

2024-2025 IMPACT REPORT

FOCUS

Strengthening the Forests and Communities of the South



OUR **FOCUS**

is forest protection rooted
in justice, resilience, and the power of collective action.

As we reflect on the past eighteen months, we do so with both heavy hearts and renewed focus. In October 2024, our beloved homebase of Asheville, NC was devastated by Hurricane Helene—a painful reminder that climate change is no longer a distant threat, but a daily reality reshaping our communities. Just weeks later, a federal administration hostile to environmental protections was ushered into office, signaling new challenges ahead for our forests, frontline communities, and the agencies tasked with defending them. These events underscore the urgency of our mission and the strength we draw from one another in times of crisis. In the face of the hurricane's destruction and an unpredictable political landscape, Dogwood Alliance remains rooted in justice, resilience, and the power of collective action.

Over the past decade, the Southern US has been ground zero for one of the most dangerous climate falsehoods of our time: industrial biomass. And through every challenge—whether political, economic, or environmental—Dogwood Alliance has remained unwavering in our mission: to protect forests and frontline communities in the face of this destructive industry.

The wood pellet export industry rose on a tide of misinformation, massive subsidies, and false promises. Forests were razed. Communities were poisoned. Carbon emissions soared—all under the banner of “clean energy.” But Dogwood Alliance stood firm. We organized from the grassroots to the grassstops, exposing the truth behind the biomass industry's false claims and ensuring that impacted communities had resources to fight back.

And we're winning.

In the pages of this report, you'll read about the extraordinary impact of people power. When communities organize, corporations falter. Drax's permit to release more toxic air pollution in Gloster, Mississippi? Denied. Enviva, once the world's largest wood pellet exporter? Bankrupt and retreating. Even global policy is shifting. We saw a major shift away from biomass subsidies, not only in the US but also in the UK and South Korea.

These victories were not easy. They took time. They took persistence. They took you. At Dogwood, we don't back down because the stakes—for our forests, our climate, and our communities—are too high. The strength of our campaigns is in the power of the people who support them. You've

helped us prove that even the most entrenched industries can be brought to account.

Grassroots community-led activism is at the heart of Dogwood Alliance. Since 2017, we have distributed \$1.2 million directly to frontline organizations through our community subgrants program. We've helped our community partners raise over \$2 million. We focus on providing critical support and resources to people directly on the ground fighting against forest destruction and for forest protection in their own communities.

Last year, we continued to make progress advancing a new model of forest conservation—one rooted in standing forests, thriving communities, climate resilience, and true economic prosperity. Communities on the frontlines of industrial logging want to protect forests. They want to shift away from a dominance of wood production and toward solutions that uplift rather than exploit.

As government systems fail to protect people and places, communities are stepping up to fill the void—and Dogwood Alliance is proud to stand with them. Last year, we partnered with a community to purchase 305 acres of amazing wetland forests on the Little Pee Dee River in South Carolina. This mature forest, containing old growth cypress swamps and diverse oxbow lakes, will be protected from logging and used for outdoor recreation and scientific research. This is our second community-owned forest project to date, and we plan to do even more.

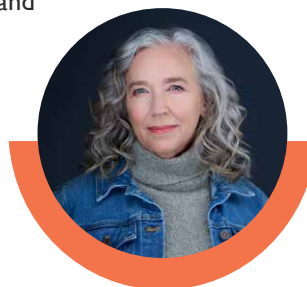
We know these are uncertain times. Climate change is intensifying. Political chaos is threatening the very fabric of our democracy. But one thing is certain: **we are not losing focus.**

We are strategic. We are bold. We believe people power is our superpower. And with you by our side, we are more determined than ever to advance a bold agenda that protects forests and communities.

With deep gratitude and fierce resolve,



Danna Smith
Executive Director
Dogwood Alliance



VICTORY: DRAX DENIED IN MISSISSIPPI!

The wood pellet industry has a long history of causing problems for nearby communities. People living close to pellet plants often complain about loud noise and dirty air. Some companies, like Drax, have even been fined for breaking pollution rules.

In April 2025, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) made a big decision in favor of Southern forests and frontline communities. They overwhelmingly rejected biomass giant Drax's request to increase pollution at its facility in Gloster. A routine approval turned into a powerful moment of resistance—and triumph.

MDEQ gave two main reasons for saying no:

- **Drax's history of pollution problems:** The company has already been fined many times for breaking the rules.
- **The risk of more violations:** Even with a new permit, officials believed Drax would still pollute too much.

Drax is the world's largest importer of wood pellets and the second biggest producer. Every year, it burns over 8 million tons of pellets at its power plant in the UK. It buys pellets from Enviva and also makes its own at sites like Amite BioEnergy in Gloster, Mississippi. An investigation found that Drax broke environmental rules over 11,000 times in the US since 2014.

This major victory is a testament to the strength of grassroots organizing. From day one, we united with the Gloster community. Together, we applied pressure on the governor. We made it clear:



we won't back down in the face of environmental injustice. Even in a tough political climate, we're proving that people power can take on polluting industries—and win.

Thanks to this strong community pressure and teamwork, leaders are also getting involved. Mississippi Congressman Bennie Thompson has become an important ally. He united with the Gloster community in the fight against Drax. He helped introduce the Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024. This bill would finally regulate carbon pollution from burning wood for energy. We're proving that people power can take on polluting industries.

The fight isn't over yet. Drax is appealing the pollution permit denial. But we're staying strong. We won't let Drax win.



Naya Black of Dogwood Alliance and a young resident of Gloster, Mississippi oppose Drax expansion at MSDEQ hearing in 2024. (opposite page) Drax's Amite pellet production facility looms over Black Hole Bottom residents in Gloster. Photo by: The People's Justice Council



We're at a time when corporate wealth feels untouchable and unstoppable. But a town of just 850 souls rose up against a giant corporation. A corporation fed by a million dollars a day in subsidies...and we WON. In a world tilted by power and profit, this is nothing short of a quiet, thunderous miracle.

—Naya Black,
Gulf South Project Organizer,
Dogwood Alliance

FOCUS ON PERSISTENCE



2015



2019



2020



2023

(left to right) Protest at Enviva's Export Terminal in Chesapeake, VA; Community opposes Enviva expansion in Northampton County, NC; Mobile billboard in Capital District, Raleigh, NC; Rally and petition delivery at Enviva's NC headquarters.

PRESSURE ON ENVIVA PAYS OFF

For over a decade, Enviva, the world's biggest maker of wood pellets, expanded rapidly across the South. But in March 2024, the company filed for bankruptcy. Their plans to grow stopped, and they had to cut back production at several mills.

Dogwood played a big part in exposing Enviva's bad business practices. When Enviva said burning wood was good for the climate, we decried it as a false solution—one that's even worse for the planet than coal. As Enviva built new plants, we worked with local communities to hold them accountable. We shared the truth with the media. This led to a report from investors and a lawsuit against Enviva for fraud.

In 2024, when Enviva asked the federal government for money to stay open, we helped send 23,000 citizen messages urging leaders to say no. We also got six members of Congress to oppose giving Enviva federal funding. Then, we brought 13 top officials from the Biden Administration to the South to experience the pollution and forest damage for themselves.

That same year, we pushed the Biden Administration to

take stronger action. We called on them to deny subsidies to Drax and Enviva and create a special task force to address how this industry harms communities in the South. Our organizing paid off: Enviva's application for funding through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) was denied, and our advocacy helped shape new federal guidelines.

In early 2025, the Biden Administration released updated rules for biomass subsidies under the IRA that make it much harder for companies like Enviva and Drax to qualify for tax credits. The new rules rejected the biomass industry's claim that all biomass is "carbon neutral." This is a big win because the industry has used

false claims about biomass being "carbon neutral" to grow.

Dogwood Alliance has been fighting against Enviva for over 10 years. While Enviva made bad business choices, our hard work with partners in the US and Europe changed public opinion and policy. We showed that biomass isn't clean energy, and it's not a good investment either.

Enviva has reemerged as a private company, but we're not backing down. We won't let Enviva win.



Biloxi, MS, TV network announces Drax bankruptcy

Federal Officials Witness the Impacts of Biomass

On the 2024 International Day of Forests, Dogwood Alliance brought 13 federal officials from five agencies to North and South Carolina to witness firsthand the damage from the wood pellet industry.

The site visit gave policymakers a rare opportunity to connect with residents of environmental justice communities and see the impacts of industrial logging up close. These on-the-ground opportunities are shifting the conversation and policies toward forest protection and community well-being.

This powerful tour marked a turning point: building relationships, sparking just solutions, and paving the way for real action that puts people and forests first.



Biden Administration officials, Dogwood Alliance, community partners and residents in South Carolina, March 2024.



Children's March, The Netherlands, 2019. Photo by: Comité Schone Lucht.

Persistence Wins Globally

In October 2024, people in the Netherlands celebrated a big win for clean air and the planet. The Swedish company Vattenfall had planned to build the biggest biomass plant in the country, which would have burned wood pellets made from clearcut Southern forests. But after years of determined opposition, the project was officially canceled.

A local group, the Clean Air Committee, led the fight—organizing events, engaging the public, and pushing leaders to stop the plant. Their persistence paid off, and the project is gone for good. Dogwood Alliance supported them from the start, sharing expertise and partnering with them for six years—proof that international teamwork can protect the planet.

This victory was part of a broader global shift away from biomass. In December 2024, South Korea significantly reduced its biomass subsidies. Just two months later, in February 2025, the UK announced it would cut subsidies for biomass power, including for Drax, from 2027 to 2031. As a result, Drax's electricity generation is expected to drop by about 55%.

Together, these wins mark a resounding victory for nature. Without these threats, forests and communities on both sides of the Atlantic, and beyond, can breathe a little easier.

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY



Advocating for Clean Air in North Carolina

In March 2025, Dogwood Alliance and our partners met in person with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ). We talked about dust problems from Enviva's wood pellet plants in Sampson and Northampton counties. The meeting was an important act in our work to make the wood pellet industry follow the rules and keep the air cleaner for people.

We teamed up with other groups like Impacted Communities Against Wood Pellets, Southern Environmental Law Center, CleanAIRE NC, and the Rachel Carson Council. At the meeting, NCDEQ said they are willing to work with the public to gather dust data that can help with future complaints. That's a big deal for clean air in North Carolina.

Dogwood will keep teaming up with our partners to demand bold action from state leaders. We'll keep holding the wood pellet industry accountable for protecting our communities.

Paige Polk, Dogwood Alliance NC State Manager, and partners advocate for clean air with North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.

Grassroots Advocacy in GA Grows Strong

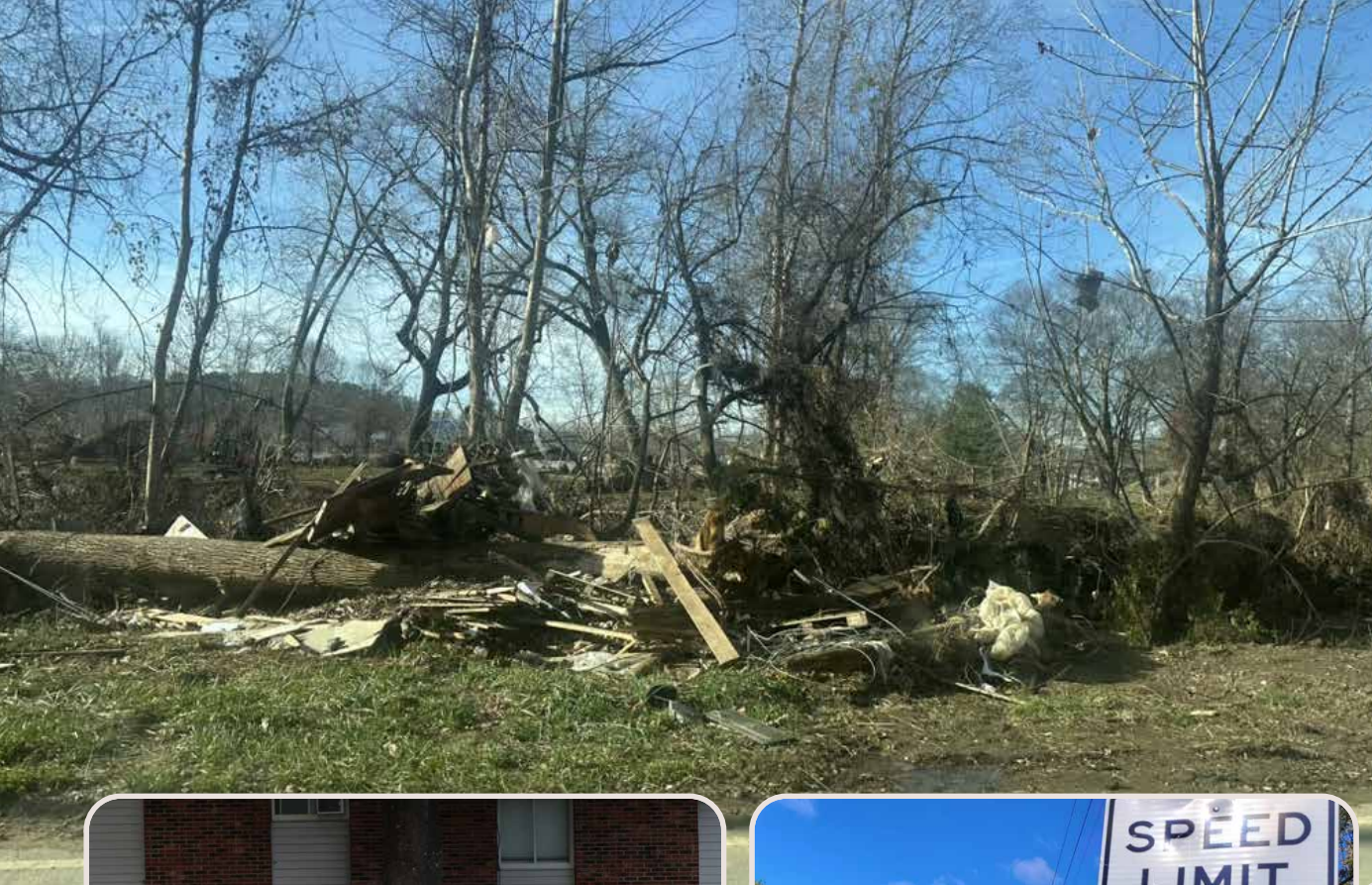
Dogwood Alliance has been ramping up our organizing in Georgia as the biomass industry tries to expand there. In 2024, we were on the ground in Lumber City, where Telfair Forest Products asked for a permit to expand its wood pellet plant. Dogwood worked with the Southern Environmental Law Center and the local community to challenge the request. In the end, Telfair withdrew its permit request, and the expansion was stopped.

We are also working in the city of Jesup. There, Altamaha Green Energy wants to build a large biomass boiler that would burn 900,000 tons of wood each year to generate electricity. Local residents are worried about air pollution, health risks, and the loss of forests. Dogwood is supporting them in their fight.

This new plant in Jesup has put Georgia at the center of new biomass power expansion. But Dogwood is on the scene, organizing the local community to protect forests and stop pollution.

“We can do nothing for the community without the community. We must have conversations and really hear those affected in order to build trust and protect both people and the planet. That’s how we form real partnerships.”

—Dr. Treva Gear, Georgia Campaign Manager, Dogwood Alliance



Coming Together After a Climate Crisis

Big storms are happening more often because of climate change. We thought some places were safe. We learned that we were very wrong. In September 2024, Hurricane Helene hit Georgia and Western North Carolina hard. Dogwood Alliance and many of our team members are based in Asheville, and Asheville was at the center of the storm.

One year later, we're still cleaning up and recovering. It took many weeks for some on our team to get water, electricity, and internet back. Though things seem normal in many areas now, reminders of the storm are everywhere. A routine trip across town will bring you past damaged houses and piles of debris. Some of our neighbors are living in temporary shelters or have lost their jobs or businesses. Many are still struggling.

Helene taught us how vulnerable we are to extreme weather. But the storm also reminded us that people can come together and help one another.

After the storm, neighbors helped neighbors. People brought water, food, and fuel. They cleared roads without caring who voted for whom. Individuals and organizations sent supplies from out of state. Dogwood's supporters from across the country sent donations to help us and our partners. We truly are stronger when we work together.

At Dogwood Alliance, we believe in helping out, sharing what we have, and uniting with our communities. We are thankful for all the people who share those values. Our strength comes from people like you.

We're grateful to everyone who helped us through the storm.



(clockwise from top left) Debris piles are still common across the landscape almost a year after the storm; Thank you sign, Barnardsville, NC; Hood Huggers team delivers supplies in Asheville. Photo by: Tiffany Womack

FOCUS ON CONSERVATION AND JUSTICE



CONSERVATION MEETS JUSTICE IN BRITTONS NECK, SC

Funders, staff, and community members gather at Brittons Neck, SC, to celebrate the protection of 305 acres of historic land along the Little Pee Dee River.

At Dogwood, we believe justice shouldn't just be the end goal. It should guide every step we take. Justice is both how we work and what we're working toward.

That's the idea behind Justice Conservation. It's a new way of protecting forests and wetlands in the Southern US that puts people and nature first. Not profits. Justice Conservation asks: Which communities are hurt most by logging, pollution, and climate change? And then we start there.

We recently used this approach in Brittons Neck, South Carolina. It's a small community facing big climate risks. It's also a place with deep history. Many people living there today are descendants of enslaved people who once worked the land.

We focused on protecting 305 acres along the Little Pee Dee River. The land has old cypress swamps, five oxbow lakes, and a full mile of riverfront. It's perfect for outdoor fun and full of natural beauty. It was also once part of Woodberry

Plantation. Saving this land meant keeping it safe from logging. It meant putting it in the hands of the descendants of the people who built its history.

And we did just that.

Working with New Alpha Community Development Corporation, we raised the money and bought the land. It will now be placed in a community trust, and the forests will be protected forever.

In February 2025, this project was featured on the PBS show *Laura Flanders and Friends*. The show spotlighted the true value of Southern forests and the urgent need for climate resilience in the face of extractive industry. The episode brought national attention to the power of community-led forest conservation.

This was a big and historic step. And it's only the beginning.



(above) The 76.91 acres in Pee Dee Watershed includes 53.57 acres of wetlands and 23.34 acres of forest that will never be logged. (right) Chief Pete Bluehawk Parr of the Pee Dee Indian Tribe

Pee Dee Tribe Closes on Over 76 Acres of Ancestral Wetlands

At Dogwood, we're working together with communities to protect wetland forests, especially in places hurt by the wood pellet industry. These protections don't just help the forests. They help the people who live nearby. They also ensure the land is in the hands of those who depend on it to fight climate change.

The Pee Dee Watershed is in South Carolina. It's harmed by pollution from an Enviva wood pellet plant upstream in Hamlet, North Carolina. We teamed up with the Pee Dee Tribe to help the community share their truth and protect their forests.

In August 2023, we helped the tribe buy over 76 acres of forest land, growing their total land from just 19 acres to almost 100 acres.

So what happens next?

These forests will protect the Tribe from flooding and other effects of climate change. They'll give people a fair chance to enjoy nature. And they'll show that forests can support jobs through outdoor recreation and tourism. Not through cutting down trees.

These forests won't be logged. Not now. Not ever.

This is what real conservation looks like. This is what justice looks like. This is Justice Conservation.

Justice Conservation Fund for Southern Forests and Communities Created

Protecting forests isn't easy. There are many barriers. For a long time, government policies have helped industries that cut down trees by giving them big tax breaks and financial support. At the same time, unfair rules and systems have kept Black and Indigenous communities from owning land. Because of this, many people have been left out of decisions about how forests are cared for. Entire communities have been left behind when it comes to forest conservation.

To solve these problems, Dogwood Alliance and New Alpha Community Development Corporation have created a unique capital fund. This fund helps communities buy and manage their own forests. The fund currently has \$1 million, and we hope to grow

it to \$2 million. With this money, we'll support 10 community-led forest projects like the ones happening in South Carolina.

In May 2025, we held a special briefing to introduce more funders to the Justice Conservation Fund. The event engaged 40 funders. It built new momentum and interest in this transformative work. The Fund grew from \$500k last year to \$1 million this year, and we hope to grow it to \$2 million. With this Fund, we will expand the number of community-led forest projects across the South in areas hit hard by industrial logging.

We're changing the way things are done. We're sharing power more fairly, and we're protecting forests for the future.

 Laura Flanders Host	 Brittons Neck Community Forest: Climate Resilience & Reparations Watch at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMiCx5UzU0o	 Lucia Ibarra Dogwood Alliance
 Danna Smith Dogwood Alliance		 Reverend Leo Woodberry New Alpha Community Development Corporation

OUR **FOCUS** HAS REACH



100
MEETINGS
WITH PUBLIC
OFFICIALS

381

acres preserved through
community ownership



\$365K

Distributed since 2024
in Community
Grants

>3
BILLION
MEDIA REACH

\$10K

**HURRICANE HELENE
RELIEF FUNDS DISTRIBUTED**
(HoodHuggers Asheville
and Concerned Citizens
of Cook County)





3,585

People who attended virtual
or on-line events, rallies,
conferences, hearings and learnings

SUPPORTED BY
17
FOUNDATIONS

+
498
DONORS

48,318

Number of petition signatures
delivered to corporations
and public officials

“It is my great privilege to serve on the Dogwood Alliance Board of Directors. Dogwood’s impact, influence, and reputation in the forest protection movement far exceeds its size and budget. I have personally witnessed how Dogwood works shoulder-to-shoulder with people deeply impacted by industrial logging. I cannot think of an environmental organization more worthy of support.”

— **JACOB BLASS,**
BOARD CHAIR, DOGWOOD ALLIANCE

“I thank Dogwood for what they’ve done for us. For what they continue to do. And for the relationships that have been established. We’re going to keep pushing. We’re going to keep fighting. And it’s good to know there are people out there who truly care about us.”

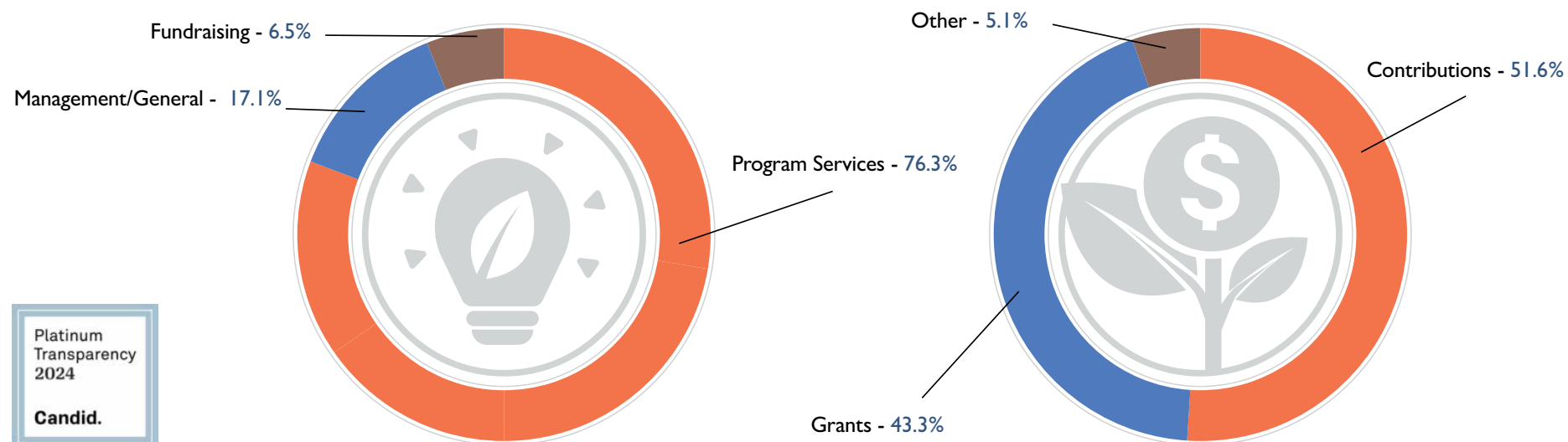
— **RICHIE HARDING,**
PASTOR AND FOUNDER/CEO
OF GASTON YOUTH

JANUARY 1, 2024 TO DECEMBER 31, 2024

Dogwood Alliance advances environmental justice and climate action by mobilizing diverse voices to protect Southern forests and communities from industrial logging.

Program Services	\$2,231,073	76.3%	
Management/General	\$500,206	17.1%	
Fundraising	\$191,101	6.5%	
	\$2,922,380		

Contributions	\$1,994,970	51.6%	
Grants	\$1,674,809	43.3%	
Other	\$196,479	5.1%	
	\$3,866,258		





SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR SOUTHERN FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES — JOIN THE MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Our forests are more than trees. They're home, heritage, and hope for the future. At Dogwood Alliance, we work every day to protect Southern forests, uplift frontline communities, and advance environmental justice across the region. But we can't do it without you.

As we look ahead, your strength, passion, and support are more vital than ever. Here's how you can make a difference today:

TAKE ACTION

Hold corporations and policymakers accountable. Sign petitions, attend hearings, and demand forest protection and climate justice.

ACT NOW:

dogwoodalliance.org/act-now

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Be part of a growing community that's fighting for people and the planet. From local events to national campaigns, we need you.

JOIN NOW:

dogwoodalliance.org/sign-up

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Your gift fuels on-the-ground advocacy, community resilience, and policy change. Every dollar makes a difference.

GIVE TODAY:

dogwoodalliance.org/donate

The future of our forests starts with you. Together, we can protect our forests. We can build a more just, sustainable South.

An aerial photograph of a river meandering through a lush, green forest. The water is a deep blue, reflecting the sky and the surrounding trees. The forest is dense with various shades of green, indicating a healthy ecosystem. The river's path is irregular, with many small islands and peninsulas of land.

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