a little deeper into that, but we'll go with your background first. So, where do you consider home?**
- 01:07** **Danna Smith** I still call the place that I grew up home. It's in a little town called, well, it's on a little island, a tiny little island across the river from Hilton Head Island. The address is technically Hilton Head, but I consider it more my home to be Bluffton, which is the little town that's the main one right across the river from Hilton Head. So, I still consider that coastal South Carolina to be part of my home. My mother still lives there in the house that I was essentially born in, and my sister and my aunt are still there, my great-nephew, but right now, home is also in Brevard, North Carolina, in a little

community called Cedar Mountain, which is right over the border of the South Carolina-North Carolina border in the mountains.

02:07 **Amanda Ostuni**

It sounds like you had a lot of family around you growing up. Who else was part of your community as a child—neighbors or church, or any other kind of groups like that?

02:21 **Danna Smith**

I was very close to my family who lived in that low—what we call the low country in South Carolina, for literally, like my great, great, great, great, however many greats grandfather was the signer of the Declaration of Independence from South Carolina. So my family goes way back in that area, so family was a big part of my life growing up, as well as friends from school, and their parents, and I did go to the Episcopal Church and grew up in the Episcopal Church in Bluffton, but never really felt that connection to the Church in the same way that—I’ve told other people “I really found God in nature,” and never really resonated with the more organized religions.

03:27 **Amanda Ostuni**

Was your—how did that fit with your family dynamics? Was that well-received?

03:36 **Danna Smith**

I was fortunate enough to have parents who let me decide who I wanted to be, and supported me at every step of the way. And it was definitely, I grew up in the early seventies, I would say, seventies to mid-seventies. So normally in my family, you would get confirmed in the church at 12 years old, and you go through a series of classes in order to get confirmed. My—and it's big deal, like you get presents and it's like this big thing. But after the first class I told my mom I did not want to go back. She asked me why, and I explained to her why, and she didn't force me to go back. But there was, I think, it was a time—a period of time where sort of this old model of like you gotta go to church and you have to go every Sunday, in the rural community was starting to sort of be questioned, and I was kind of at the forefront of that, and my mother was gracious enough, and my father, to let me decide. Even my grandparents, who were very traditional in terms of really believing that if you did not get confirmed, you would not go to heaven, but still supported me in my decision, and allowed

me, as a 12-year-old to make that decision for myself. And I'm always really grateful for that.

05:12 **Amanda Ostuni** **You said you found—I don't know the word you used, maybe faith—in nature. What was your dynamic with nature? What kind of activities did you do, and things outside?**

05:24 **Danna Smith** I was really fortunate to grow up in what I believe to be just like one of the most magical places on earth. Our little house, tiny little house that we lived in was on a salt water creek and so I was always outside. I was climbing trees, I was building forts with my sister, we were chasing fiddler crabs on the one side of the island where the marsh was, and on the other side where our house was on the creek and we swam with dolphins coming up, just amazing birds everywhere. I thought everybody had dolphins in their backyard when I was growing up. It was just a really—I was very, very fortunate to be free-ranging—to have just free range of just this amazing ecosystem. And there was one particular moment, cause—in my life, where I was really struggling with not really feeling the church, feeling the connection with God, and feeling every time that I was in church, feeling a little bit afraid because of all the talk about the Devil and hell, and I just didn't want that—I just did not want that in my purview, in my psyche, I guess, as a kid. It was frightening and I didn't like it. I mean I was really struggling, and I—but I was really trying to find that place in myself, to open up to the concept of God.

And I remember very vividly, I was probably about 10 or 11 years old, and I was walking out in the dirt road in the front of my house picking blackberries, it was kind of a hot summer day, and the blackberries were all out, and it was one of our favorite things to do was to pick blackberries and then make all kinds of stuff with it. And the sun was kind of setting, it was like dusk, and then this—this beautiful butterfly, monarch butterfly, landed on the blackberry bush, and the sunset lit up the wings of the butterfly, and it just absolutely filled my heart. I mean I just felt this moment, almost like a lightning bolt of like 'this is what love and God is,' and to this day, I can't walk into a church without seeing the stained glass of—the stained glass of the church windows and

thinking about like ‘that’s where they got the stained glass, that’s where the stained glass came from, just like the wings of this butterfly.’ So, for me that was a real ‘aha!’ moment in my life that I’ll never forget.

08:20 **Amanda Ostuni** **That’s amazing. I feel like I could write a poem or something off of that.**

08:26 **Danna Smith** Yeah, write one. That would be awesome. [Laughs]

08:31 **Amanda Ostuni** **So, I think we can make assumptions from kind of how you described your childhood, but personality-wise, how would you describe yourself growing up?**

08:44 **Danna Smith** I was really shy. I was really very shy as a child. I was very, also—though I wouldn’t have described myself this way, but when cousins and friends and stuff describe me when I was little, they say I was very hard-headed, very determined and strong-willed. I always thought of myself as a child as pretty easy-going—they were like, ‘no, it was your way or the highway.’ So, yeah, I was very sensitive, also, I think I was really empathetic.

I grew up during the time of where the—South Carolina was the last state to desegregate schools, and they had to be forced to do that by the Supreme Court of the United States, right? So, there was culturally a big push back on desegregation. And a lot of White parents were fearful of what that desegregation might mean for education, etcetera. So, there was a movement to build private schools. This is where the private school movement kind of came in in the Southeastern U.S., and my parents were part of that. They created private school—were part of a group of parents who created a private school. So, I—just to give you the context, I mean as a child, I always kind of remembered—it didn’t feel right. It didn’t feel right that there was this even unspoken separation between White people and people of color—Black people, essentially, from where I grew up. And I always felt a little sadness in my heart around it. I always remember as a child feeling like, ‘oh Gosh, you just got lucky that you got White parents!’ And just really feeling that sense of empathy, because I

could—there were lots of little—little things that added up to the big ‘you don't mix with that’ kind of thing, and it was really hurtful, I think. I think it really hurts children to grow up in that—getting those kind of messages, because it's not a child's default, to recognize those differences. It's really a learned thing, and in my situation, my parents were very open, and they were of a generation, so that was what they were taught, and that's the way they were moving through the world.

As they got older, and we got older, as children, and as we became adults, they sort of evolved with us. This is like the children sort of help to teach the parents, and the whole Civil Rights Movement, and all of that happened, and my parents, grandparents, etcetera, moved beyond. But as—in early memories as a child, I do remember that kind of metacultural message that was being reinforced at every level, even for those who weren't like blatantly out there trying to resist. So yeah, I always felt that little sense of sadness while I had this beautiful nature, which was my escape and my place where I found love of everything; I had this dark side of my growing up, which I think a lot of kids in my generation did—and probably still today have, where you're taught not to accept people who are different, and it's subtle, it's not necessarily direct. So, I had to really grapple with that my whole life.

13:25 **Amanda Ostuni** **What ways did you find to push back on that, like outwardly, if at all? Was there any level of a sort of activism that you took at that young age?**

13:43 **Danna Smith** Well, I do remember not at that young age, because, I was also sort of brought up in an environment where kids aren't given the opportunity to express themselves, right? It's just a cultural thing, and it's like the parents know best, and you don't question, so as a little child, I didn't feel like I had a voice in that, I didn't know how to speak out about it, I didn't know—because I wasn't given the space, right? It's not to say that I couldn't have, but being that shy, little rule-follower type, I—and it wasn't until I got older, in my twenties, that I remember having conversations with my dad, and saying, ‘I don't like it when you talk like that, you know I

don't like it when you say that,' and so I would find ways to push back, where there would be these little jokes or these little snide remarks about something, and I would call him on it. And he took it, to his credit, he took it and pondered it, and realized that like, 'yeah, maybe that's not appropriate anymore—maybe it was never appropriate, maybe I shouldn't be saying those kinds of snide joke—jokey-type remarks.'

And then I always was pulled to—I did public defender work in the city of Atlanta for a little while before I started Dogwood Alliance, and I've always been pulled towards this sense of justice, and understanding that there's disproportionate incarceration of Black men, and was drawn to public defender work because of that. But then, when I found the environmental side of the work, it was like that's what really spoke to my heart more than anything, was—and forests. And we can talk more about 'aha!' moments around really getting into that. But I tried practicing law, doing corporate stuff right out of law school and it just wasn't speaking to me, so I tried the public defender route, and went back to a smaller firm to try to fit that in, and then ended up working for Greenpeace in Atlanta, and that was like—I was like 'aah!'—felt like I had found my unique purpose in the world.

16:46 **Amanda Ostuni** **I'm glad that you brought up the law school, but before we get to that, I want to know what you started out thinking as a career, like as a kid, and then what you chose going into undergrad, because I didn't see that on your LinkedIn. So, tell me how you got from childhood to wanting to do law school?**

17:05 **Danna Smith** Yeah, so, I don't know that there was any big thing I was just drawn to. Maybe it was that I was drawn to a sense of justice, and the law and how all of that worked and everything. But honestly, when I got out of law school, when I went into get my undergrad degree, I was just thinking about money. I was thinking about having a career that I could make good money, and I was interested in law, so I studied political science, as an undergrad, and then blazed right on through to law school at Emory university, after that. And I was young, I didn't really have the perspective of what it was, and some people do, some people

know exactly what they want to do and just go for it. I knew I wanted to go to law school, but I don't know that I knew exactly what I wanted to. I was like maybe tax law, maybe corporate, I don't know—I don't know what I want to do. And it wasn't until I actually got out of law school and started practicing law that I realized that I really wanted my work to mean something. And so just the grind day to day, putting on a suit and going in an office, and working on cases that I really didn't care about—who broke a contract on a construction project or something like, insurance companies not wanting to pay, and working on behalf of the insurance company; None of that really felt like meaningful to me and I'm like if I'm going to go in to do something which is gonna require most of my life, I want it to mean something, and so that's where I tried the public defender route but it was really, really difficult work. I did not enjoy it.

19:16 **Amanda Ostuni** **So, from the public defender route—how did you make your way into Greenpeace from there? Is that the trajectory, or is there another piece in there?**

19:34 **Danna Smith** Yeah, so I was doing some volunteer work for a nonprofit organization in Atlanta called the Environmental—Georgia Environmental Organization, GEO—I think they've morphed into something else now, that was like 40 years ago, or something—not that long, maybe 30 years ago. I was doing a citizen's handbook on the Clean Water Act, like how citizens could engage in the permitting process around facilities that needed to get permits for water discharge, and so I was writing—and other things—just overall, how can citizens get involved in issues around water quality through the Clean Water Act. And so, I was writing this handbook, and I was doing it on a volunteer—essentially volunteer-basis, I mean they paid me a little bit to do it, but not nearly enough for the amount of work that I was putting into it. And as I was doing that work, I realized it's like this was sort of the work that I really wanted to do. I really wanted to do environmental work, and I didn't care about it being legal-related. I really felt like it didn't have to be that.

So long story short is I ended up going to work for Greenpeace in Atlanta getting a job with Greenpeace in Atlanta. And I took a pretty significant pay cut in order to do that. It was a pretty—and part of my job was going door to door, and part of my job was figuring out how the local office could tap into national and international campaigns. So that's kind of how I ended up at Greenpeace, and I just remember thinking to myself, 'the money is not what's motivating me in my life anymore, so if I have to take a pay cut to do something that I really am excited about doing, I'd rather do that.' And I'm so glad it did, because it provided a stepping stone for me to be able to start Dogwood Alliance in 1996, and I was at Greenpeace for about 3 years, working on an energy campaign, and then going door to door and getting people to sign up, like canvassing, to be members of Greenpeace. And three years in, in late 1995, Greenpeace went through major financial struggles, and ended up closing all of their offices except for one out West, and then in D.C. They cut the energy campaign, and they cut all of the canvassing. So, I was in this place where I had a severance package for like 6 months or something, so I knew I had a little bit of time to figure out what my next move was gonna be. And I remember my mother telling me 'well you can always go back to practicing law,' and I remember just breaking down in tears, cause I was like 'no, that's not what I wanna do, I'm not gonna go back to practicing law—what am I gonna do, real estate law or something?—no, I'm not gonna do that.'

And during that time frame, I met some activists who were going around and talking to folks about the fact that the timber industry in the Pacific Northwest was moving South, right? So, I started to get wind of like there was a ramp-up of industrial logging going on across the South. And also I got approached by the Rainforest Action Network to host an action camp in Atlanta—I lived right outside of Atlanta on a little farm. And I was like, 'yeah I'd love to host an action camp,' where they bring people in, train them in how to do direct action, it's like a week-long thing, and then you go do the action. And the action that Rainforest Action Network was planning was hanging a banner on a ship that was him coming into the port of Savannah importing mahogany wood

taken out of the Brazilian rainforest that had been illegally logged. And so I ended up not only just having this action camp at my house, but hanging the banner—literally boarding the ship with my friend Tracy and hanging this banner that said “Ban Mahogany Save the Amazon.” And I'm literally hanging off the side of the ship for like six hours in a harness, and the Savannah River is right across the—right across the Savannah River is where I grew up. And I remember just having this—another one of those lightning-bolt moments of: ‘this is my home, I’m here risking arrest, potentially risking my life’—though it wasn’t really that much of a risk; if for some reason something broke, of course, I would probably drown in the thing, but it was a very low risk that anything—the harness or anything like that would break. But I’m like ‘I’ve never even stepped foot in the Amazon, I don’t even know these tribes,’ and that didn't mean that I cared about it any less, but I remember just thinking at that moment, knowing what I knew about the expansion of what was going on in the southeastern U.S. that when I got off that ship, I was like, ‘I’m dedicating my career to this issue.’

And that's where I started to network and find other groups that were concerned about—all across the region, there were lots of organizations, very small, who were really concerned about the expansion of the paper industry that was underway in our region at the time. So we pulled together all of these groups, and came up with a strategy, and I was a big part of that—I wasn’t the only person who was a part of that—but I played a meaningful and an important role in kind of helping to convene a lot of organizations and launch a campaign targeting the EPA to do an assessment of the impacts of the expanding paper industry across the South, and to do that, we ended up creating Dogwood Alliance, which was at the time an alliance of all these organizations across the Southeastern US who were joining forces to make this a national, federal level issue, and so that’s how Dogwood got started.

27:04 Amanda
 Ostuni

That's incredible. How, if it all, would you say your childhood environment, and then your law experience played a role in helping you build Dogwood into what it is today?

27:22 **Danna Smith** Well, my childhood just gave me the love for the people and the ecosystems of the Southeastern U.S., just the passion, the purpose that I feel, the mission of Dogwood is so personal to me because of where I grew up and the things that I experienced. Both the positive side of the nature, and also the negative side of the racism and the social side of the equation... and what was your second question, your childhood and then?

28:00 **Amanda Ostuni** **The law degree.**

28:02 **Danna Smith** Oh yeah—so the law degree—I feel like right now I’m operating in the law of public opinion, right? Sometimes the law is designed to protect the interests that are destroying the planet and concentrating power and wealth into the hands of a few. That is the legal system, that is the system that we’re in right now. This has been built out over hundreds of years, right? So, for me, I’ve come to realize that, yes, there are lawyers who make a difference in that space, who hold accountability to the law, to the letter of the law. But what I see is a gap that the law is not protecting us at the level that it needs to. So, we’ve got to change the systems and the institutions and the policies that are driving the destruction of the planet at the expense of our most vulnerable in our society, which still are people of color, and low-income, or people living in poverty—and a lot of those are White people, too.

So, for me, I feel like I’m operating in the court of public opinion, not in the courtroom, but in a much bigger arena, to effect policy change and law change. And as somebody who now can look back and say—and I’ve always been described this way in my career, a bigger picture, visionary-type person, this is the space that I’m intended to operate in, is in this bigger picture, trying to effect system change, not just trying to win a lawsuit here or there, but actually trying to effect change on a much bigger scale.

30:05 **Amanda Ostuni** **With the environment that you grew up in, it's sort of a long way to being an environmental justice advocate. So how does**

your family feel about the work you're doing now, and just being in the justice space compared to what they knew?

30:25 Danna Smith

Oh, so supportive. My dad's passed away, but even before he died—my dad worked in a paper mill. This is something we hadn't talked about before, so I'll just share it now. The paper mill, which was right across the river in Savannah, every time we'd go to Savannah, 'cause we didn't have like a shopping mall or whatever. So, every so often, like back-to-school shopping, or whatever, we'd have to go over to Savannah, sometimes grocery shop. And the paper mill would smell so bad. I'd come home every single time we went to Savannah with a headache—it just was bad. My dad would smell like it when he came home. And he—so when I started Dogwood and going after the paper industry, he was very supportive.

He wasn't like 'this is my job, this is U.S. of A, this is puttin' money on the table.' No, he understood the damage that was being done. I think he just, he needed a job and it's how he could provide for his family. It's not the he enjoyed going in and out of that mill every day but it paid well, and it was a steady job, and back in the day in the rural South, that was—that was a thing to do, it was a good job, and he was a member of a union. He was a union worker, so he was all about workers' rights. My dad ended up dying of cancer at 68, and I have no doubt that his exposure to all of those chemicals led to his health problems and ultimately to cancer and ultimately to him dying prematurely. These big, huge facilities that use lots of chemicals to—and put out lots of pollution—are not just impacting people on the fence line, or people who breathe in the pollution that are coming from the smoke stacks. They really impact the workers, too, and have direct—that hits personal with me, on that level. So, my dad was always very supportive of my work. He saw me create Dogwood, he supported what I did, he thought it was awesome.

And my mother was an environmental reporter for the local paper, growing up, so she was always going to hearings about permits for water stuff, and she was a very strong advocate; I remember as a child we had the book *Silent Spring* in our little bookshelf. I

didn't know what Silent Spring was, but now I do—but I remember the name of the book, when I was little, and seeing that and just having a sense of, I don't know, connection to it, even without really knowing what it meant, just the title of it, really resonated with me. So, both—my dad was very outdoor—he didn't have sons, it was just me and my sister, so we would always go hunting; I was his fishing buddy, we'd go waaay out in the ocean and go fishing all day. He was an avid sportsman, and a very skilled one at that. So, he—both my parents played a big role in terms of my immersion in nature and my love of nature, and that really seeded who I am as a person today. So, they're both very supportive—both were, and my mom still is.

34:31 **Amanda Ostuni** **That's great to hear, and we will get into more specifics on Dogwood, but there is something that Meghna had wanted to follow up with when you were talking about the times where you did sort of have a clash with your parents over the justice situations that were going, and I think it's important we address that because this is focused on the South, and there's that culture element, so, Meghna, do you want to jump in with that, and then...**

34:59 **Meghna Parameswaran** **Yeah, sure. I think, you were talking a little bit about this discomfort with the Southern atmosphere, but also it seems like you have an immense pride for your family, and in your family history, and what you were saying about your great-great-great grandfather signing the Declaration of Independence, and also the work that your parents have done; I was just wondering how you've been able to reconcile having that pride and also feeling—**

35:30 **Danna Smith** Yeah, that's a great question, because I've contemplated this for a long time, and the place where I always land is revolutionary. My great-great-whatever-grandfather was a revolutionary. I mean he—there are accounts of letters going back and forth between him and his parents in England and them saying you're gonna get hung if you go against the English government, and, you know, doing it anyway. Maybe not for the most—for the best reasons, right? But so, I always feel like that revolutionary spirit is in me,

and that I'm here to kind of course-correct on what it means to be a White revolutionary in the United States, coming from a background of folks who conquered, committed genocide, enslaved people. That it's my job to take that revolutionary spirit and use it for righting some of the wrongs of colonialism and White supremacy, and all of those things that have put us in a position that we're in today where the climate is being wrecked, the biodiversity is collapsing, the disparity between the poor and the wealthy is growing.

All of those things are connected. And to me, it's about seeing those connections to that history that—and working, again, at the system level to change those things, and to move our society in a way where we're putting people and the planet ahead of corporate profits, essentially.

And then with my parents, I saw them evolve in their own thinking over time. And that to me is also been really, you know, it's a good thing to see, and so that, that's like—I think I would probably have a very different answer if I had parents who were stuck in the pre-Civil Rights era, and there are people who are in my family who are, who don't believe racism exists—and I don't mean my immediate family, but in my more extended family. So, I, I think it would be a different—but my family has evolved in awareness. And I'm still having to—because when you go through deep training around racism and its structure, and its, how it's institutionalized at a policy level and you start to see every single element, whether it's lending, whether it's housing, whether it's environmental, whether it's school systems, tax codes, you know criminal—all of it taken together, it's pretty clear what has transpired. And so I'm still having to educate, 'cause I've been fortunate enough through also my legal training but also through intentional training that I've done to kind of really learn about some of these things, I'm still having to sometimes impart some of that information to my family, but [they're] very receptive to it, and very much understanding that this is a problem, and that it's at the root of a lot of the problems that we're dealing within our society, here in the U.S. but also globally.

39:36 **Meghna Parameswaran** **How do you think—or how have you seen, I should say, the systems of colonialism and capitalism and racism be reflected in your work at Dogwood. Are there any specific projects where you've seen that come through?**

39:55 **Danna Smith** Yeah, so, a couple of things. The first one I would say is just, you know, most of the land—most forest land in the Southeastern U.S. is “privately owned,” it's not in public ownership, and there's no regulation of industrial logging in the Southeastern U.S. And so, it's been a very clear pattern over the course of hundreds of years of those who own land having influence over policy, those who make a lot of money off of exploiting land having a lot of influence over policy, right? So, the policies are really designed to encourage and support landowners to engage industrial logging. And if you don't own land, you're, you kind of consider, like you don't have a say in what happens with industrial forestry and logging.

And so, I've seen that play out because in the areas where logging is most concentrated are the black belt of the coastal plain of the U.S. South, which is the historical also place where the cotton trade was, right? It's like you can almost line it up with exactly the same map. The majority of the population in most of these areas is—are disproportionately people of color. You'll have some counties that are like 90% Black, but yet 99% of the land, forest land is owned in the rural south by White people, still, right? So, on a policy level, those landowners have dominated, and industry, have dominated the narrative about forest policy, right? And they've designed policies that work in favor of exploiting the land for personal profit or for corporate profit. So that's one way.

The other way that we see this play out is that the concentration—with just the South—has been experiencing this rapid growth in the market for wood pellets. They're turning trees into wood pellets, they're shipping them over to England, right, like, and other countries in Europe, to be burned in power stations as an alternative to coal, as renewable energy. Even though the science is pretty clear that it's worse than coal. It's not as efficient, you have to burn a lot more material to get the same amount of energy,

so it's, it's a climate disaster. It's also really highly polluting; when you combust wood, it creates all kind of pollution that is on par with coal. So, it's really not a climate or clean energy solution, but it's being subsidized really heavily in Europe right now, because they count the emissions as zero. It's a whole false thing. But they count those emissions as zero because the theory is that trees grow back, right? But the reality is it takes a really long time for a forest to bounce back, for a tree to grow. Cut down a 50-year-old tree, you're talking 50 years just to get it back to the point where it was when it was cut down, to begin with, and all that carbon is being emitted into the atmosphere.

So, but this build out of the wood pellet mills that are feeding this climate, false climate solution in Europe, is happening in the same communities of the rural black belt, disproportionately impacting people of color. And the production process of the mills themselves is adding pollution, air pollution into the air, and a lot of these communities are already experiencing health issues because of other industries that are there, whether it's paper mills, or Oriented Strand Board—other wood products mills, or whether it's hog farms or chicken factories, this is the dumping ground. This is where all of that industrial, extractive model of our economy is hitting the hardest, is in these types of communities across the black belt of the South. And these communities tend to have higher—some of the highest poverty rates in the country, lowest health outcomes in the country. So, we see that play out a lot with the forest industry. And a lot of people don't think of the forest industry like they think of oil and gas and, but they are just as dirty, just as destructive, and are disproportionately impacting the exact same communities.

And on top of the pollution there is also the ecological destruction, right? So, what's happening with a lot of these, in a lot of these areas is they come in under the guise of jobs. But actually, it's restricting economic development because the things that are really help communities thrive would be, if you look at the economic trends across the region, it's things like retirees living in an area, it'll be entrepreneurship, outdoor recreation is way more jobs, contributes way more to the tax base than

industrial logging and wood production does. And you can't develop outdoor recreation economy in areas where all the land is privately owned, and it's clear cuts and pine plantations. Because nobody hikes in a clear cut, nobody wants to camp in a pine plantation. There's real, so it's restricting other types of economic development. So, it's not just about the sheer number of jobs that some business could bring to the area. It's like what's the opportunity cost of bringing those types of jobs versus these other types of jobs, and it's huge when it comes to looking at forest—the forest economy; there's such a big difference between communities that are more where wood production is more concentrated and those that have more of an outdoor recreation economy. It's night and day. The economic conditions of the communities are so different. It's so much worse in the areas where there's a lot of industrial wood production and industrial logging going on. And the economies are much stronger and the community is more healthy [in outdoor recreation economies], right?

And then the other piece of it is the industrial logging itself, which is degrading natural flood control, at a time when these same communities are experiencing unprecedented flooding, due to the warming of the climate. And forests are natural like air conditioners. It's proven that they cool the air and the more intact and older a forest is, the better job it does of protecting against floods and droughts and heat waves. But you've got these landscapes in these areas that are highly degraded, fragmented, chopped up, literally, hammered. If you look at maps of ecological integrity, globally, you'll see the southeastern U.S., and particularly the coastal plain, coming in at the lowest rate for ecological integrity. And that's because of industrial logging. The South is the world's largest wood-producing region, and the rate and scale of logging is four times that of South American rainforests.

So, it's a huge problem. It's contributing to climate change. Logging is—when you log a forest, you release carbon into the atmosphere that would otherwise be stored. But those emissions aren't currently being transparently reported in greenhouse gas

accounting, because again it's like 'well trees grow back' and there's this like shell game that they play around the accounting with it. So that's one thing we're trying to work on, but... So, it's causing climate change, it's a major driver of carbon emissions in the U.S.—coming from the U.S., it's degrading or preventing nature from being able to provide optimal climate resiliency benefits to communities and it's polluting and economically, it doesn't make any sense, right?

49:24 **Meghna Parameswaran** **Yeah, and I think you so clearly laid out this obvious link between systemic factors and environmental destruction. And I think one of the common struggles that we've seen in the environmental justice space is being able to have productive conversations that directly address race, and much larger institutional factors. And so, I was just wondering what your experience has been with that, or if that's a challenge you've faced—have you been able to fight through the White environmentalism guise?**

50:02 **Danna Smith** I mean it's, it's real. It's real, and one of the things that we've come to realize—that I've come to realize is the disparity in resources that are available, and access to resources that White-led environmental organizations have versus other organizations, right? And so, it does sort of give the perception, or it has historically—I think things are changing rapidly and dramatically in a really positive way on this—but that people of color don't care about the environment because they have so many other things that they're having to deal with, from an economic standpoint or whatever. I think that was an old way of thinking, but the reality is they just didn't have the resources that the White environmental organizations do.

And so, one of the things that I've been a big proponent of and that we at Dogwood have been doing is not only—we're a relatively small organization, I mean we have a 2.5 roughly million-dollar budget, which is big for the South, but it's not like a Sierra Club or a Friend of the Earth, or something like that. We don't even have as big, nearly as big a budget as the Southern Environmental Law Center, for example. But we set up a sub-

grant program several years ago where we give grants directly to our community partners that we're working with, who are on the front lines of the fight to stop the wood pellet industry and to scale up forest protection.

And then we've also taken it upon ourselves to make sure that we are advocating for the funders that fund us to actually fund our partners directly. And we've been really successful at getting a lot of our funders to give grants to some of the organizations who are set up to take it, right? Not all of the smaller community groups are set up to take a \$50,000 donation, but some of the partners we have are. And so, we've been really successful at getting some of our donors to do direct funding, to the tune of, over the last couple of years, over a million dollars of funding going to support our partners, because we take it seriously that we've been privileged enough to have this access to these funders that a lot of other groups haven't even had the access to, and we've been privileged because of so many different reasons, but... because we're White, and because we're—went to law school, and all of these things. So, we take it seriously that there is inequity in the environmental movement and we're trying our best to do what we can, as an organization, to move money as much as possible, to leverage who we know, what we know, and get more resources on the ground.

But it's still real, and it is true; I am a White woman, and I am an executive director of a forest protection organization in the Southeastern U.S., that our work, everything we do to protect forests has impact, right, on communities that are living in these areas. And so, the other thing that we've had to reckon with is how do we make sure that what we're advocating for, and our policies and our strategies, are actually a reflection of what the community wants, and what the community needs, versus us coming in and saying, 'oh, we're running this campaign, here's what you can do.' It's like no, how can we work together? Where can we work together? How can we co-create strategies, together, because at the end of the day, the people who live in these places are going to be the strongest advocates for their protection.

And a lot of times, it's just a matter of us playing a role of giving communities information that they otherwise don't have access to. Because the information that they're given usually is coming from the government, which is right now, just enabling industrial logging, right, or landowners or industry people. And so, we provide a really important role right now, even though we are White-led, in terms of, because we *have* had privilege, that we have been able to study these things for 20-some years, and we have information that can be really helpful to communities, right, in helping them to have access to information that's different than what they would be getting from other sources.

And a lot of times, some of these folks don't ever even get engaged, whether it's with government, or whoever, and so literally going door to door to these folks who are on the front lines of the impacts of this industry, doing cold-calling, just reaching out and saying, you're important, you've got a role to play here, if you want to, here's some information. And we've just found that that—we've got, we take our partnership seriously. We don't want to be the type of group that comes in, and is like, like we did with a community in Hamlet, North Carolina, where they had no idea that this wood pellet mill was coming in. So, we went and did education—Emily [Zucchini], I think y'all will be talking to Emily soon—but she went, and knocked on doors, networked her way to find the community that was impacted, gave them the information, and they wanted to do something, they wanted to fight back. And the permit for that facility, we fought it, we fought with them alongside of it. The permit for that facility was issued. And we decided we're not just gonna go on to the next community, we're gonna continue working with this community, regardless of whether or not we won on this one battle around trying to stop that wood pellet facility.

We're gonna work with them to make sure that we're here to support them to get tighter pollution controls, to try to stop that facility, shut it down, if that's what they want to do, to help think about how to improve the health conditions, and the economic conditions in that community—based on our specific mission-related work; It's not like we're all of a sudden doing all this other

stuff, but how do we continue to work together, even when we lost a particular issue that brought us together. We really take seriously being a good partner at Dogwood, not trying to be the leader of everything, but hearing the voices and trying to adapt our strategies, and allocate our resources in ways that are really supporting the communities to build their power.

And it's not easy, and we're not perfect, and we're still a White-led, largely White-led organization, and that's something that we're also working on course-correcting, recognizing that here we are, 25 years later, and our leadership is still predominantly White, right? What does that say about us, and how we've moved for the last 25 years in terms of how have we been exclusive in our organization, not just externally with partners, but internally. And so those are some difficult conversations that we've been having over the last, you know, 10 years or so, and five years, and last year, and that we're continuing to grapple with as an organization, and it's the right conversation to be having and we still have work to do and we'll continue to do it.

59:24 **Meghna Parameswaran** **Yeah, I've heard you speak on these themes of access, equity, funding, and I was just wondering if you could say a little more about the other challenges that the Dogwood Alliance has faced, or that you personally have faced in your work in addition to these conversations.**

59:44 **Danna Smith** In addition to access, equity, and—?

59:50 **Meghna Parameswaran** **Yeah, I mean you were just talking a little bit about how you're trying to incorporate more diverse voices or adapt your strategies. And I would consider all of those very relevant challenges, but if there is anything else that you wanted to talk to or talk about?**

1:00:07 **Danna Smith** Yeah, I mean, I think even the whole concept of leadership and hierarchy in organizations is coming into conversation, which I think is absolutely appropriate and necessary. It's like, okay, let's look at the way that nonprofits are structured in ways that mirror that of corporations, because we are technically and legally a

corporation, right, and there's certain legal things you have to have in place in order to be able to operate within the law of a corporation, even if you're a nonprofit. And so, the laws even sometimes are, inhibit our ability to embrace fully and reimagine different structures, because we're kind of legally bound to certain things, and so we're really trying to explore like, what is the edge on that? What is the edge around that, even for things like hiring; anti-discrimination laws don't really operate to support nonprofits that want to diversify, because there's—you cannot hire someone based on their race, no matter who it is, right, on any side. And so, we've had to really grapple with that in certain instances where it's like yeah, from a legal standpoint of not having diverse candidates, and but not wanting to hire until we had diversity in the pool and somebody that we... So those things can really, if you're not careful, can really come back to bite an organization. You have to comply with the discrimination laws when you're hiring, and sometimes that's limiting in terms of where you want to go as an organization in terms of building diversity. So, things like that we've had to definitely had to grapple with.

And we have—we are, our staff is diversified, and as our staff has diversified and as we have grown as an organization, it's also forced us to really grapple with things like White-dominant culture, and what does that mean? What does that mean in practice? And so, we're grappling with all of that, literally like over these last 5 years, and trying to find a new normal, if you will, `cause, of how to operate, how to be as a culture that's more diverse and more inclusive and creating that sense of belonging in ways that require us to kind of let go of some of the old ways that we used to do things.

And so, it's a process of unraveling and then recreating. And it doesn't happen overnight, you don't all of a sudden have a whole new leadership structure where power is shared, and all of these things, because you've also got these, on the flip side, are those obligations you have to the funders or to the legal system of having a board that oversees—right now, it's board oversight over an executive director. And if you're gonna have multiple people who are in positions of power in an organization, then the whole

board structure has to change, right, and the board has to be on board with like managing more than, and overseeing more than one person so it creates a lot of, again, some of the legal and practical implications of trying to do what we want to do, come up against road—I wouldn't say roadbl—boundaries that we have to operate within, in order to make these types of transformations happen. But we have been, we've been evolving over time, and we'll continue.

1:04:38 Amanda Ostuni **What about for you personally, in terms of being in this space, because it is a lot of energy, a lot of heaviness. What is your personal biggest challenge and how do you cope?**

1:04:53 Danna Smith Yeah, I mean the personal—on a personal level, I think the biggest challenge is being an executive director and having to navigate, and ultimately, bear the responsibility of the organization, right, like sink or swim, right? I think that's the biggest challenge is trying to navigate in that space in a way that is measured, deliberate steady progress, without just completely capsizing. Because the tensions can get high sometimes, these issues are really so important to everyone, and it's hard to hear, I think on the part of White people who are really trying—it's hard to hear constant critique and constant... I think that's the other thing that's hard, is really trying to balance all that has to be balanced at a leadership level, in terms of management, with a real sense of urgency and desire among the part of some staff to want to see changes and want to see big, bold major changes in short periods of time.

That's, I think, the hardest thing for me, and it hits personally sometimes, it feels personal sometimes, even though we know that we've gotta take that—we've gotta take that critique and not take it personally, right? But sometimes you just feel misunderstood. Or wrongly accused, and so sometimes it's difficult to be in the hot seat of a White-led—to be the leader in a White-led organization that's really leaning in on these issues, but I wouldn't have it any other way. If it, if it weren't challenging, if it weren't—there, there weren't tension points, then it would mean that we're not really changing or evolving in any way. And that is worse than feeling the pressure of the critique and trying to fix

things. Which is the other thing for me, I've learned about myself is that, if there's a critique, I want to know how to fix it, I want a solution. And sometimes there's just not—that's not the way to go about it, it's more about hearing, listening, understanding, and having shared accountability for the solution, as opposed to me just feeling like, 'I've gotta fix this, this is bad, I need to fix this.' So, I'm learning how to be a better leader, in the context of all of this critique. I'm learning how to discern what needs to be acted on immediately, versus what needs to be more of a measured [response], over a time frame—what needs to happen over maybe a 6-month timeline versus what needs to be thought about in a multi-year timeline, and then not taking it upon myself to try to come up with the answers, but really looking to teams of people to help develop the roadmap forward, but just giving—helping prioritize it for the organization, versus trying to say 'oh, this is so bad, what can I do about this as the executive director'? So, I'm learning about how to do that differently than I've done it in the past.

And it's not just a racial thing. It's also, I think, a generational thing. The younger generation has so much to offer. I remember myself when I was younger and pushing the envelope. So, I really appreciate that energy, and try to do the best that I can, because there's also value in the wisdom and experience of someone who's been around for a while, and who understands some of the constraints or the boundaries around what can or can't be done in terms of change and how long it might take, or how we might go about it.

So, it's trying to manage that polarity, centering those voices, really hearing, really internalizing, *not* taking it personally, and then also not—also because I've made this mistake, too, which is sometimes just defaulting to what a group wants, when, and then it turns out not to actually be the best decision. And I didn't step in with my experience hat, because I didn't want to go against the grain, so it's always a tightrope. It's always trying to balance the two of those things: enabling that change, wanting to be a part of that change, but also having to make sure that with the experience, and expertise, and the unique vantage point that I do have as

executive director that I'm looking at the whole picture, and trying to do my best to make the best decisions that I can in the moment. Sometimes I make good ones, sometimes I make bad ones, it's just like everybody else.

1:11:04 **Meghna Parameswaran** **I would love to hear also a little more about what's your favorite moment, or memory from the work you've done so far, or a personal triumph? I think you've done a lot of thought about your critical ways to improve, which I really appreciate.**

1:11:23 **Danna Smith** I would say recently, my biggest moment was, last year Earth Day, CBS Morning News did a feature story on the wood pellet industry, and I took the reporter down to Northampton, North Carolina, and essentially fed him the story. And they filmed me, they also filmed local community partners that we work with. And it was like this, *finally* I feel like, 'cause it's the first time we've had that level—we've gotten on national news before, but never like a seven-minute feature on Earth Day. That is a big deal, on a major news network, so it just really felt validating in so many ways.

And yes, I could talk about victories we've had and times when we've caught the industry red-handed, in a meeting we were in in New York with lawyers—[e.g.,] we caught this one paper manufacturer in a literally in a smoking gun lie. And it was just like, oh my god, that was so fun—we had hard evidence that they were converting natural forests on the Cumberland Plateau to plantations, and they were telling us that they didn't do that anymore, and we literally had evidence that they had just done it in the last couple of months.

And so, it was just like one of those moments, and there's been a lot of those, but I really pick the CBS Morning News story because it, not only did it catch the company—the wood pellet manufacturer in a lie, in several lies, like one saying the only source wood waste, when the reporter saw the trees in the log yard that it wasn't just limbs and tops of trees, it was like whole trees. And also the dust; they were saying that none of their dust goes

outside of their facility, and it's like the guy, they literally filmed a guy that lived on the fence line and his car is covered in wood dust. And they can't go out and have a picnic anymore, a barbecue outside, without smelling the wood dust, which is of course really toxic. So, anyway, but it was just that moment where it felt like it was validated, it's like a major news story on Earth Day, about the wood pellet industry destroying southern forests and communities, and that's our mission, and it was just—

1:14:19 **Meghna Parameswaran** **Thank you, and congratulations on being on that broadcast.**

1:14:24 **Danna Smith** Yeah, check it out! It's a great piece!

1:14:28 **Meghna Parameswaran** **I think, as we kind of finish up the conversation, I'd like to ask some more about your larger personal aspirations for the environmental justice movement. I guess what are your hopes regarding your personal role, your next steps, and also general progress?**

1:14:50 **Danna Smith** Yeah, so, my biggest hope is that the communities on the ground that are really—one of the things I actually see right now is that the environmental justice movement has become such a spear, a tip of the spear in the environmental movement, so it's just like, really encouraging to me. And so, I guess one aspiration I would have would be that the groups on the ground get the resources that they need to be able to achieve a better vision for their communities, and our role is to help do what we can to be partners in helping to make that a reality. And then I think we all win. We all win.

I do think that also moving forward that we need—we need more allies than just those who are on the front lines and in the environmental justice communities. We need a big powerful movement of people who care about these things to be engaged in taking action in ways that are really centering those communities. So, I do see that as a as an important role for an organization like Dogwood Alliance, is helping to build out some of those other ally—alliances and orient more of our environmental counterparts

into the right—moving in the right direction. So, you know, this last year we had to, well we didn't have to, but we led an effort to expose the nature conservancy because they're out there promoting industrial wood production and logging as a climate solution, along with the likes of companies like Enviva and Drax, who are the biggest wood pellet manufacturers in the South. So, on the one hand, we tried to reach out to the Nature Conservancy about the concerns that we had, we had a long meeting with the CEO that lasted about six hours, and this is a 1 billion-dollar-a-year nonprofit, right? They're the largest conservation organization in the world. Talk about concentration of resources and power. And they're very friendly with industry and are actually writing climate policy at a federal level along with industry, and helping to perpetuate the status quo that industrial logging is good for the climate, good for forests, wood products we need to just consume more of them, instead of burning coal and instead of plastic, we need to use more wood. And it's just not true and it's a very dangerous thing to be promoting right now in the context of trying to avert climate chaos so... But those talks didn't go anywhere. And so, we ended up doing a public expose of the ways in which the Nature Conservancy is not listening to local communities, not centering the interest of environmental justice, and ignoring important climate science.

And that's not always what we have to do, because there are other times where we have allies and organizations that we can, that we're working with, and they're actually embracing more of this bigger understanding of forests and forestry and wood products in the Southeastern U.S. But, so, I do think that that's also important is that we play a role in holding not just ourselves, but also our movement accountable to environmental justice and real climate action, and be able to call out those that are promoting false climate solutions. So, I think that's an important element to the role of an organization like Dogwood Alliance.

And then, in terms of like—and not just our own movement, but also looking at how can we partner with others who might, and bring in other constituencies, who might have a real role to play in this fight, whether it be health professionals, outdoor recreation

enthusiasts; We've really spent a lot of time and effort, and rightfully so in helping to build out this network of frontline community partners, but who else do we need to bring in to the fold, so that we could really win with a capital W; hold this industry accountable, protect more forests, shut down some of these mills, clean up the air, let the trees grow, take the pressure off, let nature do its job. So, who else do we need at the table in order to be able to do that? And I just think it's a matter of building a diverse movement that is so strong that these issues can't be ignored, and that they become an issue for the voters, that it becomes an issue that folks are gonna hold politicians accountable to, in order to get their vote.

So right now, immediately, we are working to, and we have been for several years now, working to change policy in Europe that is treating burn wood as climate friendly. We're working to try to, with partners over at the EU, to try to get the policies that subsidize this industry changed, and we've been making really steady and building progress in that regard over the last, I would say 10 years, and so we're starting to see some change in the way that folks are thinking about, 'why are we subsidizing this? Should we be subsidizing this?' They're putting more restrictions on the subsidies, etc.

But the companies now, the wood pellet manufacturers are looking to—they see that policy scheme in Europe as kind of tenuous, and if they want to grow, which is what our economic system encourages every business to do, is to grow, then they're going to have to find additional markets outside of the EU, and this is why they've been involved really heavily in helping to promote policies at the federal level here including in the Inflation and Reduction Act that would subsidize them for expanding wood markets in the U.S. And so, we're working on the—we've developed a new area of focus over the last couple of years with the Biden administration, when Biden got elected, created new opportunities with the signing of an executive order on climate change and environmental justice. The Biden administration's approach to forests is horrible right now. I mean it's just terrible. They're providing subsidies for wood energy markets, and to

grow the wood products industry. And so, we're working really hard to educate the administration about why that's bad, why they shouldn't be doing it, and we're working with our environmental justice partners to reach the highest levels of government, or those folks who are director level within EJ. And we're having a lot of really good conversations and reception to what we're saying. We haven't gotten a lot of action yet, but we know that takes time. We're working to get an interagency task force in place to address the impacts that this industry is having on EJ communities and climate resiliency, from a health and climate resiliency standpoint.

We are continuing to push back at every level. The industry is still ramping up their production. Both the two biggest wood pellet manufacturers, Drax and Enviva, are planning to significantly expand in the next couple of years, so, we're gonna continue to push back at the local level and educate folks—arm them with information and resources, and tools that they need if they want to push back. We're going to be right there with them and supporting them to do that. And we're recognizing that we need a, we need a paradigm shift in how we're thinking about forests in the U.S. as a climate solution. Because right now in the U.S., it's all about industrial logging. And we see that out West, on public lands, and we certainly are seeing that in the Southeastern U.S., that our government is enabling this industry, just as much as the EU government subsidies are enabling it, so really pushing back on that.

And then one of the most exciting things that I'm really excited about is, just like you have in the fossil fuel campaign folks promoting solar and wind power, well in the forest campaign, of course, as an alternative to burning wood we've got solar and wind, but what does the alternative on the ground look like? And so, we're really working with local communities and the Pee Dee Watershed in South Carolina and North Carolina right now to develop a new model for protecting forests that is community-led. And one of the first things that a community wants to do is to start purchasing community forests—forests that are owned by the

community, not by an individual, not by the government, but owned by the community.

And this idea of community forest can create sort of the foothold, if you will, or the seed for being able to reimagine the local economy in those areas in ways that a community is actually benefiting because the trees are remaining standing and folks can engage in things like outdoor recreation, or foraging, and agro-forestry, and where the community is the owner versus it being in private ownership. And that's like to me one of the most inspiring things; we've been working with the Pee Dee Indian tribe to actually get land back, to—they are so inspired by this project we've been working with them on where they've acquired, I think it's 16 acres they're about to acquire, which we've been helping them with, another 66 acres, they're putting a cultural center. And this is a tribe that experienced just outright genocide, at the very beginning of the settlers, like literally my ancestors, and were pretty much wiped out. They're not recognized by the federal government, they are by the state. But for them to have this land now, where they're building a cultural center and an outdoor nature center—they've got wetlands behind their cultural center that they're putting a boardwalk in for people to come.

They have no interest in making money off of this land. They just want to bring their culture back, they want it to be available for everyone in the community, they just want it to be a community benefit. And that mindset is still there, 400 years later. And they will describe themselves as a very poor tribe; It's not the money for them. It's their community, it's their ability to self-sustain, and to be with each other, and to remember their culture; They're doing things like relearning their language.

So those types of projects which are seeding a whole new way of thinking about land conservation, and having it be community-led and community-based and community-owned is a very different approach to what we've historically experienced with land conservation organizations in the past, of which we are *not*. We're more of an advocacy group. We've never been a group that buys land and then protects it. We've been more of an advocacy group,

but this community-based model seems to fit so perfectly with our advocacy work, and our analysis of what the—of the inequities, and what's needed for the future, that to me it's like, really, really exciting.

1:28:08 **Meghna Parameswaran** **It's exciting to us, too, and thank you so much for your candor on what your organization and the wider movement can do in response to these industry-wide destructive practices, as well as the histories that go along with them. And we want to be mindful of your time, so just to wrap up, is there anything that you would like to speak to, that we didn't get to? And maybe do you have any advice for individuals trying to get into this activism space and sustain themselves through the EJ fight?**

1:28:49 **Danna Smith** Yeah, you know, I think the thing that at least sustains me, and I don't know if this would sustain everyone, so I don't feel like I can speak for everybody in terms of what might work for them, but being in nature. Being in nature, finding that quiet space where you realize what humans do separate from nature is way different from what humans do when they're in nature, and this whole divi—division between, we're not robots, we're not solar panels, we're not wind turbines; We're not machines. We're mammals and we're meant to live in nature. We're meant to be a part of nature, not separate from nature, and I just get so much inspiration when I'm in nature and I feel like I'm just one of many, as opposed to feeling all the pressure of being a human trying to make change in this world today.

And so, for me, that's what sustains me, is being in nature. It gives me hope, it makes me feel like another way is possible, we just aren't quite there yet, and that we do belong; we as humans do belong on this planet, and we belong in nature, not, we don't—I don't think it's our destiny to get kicked off, to get kicked out. I think it's our destiny to be here, and to enjoy and to thrive in just the beauty of everything around us. And everything that is here on this Earth didn't belong—doesn't belong to anybody, it belongs to all things, and it belongs to all of us.

So, I just get a lot of inspiration, and that's what keeps me going, along with recognizing that you have to take that time, you have to be okay with saying, 'you know what, I can step away from this, and just remind myself what the bigger picture is all about.' If you find your personal passion, then that can sustain you, but you can't be a martyr. If you really want to sustain and be in it for the long run, you have to be willing to take care of yourself, and those around you, as well, and help to support a culture that is—because I think the idea of urgency and you've gotta work so hard and the workaholic-type mentality is very much a part of the big picture of what's wrong with our society. 'Cause it's false; we don't have to work that hard and be that busy all the time, and it's really important that we resist that drive to wanna be so concerned about what we're doing that we're overworking, and creating that expectation for those around us. So that I guess is my own experience.

1:32:27 **Meghna Parameswaran** **Thank you so much, and that was really beautiful. There's not really much else I can say, to respond to that, because it was just so profound. But I wanted to thank you for taking the time to talk to us and to share your wonderful life experience, and also to thank you for all of the amazing work you've been doing in the advocacy space and elsewhere.**

UNRELATED CHATTER

1:35:26 **Amanda Ostuni** **Thank you so much again. Anything else you want to ask us about the process or what's next?**

1:35:33 **Danna Smith** No, I just wanna thank y'all for thinking of me for this, and for recommending me to do this. It's been really fun and I always think that marking the history of things, and especially with the forest issues in the Southeast.

It's like people still don't quite understand the magnitude of what's going on here in terms of industrial logging and its impact. I mean it's one of the biggest issues affecting the Southeastern U.S., and yet people still don't seem to see it as a big climate issue or a big environmental justice issue—I'm talking about in the big

movement of the climate justice. And so, I really appreciate you guys making this issue and our work—I say our work, not just mine—a part of this collection of history that you’re doing around environmental justice, so I appreciate it.