

Our History

Southern activists formed Dogwood Alliance in November 1996. Originally, Dogwood Alliance focused on stopping the expansion of chip mills - facilities that grind whole logs into wood chips for making paper and chipboard -- across the South. Beginning in the mid-1980s, large pulp and paper industries shifted the main thrust of their activity from over-cut forests of the Pacific Northwest to recovering forests in the South. This shift resulted in a proliferation of chip mills and unprecedented industrial-scale clear-cutting of forests. Over the last two or three years as citizen concerns about Southern forests escalated into the national spotlight, only a few chip mills have applied for permits in Southern states. While this possibly signals the end of an era of aggressive expansion by the paper industry, it is most definitely not the end of the destruction of the region's forests for paper production.

In 1999, Dogwood Alliance celebrated its first major victory by leveraging the first ever, comprehensive study of Southern forest sustainability. Conducted by the US Forest Service, the Environmental Protection Agency and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the study showed that the Southern United States produces more timber than any other country in the world and paper is the number one wood commodity produced in the region. It also confirmed that Southern forests are some of the most biologically diverse and endangered in North America.

Recognizing that environmental groups were successfully using market campaigns to compel companies to protect forests, Dogwood Alliance adopted the strategy and launched the first markets campaign focused on retail suppliers of office copy paper with our international partner ForestEthics. On November 12, 2002, Staples, the largest office supply superstore in the world, announced its new environmental paper procurement policy in a joint press conference with Dogwood and ForestEthics (click here to see victory timeline). In its precedent setting policy the company committed to phase out products originating from endangered forests (including those in the Southern US) and to aggressively increase the amount of post consumer recycled paper made available for sale. Due to the success of this campaign and its impact on the South's largest paper producers, Dogwood now focuses its campaigns in the marketplace.

To learn more about Dogwood's current campaigns click here.

To take action to protect Southern forests click here.

Dogwood Alliance believes in accomplishing change through campaigns on sound science and economic viability.

peaceful non-violent means and bases its