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Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP)
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Joe J. Guidry (JG): Hi, this is Joe Guidry on March first, interviewing Sally Thompson in her beautiful home in Hyde Park, and we're going to be talking about ELAPP. Sally, can you tell us about where you were born?

Sally Thompson (ST): I was born up North, but I don't remember any of that. I was a war baby. My father was being transferred from one place to the next. My father was a college professor, and we spent the first several years, when he taught at John Hopkins University, and then moved to Florida when I was about nine, I guess. We moved to Winter Park and then to Tampa.

JG: Okay. What brought you to Tampa?

ST: Daddy was teaching at [Rollins College], and he saw an opportunity at the University of Tampa that looked more pleasing to him, I guess, and we moved to the University of Tampa—excuse me, moved to Tampa. He liked the idea of living in Hyde Park. [St. John's Parish Day School] was a new school at that time, and my parents got to know the people at St. John's school. And we moved into the neighborhood, and the Thompson kids all when to St. John's school.

JG: Yeah. That's great. What was Tampa like to grow up in, back then?

ST: What was Tampa like to grow up in?

JG: Yeah, in Hillsborough County?

ST: Well, I think about—one of the things that I think about, growing up, is that I was very unaware of racial tensions or anything like that. And, at St. John's, we would walk downtown sometimes on—because it's about a mile and one-half, I guess—and we would walk downtown to go to the movies when we got out early on a holiday. Did that several times. I used to ride my bike in the neighborhood where Hyde Park Village is now. There were shops and stores. I think there was a five- and ten-cent store, and a butcher shop, and, eventually, a couple of little apartments and gas stations. I used to ride my bike there. I used to ride my bike on [Bayshore Boulevard]. Kate Jackson went there as a teenager, a preteen. The old building that was later torn down was bungalow style¹, where they had things for kids.

JG: That must have been great.

ST: We—we went—we also, my grandfather moved here, and he ended up getting a house over at Indian Rocks Beach. So, we used to go over to Indian Rocks Beach to go swimming.

JG: Well, were you interested in the outdoors, in the natural as a kid? Do you remember?

ST: Well, it's hard to say because I think I sort of took it for granted, riding on my bike and being outside. I would say, yes, I was, but I wasn't interested in science or critters or birds or any—none of that was on my radar screen at that point, if that's what you mean.

JG: Yeah, yeah. That came later?

ST: And Tampa was so much smaller, then. It was a much more of small town, so I didn't really think about the environment, I guess. Although, I did have a "I am not a litterbug" tag when I was in the fourth grade. (laughing) So, I guess, before we moved back to Florida—or maybe it was—there used to be, you know, "Do not litter," and I had an "I am not a litterbug" sign. So there was stuff in there that was environmental, but it wasn't—I was girl scout, and we went to Camp Dorothy Thomas, which is out by the Alafia River, and there used to a lake there. There's not a lake there anymore. So, I think, things that I did, I just sort of, maybe, took for granted.

¹Bungalow style is a typification of home architecture popularized in early-to-mid 20th century United States. Common characteristics of bungalow style structures include a low-pitched roof, a large front porch, and an open floor plan.

JG: Well, you grew up in Hyde Park.

ST: Yes.

JG: You weren't very far from Bayshore.

ST: Oh, yes.

JG: Did you have—what was the bay like then? Or did you have you any connection with it?

ST: I don't remember the bay being—well, I will say, when I went to high school, I went to the Academy of the Holy Names. And, back in those days, there wasn't air conditioning. So, you got to smell the eau de bay, as we called it. Especially at Bayshore and [Bay to Bay Boulevard], it was pretty stinky at times. So, even though I did spend time on Bayshore and rode my bike, I was aware that there was pollution. I just wasn't active. I'm sure that anybody was, at that point.

JG: And so, you grew up in Tampa. You went away to college. Where did you—?

ST: I went to college at Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. I spent four years there, and then I moved up to New York City to find fame and fortune, and Mr. Right.

JG: And succeeded on all counts?

ST: And didn't succeed on any of them. However, in 1970, I went to the first Earth Day parade in New York City. And it was really, really hard living in New York City because you were such a little, little fish in a big pool. And I came back to Tampa in about the mid '70s, early to mid '70s, because it just was getting too big in New York, and I thought I'd come back to Tampa. A lot of my New York friends thought I was crazy.

And I was starting to get interested in the environment, or become more aware of environment. What was interesting to me was, I came back, and I found out that a lot of

the plants that I'd really taken for granted or liked as kid, like the Australian pines², were invasives³ [sic]. They were terrible invasives [sic]. And we had a melaleuca⁴, which we called punk, we had a punk tree in our yard.

JG: That's what we called them.

ST: And people would peel them and make baskets to grow plants. And then the cherry laurel⁵, the [*Schinus terebinthifolia*⁶], Mother planted them over at the beach. And if you look at an old University of Florida, University of Florida put out a book on plants in mid '50s. I think it was the *Seminole(??)* or *Seminal(??) Book on Plants*, and they had all three of them as ones to buy and plant.

So I think what hit me was that, when I was growing up in Florida, there were maybe five million people. And then, as Florida grew bigger and bigger, the invasives [sic] became—whether they were people, or whether they were plants—that you became more aware. And so, one of things, when I first came back to Tampa, I decided I wanted to get involved in the environment.

And I met Sally Casper; she was involved in Save Our Bay. I had dated her husband, Tom, in high school. And she was having an event for—I think Fran Davin was running for office—and I was asking about what I could do. And, she handed me a Save Our Bay flyer, and the next thing I knew, I was on the board because that's one of those things where you say you want to get involved. And so, I had a lot of learning to do.

JG: You say you had a lot of learning to do. You, actually, kind of got into the environment because [of] a sense of mission more than really being familiar with the all the issues.

²The Australian pine is a tropical evergreen tree native to Australia, the South Pacific, and South Asia; due to its aggressive growth rate, the species is considered invasive to Florida.

³An invasive species is any living organism—plant, fungus, bacteria, or animal—that is not native to a specific ecosystem and causes harm to its environment, ecosystem, or surrounding human community as it spreads.

⁴The melaleuca tree, commonly called punk tree or paperbark tea-tree, is a species of tree endemic to Australia. Melaleuca trees are invasive in Florida due to their rapid growth rate.

⁵The cherry laurel is an evergreen shrub or small tree native to North America.

⁶The *Schinus terebinthifolia*, sometimes called the Brazilian pepper tree, is a species of flowering plant in the cashew family; it is native to South America and considered invasive in Florida.

ST: I wasn't aware of issues. I think I just maybe took things for granted or didn't know any better. It was as I became more involved, I realized that the yellow haze that was on the horizon when I was growing up was from sulfur. Or, you know, the haze over Davis Island. It's almost like, all of a sudden, it hit me that a lot of things that I knew nothing about were actually becoming very problematic. The fish tanks, flushing stuff down the toilet, which then ends up in the rivers and streams, clogging plants. It just was a real eye-opener, and I just became more and more interested.

JG: And had you gone to work for the city, at that time?

ST: I went, yes. I went to work for the city, and most of my work for the city was in human resources. But, when we started doing a classification and pay plan for the city, most of the professionals wanted to be assigned to departments like planning or budget or whatever. I said, "I want to be assigned to sewer, water, public works." And I saw, for example, the [Howard F. Curren Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant] built, from the bottom up, and I interviewed the people that worked there, so it was a real education for me and very interesting.

JF: So, most of your work on the environment was done as a volunteer, as a citizen activist.

ST: Yes.

JF: But you could also see it from the other side—

ST: Yes.

JF: —from the city job and kind of help—

ST: Yes, because I got myself assigned to departments that nobody else wanted to be assigned to. And, because of my interest, I was able to find out things. When I was first interviewing, for example, some of the engineers relative to their job descriptions, they sort of looked at me like "What does she know?" But I learned a lot from it.

JF: Back then, were there many people that shared your attitude on the environment, in the administration?

ST: Well, I remember, I just thought of something that was really funny. I met Robin Lewis when I was involved with Save Our Bay, and I found out about all the issues with the incinerator and McKay Bay⁷. I was assigned to solid waste, which was then sanitation. When I went out to interview the people who worked at the incinerator, the director, then, was just talking about how—he was bashing Save Our Bay and Robin and all this stuff. Well, you know, it was “Look at these—what these people are doing. They’re telling us that we’re not doing our job,” or something. And I was feeling very strange because these were friends of mine. But I started learning that there were issues that I didn’t know anything about, on both sides. And, later on, the superintendent and I had big laugh about it. But, at that time, he was just frustrated because, I think, Audubon⁸ or Save Our Bay was threatening to sue the city, and I had no idea about it.

JF: But, as with many people I talk to, the bay is what really was the focal point of your interests in the—

ST: Well, I got involved with Save Our Bay, and then I started realizing that the bay was in pretty bad condition. It was something that I took for granted growing up, knowing that the smell was bad, but not knowing anything about urban runoff⁹. I just started educating myself.

JF: Now, what was your next step beyond Save Our Bay?

ST: Well, what happened with Save Our Bay, and this is what happens lots of times with local organizations, is they’ll have a cause, but if they win the suit and they win the cause, then what do they do next? When it’s a national organization, for example, like Audubon, they can afford to have—and I’m not saying they do—but they can afford to have a Tampa Audubon and have it lose members and not be very active because they have the umbrella organization, which is a nationwide one. So, they can become active and less active.

⁷McKay Bay is the name given to the northeastern corner of Tampa Bay.

⁸The National Audubon Society is an organization devoted to conserving and protecting birds and other wildlife through its local chapters, as well as restoring and safeguarding animal habitats and natural resources across the United States.

⁹Urban runoff, a major source of flooding and water pollution in urban areas, is polluted rainwater that has been carried across paved roads, rooftops, gutters, et cetera, and deposited into soil.

Well, with Save Our Bay, it didn't work that way. And we also—our board—decided that maybe we needed to look at more than just the bay, and that is when the Hillsborough Environmental Coalition started. And, what happened was we started doing some research and found out that there had been a Hillsborough County Environmental Coalition a few years before, that had been set up. I think it had twenty-six dollars in its bank account, and it hadn't met. We decided, also, that we had better take the [word] county out of it because, if we called it the Hillsborough County Environmental Coalition, they might get it mixed up with the Environmental Protection Commission [EPC]. And, sure enough, when we reopened the bank account, I think they sent the first notice to EPC. So we realized that we needed to call it the Hillsborough Environmental Coalition.

So, we were active for several years, and that's when we started looking at more than just Tampa Bay. We looked at the phosphate industry and what was going on. We looked at air quality. We looked at land. We became more of an umbrella group, the idea being—as a coordinating group, too, with the other environmental groups, so we could all work together and communicate better, rather than just stand on our own.

JG: Who were some of those people in that effort, besides you?

ST: Well, we had Rich Paul, and we had his predecessor, whose name I can't think of right now. We had—oh, dear.

JG: Robin Lewis? Was he involved?

ST: Robin was a little involved, but not so much at the beginning. We did have Audubon. We had, um—I'm going to have to give you the names because I'm just drawing a blank right now.

JG: That's okay. Was John Betts involved in that?

ST: No, he had been involved with Save Our Bay, but he was pretty much—he and um some of the professors out at USF were kind of doing their thing.

JG: Well, how did—eventually, you became very involved with ELAPP, and when did you come to that point—

ST: Well—

JG: —when you realized we need to start buying land and not just—

ST: We, in the late—Joel Jackson was working for, I think, for Hillsborough County at that point, and there was a bond issued.

JG: For the bond program.

ST: And, towards the end of the '70s, the state had a land program—I'm not sure what year the Conservation and Recreation Lands program¹⁰ started. But a proposal was made to Tallahassee to acquire the Bower Tract, Cockroach Bay Islands, and then there was another piece of land that's on [Upper Tampa Bay Park], where the Hyatt is.

JG: Uh-huh.

ST: It was—I don't remember what. Anyway, so these three parcels were nominated to the state. And that's when I started understanding the politics involved in land acquisition. This was five years before we even talked about ELAPP. And so, we proposed these three parcels. The *Tampa Tribune* became very, um, in opposition to the Bower Tract. Holmes Alexander,¹¹ who was the book review editor, was very much opposed to it. What was sort of interesting for me is [that] my father used to write book reviews, and he walked into Holmes' office, one time, and Holmes had the map out and was talking about how this was already protected; it didn't need to be purchased. And I thought, "Oh my goodness. This is interesting," because, you know, I was having this conversation. And then I talked to—was he the environmental editor, Wayne(??) or Wade(??) Stevens?

JG: He was just an editor.

ST: Okay. Because he wrote an editorial, and it was "Why Protect the Already Protected?" I think Holmes maybe wrote an editorial; I'm not sure. But, all of a sudden, I felt like I had walked into a hornet's nest, and I didn't really know how to deal with it.

¹⁰The Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program was established by the Florida Legislature in 1979 to acquire lands of environmental and cultural significance. In 1989, the CARL program was replaced by Preservation 2000.

¹¹Holmes Moss Alexander (1906 – 1985) was an American historian, journalist, columnist, and politician.

And they would not talk to us who were interested in protecting the land because they had already made up their minds. I think there was somebody who owned the property, and they didn't like him or something.

JG: Yeah. In the interim, they got a new editorial page editor, who hired me, and I was able to reverse that.

ST: Well, I was sort of told by staff that it was a hopeless case. In fact, Wade called me and said that it couldn't be done, which made me even more interested in getting it done. And then, the other thing that was interesting is that Elton Gissendanner¹², who was the head of the Department of National Resources, was having a spat with Jake Varn¹³, who was the head of the Department of Environmental Regulations. Mr. Gissendanner was interested in a parcel down in southeast Florida that was where he was from, and Jake was interested in the Bower Tract. And, because Mr. Varn did not rank the other parcel higher, Mr. Gissendanner voted against it. So, we went from something like a ranking of a number seven to a ranking of number 22. I had been asked speak at an Army Corps of Engineers conference about Tampa Bay, environmental aspects of Tampa Bay. And I ran into Secretary Gissendanner, and I just asked him why he changed his vote. He said, "Well, Jake voted against mine, so I voted against his." And I thought, this is amazing that a person in that level is speaking this way to me, who's a nobody. So, I was armed with some information to do some research, and that's when I found out how the parcels had changed.

Anyway, over the years, we ultimately ended up buying the Bower Tract and, part of what we realized, what the county realized, is how competitive it was statewide. The county, I believe, put up about a half million dollars to help buy this land. And then it was purchased. Then there was the dedication, and Governor Graham came down, and Elton Gissendanner came down to the dedication because his daughter had moved to the neighborhood, so he was all for it. But this is where—

JG: And—who ended up going to prison.

ST: I understand he did. But I would say it was, maybe, two or three years later that Jan Platt approached me. She spoke to, I think it was Larry Brown. I think Bill Tatum had died, and Larry Brown was the county administrator. And she recognized that we needed to have—if we were going to be competitive with the state program, that we needed to

¹²In addition to serving as the director of the Department of Natural Resources, Florida politician Elton Gissendanner also served as the mayor of North Miami. In 1988, Gissendanner was arrested on charges of obstruction of justice.

¹³Jake Varn is a prominent environmental attorney in Florida.

have source of income ourselves, and also that there were parcels of land in Hillsborough County that needed protection. So, it was sort of two-fold.

JG: So, you got involved with Jan in trying to get—

ST: Jan asked me to serve on this committee, and you don't say no to Jan.

JG: So, you went out and met with the public and—

ST: Oh, yeah.

JG: Was it much push—?

ST: Is this still on or are you done?

JG: Yeah, it—I just—

ST: Okay.

JG: Was there much pushback to begin with?

ST: I think it was first educating people, and we ended up hiring a consultant. Oh, we ended up hiring—I believe that is when Eric Draper got involved, and he was with Clean Water Action, I think, at that point. And he spoke at the county. We put together brochures. We had to come up with a name. We met for probably a year to develop some sort of program to take to the citizens. And then we marketed it, and the citizens voted for it. But, yes, we went out and talked to different groups and had our flyers put together. And what we did was, we used Cockroach Bay Islands as our—because you needed to have a project to get people excited about—so they would be a keystone-type project.

JG: Were you surprised at all that, in a county that had traditionally been very development-friendly [and] elected development-friendly commissioners, that the public endorsed it so strongly?

ST: I'm not sure whether I was surprised. This is going back a long time, but I always had the attitude with, at least at that time, with environmental issue [that] if it makes sense—I mean, we have history in this country of protecting parks going back to Teddy Roosevelt. And it's been a bipartisan kind of thing. And the other thing, too, is we went to some—I remember going to a workshop at Rollins College to hear about what was going on around the state; who else was sort of developing. Clay Henderson was involved on his side of the state. And we made it voluntary. We made sure that it was not, that it wouldn't be eminent domain, and you wouldn't be taking land, you know. And, when you come up with something that's purely voluntary, people look at it a little bit differently than if they think you're taking away their land. And we had to be careful, too, that some people would speak and say, "Well, you can put it in the"—whether it's the comped land(??) or something like that, that you can rezone. And, again, everything was to be voluntary, and I think that's why we were able to sell it.

JG: And it has been citizen-run group from the very start. You've been involved in—

ST: Yes, it has. And, in fact, the first year, once we got the um, referendum passed, then we had to figure out: how are we going rank these lands? If people nominate them, how do we do this? And, the first year, we had 26 sites, and we ranked them from one to 26. We didn't really want to do it that way because that meant one would be better than the other. And, of course, the newspaper reported that, you know, this was better than that. But we didn't really quite know how to do it differently.

And then when Kurt Grimley was hired, he was hired after the first year as the acquisition person, he suggested that we come up with a A, B, C type, where you could have 10 of them or five of them that are in the A level, and others in the B level and C. That way, they could go back and forth, and it wouldn't have to be that you had to buy number 1, then number 2, and number 3, because it doesn't work that way when you acquire. And we didn't know enough about real estate, or I certainly didn't, to know the nuances of setting up a program like that. But what was interesting for me is, I worked in human resources, and we had been going through a whole way of evaluating people's applications and getting away from the scoring of 1, 2, and looking at a range of scoring. So, you know, it was very understandable to me, if that makes sense. It was kind of interesting.

JG: And they brought in real estate experts, right, to also give people (both speaking at the same time; inaudible) doing the site selection and people doing—

ST: Oh. well, we had a whole way of—because one of parts was public interest, but the other part was, and Rob Heath worked with us very closely on this, they had scientists who went out. And there were volunteers as well. There were staff and volunteers that

would go out and look at the sites and look at the flora and the fauna and the environmental importance. They would come to us, and we had a scoring system, and they would tell us what they saw. So, it wasn't just us saying, "Well, that looks nice." We had experts, you could say, that were helping us make a decision. And there were several people on the selection team, so it was a give-and-take.

JG: So, it eventually evolved into a pretty efficient process?

ST: I think so. Yes.

JG: I mean, you've been involved with government all your life.

ST: Well, I don't know about that.

(both laugh)

JG: Well, pretty much.

ST: I've been involved for a long time.

JG: A long time.

ST: I felt that, and government, lots of times, has a lot of—I got into government because I got tired of people bashing government. And I thought maybe I could make a difference. I'm not sure I did. But, anyway, it's always good, though, to be involved with something where you see it being done right. And it being done with the volunteers and the staff was doing it right.

JG: Great. Were there any obstacles that y'all [sic] ran into that were unexpected, or major hiccups that you needed to deal with?

ST: Oh, well, I can remember, I think it was first year, the Sierra Club¹⁴ nominated about half of the county, and we didn't know what we were going to do. We ended up breaking it into parcels. But we got, at the beginning, program was modeled after the Conservations and Receptions Lands Program, CARL. But then, in 1990, with Preservation 2000, we had several other programs under the umbrella: the Florida Communities Trust¹⁵, the [Florida Department of Environmental Protection Office of Greenways and Trails]¹⁶, Save Our Rivers. Some of them had been existence before, but there were other ways of looking at applications and other ways of partnering. Another thing, too, was the [Surface Water Improvement and Management] program, the SWIM program¹⁷. Tampa Bay was a priority, one of the priorities in the state. And so, when we were looking at acquisitions, we got to the point where there were opportunities for restoration. And then there were opportunities for linkages, which is not something we even thought about, or I even thought about, at the beginning. But then you start seeing where you restore this. You take a pristine area; you take an area that can be restored, and you end up with a connectivity that you never imagined. It's pretty exciting.

JG: Now, you're talking about these partnerships and how important they were, and you served on the board of district(??), which is a very important thing. Do you think that helped, too, your role on the district?

ST: Well, when I got appointed to the water management district in 1990, I really didn't have any idea what I was getting into. But I did request, because we had several committees, I wanted to be on the land committee because I was interested in land acquisitions and partnerships. And I had no idea how large the Save Our Rivers program was, so that was another education for me. And so, I was able to look at opportunities where we could partner with the district. For example, at that point, I chaired the Alafia River Basin Board¹⁸. Because I worked in the city of Tampa and for the city, I thought

¹⁴Sierra Club is a national environmental organization that practices political activism and coordinates outdoor programs in state and national parks across the United States. Their motto, "Explore, enjoy and protect the planet," speaks to their goals of promoting responsible engagement with natural resources, protecting the ecosystems of the Americas, and advocating for environmental rights.

¹⁵Florida Communities Trust is a conservation program that assists communities in protecting important natural resources, providing recreational opportunities, and persevering waterfronts.

¹⁶The Florida Department of Environmental Protection Office of Greenways & Trails provides statewide leadership and coordination to establish, expand and promote the natural greenways and trails of Florida.

¹⁷In 1987, the Florida Legislature created the Surface Water Improvement and Management program (SWIM) as a mechanism to address nonpoint pollution concerns affecting at-risk water bodies in the state.

¹⁸The Alafia River Basin Board is one of eight regional Basin Boards in the Tampa Bay area; the boards each provide guidance and funding for local programs that are specific to the watershed basins they protect from pollution and depletion.

that, probably, being on the Hillsborough River Basin board appear to be a conflict, because that's in the City of Tampa. So, the Alafia River was separate.

And I remember talking to Fritz Musselman, who was in charge of land, about opportunities for riverine corridors¹⁹. And we ended up adding the Alafia river corridor and the Little Manatee River corridor and, ultimately, something called the Tampa Bay Estuarine Ecosystem. We already had the Hillsborough River. But we're looking at these, and, when they were designated as something that was a priority of ours, it made it an opportunity to partner with the county on the ELAPP program. That way, the district and the county wouldn't be competing with each other. They would, for example, with the Alafia River and the Little Manatee River, one would take the lead on one, and the other would take the lead on the other. So, they would be more efficient; it'd be a more efficient way of acquiring the land, and something that was more responsive to the tax payers.

JG: Do you have any concerns now? In the last couple of years, the districts have looked at selling land. Do you worry about that partnership being frayed at all?

ST: Well, it's kind of ironic because we had ELAPP renewed with a huge majority vote. We had a constitutional amendment passed with, I think, 75% of the people in Florida wanting to support land acquisition. And yet, our state won't go forward. So it's very frustrating. It's frustrating, too, because, especially with the downturn from a few years back, there were lands that were available at good prices. But our elected officials weren't letting us go forward. And we were losing out on partnerships. So I always try to be the optimist and figure, well, let's make sure we're taking care of what we have, and maybe, eventually, people will wake up and realize.

JG: What do you think ELAPP's biggest accomplishment has been?

ST: I think, when you look at the way we have been able to protect land and link land that—I mean, it would have been fine and nice if we'd gotten a whole bunch of different parcels here and there, but we've got corridors linked. And I think that has raised the awareness of people. I think the accomplishment is that people realize that it's a program that's working; that it's not some government boondoggle. And, you know, in a county that's developing as much as Hillsborough county, the fact that we have set aside this land is wonderful. And if you couple that with, as I said, one of the things was Tampa Bay Estuarine Ecosystem. (phone rings) The way Tampa Bay has improved, you know, relating the land and the water is amazing.

¹⁹River corridors, sometimes called riverine corridors, are the plots of land directly adjacent to rivers. The protection of these landscapes is crucial to preserving a river's watershed and ecology.

JG: Well, what do you think is the biggest challenge, going forward with ELAPP?

ST: I think a big challenge is helping elected officials, especially at the state level, to understand that protection—we in Florida were really blessed with the fact that we have one of the best programs in the country. Unfortunately, over the past several years, for whatever reason, our elected officials have kind of ignored that. Somehow, it's gotten to the idea that we're taking land off of the tax rolls, and that means—you know, right in the paper today, talking about timbering on lands in parks. And, it's not necessarily that some of that, and this probably blasphemy, that some of that won't work because, sometimes, when we buy lands, we have what are called acquisitions of convenience because it's a large swath of land and we have to buy the whole thing. So some of it might work for timbering or for cattle grazing or whatever. But that's got to be something that probably temporary and it can't be something that's supposed to pay the way, so to speak, on a full-time basis. And I really think that some of our elected officials don't understand the importance of the protection of the land. I'm not sure why because it's gone from—I mean it used to be a bipartisan kind of thing. And, now it's gotten a we-versus-they. I'm not sure whether, maybe, I can't say we haven't done a good enough job of preaching the gospel, so to speak. I don't know. For example, when you're dealing with something like greenways and trails, if you have land that's adjacent to a high-end development or land adjacent to a development, it's going to be more high-end, probably, because people like the view, or like being near land like that. So even though the land itself may have lower taxes, the land next to it, where you've built, is going to bring in more taxes because you have higher-end homes. And, somehow, people don't make the connection. So, you know, that's just something we have to keep working on, and I don't know. I'm hoping, um, it's very frustrating to me because we've got a good program. We've had a good state program, and, as it fluctuates, people don't know their history.

JG: Well, Sally, I think we've covered most everything. Is there anything I should have asked that I didn't or anything you want to cover?

ST: Well, I can give you some names of people, you know, from the beginning. I just can't think of them right off. So, I can—

JG: Okay. Well, you can call later with that.

ST: I'll email or call—yeah.

JG: But if there's anything else that you'd like to say. If not, I think you've been very generous with your time.

ST: I can't think of anything right now, except I just hope that we can press forward and become more successful, continue our successes.

End of Interview