

James: all right. So I I I think, you know, like we like to start off with kind of a personal question a little bit. But just so. can you narrate a little bit? kind of the story of how you became involved in environmental protection and governance work.

3

00:00:22.810 --> 00:00:28.300

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Yes. So my mother, Claire Schluder back created

4

00:00:28.770 --> 00:00:37.830

Melanie Schlotterbeck: or co-created Chino Hill State Park, and I was about 4 when she started that work, and so

5

00:00:38.210 --> 00:00:40.250

Melanie Schlotterbeck: me and my twin sister were.

6

00:00:40.640 --> 00:00:54.230

Melanie Schlotterbeck: for lack of a better word used in photographs with the press. And oh, here's some cute kids and So I have been raised in the thick of the conservation movement

7

00:00:54.250 --> 00:00:56.039

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and have

8

00:00:56.700 --> 00:01:10.120

Melanie Schlotterbeck: a unique skill set that complements what my mom does. And so we, we collaborate on all sorts of projects. But our work focused on hills, for everyone spans 4 counties and 12 jurisdictions

9

00:01:10.750 --> 00:01:11.740

Melanie Schlotterbeck: so

10

00:01:12.190 --> 00:01:24.749

James: awesome. Yeah. can you tell me a a little bit more about like that division of labor or skill sets that like, and how you collaborate with your mom a little bit

11

00:01:25.680 --> 00:01:33.100

Melanie Schlotterbeck: legislative focus kind of the policy side related to interacting with the press

12

00:01:33.110 --> 00:01:48.290

Melanie Schlotterbeck: legislative staff members. whereas mine is more on the technology side. So mapping interfaces, you know, kind of the communication side fundraising.

13

00:01:48.500 --> 00:01:56.480

Melanie Schlotterbeck: My background is in geography. So Gis is a big component of what I do. So

14

00:01:56.860 --> 00:02:00.430

Melanie Schlotterbeck: dare I say, old school versus new schools.

15

00:02:02.980 --> 00:02:04.070

James: Fair enough.

16

00:02:04.410 --> 00:02:10.449

James: so I I I something that like we have

17

00:02:11.620 --> 00:02:13.529

James: Notice. It is

18

00:02:14.140 --> 00:02:28.419

James: that you you guys seem to work with a lot of different kinds of organizations and form a lot of partnerships. So can you tell me a little bit about all of that, and like. how these partnerships developed and like what how you all work together, and what that collaboration is like.

19

00:02:28.770 --> 00:02:32.660

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Sure. one of the

20

00:02:32.980 --> 00:02:40.190

Melanie Schlotterbeck: opportunities that has presented itself for hills, for everyone specifically

21

00:02:40.360 --> 00:02:41.520

Melanie Schlotterbeck: is

22

00:02:41.630 --> 00:02:45.809

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Cross county collaboration. And so, while

23

00:02:46.030 --> 00:03:02.529

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Chino Hill State Park, the idea for it came in the 1970 S. That same concept was being developed in the 1980 S. By residents on the west side of the hills and the pointing hills.

24

00:03:02.560 --> 00:03:05.820

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And once we understood

25

00:03:06.430 --> 00:03:18.299

Melanie Schlotterbeck: conservation biology, and that you needed to connect things together in order to make them thrive. And that species and habitats survive over the long term.

26

00:03:18.830 --> 00:03:28.369

Melanie Schlotterbeck: We realize, gosh! We better. We better really unite with. you know, the West, the East, and the center. And

27

00:03:29.920 --> 00:03:32.320

Melanie Schlotterbeck: as park advocates.

28

00:03:33.840 --> 00:03:36.760

Melanie Schlotterbeck: you cross a lot of topics.

29

00:03:36.930 --> 00:03:39.869

Melanie Schlotterbeck: whether it's economics.

30

00:03:41.520 --> 00:03:44.090

Melanie Schlotterbeck: disadvantaged communities.

31

00:03:45.830 --> 00:03:57.630

Melanie Schlotterbeck: native plants. air quality. There's all sorts of topics that come into play which makes it really easy to find partners.

32

00:03:58.170 --> 00:04:07.119

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And what I've found. This is probably slightly off topic. But what I found to be really helpful in terms of success

33

00:04:07.140 --> 00:04:12.770

Melanie Schlotterbeck: is that once you form that partnership relationship.

34

00:04:13.320 --> 00:04:23.369

Melanie Schlotterbeck: you don't have to agree on everything. You just have to agree on one thing, and you move that forward. But where you do disagree.

35

00:04:24.090 --> 00:04:31.560

Melanie Schlotterbeck: having that relationship makes it so much easier to have a conversation about where you disagree.

36

00:04:32.010 --> 00:04:42.270

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and makes it much easier to disagree. If that makes sense, it's less of a challenge. You're not, you know, combative. You are partners. You just recognize that

37

00:04:42.380 --> 00:04:49.009

Melanie Schlotterbeck: this is the thing we agree on, and this other thing we don't. But we can at least understand where the other side is coming from.

38

00:04:51.940 --> 00:04:53.459

James: Yeah, I think that's a good point.

39

00:04:53.680 --> 00:04:58.509

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I I I have a a question like.

40

00:04:59.620 --> 00:05:03.259

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I think that's interesting to say that different issues

41

00:05:03.490 --> 00:05:13.059

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: help actually help you actually work together easier. Which to me that sounds like me. That would be the case. Like, if you're like split focuses.

42

00:05:13.140 --> 00:05:17.549

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: it. Maybe it'd be harder to actually work together. And like you mentioned, like.

43

00:05:17.860 --> 00:05:23.360

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: disadvantaged communities, air quality conservation. We're like these things are

44

00:05:23.390 --> 00:05:28.719

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: connected like environment. Right? Like, we're all living in this lived environment.

45

00:05:28.920 --> 00:05:30.620

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: But they are

46

00:05:31.110 --> 00:05:40.270

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: different approaches, like building a wildlife park will be different from like reducing

47

00:05:41.050 --> 00:05:54.439

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: industry right next to a disadvantaged community. Right there, they're the same. They're the same right? Like you guys like everyone here gets out there. The same kind of issue. But they're very, very different kind of approaches to that in different ways of looking at the problem.

48

00:05:54.520 --> 00:05:55.970

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: So I'm curious, like.

49

00:05:56.280 --> 00:06:03.130

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: maybe talks. If you could talk to kind of how you would, how you approach those differences, and how it is, how it does make it easier to work together.

50

00:06:03.450 --> 00:06:10.420

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Sure. So it's finding out where those common threads are. So using the example you just gave.

51

00:06:10.440 --> 00:06:36.919

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Yes, we're building a 31 mile long wildlife corridor. And if we're focused on building a partnership with somebody who wants to reduce air pollution, industry may not be our actual focus, but if we can tie that to these particular plants, reduce emissions that are in the air and clean the air for us. That's the connection.

52

00:06:37.100 --> 00:06:42.539

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So sometimes they're less obvious than other times. But

53

00:06:42.890 --> 00:06:48.030

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I I I will find the common thread. So

54

00:06:49.210 --> 00:06:52.390

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: do you have any specific examples, because

55

00:06:52.450 --> 00:07:00.480

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: they going through like I was scrolling through like your LinkedIn, for example, and it was quite impressive, kind of like the scale projects. So maybe you could narrate like

56

00:07:00.690 --> 00:07:04.960

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: one of those instances. I just be curious kind of here like a example of that.

57

00:07:07.330 --> 00:07:10.090

Melanie Schlotterbeck: let's see. So

58

00:07:13.190 --> 00:07:22.670

Melanie Schlotterbeck: in 2,005, the Orange County transportation authority was developing its next half cent sales tax measure.

59

00:07:22.800 --> 00:07:23.920

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And

60

00:07:24.710 --> 00:07:37.800

Melanie Schlotterbeck: my mom was, this sounds so weird to say that but my mom was appointed as the hills for everyone rep, and I was the representative of another nonprofit called Friends of Harbor's Beaches and Parks.

61

00:07:38.030 --> 00:07:50.500

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and our goal was to see if there was something we could get into that transportation sales tax measure that benefited the environment, and

62

00:07:51.370 --> 00:07:58.970

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I had a lot of time on my hands. I was recovering from a spinal fusion, and in a hospital bed for 9 months, and so

63

00:07:59.090 --> 00:08:18.399

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I had nothing better to do than research how transportation can benefit the environment and found an example in San Diego County, where they had generated through the sales tax measure down there 800 million dollars to benefit the environment. And you don't normally think

64

00:08:18.770 --> 00:08:21.789

Melanie Schlotterbeck: conservation and transportation go together.

65

00:08:21.870 --> 00:08:27.589

Melanie Schlotterbeck: But every single transportation project. This is how I did that research in that downtime

66

00:08:27.760 --> 00:08:28.829

Melanie Schlotterbeck: was

67

00:08:29.870 --> 00:08:37.459

Melanie Schlotterbeck: has in its budget a line item for environmental permitting for environmental mitigation.

68

00:08:37.480 --> 00:08:38.880

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And so

69

00:08:38.980 --> 00:08:48.439

Melanie Schlotterbeck: what I proposed was, there's gotta be a way to tap into that line item with the Octa measure and

70

00:08:49.210 --> 00:09:09.089

Melanie Schlotterbeck: smarter minds than myself. Specifically, a woman named Terry Watt. She. She was kind of the lead negotiator on this, and we ended up coming up with an ask for Octa, because they? They knew that getting the transportation sales tax measure

71

00:09:09.170 --> 00:09:22.649

Melanie Schlotterbeck: approved was going to be harder, and it's harder because the first time the measure passed in 1,990, it only required 50 plus one as a majority to achieve an approved

72

00:09:22.990 --> 00:09:24.860

Melanie Schlotterbeck: voter approved measure.

73

00:09:25.150 --> 00:09:32.939

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Now it required two-thirds majority, so the the requirement for passage was a lot higher.

74

00:09:33.040 --> 00:09:38.269

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and so Octa was trying to figure out, how can we get other folks on board?

75

00:09:38.330 --> 00:09:41.550

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And so, when our ask came in.

76

00:09:42.030 --> 00:09:48.580

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Instead of looking at every freeway project. There were 13 of them individually.

77

00:09:48.620 --> 00:09:58.630

Melanie Schlotterbeck: we said, just bundle all of those line items and put them in a big pot over here, and instead of doing little mitigation, do big mitigation.

78

00:09:58.870 --> 00:10:02.800

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and we were therefore able to

79

00:10:02.860 --> 00:10:18.729

Melanie Schlotterbeck: preserve 1,300 acres and restore 350 acres, and we still have 150 million dollars to spend. So clearly there was an advantage to Octa. We then helped get the measure passed by promoting it to all of our

80

00:10:18.790 --> 00:10:29.129

Melanie Schlotterbeck: our email list, our mailing list. We were on a campaign at that point because we could get properties purchased for conservation, and they could get their transportation projects built.

81

00:10:29.160 --> 00:10:42.059

Melanie Schlotterbeck: That said there were 3 poison pills that we identified in advance of negotiating. So this is kind of knowing who you're working with and understanding what your own boundaries are

82

00:10:42.100 --> 00:10:44.300

Melanie Schlotterbeck: was important. So we knew that

83

00:10:44.430 --> 00:11:02.049

Melanie Schlotterbeck: if the measure which was known. The second measure was called Measure M. 2. The first one was Measure M. One. This, if the second measure included the Toll Road through San Anso Free State Park. Notice. It's a park. We don't want roads through parks that was deal breaker.

84

00:11:02.090 --> 00:11:14.520

Melanie Schlotterbeck: If the road connected the Inland Empire from the 15 over to the 241 over the Cleveland National Forest. also a deal breaker, and the third one was

85

00:11:14.730 --> 00:11:32.249

Melanie Schlotterbeck: building an elevated extension of the 57 Freeway down to Pacific Coast Highway highway over the Santa Ana River. So you'll see the theme is those 3 road projects would have impacted greatly environmental

86

00:11:32.310 --> 00:11:40.190

Melanie Schlotterbeck: locations that are near and dear to conservation groups, hearts. So that's the the link of

87

00:11:40.470 --> 00:11:43.249

Melanie Schlotterbeck: disparate interests coming together.

88

00:11:43.470 --> 00:11:44.420

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and

89

00:11:44.570 --> 00:11:47.830

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that relationship has paid off

90

00:11:48.470 --> 00:12:01.589

Melanie Schlotterbeck: 20 fold in terms of our ability to communicate with the transportation agency. They've asked us to sit on climate committees serve on interview panels. They know that they can come to me

91

00:12:01.830 --> 00:12:08.979

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and get honest feedback without you know me going to the press to to throw them under the proverbial bus.

92

00:12:11.830 --> 00:12:27.939

James: That's all really interesting and helpful. and that that brings me to another question. So I I'm wondering so like in your extensive experience. I'm sure you worked at like many scales of government. Right? And for instance, I I I

93

00:12:28.170 --> 00:12:33.940

James: read that you're not shy in your critique of your Belindas as a scale of government.

94

00:12:34.210 --> 00:12:42.590

James: And so I'm wondering, can can you talk about like? So it sounds like you had a lot of look with the Octa right? like our like, have you found.

95

00:12:42.660 --> 00:12:54.849

James: like certain scales of government, to be more cooperative and some being like more resistant? And can you just like, do you have thoughts about that, and maybe why that is, or like where those struggles have, how they come about.

96

00:12:56.330 --> 00:13:02.509

Melanie Schlotterbeck: It entirely depends on who's in office, which we know can shift

97

00:13:02.810 --> 00:13:07.999

Melanie Schlotterbeck: for any number of reasons, whether it's an election or a recall, or something like that. But

98

00:13:09.610 --> 00:13:20.020

Melanie Schlotterbeck: we've had success at all levels of government. I mean, clearly working at the Federal level level is going to be harder because we're situated on the West coast, and you know that

99

00:13:20.080 --> 00:13:29.549

Melanie Schlotterbeck: in and of itself provides a challenge. Even Sacramento is a challenge, because we're in Southern California. And so yeah, so it's a very different.

100

00:13:30.770 --> 00:13:40.250

Melanie Schlotterbeck: very different tasks. But the skill set of working with elected leaders, and their staff applies across the board, and

101

00:13:41.940 --> 00:13:50.589

Melanie Schlotterbeck: some, I'll give you an example. Hot off the presses like I've not even announced it on our social media pages yet.

102

00:13:50.770 --> 00:14:04.649

Melanie Schlotterbeck: But last night the city of Brea adopted a native tree preservation policy, and it has specific criteria of what trees are protected, what size they need to be, what parcels they apply to.

103

00:14:04.790 --> 00:14:09.059

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and we had first tried to get it done at the county.

104

00:14:09.660 --> 00:14:17.049

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and we couldn't get it passed. And so I thought, well, we've got a receptive audience with

105

00:14:17.070 --> 00:14:24.039

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the city of Brea. They're interested in hillside preservation they've invested in that. They've named it as a goal.

106

00:14:24.510 --> 00:14:27.239

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and I happen to serve on the planning commission.

107

00:14:28.100 --> 00:14:34.419

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So all the stars aligned. The policy was unanimously approved by the planning Commission and the city council.

108

00:14:34.430 --> 00:14:50.839

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So this week I'm going to be reaching out to the Board of Supervisors to say you're not going to be first in line now. The city of Brea has done it. Be a follower, because you're not the leader, and that in and of itself tends to convince

109

00:14:51.170 --> 00:14:56.129

Melanie Schlotterbeck: governmental agencies to take action, because they are afraid to be first out of the gate.

110

00:15:00.260 --> 00:15:07.480

James: That's interesting. And so I'm sorry I'm asking all the questions, but I I just said a quick follow

111

00:15:07.830 --> 00:15:09.510

James: So that sort of like

112

00:15:10.070 --> 00:15:16.749

James: pushing from a bunch of different scales and a and a bunch of different ends to try and get someone to break the

113

00:15:16.910 --> 00:15:27.850

James: the floor, I guess right? Or this, you know, to then, like, once you have someone rate, it's a lot easier to get everyone else on board is what you're saying.

114

00:15:28.050 --> 00:15:39.560

James: I'm I'm I because you you like. This is another thing that you know aid. And I observed, is, you all have been like. really remarkably successful in your initiatives and and all, and y'all's campaigns. I wonder if you have

115

00:15:39.930 --> 00:15:50.560

James: nuggets of strategy, or I'd advice other things that that like really, that you that has influenced your your campaigns.

116

00:15:50.800 --> 00:16:14.420

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So I'm gonna I'm gonna give props to my grandpa, my Mom's dad. He was an engineer at Harvey mud and taught the clip the engineering clinic there, and these were freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors that would participate in real world examples. You know, the business would come and say, I've got this problem. Give it to your students, see if they can solve it.

117

00:16:14.710 --> 00:16:29.450

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And he would give the hardest problems, not to the seniors, but to the freshmen, because the freshmen didn't know what all the rules were. They didn't know what their constraints were, and they were able to think outside the box.

118

00:16:29.530 --> 00:16:35.139

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Exactly. So. My mom is actually a registered dietitian by training.

119

00:16:35.230 --> 00:16:50.479

Melanie Schlotterbeck: She's got a degree in political science. Nobody ever told her that creating a State Park was really flipping hard number One and Number 2, that 45 years later she would still be doing it.

120

00:16:51.330 --> 00:17:01.449

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So longevity and tenacity are critically important, and being able to think outside the box. So when we got turned down on the tree preservation policy.

121

00:17:01.570 --> 00:17:06.239

Melanie Schlotterbeck: My next thought was, Who can we go to? Where we can get a favorable outcome then?

122

00:17:07.480 --> 00:17:09.199

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And we have that answer now?

123

00:17:13.290 --> 00:17:41.939

James: so I might like be reaching a little bit outside of your wheelhouse here. But we, you know. So our focus is in Santa Ana, and we're dealing primarily with issues kind of proximate to what you typically work on right. But I'm wondering, like in your work and in your extensive experience and advocating, for you know certain points of environmental governance. Have you come across issues of of environmental governance and like, if so, can you like? Do you have, like a a

124

00:17:42.010 --> 00:17:51.230

James: a little bit of like an example of like how those issues a rose or came into your radar and like who were the stakeholders and and what not some

125

00:17:51.310 --> 00:18:04.710

Melanie Schlotterbeck: sure. And can I ask a question before I answer it? And you define environmental governance? Are you talking about the nonprofits governance and how it addresses problems or like actual local government.

126

00:18:04.990 --> 00:18:13.039

James: typically, yeah, I'm thinking about local government, right? So in yeah, and how the local government or the state is addressing environmental concerns.

127

00:18:13.140 --> 00:18:18.850

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Got it. So we normally hear about issues

128

00:18:19.100 --> 00:18:30.770

Melanie Schlotterbeck: because somebody does Google search and figures out, this nonprofit is in this area. And oh, they care about the birds or whatever. And so they come to us through our

129

00:18:31.070 --> 00:18:33.880

Melanie Schlotterbeck: website soliciting help.

130

00:18:34.030 --> 00:18:50.590

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And we have gotten involved in numerous campaigns, simply because somebody in some city in the Pynchino Hills Wildlife Corridor came to us and said, We've got this problem. Here's what's being proposed. Can you help us?

131

00:18:51.530 --> 00:18:55.919

Melanie Schlotterbeck: It's hard watching for counties.

132

00:18:56.030 --> 00:19:07.100

Melanie Schlotterbeck: all their boards of supervisors, and 12 jurisdictions on top of joint powers, authorities that exist in the wildlife corridor as well. So

133

00:19:08.660 --> 00:19:15.229

Melanie Schlotterbeck: it's also a challenge that between my mom's hours and my hours it's less than a full time person.

134

00:19:15.640 --> 00:19:22.600

Melanie Schlotterbeck: but because we are incredibly efficient and have been doing this a long time. You figure out

135

00:19:23.080 --> 00:19:25.090

Melanie Schlotterbeck: how to tackle something

136

00:19:25.310 --> 00:19:46.319

Melanie Schlotterbeck: as quickly and strategically as possible. So in a community like Santa Ana. It would normally be a resident or residence based group that circulates a petition. They're trying to figure out how they can get better traction. They call in the next level, which could be a regional group, or it could be

137

00:19:46.390 --> 00:19:59.049

Melanie Schlotterbeck: a a national group that does some type of conservation work. But sometimes those national groups call us and say, Have you heard of this? Do we? Is there something we should do or get involved with?

138

00:19:59.280 --> 00:20:08.899

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And so they're relying on us for that information as well. But it's really simply a phone call for an email that gets us engaged on something

139

00:20:10.910 --> 00:20:13.580

Melanie Schlotterbeck: outside of what we're already watching for

140

00:20:16.100 --> 00:20:17.259

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: that. Yeah.

141

00:20:17.350 --> 00:20:20.409

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I think what I'm hearing is that the

142

00:20:20.510 --> 00:20:26.289

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: what I see is there's like 2 different approaches to kind of like solving. I guess community based issues would be like

143

00:20:26.610 --> 00:20:35.449

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: petitioning from the outside to the government and actually working like being a part of it or like working within it. And I'm

144

00:20:35.830 --> 00:20:44.859

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I'm curious to here like, where do you see yourself? Because what do you think is more effective because you're also on the planning commission, which

145

00:20:45.110 --> 00:20:51.619

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I'm not sure, like in your experience, how much really like power that really has. But like in Santa Ana Landing Commission is actually past, like

146

00:20:51.640 --> 00:21:02.570

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: some pretty important things, are helpful, for. like I, I've I've really learned how important like land use policies are, and all that like really say, a huge part of the city does. So I think you actually are in a pretty

147

00:21:02.680 --> 00:21:05.099

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: good spot within the city.

148

00:21:05.930 --> 00:21:13.859

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: But from our experience we've mostly had, like with our community partners in Santa Ana. We've mostly done, I think, outside

149

00:21:14.280 --> 00:21:17.849

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: committee organizations trying to like petition. The Government, rather than really like

150

00:21:17.860 --> 00:21:23.989

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: our strategy being is getting people into like the city government which that hasn't happened yet, if I think we're trying to do that.

151

00:21:24.460 --> 00:21:25.330

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: But

152

00:21:25.570 --> 00:21:29.699

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: there's just 2 strategies. I'm kind of curious to hear your thoughts on that and kind of yeah.

153

00:21:30.120 --> 00:21:33.770

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So I have employed both. James, were you going to say something?

154

00:21:34.240 --> 00:21:39.000

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Okay? I've employed both strategies and

155

00:21:39.260 --> 00:21:52.459

Melanie Schlotterbeck: both can be effective. There's a toolbox of things that as a an individual or a community group, or even a nonprofit that you are or are not allowed to use

156

00:21:53.660 --> 00:22:00.300

Melanie Schlotterbeck: peer pressure conversations with a commissioner or a council member. a recall.

157

00:22:02.110 --> 00:22:07.749

Melanie Schlotterbeck: a a ballot measure. There's all litigation. There's all sorts of things that you can do.

158

00:22:08.890 --> 00:22:15.860

Melanie Schlotterbeck: But as the dear friend of my Elizabeth Brown, with L in a green belt, used to say, if you aren't at the table you're on the menu.

159

00:22:17.430 --> 00:22:18.260

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and

160

00:22:18.520 --> 00:22:27.010

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I want to be at the table. I'm not interested in being on the menu. I've we've already lived through that any number of times, and it's not fun.

161

00:22:27.070 --> 00:22:31.340

Melanie Schlotterbeck: especially when you have to identify your park.

162

00:22:31.710 --> 00:22:51.349

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And you're at a meeting of transportation agencies. And they say we're gonna put a road here, and it's like you can't do that. That's a protected park. They see it as blank. There's nothing on it. We see it as gosh! There's 90 miles of recreational trails here. There's a campground. It's a intact watershed. There's mountain lions.

163

00:22:52.170 --> 00:22:57.680

Melanie Schlotterbeck: But if you don't know your situational geography, that's a problem. So

164

00:22:58.070 --> 00:23:01.019

Melanie Schlotterbeck: my goal is to

165

00:23:01.550 --> 00:23:05.170

Melanie Schlotterbeck: collaborate with government. What I have found

166

00:23:05.690 --> 00:23:08.880

Melanie Schlotterbeck: is that you are much more

167

00:23:09.100 --> 00:23:10.610

Melanie Schlotterbeck: successful

168

00:23:12.610 --> 00:23:16.339

Melanie Schlotterbeck: if you're supporting something rather than opposing it.

169

00:23:16.950 --> 00:23:23.500

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And so, even to the point of, we don't like ABC policy.

170

00:23:23.910 --> 00:23:30.589

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I would frame that as we're able to support this if you change the

171

00:23:30.670 --> 00:23:37.410

Melanie Schlotterbeck: because A and C are fine and so just that language approach

172

00:23:37.570 --> 00:23:48.649

Melanie Schlotterbeck: completely changes. How a decision maker retains. The information evaluates whether or not you're a threat or an ally.

173

00:23:49.140 --> 00:23:54.689

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I have a side story. I don't know if these side stories are helpful to you at all. Okay. So

174

00:23:54.960 --> 00:24:02.399

Melanie Schlotterbeck: there was a policy that. and I'm wearing my friends of harbor speeches and parks had at the moment. Because that's how it's relevant. But

175

00:24:02.490 --> 00:24:17.009

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the State of California had approved legislation. Sb. 375, which required the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through vehicle miles traveled for cars and light duty trucks.

176

00:24:17.390 --> 00:24:28.869

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Orange County, wanting to maintain its local control, chose to develop its own sustainable community strategy. Instead of participating in the Southern California Association of Governments

177

00:24:29.420 --> 00:24:30.640

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Document.

178

00:24:31.480 --> 00:24:47.260

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I saw that as an opportunity to advance that transportation mitigation that we had been talking about, because all the elected appreciated our support at that moment. So I got show up at this meeting, ready to pitch my idea

179

00:24:47.320 --> 00:24:52.849

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that natural lands. Preservation reduces the Mt. And Ghg.

180

00:24:53.340 --> 00:24:55.989

Melanie Schlotterbeck: By stopping land conversion.

181

00:24:56.230 --> 00:25:08.309

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So if you're not converting it to houses, you don't have the same emissions, energy use or vehicle miles travel pretty easy to understand the person in front of me

182

00:25:08.720 --> 00:25:20.770

Melanie Schlotterbeck: in the line up of public testimony, because, you know, you get your 3 min was chatting about bikes and bike safety, and that there was a policy needed in terms of

183

00:25:21.310 --> 00:25:26.229

Melanie Schlotterbeck: how to protect bike lanes and get people to point A to Point B safely.

184

00:25:26.710 --> 00:25:31.180

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and I will never forget the chair, who shall remain nameless.

185

00:25:31.410 --> 00:25:42.339

Melanie Schlotterbeck: ripped them up one side and the other, and said, How dare you come to this meeting and tell us what to do without giving us a sample policy?

186

00:25:42.370 --> 00:25:48.170

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Now, one of the benefits of having done this job as long as I have

187

00:25:48.870 --> 00:25:53.299

Melanie Schlotterbeck: is that I'm I am totally able to adapt Johnny on the spot.

188

00:25:53.420 --> 00:26:00.259

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and so I get up. I give my testimony. But I added a couple of sentences at the end that said.

189

00:26:00.330 --> 00:26:05.049

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Our team is working on the language. You will have it by the end of the day.

190

00:26:06.490 --> 00:26:12.989

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and lo and behold. my policy gets incorporated into this document

191

00:26:13.630 --> 00:26:21.080

Melanie Schlotterbeck: because of that one move. Now I also, here's other kind of strategies and tactics.

192

00:26:21.340 --> 00:26:23.050

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that I have employed.

193

00:26:23.750 --> 00:26:33.019

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I figure out the font that they use the color of the text that they use. So it looks like it belongs in the document

194

00:26:33.990 --> 00:26:35.460

Melanie Schlotterbeck: makes sense, right?

195

00:26:36.100 --> 00:26:41.169

Melanie Schlotterbeck: You know, you didn't use comic sands if they're using times new Roman. So

196

00:26:41.220 --> 00:26:48.340

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the other tip I have is showing up. And as as a professional. So environmentalists tend to get

197

00:26:48.810 --> 00:26:58.589

Melanie Schlotterbeck: couched in the hippie Birkenstock, you know. Dreadlock kind of tree hugging chain themselves to bulldozers. Kind of thing

198

00:26:58.800 --> 00:27:02.379

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I showed up for a meeting one time full suit.

199

00:27:02.670 --> 00:27:16.069

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and I, the city, said, Oh, are you here to present with the developers team? And I was like that is quite a compliment. Thank you so much. But no, no, I'm here on the opposition's team.

200

00:27:16.450 --> 00:27:24.840

Melanie Schlotterbeck: so play the part. Don't play into the stereotypes, and that's how you get invited to the table.

201

00:27:27.710 --> 00:27:28.550

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: That

202

00:27:29.210 --> 00:27:36.329

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: yeah, I I like that. I've always kind of taken that stance to kind of like act like you belong there right, and things will kind of work out

203

00:27:36.460 --> 00:27:39.050

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: so that I like. I like hearing that actually work out for you.

204

00:27:39.930 --> 00:27:41.650

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I'm I'm curious like.

205

00:27:41.710 --> 00:27:48.400

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: so I've always kind of struggled with. All this work you do. Is this kind of like

206

00:27:48.630 --> 00:27:53.939

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: an undue burden on a citizen or a community member

207

00:27:54.190 --> 00:27:57.660

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: like? Is that too much to kind of like. Is there a point where you say.

208

00:27:57.760 --> 00:28:02.309

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: why am I doing all this? The government should be kind of doing it? Or

209

00:28:02.840 --> 00:28:09.689

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: also there's the other argument, which you know, kind of 50 50, like, you know, people should be kind of engaged. This whole process. They should be

210

00:28:09.930 --> 00:28:14.370

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: involved with it, they should be helping. It shouldn't just be up to like a group of like

211

00:28:14.510 --> 00:28:23.360

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: people kind of rolling over everything which all kind of be involved. So I'm wondering, like you favor one or the other. Do you see a mix of the 2, or what your experiences?

212

00:28:23.570 --> 00:28:29.470

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Well, I I've I tend to favor the latter of the 2 you just described.

213

00:28:30.390 --> 00:28:55.460

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Clearly, I'm showing up. We have a participatory democracy, and in order for it to function at its best. You need to show up. And so that comes in a variety of forms, whether it's sending an email to a city Council member circulating a petition running for office voting. There's all sorts of levels to it.

214

00:28:56.860 --> 00:28:59.730

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I'm incredibly blessed in that.

215

00:28:59.740 --> 00:29:04.080

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I absolutely love what I do.

216

00:29:04.990 --> 00:29:17.790

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I I was made for this job. And I, this is a job, you know, when you're 5, and you have to say I want to be a teacher or whatever firefighter. I had no idea this existed.

217

00:29:17.830 --> 00:29:27.099

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And it's because of that engineering clinic that I spoke about earlier. If you're not constrained in the boxes, you can move mountains.

218

00:29:27.350 --> 00:29:28.999

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and that applies

219

00:29:29.010 --> 00:29:31.300

Melanie Schlotterbeck: to any number

220

00:29:31.350 --> 00:29:38.380

Melanie Schlotterbeck: of problems that you're presented with, whether it's health care, the environment. anything

221

00:29:40.380 --> 00:29:42.269

Melanie Schlotterbeck: but showing up is key.

222

00:29:43.860 --> 00:29:48.350

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: Yeah, no, I I would absolutely stand with you on that. I think that's that's a good take on it.

223

00:29:50.620 --> 00:30:01.020

James: So another one of I I I actually don't remember if you or your mother wrote this particular article. But I thought it was interesting.

224

00:30:01.730 --> 00:30:03.180

James: How

225

00:30:04.590 --> 00:30:19.819

James: you all were discussing the way social justice issues like a portable housing in particular, sometimes gets brought up by your opposition as a way as a rhetorical move, right to make them look sort of like the good guys. And so I'm wondering.

226

00:30:20.100 --> 00:30:25.070

James: you know, like, if you see sort of like sometimes these tensions.

227

00:30:25.430 --> 00:30:52.260

James: whether just rhetorically or or or more, with some sort of real substance behind them. But these tensions between conservation and social justice, if those do emerge, or if they are, or like your experience with these intersection, if there are tensions there, and how can they be like better? what's what rhetoric do you use to combat that? And how can they be better like aligned and how you work with those sorts of issues?

228

00:30:52.770 --> 00:31:05.100

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Good question. So I'm going to start with the fact that we have 2 emergencies. One of them is a climate emergency, and the other one is a housing emergency. They both exist simultaneously.

229

00:31:05.520 --> 00:31:08.749

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And yet you only ever hear about

230

00:31:08.810 --> 00:31:16.670

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the housing emergency because they have more money than environmental groups tend to have. So they're able to

231

00:31:17.210 --> 00:31:22.520

Melanie Schlotterbeck: use the megaphone longer, louder. you know, more extensively.

232

00:31:23.940 --> 00:31:30.550

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I'm going to give props to the environmental community for shifting its position over the last.

233

00:31:30.570 --> 00:31:33.450

Melanie Schlotterbeck: probably 10 to 20 years.

234

00:31:33.510 --> 00:31:38.620

Melanie Schlotterbeck: where, instead of simply saying, no to housing.

235

00:31:39.890 --> 00:31:41.290

Melanie Schlotterbeck: it's now.

236

00:31:41.780 --> 00:31:49.820

Melanie Schlotterbeck: This isn't where it belongs. It actually belongs over here, and the best example we have is wildfires.

237

00:31:49.990 --> 00:32:03.140

Melanie Schlotterbeck: If you look at Chino Hill State Park. I can tell you exactly where I would never build any homes. And yet the Board of Supervisors approved 340 homes there.

238

00:32:03.550 --> 00:32:08.000

Melanie Schlotterbeck: because they said, Well, we have a housing shortage. We do.

239

00:32:08.330 --> 00:32:11.669

Melanie Schlotterbeck: but not of 1 million dollar mansions.

240

00:32:11.770 --> 00:32:20.710

Melanie Schlotterbeck: What we have a housing shortage of are the very low and low affordability levels, and no developers ever going to get

241

00:32:20.740 --> 00:32:23.110

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that level of housing

242

00:32:23.820 --> 00:32:29.520

Melanie Schlotterbeck: built on hillsides. And so there are constraints.

243

00:32:29.540 --> 00:32:32.849

Melanie Schlotterbeck: But I think that the building industry

244

00:32:34.250 --> 00:32:45.279

Melanie Schlotterbeck: tends to think that it can overcome any constraint. But, as I've said in testimony before, Mother Nature bats last and she always wins.

245

00:32:50.040 --> 00:32:50.890

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: Yeah.

246

00:32:51.000 --> 00:32:54.510

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: do you have you?

247

00:32:54.800 --> 00:32:56.170

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I know you're

248

00:32:56.240 --> 00:32:59.250

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: organization at large, like the

249

00:32:59.350 --> 00:33:03.500

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: hills, for everyone has worked with sequel a lot. Do you

250

00:33:03.770 --> 00:33:11.020

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: like what it's been? Your kind of experience of sequel, like, I'm curious. I just your thoughts on the law, and because it comes up a lot in that kind of

251

00:33:11.130 --> 00:33:13.589

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: seen it more and more as like a

252

00:33:13.770 --> 00:33:23.340

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: a pretty powerful tool, for which I don't know if it was ever designed for this. But this way I I see it being used by community members right, like people like your organization kind of using it to

253

00:33:23.470 --> 00:33:28.739

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: really is a really powerful tool to kind of fight up against developments that could be harmful like

254

00:33:28.810 --> 00:33:34.900

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: in wildfire zones like the 1 million dart mansions. Aren't really that necessary? Some kind of here's how you use that.

255

00:33:35.220 --> 00:33:49.069

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Yeah. So I actually worked for the organization that crafted that law, the Planning and Conservation League and the law is California's premier environmental law.

256

00:33:49.220 --> 00:33:55.019

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Our landscape would look a lot different had that one not ever been written and codified.

257

00:33:55.610 --> 00:34:00.310

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And it does 3 things right? So it requires an evaluation

258

00:34:00.450 --> 00:34:16.829

Melanie Schlotterbeck: of impacts from a project. It requires that those impacts be mitigated. and it requires that the public participate in the process. So of the 3 legs of that stool the public is one of them.

259

00:34:17.000 --> 00:34:20.919

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And so there's often this notion that

260

00:34:22.230 --> 00:34:24.620

Melanie Schlotterbeck: it's because of public input

261

00:34:24.730 --> 00:34:28.339

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and lawsuits that developments don't happen.

262

00:34:28.900 --> 00:34:38.460

Melanie Schlotterbeck: That's actually a red herring, because I've never in all the years I've dealt with sequel, which is more than 20

263

00:34:39.480 --> 00:34:43.810

Melanie Schlotterbeck: secret doesn't stop projects. It improves them.

264

00:34:43.900 --> 00:34:51.700

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Something else stops a project, whether it's lack of funding from the developer or

265

00:34:51.810 --> 00:35:04.130

Melanie Schlotterbeck: a decision by a governing body like the Coastal Commission says. what you've proposed isn't feasible even with the mitigation measures you've employed because of sqa.

266

00:35:04.240 --> 00:35:08.580

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So the threats that exist to sequel. Right now.

267

00:35:09.660 --> 00:35:15.760

Melanie Schlotterbeck: our mind boggling to me because

268

00:35:17.400 --> 00:35:33.229

Melanie Schlotterbeck: there's only about 2% of all of the projects that have ever been submitted to the State for its, you know, sequel list of documents that are available for public review, that it's ever been litigated.

269

00:35:33.280 --> 00:35:40.890

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and so to say that those 2 are the problem. I don't. I don't agree with that at all.

270

00:35:43.570 --> 00:35:48.570

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: Yeah. So like your reaction. What's your reaction to someone like

271

00:35:48.860 --> 00:35:53.849

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: like the whole Berkeley debacle of sequel. I kind of follow that for a little bit. Where

272

00:35:54.140 --> 00:35:58.650

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: you know the Governor, like personally kind of got involved that, and said, like

273

00:35:58.940 --> 00:36:05.390

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: for university housing, which is, you know, important part of the housing apparatus. Like

274

00:36:05.710 --> 00:36:06.700

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: you said

275

00:36:06.820 --> 00:36:13.270

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: we should basically override sequel to get some of that like specific housing through

276

00:36:13.940 --> 00:36:20.290

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: which I wasn't. I wasn't sure how to kind of take that, because that was seemed like kind of that would open a gateway to a lot of things.

277

00:36:20.620 --> 00:36:26.069

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: So is this one of those arguments that you think are kind of? Not that strong

278

00:36:26.240 --> 00:36:46.629

Melanie Schlotterbeck: to me. It doesn't, doesn't pass the sniff test mainly because most of the exemptions that happen happened during the State budget negotiations, which means that third leg of the stool that we were talking about. Public participation has been completely eliminated.

279

00:36:46.700 --> 00:36:52.030

Melanie Schlotterbeck: as well as the first and second, the analyzing impacts and mitigating the impacts.

280

00:36:52.080 --> 00:37:03.909

Melanie Schlotterbeck: SQL, already, through modifications in the law, allows for streamlines permitting, and exemptions related to infill projects. So it's

281

00:37:03.930 --> 00:37:07.280

Melanie Schlotterbeck: it's not necessary in my eyes.

282

00:37:07.380 --> 00:37:20.960

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and there's no backstop. I'll give an example. Gosh, it's in the last 10 years or so the City of Industry proposed building a stadium at the 57 and the 60,

283

00:37:21.130 --> 00:37:29.749

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and it was. It's outside the wildlife corridor. So it wasn't of great concern to hills for everyone

284

00:37:29.900 --> 00:37:39.959

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the concern was more. Why are we exempting football stadiums from the sequel process? Because it's an economic generator? Well, but

285

00:37:40.840 --> 00:37:47.039

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the number of vehicles that will descend on that already congested location

286

00:37:47.180 --> 00:37:50.619

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that needs to be mitigated and

287

00:37:51.960 --> 00:37:59.489

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the grading started, you know, because the exemption occurred. And is there a football stadium?

288

00:37:59.730 --> 00:38:11.200

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Nope never happened? So there's nothing that says if you don't build it by this date your exemption goes out the window.

289

00:38:11.400 --> 00:38:12.360

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and

290

00:38:12.850 --> 00:38:16.240

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I don't believe blanket exemptions like that.

291

00:38:16.280 --> 00:38:17.900

Melanie Schlotterbeck: or appropriate

292

00:38:20.960 --> 00:38:23.960

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: James, go ahead, go ahead

293

00:38:25.180 --> 00:38:29.480

James: So something that I I was listening to is like so like one of

294

00:38:29.580 --> 00:38:44.829

James: this, like historical shifts over the like recent decades has been. You know, these may be attacks against sequel, right? And so. But I'm wondering. You know you've also had substantial successes, you know, with Octa, with these other sort of departments, and and on these other sorts of issues.

295

00:38:45.250 --> 00:39:06.389

James: and so I I I'm sure it's full of contradictions. But are you seeing like a growing appreciation for, or an alignment of, the concerns of government? with the concerns of your organizations, or like an appreciation for conservation in the in these areas, and the benefits and the, you know, wildfire issues. And all this the

296

00:39:06.390 --> 00:39:18.340

James: you know, educational like work that you've been doing? Have you seen those start to take hold at the same time that you're also like, you know, putting out new fires like it like, can you tell me a little bit about like

297

00:39:18.740 --> 00:39:24.640

James: the shifts in the awareness of of environmental issues that you've noticed.

298

00:39:26.320 --> 00:39:27.410

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I think

299

00:39:27.880 --> 00:39:41.040

Melanie Schlotterbeck: it's gonna be jurisdiction dependent. So, for example, in the Plenichino hills, Wildfire is absolutely gonna be top of mind. But if you're talking about Santa Ana, or garden Grove or Fountain Valley.

300

00:39:41.410 --> 00:39:55.989

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Nope. They don't have catastrophic wildfires. They make it impacted by air pollution from that. But it's it's not the same as having to evacuate with 20,000 people descending on the freeway system. In one instant

301

00:39:56.380 --> 00:40:01.870

Melanie Schlotterbeck: they may care more about high heat days. or, if you look at

302

00:40:02.480 --> 00:40:08.860

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Newport Beach, Laguna Beach, Huntington Beach, sea level rise and inundation and high tides.

303

00:40:10.300 --> 00:40:16.619

Melanie Schlotterbeck: The awareness is there. It's how we choose to take action or not.

304

00:40:16.630 --> 00:40:23.250

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and I do believe that there's going to be some point where we've passed the

305

00:40:25.780 --> 00:40:29.940

Melanie Schlotterbeck: how do I frame this? The emergency is already here.

306

00:40:30.030 --> 00:40:43.929

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and we're kind of like using a squirt bottle to to to get the flames out. And at some point we're just gonna have to admit that we really need a hose that's on full blast

307

00:40:44.000 --> 00:40:57.870

Melanie Schlotterbeck: to to tamp this fire down. And until we have the leadership in place, so individuals in the conservation movement working their way up into office.

308

00:40:58.870 --> 00:41:05.670

Melanie Schlotterbeck: That's going to be necessary necessary in order to address some of these issues, because the leadership

309

00:41:05.700 --> 00:41:17.560

Melanie Schlotterbeck: tends not to be there, especially in places like Orange County, where there tends to be a very strong Republican elected official

310

00:41:17.570 --> 00:41:19.470

Melanie Schlotterbeck: majority.

311

00:41:21.440 --> 00:41:39.020

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I will also say, though, that there are groups like the California. It's formerly California League of Conservation voters. Now California and Viro Voters. They have chapters. Orange County has its League of Conservation voters, and they interview.

312

00:41:39.110 --> 00:41:49.919

Melanie Schlotterbeck: you know, get survey questions answered from elected officers or elected candidates that then have the potential to get endorsed similar to what Sierra Club does. But

313

00:41:50.560 --> 00:41:54.910

Melanie Schlotterbeck: sometimes, you know, the messenger is not

314

00:41:55.020 --> 00:41:57.639

Melanie Schlotterbeck: helpful to a campaign, and

315

00:41:57.690 --> 00:41:59.890

Melanie Schlotterbeck: somebody may not want

316

00:42:00.580 --> 00:42:12.460

Melanie Schlotterbeck: an endorsement. That's public, but they would take funding in a certain way, so that it's only on the campaign, for as opposed to somebody doing a mailer on their behalf.

317

00:42:12.850 --> 00:42:19.090

Melanie Schlotterbeck: so the messenger is important, I'm sure, anywhere but definitely an Orange county.

318

00:42:19.980 --> 00:42:30.640

James: surely. Yeah, I mean, that makes sense. I guess. So. Maybe like attacking a similar like the question similarly, but maybe from a different angle.

319

00:42:30.930 --> 00:42:32.709

James: I wonder?

320

00:42:34.570 --> 00:42:38.630

James: if you can describe sort of.

321

00:42:39.230 --> 00:42:56.630

James: or maybe like, you know, I identify what exactly is in in your experience. Like what exactly, isn't working in terms of like, how do we get this transition to like the fire hose right? and like what is like? What are the barriers towards this mobilization that we like

322

00:42:56.920 --> 00:43:01.050

James: need to like get around in order to like, sort of, you know.

323

00:43:01.230 --> 00:43:09.540

James: make that transition into that level of scaling up our action. so like, what are the barriers that maybe have

324

00:43:10.580 --> 00:43:14.540

James: been inhibiting that? And then maybe the opposite side

325

00:43:14.760 --> 00:43:21.829

James: of like, if government was working, how you think it should be working. What does that look like if that makes sense?

326

00:43:22.490 --> 00:43:29.660

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Yeah, those are big questions. I know they are. I think I'm gonna start with the second one.

327

00:43:33.210 --> 00:43:43.279

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I just finished a book which I don't have near me, but called Wild rescues, and the author, Kevin Grange, is an Emt that helps

328

00:43:43.430 --> 00:43:51.730

Melanie Schlotterbeck: solve a crisis in a national park. Somebody's fainted. Somebody's been in a car accident, and he speaks to

329

00:43:51.860 --> 00:43:54.249

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the greatest good for the greatest number.

330

00:43:54.520 --> 00:44:01.470

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Right now, I think our government is focused on individual

331

00:44:02.020 --> 00:44:06.889

Melanie Schlotterbeck: properties, economic benefits, whatever, as opposed to

332

00:44:07.070 --> 00:44:22.030

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the entire sea is going to be flooding our community, and a hundred years. We better take some steps now to either. Do managed retreat, to plan for that with the appropriate mitigations, etc.,

333

00:44:24.000 --> 00:44:24.960

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that

334

00:44:26.510 --> 00:44:34.129

Melanie Schlotterbeck: is happening in some locations like San Diego. there's a community in San Diego that has that in place.

335

00:44:34.850 --> 00:44:45.030

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I am not aware of that at all. In Orange County, and an example going back to Octa, their coastline

336

00:44:45.260 --> 00:44:48.839

Melanie Schlotterbeck: commuter train from Orange County down to San Diego.

337

00:44:49.330 --> 00:44:53.660

Melanie Schlotterbeck: The railroad tracks are falling into the ocean because

338

00:44:53.750 --> 00:45:02.700

Melanie Schlotterbeck: of high tide, because of sea level rise because of in stable or unstable hillsides. Next to the tracks

339

00:45:02.810 --> 00:45:07.880

Melanie Schlotterbeck: they've shut that track down multiple times in the last couple years.

340

00:45:08.010 --> 00:45:18.480

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and they actually have a a committee that I serve on helping them to come up with ideas on, how do we address this over the long term?

341

00:45:18.500 --> 00:45:21.330

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So when you have the right people

342

00:45:21.660 --> 00:45:27.960

Melanie Schlotterbeck: running the organization or sitting on the governing body. action will happen.

343

00:45:28.710 --> 00:45:32.029

Melanie Schlotterbeck: But that isn't the case in most cities.

344

00:45:32.150 --> 00:45:33.300

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So

345

00:45:33.850 --> 00:45:37.879

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I I think that answers your your your second question, that

346

00:45:38.600 --> 00:45:45.590

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the action needs to be taken before it, it flows out of proportion. and the examples already exist.

347

00:45:46.980 --> 00:45:54.679

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I'm also gonna point to the fact that cities won't do something, and the counties won't do anything until it's mandated to be done.

348

00:45:56.350 --> 00:45:58.339

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and I I hate

349

00:45:58.800 --> 00:46:01.470

Melanie Schlotterbeck: to think that it requires

350

00:46:01.840 --> 00:46:10.519

Melanie Schlotterbeck: an act of our legislature and our governor to require that a community protected inhabitants.

351

00:46:12.320 --> 00:46:23.400

Melanie Schlotterbeck: But apparently you do need to say things like don't put the bag over your head because you can suffocate. And so as frustrating as it is to think that

352

00:46:25.640 --> 00:46:29.350

Melanie Schlotterbeck: we need to be that basic. I kind of think that we do.

353

00:46:30.020 --> 00:46:34.589

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And for some funding is available to build climate resilience.

354

00:46:35.030 --> 00:46:36.499

Melanie Schlotterbeck: but not enough.

355

00:46:37.580 --> 00:46:43.069

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So put your money where your mouse is. If you actually think this is a crisis, act like it.

356

00:46:43.910 --> 00:46:49.550

Melanie Schlotterbeck: You know the fires going on in the kitchen. Don't go take a shower. put the fire out.

357

00:46:52.510 --> 00:47:05.589

James: So I I think you also kind of did identify what I would conceive as a barrier as well, which was like one of the first, the first half of the question. But I I was wondering, maybe, if I could ask you to speak a little bit more about your thoughts on it was

358

00:47:06.210 --> 00:47:07.650

James: the way in which

359

00:47:08.770 --> 00:47:15.299

James: government seems to be oriented towards the individual as a scale right and

360

00:47:15.500 --> 00:47:29.380

James: protecting, you know, individual property rights. And and you know, you know, thinking in terms of, you know, like what has worked quite well for us. in terms of, you know, the liberal individual like theory of government, right?

361

00:47:30.270 --> 00:47:40.630

James: But the scale of these of climate change, right and the like sort of like disaster scale of disaster that we're already experiencing, and that we will surely experience

362

00:47:40.730 --> 00:47:42.220

James: is troubling

363

00:47:44.810 --> 00:47:52.999

James: the thinking of of government and its role as simply protecting individual rights. Right? Is that makes sense. If that makes sense.

364

00:47:53.130 --> 00:47:55.860

James: and

365

00:47:55.930 --> 00:47:58.700

James: so I yeah, I I'm I'm wondering about

366

00:48:01.380 --> 00:48:19.270

James: if and how. Maybe you're trying to work against just the the thought at that scale in your work. And if you are appealing to more collective census or collective values and sort of like in like.

367

00:48:19.320 --> 00:48:23.629

James: at which scale that you think that that becomes effective if, like

368

00:48:24.480 --> 00:48:37.519

James: appealing to community levels, or if, like, you know it. It does. The sense of a city identity or a national identity. Is that getting too hairy and too unwieldy, and like just wondering like

369

00:48:39.440 --> 00:48:44.789

James: if that makes sense like where beyond the individual like what's sort of like

370

00:48:45.210 --> 00:48:56.320

James: sense of identity, and what sense of political sort of solidarity? Where and how, what scales you think that works.

371

00:48:58.720 --> 00:49:10.269

James: I think it needs to happen at every scale where our organization specifically can make the most impact is at the local and regional scale.

372

00:49:10.760 --> 00:49:15.469

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and it is constantly shocking to me that

373

00:49:17.210 --> 00:49:21.160

Melanie Schlotterbeck: we have a hundred 90 ish

374

00:49:21.420 --> 00:49:26.719

Melanie Schlotterbeck: jurisdictions within the Skag region. plus all 6 counties.

375

00:49:27.190 --> 00:49:36.399

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and we have policies written into that document, the regional transportation plan and sustainable community strategy that talk about

376

00:49:37.470 --> 00:49:44.720

Melanie Schlotterbeck: making sure our communities are built resiliently, that we're protecting natural lands, that

377

00:49:44.770 --> 00:49:50.800

Melanie Schlotterbeck: we have equity, whether it's transportation, health, care, environment, park access, whatever

378

00:49:51.770 --> 00:50:06.059

Melanie Schlotterbeck: put them when you get down to the individual city level, all that regional planning stuff. No, that's somebody else. And so I know you have questions in here about silos. It's like nobody can think outside whatever silo they're in.

379

00:50:06.270 --> 00:50:12.240

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and an example I'll give of of how to

380

00:50:14.630 --> 00:50:17.630

Melanie Schlotterbeck: pinpoint the problem without

381

00:50:17.650 --> 00:50:20.300

Melanie Schlotterbeck: saying your whole plan stinks

382

00:50:20.690 --> 00:50:30.559

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the city of Chino Hill, so you know the State has undergone a regional housing needs assessment. In the Skag region all the cities and counties were allocated

383

00:50:30.980 --> 00:50:32.600

Melanie Schlotterbeck: housing numbers.

384

00:50:32.930 --> 00:50:41.859

Melanie Schlotterbeck: because land use policy and housing impacts our work. We commented on a lot of different plans, and

385

00:50:42.270 --> 00:50:48.260

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that's my one regret. I should have done urban planning as opposed to environmental geography. I digress

386

00:50:49.180 --> 00:50:58.129

Melanie Schlotterbeck: city of Chino Hills was proposing affordable units in Carbon Canyon. Okay? Well, let's just talk about the name for a second. Carbon

387

00:50:59.080 --> 00:51:01.230

Melanie Schlotterbeck: implies it's burned

388

00:51:01.830 --> 00:51:06.549

Melanie Schlotterbeck: based on my fire studies. It has multiple times.

389

00:51:07.000 --> 00:51:09.029

Melanie Schlotterbeck: It's not a good idea

390

00:51:09.190 --> 00:51:17.970

Melanie Schlotterbeck: to put low income residents in a place that not only doesn't have transportation.

391

00:51:18.520 --> 00:51:23.070

Melanie Schlotterbeck: but in a high fire hazard zone. and

392

00:51:26.050 --> 00:51:28.079

Melanie Schlotterbeck: it's almost as if.

393

00:51:28.530 --> 00:51:37.340

Melanie Schlotterbeck: oh, here's a spot we could put housing as opposed to. Should we put housing here? Because the key

394

00:51:38.100 --> 00:51:39.770

Melanie Schlotterbeck: phrase is.

395

00:51:40.910 --> 00:51:42.389

Melanie Schlotterbeck: let me get this right.

396

00:51:43.620 --> 00:51:48.130

Melanie Schlotterbeck: The it's basically that the the power of zoning

397

00:51:48.380 --> 00:51:49.849

Melanie Schlotterbeck: comes with it.

398

00:51:50.540 --> 00:51:55.429

Melanie Schlotterbeck: A responsibility to whomever is going to be there in the future.

399

00:51:56.150 --> 00:51:59.879

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And so we need to connect

400

00:52:00.960 --> 00:52:11.480

Melanie Schlotterbeck: zoning and responsibility. And I'll I'll focus on the East Coast for an example, just to digress from what we deal with in Southern California or California

401

00:52:12.360 --> 00:52:24.119

Melanie Schlotterbeck: as a taxpayer in the United States, I personally struggle with the fact that we have homes built on Barrier Islands that get wiped out with hurricanes. Multiple times

402

00:52:24.920 --> 00:52:28.920

Melanie Schlotterbeck: we should have again a backstop that says

403

00:52:29.210 --> 00:52:37.660

Melanie Schlotterbeck: it's it gets wiped out once the government buys it out, because chances are it's gonna get wiped out again.

404

00:52:38.150 --> 00:52:52.890

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Or maybe it's twice I mean, I don't know smarter minds need to figure that out. But I struggle with that, as it relates to California's laws. we shouldn't be putting houses in high fire hazard severity zones. We shouldn't be putting them on cliffs that

405

00:52:53.280 --> 00:53:08.239

Melanie Schlotterbeck: fall into canyons high, you know, rolling hills, the States. And so these problems have and will continue to exist and will only get greater as the threat, and the emergency gets worse.

406

00:53:10.320 --> 00:53:18.970

James: I don't know if I answered your questions, and I kind of maybe a little bit.

407

00:53:19.150 --> 00:53:21.570

James: Yeah, absolutely the question.

408

00:53:24.130 --> 00:53:28.129

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I think we were coming up on 1230.

409

00:53:28.340 --> 00:53:31.949

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I think this has been really good so far.

410

00:53:33.050 --> 00:53:46.140

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I think it will be to respect your time right? That kind of the the limit we set. I think we'll kind of.

411

00:53:46.570 --> 00:53:49.100

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I can go until 10'clock.

412

00:53:50.020 --> 00:53:54.200

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: Okay, I think I think in that case. And yeah, I'd be curious to hit on

413

00:53:54.550 --> 00:53:57.550

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: one of our questions that we kind of out there was like.

414

00:53:58.480 --> 00:54:05.119

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: what kind of data and information do you leverage in your work, and you've brought up

415

00:54:05.880 --> 00:54:09.129

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: kind of the Arcgis which is

416

00:54:09.550 --> 00:54:12.500

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: of interest to us, because in our work

417

00:54:12.630 --> 00:54:18.410

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: one of our researchers, she She creates our Js maps to kind of plot out

418

00:54:18.670 --> 00:54:25.099

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: polluting industries in Santa Ana, and that creates pretty compelling visuals. So in that case, that kind of

419

00:54:25.810 --> 00:54:36.430

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: geography as a data resource has been pretty compelling for our for people that we kind of addition to like the city or other environmental groups, or just kind of educate.

420

00:54:36.440 --> 00:54:38.460

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: said people in the community.

421

00:54:38.520 --> 00:54:48.079

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: So you know, how does that? What does that look like for you? How you utilize Rtis or other? What else do you use in terms of data?

422

00:54:49.530 --> 00:55:00.110

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So as a geographer, I love this question. I just need to say that. Thank you. Thank you. Context and location are incredibly important to the work we do.

423

00:55:00.310 --> 00:55:03.350

Melanie Schlotterbeck: being able to identify your property on a map.

424

00:55:03.410 --> 00:55:18.730

Melanie Schlotterbeck: even if they don't have streets, or it's just a hillside system, knowing what you're looking for is the difference between having infrastructure proposed on your property or on your park, your protected park or not?

425

00:55:18.920 --> 00:55:22.099

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So I was at Cal State, Fullerton.

426

00:55:22.800 --> 00:55:36.940

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the last class of hand drawn maps, and the first class of digital. Ma, so I was right at the cost of transitioning the entire time before that my mom and my sister and I would help

427

00:55:37.240 --> 00:55:43.729

Melanie Schlotterbeck: color black and white maps in with markers and crans and pencils and stuff

428

00:55:43.800 --> 00:55:50.939

Melanie Schlotterbeck: to provide that visual to decision-makers as they were trying to fund the creation of Chino Hill State Park.

429

00:55:50.980 --> 00:56:05.459

Melanie Schlotterbeck: We are much more sophisticated now because, thanks to my dad who gave me Arcg. Well, arc view 3 back in 1,999 got several upgrades that have happened since then. But

430

00:56:05.980 --> 00:56:10.629

Melanie Schlotterbeck: what we realized after the 2,008 freeway complex fire.

431

00:56:10.820 --> 00:56:19.270

Melanie Schlotterbeck: nobody was tracking the regional view of wildfires specifically Chino Hill State Park.

432

00:56:19.310 --> 00:56:34.160

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So using that Gis background and understanding our landscape, I ended up evaluating a hundred years worth of wildfires in the park. Now that landscape was supposed to burn every 30 to 150 years.

433

00:56:34.690 --> 00:56:38.210

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Portions of it were burning every 18 months.

434

00:56:38.840 --> 00:56:48.859

Melanie Schlotterbeck: That's a problem in terms of park investments, because the habitats and the species that were protected using public public dollars.

435

00:56:49.010 --> 00:57:02.519

Melanie Schlotterbeck: We're no longer going to be there if it type converted to non-native grasslands which, by the way, ignite easier. They dry out earlier in the season, and they spread fire faster.

436

00:57:02.590 --> 00:57:03.660

Melanie Schlotterbeck: so

437

00:57:03.840 --> 00:57:06.680

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that research we then

438

00:57:07.310 --> 00:57:18.190

Melanie Schlotterbeck: took our show on the road, went to the fire agencies, went to the transportation agencies, went to our legislators, the cities, the counties, and we gave them the scoop and said.

439

00:57:18.360 --> 00:57:29.690

Melanie Schlotterbeck: It's not safe here here and here, and we even offered. Like Cal. Trans. For example, the majority of the fires start along the 91 freeway

440

00:57:29.880 --> 00:57:37.600

Melanie Schlotterbeck: between the 71 and the 241. If we can curb fire ignitions right there.

441

00:57:37.960 --> 00:57:43.169

Melanie Schlotterbeck: It would be game changing to the Santa Ana Mountains into Chino Hill State Park.

442

00:57:43.890 --> 00:57:46.480

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So, having the ability to

443

00:57:48.100 --> 00:57:57.050

Melanie Schlotterbeck: get the information through tools like public records, act requests or relationships with agencies, or knowing where to look for data

444

00:57:58.230 --> 00:58:03.339

Melanie Schlotterbeck: all the way down to how to operate Gis software

445

00:58:03.460 --> 00:58:13.410

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and then having access to park ecologists that can review what you've written to confirm that what you're saying is appropriate, and that you're not

446

00:58:13.650 --> 00:58:35.110

Melanie Schlotterbeck: bending the truth to fit your analysis. And we didn't want to come up with reasons why things happen. We just wanted to say, here is where it's happening. He, I can tell you. July has the most number of fires, but November's fires burn the most acreage because of the Santa Ana winds.

447

00:58:35.280 --> 00:58:47.909

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And so our simply understanding fire context revolutionized our ability to present information to decision-makers.

448

00:58:48.190 --> 00:59:06.130

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Then we took that information and started applying landslide zones, earthquake faults, transmission lines, access to a residential area and what's required under the Ocala Fire code for safety. So we have

449

00:59:06.270 --> 00:59:17.510

Melanie Schlotterbeck: added to that knowledge base as generalists, not experts. We know a little bit about a lot of things enough to be dangerous, or should I say enough to be effective?

450

00:59:17.630 --> 00:59:18.380

Melanie Schlotterbeck: But

451

00:59:19.040 --> 00:59:35.900

Melanie Schlotterbeck: it's it's revolutionized. Our ability to communicate is being able to present maps as a tool to decision makers, and even I'll I'll go so far as to say when we show our donors maps of what we're trying to conserve.

452

00:59:36.430 --> 00:59:43.729

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Light goes off, and they say, I totally get this. I now understand why you care about this acreage.

453

00:59:48.520 --> 00:59:52.829

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: So in our work like these.

454

00:59:52.930 --> 01:00:00.259

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: we use something called town virus screen. Maybe you, yeah. But yeah, of course. Yeah,

455

01:00:01.630 --> 01:00:09.910

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: we use that. We we have brought. We do these things called stakeholder meetings. where we bring together all these different

456

01:00:11.860 --> 01:00:19.720

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: agencies, environmental agencies like South Korea quality management district carb to power and tax services control

457

01:00:19.940 --> 01:00:36.870

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: all these different people would bring them in the room to kind of. We've only done 2 of these so far, but we're trying to see like in Santa Ana. How can we reduce the disadvantage? And how can we kind of achieve environmental justice? And the things that we do is we show, like count virus screen maps.

458

01:00:37.140 --> 01:00:42.310

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: And we say to the perimeters like, Why are you permitting new industries.

459

01:00:42.390 --> 01:00:48.669

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: businesses, and these disadvantageded communities? Look at the map. Half the city's disadvantaged. Why are you doing it?

460

01:00:49.150 --> 01:00:50.810

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: And that strategy is

461

01:00:51.350 --> 01:00:59.450

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: not been that effective honestly, because it's kind of just answering on the question, or just, I don't think it's not that compelling. So

462

01:00:59.670 --> 01:01:01.240

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: when you say that.

463

01:01:01.680 --> 01:01:12.800

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: you know your your maps are actually pretty, it's really effective with legislators and decision-makers. What's the reason you think, why is it so compelling to them is just the

464

01:01:13.450 --> 01:01:20.159

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: the stakes aren't higher or lower, but they're just different. The problems are a little different. So why do you think it's effective?

465

01:01:23.390 --> 01:01:25.600

Melanie Schlotterbeck: That's a really good question.

466

01:01:30.240 --> 01:01:35.660

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And dare I say it probably comes back to representation again?

467

01:01:38.040 --> 01:01:43.429

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I feel like everything I tell you is a story. My cousin, who works at loyal Lamar amount

468

01:01:43.700 --> 01:01:47.260

Melanie Schlotterbeck: had a colleague that was pregnant and

469

01:01:47.760 --> 01:01:53.570

Melanie Schlotterbeck: lived in an economically disadvantaged community, and for her first born

470

01:01:53.760 --> 01:01:57.470

Melanie Schlotterbeck: went to a doctor in the neighborhood. and.

471

01:01:57.760 --> 01:02:05.080

Melanie Schlotterbeck: you know, got got care. I wouldn't say it was a considered exceptional, but the second child

472

01:02:05.390 --> 01:02:08.679

Melanie Schlotterbeck: she went outside her community.

473

01:02:08.720 --> 01:02:10.820

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and the level of care

474

01:02:11.400 --> 01:02:16.779

Melanie Schlotterbeck: was a factor of 10 fold better than what she received in her own community.

475

01:02:17.160 --> 01:02:18.880

Melanie Schlotterbeck: even to the point of

476

01:02:20.210 --> 01:02:30.139

Melanie Schlotterbeck: take multi-vitamins do prenatal. This, you know, have an ultrasound at this point, and so the resources and the representation in government

477

01:02:31.850 --> 01:02:39.510

Melanie Schlotterbeck: haven't been infested the way they should be in order to allow

478

01:02:39.870 --> 01:02:50.370

Melanie Schlotterbeck: your maps to be effective, because the the bar isn't as high as it is in a community that can build on a hillside.

479

01:02:55.630 --> 01:03:05.090

James: Right? So you do. So you like. I guess the thing that you're getting at right is that you're speaking 2 communities

480

01:03:06.430 --> 01:03:18.159

James: with that are that are that are their starting point is that they have a considerable weight to throw around. That's right. They they start with privilege

481

01:03:18.260 --> 01:03:22.859

Melanie Schlotterbeck: or knowledge, or resources or access. You name it.

482

01:03:24.300 --> 01:03:31.599

James: That's why it's a a harder hill to climb, even though it's in the flats for Santa Ana

483

01:03:31.940 --> 01:03:35.489

James: I also wonder if you just think like

484

01:03:35.900 --> 01:03:40.310

James: are because fires right? Burn everything.

485

01:03:40.320 --> 01:03:42.570

James: and

486

01:03:47.530 --> 01:04:06.780

James: you know, burn, you know, property. that that is being built there. And so they have. And they have, like, of course, much wider effects to like, you know, because, like one of the things that you know that, like Aiden was pointing to is we try and show noncompliance? Right? And we hope that that's effective. And it doesn't always

487

01:04:07.100 --> 01:04:12.310

James: prove effective. But non-compliance here, like you're saying, is affecting

488

01:04:13.290 --> 01:04:17.540

James: populations who don't have as much representation in the system.

489

01:04:17.660 --> 01:04:21.289

James: And so the fact that fire, though

490

01:04:22.080 --> 01:04:27.300

James: it's just a whole different piece, right? And

491

01:04:28.140 --> 01:04:38.069

James: because you you're not gonna want to build a a battery smelter or or or housing, you know not, you know low-income housing in a place that's gonna burn right?

492

01:04:38.110 --> 01:04:44.240

James: So I I I I think that that might have something to do with some of these differences as well.

493

01:04:44.690 --> 01:04:49.650

James: I'll also add, though, to that to your comments, that

494

01:04:51.030 --> 01:05:00.860

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Maslow's hierarchy right? The community members can't be as engaged because they are so busy trying to meet their basic needs

495

01:05:01.280 --> 01:05:05.290

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that somebody else is fighting the fight for them.

496

01:05:06.010 --> 01:05:35.589

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And I'm not saying they shouldn't be focused on meeting their needs. But that's where the investment in the community comes in right, making it easier to participate having child care at a city council meeting so that you can show up after work. Drop your kid off in the you know the babysitting room and then go testify. Come back, having access to food during meetings. I mean it all plays into whether or not people are able to participate.

497

01:05:37.290 --> 01:05:40.119

James: No, I yeah, I think that's a strong point.

498

01:05:42.610 --> 01:05:44.330

James: oh, yeah, I think it's a really good point.

499

01:05:45.090 --> 01:05:52.419

James: I'm I'm gonna just jump in, look like

500

01:05:53.510 --> 01:05:56.130

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: And I think, yeah, when your point to is

501

01:05:57.270 --> 01:06:03.049

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: really clear, right? Like, there's like different affluence in different communities. And I think this is where the critique of like

502

01:06:04.330 --> 01:06:11.580

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: almost what I've seen is like environmentalism versus environmental justice, or as James Tampon, or really social justice issues where it's like

503

01:06:11.860 --> 01:06:13.639

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: environmentalism is like a

504

01:06:14.390 --> 01:06:17.430

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: a type of activism that, like

505

01:06:17.450 --> 01:06:20.909

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: a certain type of person, can afford to do

506

01:06:21.040 --> 01:06:25.829

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: which you know. That's how that's like the I'm not sure I like how true that is. But

507

01:06:26.090 --> 01:06:30.630

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: it's. I think, to me it's really important to like.

508

01:06:30.890 --> 01:06:38.599

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: make sure that these 2 different, like Sears of activism, are really like working together an army. Because, like at the beginning of this, we pointed out that.

509

01:06:38.680 --> 01:06:49.590

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: you know, it's all lived environment, right? All these different things are all connected in the same kind of sphere. but they don't overlap as much as I think they probably should at times right?

510

01:06:50.400 --> 01:06:51.320

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: So

511

01:06:51.650 --> 01:06:54.220

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: maybe that's more of a statement I really question. But

512

01:06:54.720 --> 01:06:57.860

James: well, I I got out of your question your response.

513

01:06:57.920 --> 01:07:08.460

James: I I I think I can pig you back off that a little bit and take it back to a comment that you raise that we in our question set that we have sample questions. We do mentioned silos right?

514

01:07:08.610 --> 01:07:10.290

James: and

515

01:07:10.740 --> 01:07:16.650

James: so you you commented on that. And I am just sort of wondering. So in your experience.

516

01:07:17.010 --> 01:07:20.149

James: people who are working in these different departments.

517

01:07:20.340 --> 01:07:25.009

James: do you see? Like their lack of both, like

518

01:07:25.260 --> 01:07:40.719

James: communication across these jurisdictions and spheres of and focuses of government to be like a a strong sort of barrier that needs to be worked on like or like. And do you see part of your role as

519

01:07:40.840 --> 01:07:47.209

James: trying to establish these bridges and and to sort of cross these discourses and create some cross traffic across them.

520

01:07:47.990 --> 01:07:49.749

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Yes, and yes.

521

01:07:50.490 --> 01:07:57.690

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the the siloed issue we identified particularly with

522

01:07:57.870 --> 01:08:06.009

Melanie Schlotterbeck: the Esperanza Hills project proposed above the hills of your Belinda, but being the application was through the county of Orange.

523

01:08:08.050 --> 01:08:24.859

Melanie Schlotterbeck: even to the point of the decision-makers, not understanding who was responsible for something. So, for example. Fire Ocfra is responsible for putting the fire out getting into the community to put a fire out.

524

01:08:24.870 --> 01:08:32.019

Melanie Schlotterbeck: The sheriff's department is re responsible for getting people out of the community the evacuation.

525

01:08:32.029 --> 01:08:34.130

Melanie Schlotterbeck: But during the public hearing.

526

01:08:34.220 --> 01:08:40.220

Melanie Schlotterbeck: The supervisors asked the fire authority about evacuation.

527

01:08:40.950 --> 01:08:46.649

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and instead of saying, That's not something we're tasked with. You should talk to the sheriff.

528

01:08:47.210 --> 01:08:49.779

Melanie Schlotterbeck: they said. It's handled. Don't worry.

529

01:08:51.260 --> 01:09:01.609

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and it's not handled because the sheriff didn't speak to it. and there's only one way out over an earthquake fault

530

01:09:01.770 --> 01:09:21.829

Melanie Schlotterbeck: in the inundation zone with, you know, a a hill with a 12 grade, 3 hair PIN turns, I mean any number of problems. Nobody, including the supervisors, were able to zoom out and look at it from the 11,000 foot level and say, Sure!

531

01:09:21.970 --> 01:09:34.910

Melanie Schlotterbeck: The boxes were checked for engineering. The boxes were checked for parks, the boxes were checked for water quality. Nobody looked at how things were interrelated, because they said all the boxes were checked.

532

01:09:36.510 --> 01:09:38.050

Melanie Schlotterbeck: What we want

533

01:09:38.109 --> 01:09:50.239

Melanie Schlotterbeck: of our governmental leaders is that they apply some critical thinking. and that seems to be missing from a lot of decision-makers. They're just falling back on the fact

534

01:09:50.290 --> 01:09:58.810

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that the Department said it was okay. Therefore it must be okay. Now, fast forward 30 years, when the houses are built.

535

01:10:00.330 --> 01:10:02.039

Melanie Schlotterbeck: -oh! Did I freeze?

536

01:10:03.670 --> 01:10:12.040

Melanie Schlotterbeck: You're still here for us. You're good.

537

01:10:12.070 --> 01:10:20.490

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and a fire comes through and burns another 300 homes down. The residents are going to say, but I thought it was safe.

538

01:10:20.550 --> 01:10:23.859

Melanie Schlotterbeck: because the decision makers approved this project.

539

01:10:23.960 --> 01:10:30.770

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And so back to the power of zoning comes great responsibility and consequences.

540

01:10:33.010 --> 01:10:45.480

James: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, you know this, we run into that all the time, like, you know, a piece of land could be like zone for industrial, and so people say, oh, it should be fine! Then we'll be, you know. Put this metal plating facility. But then it's like, Okay.

541

01:10:45.900 --> 01:10:57.539

James: neighbors to this piece of land that has a school right? And it's like, maybe we have to look outside of the box of zoning, and think a little bit a bit how pollution travels right?

542

01:10:57.630 --> 01:11:04.460

James: that to can you? Versus, should you?

543

01:11:05.400 --> 01:11:07.980

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: I don't know.

544

01:11:08.130 --> 01:11:17.399

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: Have you ever interacted with like the local emergency planning committees? Have you heard of those before? They're like EPA designated groups that

545

01:11:18.030 --> 01:11:23.309

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: kind of correlates to the fema the fema zones throughout the country.

546

01:11:23.750 --> 01:11:35.110

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Yeah. So I'm a community emergency response volunteer in Brea. So I've gone through the 40 h training and certification for our district. Yup.

547

01:11:36.380 --> 01:11:40.780

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: okay, yeah. Yeah. So the local, the the

548

01:11:41.390 --> 01:11:47.390

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: that kind of big that along with like evacuation relating to

549

01:11:48.770 --> 01:11:56.030

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: chemical facilities like the bigger ones, like they're called risk management plant facilities. They're EPA designate facilities there

550

01:11:56.350 --> 01:12:03.250

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: ones that could blow up, or at least huge amounts of chemical clouds. And there's this really big disconnect with

551

01:12:03.660 --> 01:12:12.510

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: emergency planning like, Hey, who has? They claim that the local Emergency Plan Committee? They have some emergency.

552

01:12:13.250 --> 01:12:25.140

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: they have emergency. I'm I'm blanking on the evacuation. They have the execution plans or they'll claim the Orange County Healthcare Agency. They have the evacuation plan for Ocfa as evacuation plan.

553

01:12:25.230 --> 01:12:27.629

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: And I did this kind of work a little bit ago.

554

01:12:27.660 --> 01:12:35.720

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: It's going to all these different people, and they're all. They don't know each other, they don't. They sell. We don't really have the plan like this other agency does.

555

01:12:36.130 --> 01:12:40.559

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: And again, there, I think it's very similar to like this

556

01:12:40.670 --> 01:12:45.670

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: natural disaster. To like a industrial disaster. There is

557

01:12:47.110 --> 01:12:50.279

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: like scary disconnect that should not be there.

558

01:12:50.370 --> 01:12:57.910

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: So it's interesting to hear you kind of point that out that that's kind of, you see similar type thing with like fire evacuations.

559

01:12:58.060 --> 01:12:59.270

Melanie Schlotterbeck: absolutely.

560

01:13:01.850 --> 01:13:04.809

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And what you described is not at all surprising to me.

561

01:13:07.220 --> 01:13:11.110

James: unfortunately, right?

562

01:13:12.120 --> 01:13:20.639

James: well, so I guess you know. Perhaps, like, for like, you know these last few minutes one sort of closer, is to maybe discuss

563

01:13:20.650 --> 01:13:26.549

James: like where you're headed. So what? What?

564

01:13:27.400 --> 01:13:39.120

James: I guess you know what or what is, you know, tickling your interest right now, and like, what are you working on? And where do you? Where do you see yourself working? What do you see yourself working towards in in the coming years.

565

01:13:42.010 --> 01:13:49.590

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So something that has been on my radar for 2 decades that I haven't yet tackled, that is, on my list

566

01:13:49.660 --> 01:14:05.639

Melanie Schlotterbeck: is figuring out. Speaking of Governance Park governance. We in Orange County are lacking options in terms of who we can turn to to own, manage and steward

567

01:14:05.660 --> 01:14:08.780

Melanie Schlotterbeck: conservation lands. And so

568

01:14:11.030 --> 01:14:17.349

Melanie Schlotterbeck: entities like Oc. Parks isn't really taking land anymore. And

569

01:14:17.670 --> 01:14:27.419

Melanie Schlotterbeck: even if there's an endowment that could be it, it still might be an issue. And so our options are limited, and if we are actually going to achieve

570

01:14:27.950 --> 01:14:38.239

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Governor Newsome's executive order, which is N. 82, 20, which sets the goal to protect 30 of California's lands and waters by 2,030.

571

01:14:38.270 --> 01:14:46.500

Melanie Schlotterbeck: We we need somebody to own a managed lands, and we don't have that. And so I would like to get that figured out.

572

01:14:46.570 --> 01:14:53.400

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I also have a personal goal to protect a million acres by the time I die.

573

01:14:53.580 --> 01:14:55.080

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So I'm

574

01:14:55.100 --> 01:15:01.339

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I'm working on that. And yeah,

575

01:15:01.900 --> 01:15:03.280

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and I think.

576

01:15:04.710 --> 01:15:07.959

Melanie Schlotterbeck: making sure that

577

01:15:08.480 --> 01:15:10.230

Melanie Schlotterbeck: we are

578

01:15:12.490 --> 01:15:18.130

Melanie Schlotterbeck: incorporating the next generation in terms of the conservation movement.

579

01:15:19.510 --> 01:15:28.679

Melanie Schlotterbeck: providing them opportunities for training, for leadership, for serving on boards for holding executive director positions that

580

01:15:29.370 --> 01:15:36.679

Melanie Schlotterbeck: haven't really been afforded to organizations in the past, because they've been all volunteer run.

581

01:15:36.900 --> 01:15:39.200

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I I know folks that

582

01:15:39.520 --> 01:15:46.319

Melanie Schlotterbeck: really disagree with the fact that I don't do my work as a volunteer, that I actually get paid for it.

583

01:15:46.380 --> 01:15:56.139

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And yeah, and my responses, I, if a developer can get paid to develop the land, I can get paid to save it.

584

01:15:56.170 --> 01:15:57.760

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Yeah. And

585

01:15:59.280 --> 01:16:10.339

Melanie Schlotterbeck: you know, yeah, I can volunteer my my off hours on any number of topics. It may or may not be environmentally themed. But

586

01:16:10.990 --> 01:16:25.429

Melanie Schlotterbeck: we need to provide opportunities for this field to expand, especially as it relates to bringing in diverse community members into these roles, whether it's aligning

587

01:16:25.450 --> 01:16:36.659

Melanie Schlotterbeck: social and economic or social and environmental justice. or simply making a space for people that haven't had a seat at the table in the past.

588

01:16:37.800 --> 01:16:43.540

James: Yeah, that all sounds. That's all very compelling work.

589

01:16:43.570 --> 01:16:54.370

James: I know, I said. That was the last question, but I can you tell me a little bit about like why that critique gets levied for your paid position like what is their position?

590

01:16:54.960 --> 01:17:03.010

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Oh, so it's you know this. It's volunteer versus paid right? So volunteers are unhappy that

591

01:17:03.230 --> 01:17:09.670

Melanie Schlotterbeck: folks like me get paid for this because they don't see it as truly being altruistic.

592

01:17:09.820 --> 01:17:12.750

Melanie Schlotterbeck: that my motivation is actually money.

593

01:17:12.810 --> 01:17:14.939

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And let me tell you.

594

01:17:16.140 --> 01:17:19.060

Melanie Schlotterbeck: based on what I've historically made.

595

01:17:19.320 --> 01:17:28.439

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I can assure you it is not the money. It's it's the outcome that I care about. So. yeah.

596

01:17:28.650 --> 01:17:33.079

Melanie Schlotterbeck: So that's a a struggle, an internal struggle within the environmental community.

597

01:17:33.510 --> 01:17:44.640

James: So just to make sure I'm understanding the idea is that because you're getting paid for it, it would like force you to compromise on things or like

598

01:17:44.830 --> 01:17:54.010

Melanie Schlotterbeck: my

599

01:17:54.110 --> 01:18:00.690

Melanie Schlotterbeck: as opposed to. If I were a volunteer doing this, then it's a hundred percent altruistic.

600

01:18:00.980 --> 01:18:06.360

Melanie Schlotterbeck: I'm doing it for the greatest good. I don't need to be compensated. If I

601

01:18:06.830 --> 01:18:09.239

Melanie Schlotterbeck: my goodness, if I won the lottery.

602

01:18:09.280 --> 01:18:16.539

Melanie Schlotterbeck: if I had a million dollars in my bank account, I I totally volunteer for this, but I have bills to pay as well.

603

01:18:16.600 --> 01:18:23.390

Melanie Schlotterbeck: so we can either pay those bills by paying me to do this, and I'm covering all my costs through grants

604

01:18:24.000 --> 01:18:25.590

Melanie Schlotterbeck: no harm no foul.

605

01:18:25.650 --> 01:18:31.609

Melanie Schlotterbeck: or you don't get somebody of my skill and caliber participating in this.
And

606

01:18:32.390 --> 01:18:33.560

Melanie Schlotterbeck: who knows what

607

01:18:34.120 --> 01:18:38.200

Melanie Schlotterbeck: decisions would have happened or not happened because of that.

608

01:18:39.120 --> 01:18:50.179

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: Yeah. And if any work deserves to get a paid, it's this type of What you do is is very important. So I think you should definitely be supported in every way to keep going.

609

01:18:50.450 --> 01:19:04.509

James: Well, thank you. I appreciate that.

610

01:19:04.510 --> 01:19:23.650

James: being able to tap into your wealth of experience. so we really appreciate it? I have one question for you. Go for it. We love that. So what's the output of this? Are you coming up with a report. What? How does this get synthesized? And do we, as interviewees get access to that information?

611

01:19:24.130 --> 01:19:26.150

James: Yes. So

612

01:19:26.300 --> 01:19:51.519

James: The first way in which, like this will, this interview will be processed, is to go on to our our research archive, which is the disaster Sts network. and yeah, we put a a link to that in the chat which will make this available to our research group here at Eco Govelab. and then I'll have to double check your consent form, but if you consented.

613

01:19:51.520 --> 01:20:03.429

James: then it will also make it open to the public as it as well. Just to researchers who maybe are just coming across the site. but from that we are also hoping, I mean, like another like

614

01:20:03.540 --> 01:20:06.140

James: very practical

615

01:20:06.250 --> 01:20:10.710

James: sort of like outcome of these interviews is to sort of help us

616

01:20:11.050 --> 01:20:26.340

James: work on our own strategies for things like our stakeholder meetings. to talk with other people who are working in proximate issues. And there's there's like best practices, if you will. So not so much a report, but, like, you know, trying to help us strategize what we're calling

617

01:20:26.340 --> 01:20:41.379

James: our current campaign. We're calling it Dac X. So disadvantaged communities so like getting rid of the disadvantage and empowering communities. This is sort of like a little slogan thing. but so like trying to work on these issues. And so we were talking with Number a number of you know.

618

01:20:41.610 --> 01:20:51.149

James: but relevant experts to sort of process that there will also likely be a publications and the form of like articles.

619

01:20:51.640 --> 01:21:14.230

James: that we hope to get published. But like if and when we cite this interview, we will definitely share those published works with you. and if it shows up in a report. you know we are. We try to be really good about keeping in touch with our research participants and keeping them informed as to how we're using their data and make sure that they're

620

01:21:14.690 --> 01:21:17.170

James: engage in and part of that process as well.

621

01:21:17.250 --> 01:21:26.000

Melanie Schlotterbeck: That's great. Well, on a separate note. I'm also involved with the Orange County surf

622

01:21:26.890 --> 01:21:32.130

Melanie Schlotterbeck: collaborative, which is a community and economic resilience fund.

623

01:21:32.210 --> 01:21:41.289

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And we're focused on disadvantaged community engagement. And so if there's any intersection with that.

624

01:21:41.400 --> 01:21:46.830

Melanie Schlotterbeck: yeah, through the banning ranch conservancy, would love to potentially collaborate.

625

01:21:46.880 --> 01:21:49.650

James: Yeah, that sounds great. What is that called again.

626

01:21:49.800 --> 01:21:53.359

Melanie Schlotterbeck: community economic Resilience fund

627

01:21:55.000 --> 01:22:00.449

Melanie Schlotterbeck: and it's run through Orange County Business Council.

628

01:22:00.660 --> 01:22:03.709

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And they do have participation grants.

629

01:22:03.740 --> 01:22:11.800

Melanie Schlotterbeck: And right now, we're doing a huge outreach effort specifically through the conservancy to

630

01:22:11.820 --> 01:22:14.990

Melanie Schlotterbeck: figure out what folks think are.

631

01:22:15.860 --> 01:22:30.490

Melanie Schlotterbeck: You know, it's called a high road transition economy. How do we prepare for economic shocks and natural disasters by building long term, healthy, sustainable, good paying jobs.

632

01:22:30.900 --> 01:22:32.490

James: Oh, wow! That's

633

01:22:32.570 --> 01:22:45.120

James: we're first is is another sort of issue that we're trying to incorporate into our Dacx plan. So I think that yeah, like we should keep in touch and definitely. have.

634

01:22:45.340 --> 01:22:51.789

James: further, you know, conversations and exchanges off the record or casually, or, yeah.

635

01:22:51.930 --> 01:23:01.480

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: we will definitely follow up, because again, our our community partners in Santa Ana their neighborhood organization green Mp and A and

636

01:23:01.870 --> 01:23:08.729

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: Again, they they focus around getting a park in their neighborhood. They're trying to get more parts in their community.

637

01:23:08.850 --> 01:23:17.699

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: workforce development. So everything you're you're doing you talk about is very approximate. So I think we absolutely will be kind of reaching back out to

638

01:23:17.740 --> 01:23:20.909

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: maybe have a bigger be a conversation with them.

639

01:23:20.970 --> 01:23:24.240

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: So this is super great to be able to talk with you.

640

01:23:24.340 --> 01:23:28.810

Melanie Schlotterbeck: Yeah, no problem. Well, I have my fingers and a little bit of everything. So

641

01:23:28.940 --> 01:23:33.759

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: yeah, I'm good to stay busy.

642

01:23:34.280 --> 01:23:41.939

Aiden Browne | EcoGovLab: Okay, well, thank you so much, Melanie, have a good day.