Cheryl Nenn Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

Creator: Cheryl Nenn
Interviewer: Paul Kinsley
Date of Interview: April 15, 2008
Location of Interview: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Length: 31 pages

Biographical Note
Cheryl Nenn served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador from February 1995 to June 1997 on a forestry extension project.

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Suggested Citation
Cheryl Nenn, recorded interview by Paul Kinsley, April 15, 2008, page #, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

Oral History Interview

with

Cheryl Nenn

April 15, 2008
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

By Paul Kinsley

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

KINSLEY: [00:00:00] Today is April 15th, 2008. This is Paul Kinsley, and I'm interviewing Cheryl Nenn, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador from February '95 to June '97 as a forest extension worker. Um, I guess first, if you just kind of briefly describe your present family, work, residence, and interests.

NENN: [00:00:37] Present?

KINSLEY: [00:00:38] Yeah.

NENN: [00:00:39] Well, my name is Cheryl Nenn. I currently live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and I work for an organization, a nonprofit environmental organization called Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers. My title is Milwaukee Riverkeeper. So what that means is I basically identify sources of pollution and try to come up with solutions to those problems. I actively patrol the waterways looking for sources of pollution, and we also do education, river

cleanup, restoration type projects, as well as some litigation. So. And other current interests are, you know, hiking, camping. I love to canoe and just enjoy Milwaukee as well. Listen to music and do community service, of course.

KINSLEY: [00:01:31] OK. Think about like the year before you joined the Peace Corps and talk about how life was then. And you know, you can include experiences relevant to becoming a PCV.

NENN: [00:01:47] Hmm. OK. Well, I, I think like a lot of volunteers, joined Peace Corps fairly quickly after I graduated from school. So the year before I left, I was finishing up my senior year of college. I was attending college at University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign and was studying to be a biology major. And I graduated, I believe, in May or late May or early June of '04 ['94] and was actually, you know, planning to leave for a Peace Corps assignment fairly quickly. After that, however, and I can't even remember where it was, but I was supposed to be sent to another country and I believe it was Guatemala. But there were some issues, safety issues, concerns. So I ended up not being able to leave right after graduation and was given basically a choice of going to Ecuador, going to Bolivia, and I believe going to the Dominican Republic.

NENN: [00:02:44] I wanted to go to a Spanish speaking country. I had some Spanish experience in college and high school and just really felt that that would be a good experience to have a better command of Spanish and that would be marketable in the future. So, I mean, it was kind of a crazy year waiting. I was kind of a, especially graduating from school and being kind of in limbo. But I ended up spending probably five or six months essentially just visiting with family and doing temp work and kind of preparing to leave. So I did have some time to prepare and kind of focus on what I was going to be doing. But it was, you know, it was a busy year going through all the health screenings and the logistical hoops that are required when you want to become a Peace Corps volunteer. But it was, you know, an exciting year as well.

KINSLEY: [00:03:34] You can probably, you know, expand on that a little. Why did you join the Peace Corps?

NENN: [00:03:40] Ah, the question. Why? You know, I was really, you know, I think, like many people, just really idealistic and really wanted to take a few years before I joined the rat race to, you know, like give back and go somewhere else and make a, you know, make a difference or try to make a difference in a developing country. And I was just really excited, I mean, as a biologist, very interested in and going and experiencing, you know, another country, especially. I was really excited about going to South America in particular and really, you know, not only helping the people, but to experience a different culture and experience a different, you know, different natural surroundings. And, you know, to try to use some of my scientific skills for good in another country.

NENN: [00:04:29] So I was very excited about going to Ecuador. I mean, they have unbelievable diversity in that country, you know, biologically speaking as well as, you know, culturally. And, you know, they have rainforest and mountains and beaches. And I was very excited about going there and, you know, working with different tribal groups as well. It's very much an interest of mine. So I was very excited about going to Ecuador, but, you know, really just wanted to go and spend a few years and try to make a difference somewhere.

KINSLEY: [00:05:02] How did you hear about the Peace Corps and what made you decide to apply?

NENN: [00:05:07] Gosh, you know, I didn't really ever know a Peace Corps volunteer, and I'm trying to think. I mean, I was interested in college, you know, to be, I wanted to be a Peace Corps volunteer and did attend some sessions that they had, which I have now participated in. But where, you know, you go to these sessions and people who had been volunteers before you kind of shared their stories. And I remember, in particular, dragging my mom to one in downtown Chicago that they had at the Chicago headquarters of Peace Corps and listening to everything. And afterward, my mom, and I remember we walked out and she said, oh, what a relief, because she just assumed that I would listen to all those stories and not want to go anymore. But I kind of came out of the meeting like, yes, you know, this is what I want to do and, you know, really

invigorated by it. And she came out of it like, very scared and worried and pretty sure that I wouldn't want to do it anymore after I heard kind of some of the details.

NENN: [00:06:01] But yeah, it's just something I had heard about. And I mean, obviously, you know, I think a lot of us have heard of Peace Corps and it was something I was definitely interested in but didn't know a whole lot about. But I did do a lot of research, talked to a lot of people before I left. And you know, I'm originally from Chicago, so I was lucky that we had a recruiter that I was able to meet with, you know, face to face and ask them a lot of questions as well and get more information that way.

KINSLEY: [00:06:26] So you kind of answered this. What were your friends' and family's reactions, you know, when you were accepted? And was there any hesitation or reservation either on your part or on theirs?

NENN: [00:06:38] Yeah, I didn't have a lot of hesitations. I mean, I was certainly, you know, nervous, I think to say the least and not really knowing what to pack and all of those common dilemmas. Especially a country like Ecuador where you can be, you know, in the Andes or you can be on the beach, it's difficult to pack to say the least. But you know, my family was very concerned. I mean, you know, your parents are concerned about your safety and you know that was a, they were very trepidatious about it. A lot of my friends too who, you know, are very different than myself, you know, growing up in Chicago, didn't really understand why I would want to do something like this. Why would I want to go for two years to this developing country and help somebody else and not make any money and etcetera? And not potentially have, you know, electricity and running water. And you know, I had a lot of friends that were very also worried about my safety and very sad to see me go, certainly for a long period of time. But, you know, I had a lot of other people that were very supportive as well. And even I think despite their concern, they were still excited for me and happy for me to go, but just worried, worried about my safety I think more than anything.

KINSLEY: [00:07:48] What project were you invited to join?

NENN: [00:07:52] I was invited to join the forestry extension project and I was trained, though, with a bunch of other natural resources volunteers. So we received, and maybe I'm jumping the gun, but we received training in kind of forestry practices as well as kind of just general environmental education. And, you know, we also had other people that we trained with that were doing more agricultural training, small animal husbandry and organic farming. But we did learn a little bit about all of those different programs and ended up, you know, I think a lot of us doing work that kind of fit into multiple different program areas. But I was predominantly doing forestry extension, but certainly dipped into agriculture and environmental education as well.

KINSLEY: [00:08:38] OK. Was there anything you did to prepare yourself and others for, you know, being gone two years?

NENN: [00:08:47] Yeah, I mean, luckily, I mean, I guess if you leave early, you know, I was fairly young when I left. I didn't really have any major investments or estate concerns, but I did give power of attorney to my parents and, you know, made sure that they had all the important information about my finances and just contact information and things like that. But I didn't really do anything major to prepare. I did end up, because I ended up having a few months before I went down because of delays with scheduling, I was able to audit some Spanish classes at a local university. And that was helpful because although I had taken probably five years of Spanish more or less, I think, in high school and college, I just wanted to brush up on Spanish, and so I did do a little bit of that. But that was about it. And just research on Ecuador and reading books. I mean, I actually read Mike Tidwell's book [Ponds of Kalambayi]. He was a Peace Corps Africa volunteer. It's a fairly famous one that I can't remember the title of. But, you know, did read some books about Peace Corps and some books about Ecuador as well.

KINSLEY: [00:09:49] OK, I guess this is more specific about your training. Where was it? You know, who the faculty, you know, what kind of technical studies did you have? How did you react to other people and, uh, your language training?

NENN: [00:10:07] Yeah, training was fun. I mean, I just remember it being a really fun time, but, you know, stressful as well. But we trained for three months in a small town called Tumbaco, which was just outside of city limits of Quito, Ecuador. Really nice training facility there, very much kind of a, you know, campus environment, but where everything is pretty much, you know, outside. What is the word I'm looking for? You know, outside areas where we could do our training and we did have classrooms as well. But it was, the weather was so wonderful where we were in Quito, you know, we were able to kind of do a lot of training stuff outside as well. And it was just kind of a nice, almost like homey environment where people could mill about outside and, you know, in between classes and talk and bond and that kind of thing. But yeah, and we learned, you know, we had training, Spanish training, every morning.

NENN: [00:10:59] I remember I was in a training group with two other people with similar language skills. So we were like in an intermediate group and they had different groups set up based on your language training, you know, the language skill coming in. And I just remember really bonding with those folks as well. And language training being really tough because we had Ecuadorian Spanish speaking professors who did not really speak English or didn't speak a lot of English. And so they pretty much taught us completely in Spanish, which is, you know, very different than how most of us learned in the States where you can't really ask the question in English if you don't understand what they're saying. And so really, having to rely on your fellow volunteers, like what did she say or what did she mean or does anyone get this, you know? I'm confused. So I mean, that was fun.

NENN: [00:11:40] And then in the afternoon, we spent time doing more technical training, learning about different environmental education curricula, actually physically going out and identifying tree species and learning the trees of Ecuador, which was quite a task. Learning different, you know, agricultural techniques, you know, learning how to set up compost piles and different things like that. So we did do a lot of that type of training as well as the cultural, cross-cultural training as well. But it was a fun time, but we all lived with families in the same little village, and some of us had better families than others. I had an interesting family that the woman, it was a woman and she had two small children and she was very pregnant

when I went there. And her husband was actually in the Oriente, was in the jungle, working in the oil fields, which a lot of men did do at the time, you know, to make money. So he wasn't really around. And it was difficult.

NENN: [00:12:37] She was really, you know, we were very busy and we were traveling a lot throughout even different parts of Ecuador during our training, our technical training and also, you know, we had site visits during training. And so I wasn't home a lot and they were supposed to help us cook and clean. And, you know, it was very difficult because she was very pregnant. So I remember, you know, like coming home after a full day's of training and really trying to help her around the house. And wash all my laundry and, you know, but I mean, it was fine. They were a great family. We had other friends in training that, you know. It was a very interesting town being on the outskirts of Quito, where some people stayed with very affluent families and some people stayed with very poor families. So it was kind of a beginning of, I guess, training as far as culturally how things were in Ecuador, where there's some people who are very well off and some people, most people who are not. But it was, you know, it was a very, you know, I stayed in a little room that had a curtain that separated me from some of the other kids and, you know, concrete floor and very meager house that, you know, was not a whole lot different than probably my parents' garage, to be honest.

NENN: [00:13:44] So it was a, you know, and a lot of us got sick. I was sick several times in training, just really bad dysentery and intestinal issues, mostly, and I think as most of us were. And you know, you get all these shots. I think we had 17 shots or something, some amazing a number of shots. Maybe I'm just imagining there were more than there were, but you know, a lot of the shots made you not feel so well. I remember yellow fever in particular. It was not very fun, but you know, it's also being sick and being in a foreign environment with a foreign family is not, you know, the best thing in the world. But I mean, it's tough. Training, I think, is, you know, despite the great fun that you have meeting the other volunteers and going out after training and wandering through the village and learning about, you know, new things and new products and new foods. I mean, you know, there's also the whole, you know, it's very stressful kind of

being with the family and not communicating perfectly and going through all that was a very stressful time.

KINSLEY: [00:14:42] Do you think that the training did prepare you? And, you know, was it useful to your service?

NENN: [00:14:49] I think in some ways. You know, definitely Spanish was useful. And I mean, a lot of the technical training was useful, especially that, you know, in my work, the tree identification, you know, the more kind of, you know, nuts and bolts of the technical things that we learned were definitely useful. Because, you know, the trees and vegetation of Ecuador are very different than trees that I had learned, you know, growing up in Illinois. So there, it definitely was useful. However, I think nothing can fully prepare you for when they drop you off at the site in the middle of nowhere and, you know, you have to kind of get things done. So I mean, I think the training definitely helped prepare, but I mean, most, you know, I think most of the preparation really happens once your feet hit your site.

KINSLEY: [00:15:35] OK. What was your initial entry like and your reaction to the country?

NENN: [00:15:46] That was interesting. I remember I lived in a very tropical, well, subtropical area, I guess I should say. I was about 12 hours from Quito, which was the capital.

KINSLEY: [00:15:56] So this was your first assignment?

NENN: [00:15:58] This is my first assignment, my site. And it was, you know, a town west of the Andes. So you had to kind of go very high up in the Andes and then kind of go back down toward the coast. I was on the western. I was actually on the border with Colombia, but toward kind of halfway between really the beach and the mountains in kind of a subtropical area. And wow, I mean, I remember driving there at night and not being fully aware of where they were taking me. And, you know, ending up in this site the first night where I didn't have a house yet or anything. I was basically staying in a bunkhouse room that was, that had other people from my agency that used to bunk out there when they

happened to be in town. But being dropped off in this room in the middle of nowhere after a very long drive, you know, 10, 11 hours in a car. And you know, my site had no electricity, and running water sometimes.

KINSLEY: [00:16:55] So you were alone there, is that right?

NENN: [00:16:57] Yeah, I was alone. I was actually taken, you know, I worked for an organization that was called UTEPA, and UTEPA stands for Unidad Téchnica Ecuatoriana de Plan Awa. I think that's what it was, very long, but it essentially was affiliated with their Department of the Interior like equivalent, you know, with the Ecuadorian government and doing essentially like environmental work and outreach. And they were an existing agency that they worked in a lot of the towns I worked in and they were my, you know, the agency I was assigned to work with. So they picked me up and dropped me off in this town. And several of the extension workers, there were two people in particular named Mary and Luis, who lived five hours away from the town I was situated in, but often went into my town to do educational work, mostly.

NENN: [00:17:51] So they were kind of like my contacts and had dropped me off one night at this town but had to go somewhere else. And so I was really dropped off by myself in a very strange place with no electricity and a candle and a match. And it was very, uh, the reality set in pretty quickly what I had gotten myself into. But and then there was a local family they introduced me to who was the, you know, people who are kind of supposed to support me in my town and they really became my, you know, my family when I was there.

KINSLEY: [00:18:23] Now what about transportation? How did you get around?

NENN: [00:18:29] Yeah, well, we didn't have really, I mean, the organization that I was assigned to had a few pickup trucks that they used, but we never had one. They would kind of come in and drop off supplies and drink a few nights and then be, you know, head out. So we, you know, we got to. The first night they took us in one of the agency trucks. But in general, it was bus. You know, bus in my town was about five hours west of the nearest major town called Tulcan, which is a provincial capital that's just on the

border of Ecuador and Colombia. And I was about five hours in a bus, you know, west of that. And when I say, you know, and this is one of these, you know, one of these roads. I mean, Tulcan is a very high city, and I think we had to even go over a peak that was close to eleven thousand feet and then head all the way down to my town, which was at about, you know, I don't know, probably eight hundred feet.

NENN: [00:19:21] And so it was a very long, precipitous road where you look off to the, you know, the side of the bus and see nothing but air. You know, steep plunges to nothingness and just very perilous road, you know, snaking through the Andes, really, and then coming down into this kind of subtropical area. So it was always an experience. And, you know, it's one of those things where you never get completely comfortable with the bus ride because it was a scary, scary bus ride. But you know, you get used to it. And I'd had a few people come visit me from my family and, you know, put them on this bus and they were petrified for pretty much the whole ride. But it was, yeah, it was a beautiful, gorgeous place where I lived. I was very lucky. Just so green. I mean, green is the first word that pops in your mind, but just green and lush and tropical plants. And you know, a little town that's kind of bursting up out of out of, you know, essentially, you know, I wouldn't necessarily say jungle, but pretty close.

KINSLEY: [00:20:22] So what about, uh, you know, a typical day or relations with the people of the country?

NENN: [00:20:30] Yeah, typical day. It was interesting. We worked, the agency I worked in mostly worked in five different little towns around me, so generally I would try to go to a different town every day, you know, and kind of repeat that.

KINSLEY: [00:20:44] Did you have regular hours?

NENN: [00:20:46] You know, I didn't necessarily have regular hours. The hours were really dictated by, you know, often the bus. Because we have, the way where we lived, there was one bus a day, so there was one bus that left my site very early in the morning that would go to Tulcan, which was the nearby capital. And then that would leave late in the afternoon in

Tulcan and kind of come back. And so often some of the towns that I worked in, I was required to jump on the bus in the morning to kind of drive up to one of the towns and then had to wait sometimes till, you know, pretty late in the afternoon to catch the bus to come back. And often that bus sometimes would not show up because there would be landslides. And so you'd have to just stay with whatever family next to the road would take you in. But you know, a lot of my schedule really revolved around the busses, although I did work in two other towns that I could hike to. And so those I generally tried to get to the town by a certain hour. But it was, you know, a lot of travel time generally during the day to go visit some place and then a few hours of either teaching or direct working with a group.

NENN: [00:21:53] And we did, I did mainly a few different types of things. We worked a lot with schools. We worked with about four or five different schools, you know, planting trees, trying to teach the kids about, you know, trees and how important they were. In our area there was a lot of logging of cedar and mahogany. And so we were trying to replant a lot of those tree species and also just planting vegetables. A lot of these kids in the schools that, you know, they got free rice and beans from the government, but just ate pretty much rice and beans every day and really poor diets. And, you know, based on altitude whether they were further up, they ate a lot of potatoes. And then some of my other towns were very tropical where they ate, you know, heavy bananas. And that was the amazing thing, even within a four or five hour radius of where I lived, I mean, altitude wise and, you know, what people were eating very pretty dramatically. And so we, you know, we did.

KINSLEY: [00:22:46] So the bananas didn't get from one place to the other?

NENN: [00:22:49] Well, interestingly, I mean, they would because people would come down to get the bananas, to bring them up to the capital to sell them. And then they would take the kind of potatoes and carrots from the capital, which was in the higher altitudes, and take that down to our town. So you would get stuff kind of going back and forth. But for the most part, people ate. A lot of these people are very poor and essentially just ate whatever they could grow in the back of their house. But the kids in particular, a lot of the schools we worked with, the kids just ate very

poorly. So we did little organic gardens and we tried to teach them how to plant different types of vegetables and eat a variety of things. And, you know, taught them a lot about biology, about plants and insects and pollination and stuff as well.

NENN: [00:23:26] And then we also did, I worked with five different, they were called integral farm projects, which were interesting. But they were actually funded, I think they were paid for by the Belgian government. I'm not exactly sure how that all happened, but the Belgians paid for these projects and they worked in several different towns and basically did a variety of different things. Worked kind of with cooperatives in different communities to do. We planted a lot of trees. We also planted nitrogen fixing trees that could self-fertilize crops. If you planted, you know, mixed a row of nitrogen fixing trees with crops, the nitrogen fixing trees would provide the nitrogen to the corn, for example.

NENN: [00:24:06] We also did, you know, pig farms and whereby under this program, each one of these cooperatives would get like five pigs to start out with and then would be able to start selling the pigs at some point and taking them back to their own houses. We did guinea pig raising. They also got 10 guinea pigs when we first started and they were able to raise guinea pigs. In some of our communities, we did either trout farms or tilapia farms based on altitude and worked with different cooperatives on that as being part of the project. And then also really trying to take the waste from some of the farm fields, and, you know, and using that to help feed some of the some of the animals. And kind of working on this holistic farm project, which, you know, ended up being, you know, very interesting because you get into all the community dynamics of, you know, equity and whether or not people were spending the same amount of time working on the farm project and whether some people were giving really high nutritious food to the pigs and others were giving dirty rice water, you know, and kind of the feuds that would ensue based on that.

NENN: [00:25:08] But you know, it was very interesting. And my days really varied quite a bit based on where I was. But, you know, essentially trying to get people to, you know, to plant vegetation, to try to supplement their diets with different types of vegetables and also meat, trying to produce some

meat for them. Just trying to do a lot of different educational topics on safe pesticide application. Things like DDT, which are not allowed here in the U.S. anymore, are freely sold in Ecuador, in other countries and people are using them without any safety precautions, you know. And teaching them about, you end up doing latrines because it's, you know, you realize that everyone, these pigs are out and a lot of people. Our pigs were confined in *chancheras*, we called them, but in little, you know, structures to raise the pigs. But a lot of people just have their pigs, they eat whatever, and they don't really have sanitation and you get a lot of disease and you know, a lot of issues going on. So trying to educate people about properly disposing of their human waste, which became and ended up becoming a decent project for us, which wasn't originally planned.

NENN: [00:26:20] And, you know, just in working with different communities and responding a little bit to their needs too. And we had one community we worked in that was kind of interesting where we had horrible landslides all the time and a lot of the lower communities couldn't get their crops out. You know, it was mostly bananas and mangos and, you know, some pineapples and heart of palm and different things that we had. But they rotted really quickly. And if you had a landslide, you couldn't ship that stuff out and sell it. So people were losing a lot of money. And so we had a group of women that wanted to start a marmalade making business. And so one of the things that we did, which probably ended up being one of my most successful projects, was, you know, doing a little fundraising to support this marmalade project and getting these women equipment, you know, basically stoves and pots and pectin and different things that they needed to make marmalade. And, you know, getting them, you know, essentially starting a small business so that they could kind of capitalize from this unbelievable amount of fruit that they had.

NENN: [00:27:18] And even bananas, I mean, there's so many, we had so many bananas and different fruit that they couldn't even sell because everyone else has bananas in the town. So nobody wants to buy bananas. And if the trucks aren't coming, then you can't take the fruit and send it up to the Andes where people would buy that kind of thing. So just trying to kind of, you know, provide them with another way to make some money and to

preserve the fruit that was rotting a lot of the times because the road was bad and we had a lot of rain, you know, daily. So there was always landslides and things, and trying to make sure that people had another outlet to do something with their product.

KINSLEY: [00:27:55] So how were the villagers? Were they receptive to most of the things that you tried? Or was it a struggle to bring in new ideas and new ways of doing things?

NENN: [00:28:05] So I would say both. I mean, in some cases, like, for example, with the marmalade, they were very receptive because it was their idea and they just needed a little bit of help, you know? And in other things, you know, they weren't so receptive. Like the latrines, for example, someone had come in before we were even there. And a lot of these people had latrines, the actual bowls, the porcelain bowls, that they had, you know, impatiens and different flowers growing out of because they never really made the latrine. And, you know, just kind of trying to educate people that it's much more safe for their family and their health to have a latrine. A lot of people were very resistant to that, and I remember a bunch of our, at the schools we were just trying to create latrines at the school so that the kids wouldn't have to run out everywhere and go to the bathroom. And you know, we worked with a lot of families where they harvested cedar and mahogany and other trees. And we said, well, each family needs to bring one board so we can build these latrines, you know, so we can build a latrine for the school. And, you know, having a really hard time, nobody, you know, I mean, it happens here too. I work a lot with communities here, but you know, having to go door to door and say, you didn't bring your board, I need your board, you know? And just trying to get those little things changed, like the personal habits changed, is incredibly difficult.

KINSLEY: [00:29:17] What were the latrines, were they just basically pits in the ground?

NENN: [00:29:22] Yeah, I mean, we actually, some of them there, we actually had bowls that someone had donated, and I'm not even sure who had donated them at one point, it could have been the government, but nobody had really built. They had bowls that, a lot of the schools had received these

porcelain latrine bowls, but they never went that next step to make the latrines. So we essentially made the little hut, you know, and then dug the hole and put the actual porcelain bowls in place. So essentially, all of it is just going into a pit in the ground, but it's a little bit nicer. And it has this bowl where you can take rainwater, which was abundant, and river water and, you know, just flush the bowl after you go to the bathroom. So it's kind of more of a high tech latrine, if you will. But you know, that was very difficult. And even after we did end up building many of them, trying to make sure that they used them, you know, was very difficult.

NENN: [00:30:12] And, you know, just trying to change the agricultural practices to minimize erosion. You know, at the time, people always would plant their pineapples straight down the hill. And so when you have rain events, you have a lot of dirt and stuff washing off and they were losing a lot of topsoil. So we were trying to, you know, essentially educate them about terracing and the importance of growing the crops, you know, perpendicular to the slope so that you minimize erosion. And you know, a lot of it, things have just been done forever.

NENN: [00:30:39] And one of the other interesting things that I remember is we had people there, you know, a lot of them are tribal. We worked with mostly they're called mestizo, but they're mixed between indigenous and Spanish blood. But we also worked with a group of natives called the Awá and another group called the Chachis that both had their own culture and languages. And you know, many of the people that we worked with were, you know, had different tribal beliefs. And so that was always very interesting. You know, there were some of the tribal people that. We had a reserve next to us that was an anthropological reserve called the Reserva Awá, which was for the Awá people. And many of them were very much wanted nothing to do with me. They thought I was kind of the white devil. You know, they grabbed their children and run away from me when I first met them.

NENN: [00:31:28] But I mean, you know, sometimes we'd walk really far to certain towns to work with people and, you know, to help them plant a garden or plant some trees or whatever it happened to be that day. And you know, a lot of times you'd get there and they would say, oh, we're not working

today. And you'd say, well, why aren't you working today? And they'd say, oh, *mala luna*, which means, you know, bad moon. And you know, we never, you know, the moon is really bad right now. We can't, it's not a good time to plant or it's not a good time to weed or, you know, whatever it happened to be. And so that was very interesting and trying to be, you know, to learn those things. But often, you know, it didn't seem like there was rhyme or reason too, things would just change for no apparent reason. But you know, we, and a lot of the work and the walking around and, I mean, a lot of my sites would take, you know, all day to travel to or to walk to. And so you did become, you bonded a lot with.

NENN: [00:32:22] I had another local girl called Marlany, who was also employed by the agency I worked for, who was kind of like my host counterpart in the community. And we just spent a lot of time together, you know, in transport and kind of working, but also just having fun and talking and being together, you know, on the way to do work. And she also, her and her family became, I guess, one of my really, you know, my family really, my support in my community. So, you know, even the fact that we, you know, we worked quite a bit, I think, and especially in comparison to other volunteers I've talked to, I feel like we worked quite a bit. And, you know, I had my own tree nursery in the backyard and, you know, I'm kind of a, need to be doing a lot of things at one time. So I mean, you know, we worked a lot, even when I was home, I was planting trees and things for communities that I was working with.

NENN: [00:33:13] But you know, we did spend a lot of time, I mean, you just spend a lot of time cooking and a lot of time cleaning and, you know, washing dishes and washing clothes by hand. We had what's called a pila. So when it rained or when we had drinking water, which was pretty rare. And it's interesting because I lived in a place where we had rain every day and it was kind of the opposite scenario that many people would think of, because you'd think if you had a lot of rain, you'd have fresh water all the time. But our town did have like a system of pipes to many of the, you know, the houses that carried water. But when it rained a lot, the pipes would get clogged up with leaves and dirt because the water was coming right from the river. And, you know, so when it was raining a lot, we wouldn't have water to the houses because the pipes, you couldn't keep

them clean. And it seems like they would, someone would go out and clean the pipes or fix whatever problem happened, to fix what happened that day or whatever. And then you'd have running water maybe for a day and then you wouldn't have running water again.

NENN: [00:34:14] So I would say, like, you know, 20 percent of the time we had running water, and when we did have that, you'd fill up every single bucket in your house, every single. You know, we had these concrete tanks in the back yard that we'd fill up with water just so you had water just to wash dishes and to wash clothes and things like that. Otherwise you're, you know, you're taking everything to the river. And the rivers, because we had so much rain were generally not, you know, sometimes they were clean, but most of the time they were pretty, you know, chocolaty brown looking. So we, you know, we had a lot of huge, you know, landslides were pretty common. We even had a really horrible one once where it took away like a town, like I think like a dozen people lost their lives. And I mean, they were washed away with livestock and everything down the river. I mean, it was unreal. So, you know, we really spent a lot of time just doing the day to day things because we didn't have electricity. You don't have refrigeration. So just the amount of time cooking was considerable. We would make a ton of soup. People in my town ate soup like crazy. And I think part of it was, you know, you can make a big vat of it and to the extent that you can heat it up, and most of us had gas stoves.

KINSLEY: [00:35:23] And where did they get the water to drink and do a soup?

NENN: [00:35:26] Well, most of the water came, I mean, if you were lucky and you had water coming to your house that day, it would come from like essentially the hose. But in days where and then if you didn't have any water, you hopefully had enough water stored up in your pila. You could take that water and just boil it. And if there wasn't any water in that, then it's down to the river essentially to get the water. But I made sure that I went out and bought a bunch of garbage cans with taps right when I got there. And just every time we happened to have water, just filled up every possible thing in my house I could fill up with water. So for cooking, that would be for cooking, for cleaning clothes, for everything. And you know, we had, Ecuador, I think out of all Peace Corps countries at the time was

either number one or number two for intestinal illnesses. We were number one but, uh, or number two, but we had a lot of. You know, it wasn't uncommon for me to get dysentery or giardia. I'd say every couple of months I was having something going on. Just chronic indigestion.

KINSLEY: [00:36:23] Even though you boiled the water?

NENN: [00:36:24] Even though I boiled, yeah. I mean, there was just, you know, it was really difficult. And a lot of times, like with my job in particular, a lot of volunteers, I think, are very stationary. I tended to move a lot in the communities and sometimes even having to spend the night with different families. So, you know, a lot of times you ask people, is this water boiled? And they'd say, oh yeah, see? And it wasn't, you know. You'd get like a freezing cold like pineapple juice or something from someone which just looked like the best thing possible in the world that you could drink at that time. But you know that if anything was freezing cold, it essentially was right from the river because we didn't have refrigeration. So, you know, I think a lot of times too, you don't want to offend people by not eating their food or eating what the juice or drinking the juice that they provide for you. So and in fact, you know, if you go to certain places and they provided you with food and you didn't eat it, the next time you'd go by through there they wouldn't give you anything. So, I mean, you definitely did have to respect people.

NENN: [00:37:20] And that meant, I mean, at least in my case, I got sick quite a bit, I think, because I didn't always have one hundred percent control of what I ate and what I was drinking. And then sometimes people, you know, they're very poor. And I mean, I'd go to work with people and after we'd work with them all day, you know, helping them plant trees or, you know, work in their nurseries or whatever we were doing. You know, you'd come back and they'd give you like a meal of rice and pasta, which was like the only thing they had at that time because they didn't have any crops to share with you or any food. And I mean, some of these people were incredibly malnourished. And, you know, but others lived in, especially in the more tropical regions, could live, really could live on bananas and plantains. We had like five different kinds of bananas and yucca. You know, even though they were really poor as well, I think the communities I

worked with in the more tropical areas ate much better in general than some of the Andean, the higher Andean communities where we worked, where it was really cold and difficult to produce, you know. So they had to buy a lot more like food, you know, than maybe some other people did.

NENN: [00:38:23] And I mean, I worked with people too that just hunted. But I mean, I lived with wonderful people in my town and they really, I think, several families in particular really took care of me and watched over me. And even towns, you know, in different places where I worked, I became really good friends with the teachers there and, you know, some of the families there that would put me up at different times. Just wonderful, wonderful people in general. But we spent so much time cooking together and cleaning and knitting and just hanging out with each other. And that was something that was really wonderful because I think in the U.S. a lot, you know, where I live in Milwaukee, I maybe know two or three of my neighbors. And you know, you live in a small town in Ecuador and you know everyone and everyone knows you, which is a good and a bad thing. We used to say "*pequeño pueblo, infierno grande*," which means small town, big hell, which was true.

NENN: [00:39:14] There was, you know, you don't have TV or entertainment. So, you know, people create entertainment by fabricating stories, you know? Why was the gringa in the store for ten minutes? You know, what was she doing in there? You know, buying eggs, you know, buying food. But people would, you know, create little intrigues about whether or not I was having an affair with a store owner at the time. But you know, that was really fun. And we used, when we I remember when we first started getting busses that came in that had TVs in them, which was, you know, pretty high end for my town. And just everybody in the town piling into the bus and watching movies at night because there was nothing to do. I mean, we didn't have power, we didn't have TV. You know, a lot of us had radios.

KINSLEY: [00:39:57] So they just parked the bus?

NENN: [00:39:58] They parked the bus and we'd all walk into the bus and watch TV, you know, and it was pretty great. We'd have weekly like dances too a

lot of times where people would just get together and dance, merengue and salsa. I mean, it's so much fun. And until, you know, people drink quite a lot of *trago*, as we called it, which was cane liquor, similar to kind of moonshine, which, you know, I think there's a version of that probably all over the world. But, you know, sometimes you go to these dances and people get drunk pretty fast and things would get a little crazy and you'd have to leave, make a hasty exit. But you know, for the most part, the community there was pretty wonderful and just feeling really part of a community was something special.

KINSLEY: [00:40:37] OK. Maybe just say a little about how life and work changed over the months and, you know, at the end of the first year, what was some of the notable events and reflections? Unexpected things, relationships, health problems? I mean, you're already kind of hit on some of these. Vacation and travel.

NENN: [00:41:02] Yeah, I mean, definitely things always get easier the longer you are somewhere and you get a lot more respect. I had kind of an interesting situation in that I was evacuated because there was fairly heavy guerrilla activity. And guerrilla, guerrilla activity I should say, of some Colombian groups. One, we didn't really have FARC, which is the one that most people hear about, wasn't super involved in our area, but we had a group called the Frente Comuneros del Sur that was kind of like a, you know, a little guerrilla group and they, you know, they had been in the area forever. And on the Colombian border and Ecuadorian border, there is a lot of, you know, I wouldn't say there's a lot of drug running, but there's certainly, you know, people. The borders are fairly porous and people going back and forth. And where I lived actually the only main road along the border was on the Ecuadorian side.

NENN: [00:41:54] And you know, it was pretty common to see these people every once in a while and you'd hear stories of young kids that kind of disappeared over the night that were, you know, left to join the guerrilla groups and would never be heard from again. Because, you know, there's at least the rumor, and I'm probably true that, you know, they couldn't really leave once they joined. And so and you'd hear stories of them coming into town and bribing store owners and making sure that the store

owners would give them blankets or give them food or whatever. But we had a couple of instances where there was holdups of busses that were the route I was mentioning before from the capital down to my site. And it's fairly easy to hold up a bus when you have a precipitous decline of death on one side of the bus. You just put a couple of rocks in the road and the bus has to stop. There's nowhere for the bus to go. So there were some people that were holding up busses with guns and stealing money and things like that.

NENN: [00:42:47] And nothing ever happened to me, thank goodness, but the word kind of trickled down to Quito that this stuff had been happening. Although I would add that it happens pretty much all over the country, but in particular because I was so close to Colombia, I think, and the State Department had some sort of information that they were uncomfortable with me being there. So my last year was, or a little bit less than my last year, was a little traumatic in that I was taken out of my site and still ended up working with the same agency and essentially applying my skills on more of a regional level in the northern portion of Ecuador and working with some other communities that my agency worked with. But that was very hard because, you know, you become really close with the family and friends that you have in your town and having to leave them was very traumatizing. And also the way, I was pretty much having, I had to leave pretty quickly and precipitously. Essentially had the white jeep show up in front of my house and had to pack up and leave and wasn't able to really say goodbye to a lot of people. And not really, technically, you know, wasn't really allowed to go back.

NENN: [00:43:51] Although I did end up meeting a lot of my friends in the capital and meeting up with them from time to time in the nearby capital, where we had to go to get mail and to get, you know, really a lot of food and money from the bank, you know? And so I would be able to meet up with them in Tulcan, which was the nearby provincial capital. But my last year was a little, a little difficult, and just kind of making a transition and kind of, you know, doing a lot of almost I don't know if I'd call it consulting work, but kind of doing some of the work I had been doing in my site and bringing it to some other communities. And in some cases got to visit some other volunteer friends and kind of do little *charlas* on fruit tree

grafting and, you know, did marmalade demonstrations in several different communities and teaching people how to make marmalade and jams.

KINSLEY: [00:44:37] Now what do they make the marmalade from?

NENN: [00:44:40] Just different fruits. I mean, well, I would say here we think of marmalade as orange marmalade, but there in Spanish they call them *mermeladas*, is pretty much kind of the, I guess the catchall word for all kind of fruit preserves and jams and things like that. So I ended up doing kind of a lot of different things toward my last year that I was there. So things changed a lot. But you know, you obviously, you get more skills, you get more, you have more confidence in your skills and more confidence certainly in language. So that, you know, in many ways, it was kind of fun because you can go out and I felt like I was, you know, much more effective certainly in my final year.

NENN: [00:45:16] And was able to take some really wonderful vacations with friends. I mean, a bunch of volunteers went to the Amazon and did a really great trip and a bunch of us went to the beach once too and met up, I think, during the holidays and had a really nice trip. So I was a little bit, I mean, I was fairly isolated in that I was, you know, a good distance from the provincial capital and my closest volunteer was probably only 25 miles away, but it took about seven hours to get to him. So I, you know, I think as opposed to a lot of other volunteers, bonded a lot with the community and my Ecuadorian friends, probably more so than some of my other volunteers just because, you know, I didn't live close to a lot of other Peace Corps volunteers.

KINSLEY: [00:45:56] Was that by choice or was that?

NENN: [00:45:58] I think a little bit. I did really, it was important to me to really have a, I didn't really want to be in like a provincial capital with six other volunteers. You know, I think there's a, and there were those situations where people, because of health reasons or whatever had to be fairly close to Quito as well, and I wanted to be out. But you know, and I didn't necessarily want to be maybe as isolated as I was, but I certainly did enjoy it. And I think it helped me definitely with my language skills, and I think it

really was great for my overall experience that I really was able to bond with the locals more than I probably would have if I had been closer to other volunteers.

KINSLEY: [00:46:37] Now you said, most of them had gas stoves?

NENN: [00:46:40] Mm hmm.

KINSLEY: [00:46:40] And where would they get the gas from?

NENN: [00:46:43] Well, that was interesting. I mean, we would get, you can get gas from a lot of different stores in Ecuador. And they're like these big gas tanks that kind of, you know, were very heavy, but I mean, they're essentially propane gas like almost like a camping stove really. But this is what people cook on all the time. However, while we were there and kind of, it was more toward the end of my service, the Ecuadorian economy really started tanking and the sucre, which was the local currency, lost like 85 percent of its value. And it always used to be that, you know, Ecuadorians would go into Colombia to buy cheap stuff, and it kind of switched where all the Colombians would start coming into Ecuador because everything had lost so much value. Or actually, I think actually I'm getting that twisted around. But anyway, it was, I'm getting it a little bit twisted, but it was cheaper to go and get gas in Colombia for a while.

NENN: [00:47:31] So a lot of us were heading up to Colombia to get our gas because the Ecuadorian gas just became really expensive or the money wasn't worth much anymore, so it was harder and harder to buy it. So a lot of people are going into Colombia, and a lot of people started just cooking with wood, which became a problem because, you know, people cook with wood full fires in their houses, which mostly are just, you know, wood planks and tin roofs. But you still, some of the air quality in some of these people's homes. You walk into these little huts and, you know, fill up your lungs with smoke. And so a lot of people started cutting down a lot of trees at that time, which was upsetting because we were trying to, you know, replant them.

KINSLEY: [00:48:08] Now you were replanting the same kind of trees?

NENN: [00:48:10] Yeah. Well, we were planting a lot of different types. But you know, trees indigenous to the area and some fruit trees too. We were planting a lot of fruit trees in farms, but a lot of cedar and mahogany and almonds.

KINSLEY: [00:48:20] Now where did you get the trees?

NENN: [00:48:24] We grew a lot from seed ourselves and, yeah, mostly that. We really grew them ourselves. And a lot of the trees grow by *estaca* or stake so you can do live stakes. And so we grew things in different ways. And we got some seeds and things too from other parts of the country. But it was a, you know, it was difficult. It was a difficult time. And ultimately, Ecuador ended up switching to the dollar, to the U.S. dollar, because their currency completely lost its value. And that didn't happen till after I left, but it was fairly close after I left. And that, you know, from what I heard from my friends who I'm still in touch with, has been really difficult for the Ecuadorian people because, you know, you know, things got more expensive because you're paying more dollar prices for a lot of things. And I'm no economist and I don't completely understand it but it was, yeah, it was an interesting time period, for sure.

KINSLEY: [00:49:18] OK. Is that is that pretty much, are you at the end of your tour from what you've said? Or is there anything else you'd like to add? Because I think we want to just kind of sum it all up. What was your sense of achievement and failure or the pluses and minuses and regrets, satisfactions? Plans for the future, like that?

NENN: [00:49:42] Well, I mean, I love my Peace Corps experience, and I mean, I got a lot out of it and, you know, I just remember it really fondly, even though, I mean, I was sick a lot of the time and it was difficult in many cases, especially when I was evacuated, it was very difficult for me. You know, but I would never give it up. And I mean, we always tell people, you know, it's the toughest job you'll ever love, but it's true. It was very tough. But at the same time, I met wonderful Ecuadorian people, some of whom I still try to stay in touch with, and wonderful other friends too that were Peace Corps volunteers that will be lifelong friends. And you know, you

just. And just being able to bond with other people who had that same experience is pretty, pretty special. And, you know, I loved it. I mean, it was, uh. I think we achieved a lot, you know, hopefully a lot of people will remember me and remember what we tried to do, and will do things a little bit differently in the future. And I think, you know, from a technical perspective, we were pretty successful.

NENN: [00:50:40] I haven't been back. And I really would love to go back, but I'm also a little scared to go back to see how things maybe have ended up. But you know, from what I hear and I still get calls probably a couple of times a year from some friends when they happen to get into town and can find a, you know, a phone or can afford to pay to call me, that, you know, things are going pretty well. Like I know my cooperative of women with the *mermeladas* are doing really well, and they've gotten their formal like sanitary registries from the government and can sell their marmalade slash jam, you know, wherever they want to now. And so I know some of the projects are going really well and that makes me feel really good. But you know, I still have friends too calling me, asking me for money, which is always a tough one. And really just trying to support them and let them know that they need to, they need to be, you know, they need to work this out for themselves. And normally they do, you know, you just really need to push them and they'll come up with a solution themselves. But it's something I never would regret and something I definitely would do again.

NENN: [00:51:43] And I did end up joining Crisis Corps after grad school just briefly, and I won't get into it, but in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch, and that was something that was also a very interesting experience. And subsequently as well, I'm very involved with the Milwaukee Peace Corps Association and we just are really a group that can support people getting home from Peace Corps and having them find friends that understand what they've been through. Supporting and educating people who are leaving, you know, as well as just providing fun place for social activities for people to get together a few times a year. We have ethnic eats events and different community service events that we do as well, like river cleanups and different things. And we also, you know, raise money and try to give some of it back to current volunteers that need a little money for projects. So I mean, that's a, I really appreciate being involved in that

group and, you know, just being able to kind of keep that tie with Peace Corps and supporting people, new people coming back. And, you know, every time they come back and tell you their stories, it kind of reminds you of your own and puts a smile on your face.

KINSLEY: [00:52:49] OK. Yeah, I just. This is kind of a specific question. I want you to try to reevaluate your service in light of the three goals of the Peace Corps. The first one is to provide technical assistance where requested.

NENN: [00:53:08] Yeah, I mean, I think we definitely did that. I mean, we provided, I mean, maybe more than other people, a lot of technical assistance to people. And I think, you know, some people really appreciated it. Some people maybe less so. But you know, and I think we also tried to adapt. I mean, a lot of the projects we ended up working on weren't really planned, but it was really adapting to the needs that people had, whether they could verbalize those or not. And so, you know, we did provide a lot of technical assistance. So I think we definitely did that.

KINSLEY: [00:53:35] OK. And the second one is to promote better understanding of the United States.

NENN: [00:53:40] Yeah, I mean, I hope I did that. You know, that was always an interesting thing. I mean, a lot of people, like I mentioned, were very wary of you when you first came, especially the tribal people I worked with were very wary about me. And it was always amazing to me that they could be so scared of a white person being that they didn't have TV or movies or even really radio where they lived and were incredibly isolated. Some of the people I worked with were a 10 to 15 hour walk from my town, which was already in the middle of nowhere. So very interesting. And a lot of people after they knew you, you know, over time knew that you were a good person. But you know, yeah, I mean, it was always hard battling those misconceptions and, you know, people thinking we wore our clothes once and threw them out. And, you know, having these crazy ideas of kind of what life was like in the United States, at least for me. And so, you know, I think a lot of people I worked with, I tried really hard to just let them know what our life was like. And you know, most people, you know, working class people in the U.S., how our lives are and how we're not all

that dissimilar to them, but have different challenges really. And so I hope that I educated them a little bit about people in the U.S.

KINSLEY: [00:54:50] OK. And then the third goal is to promote better understanding of other peoples by Americans.

NENN: [00:54:58] Yeah, I really try to do. I think I try to do that. I mean, with I think, especially with our role in Milwaukee Peace Corps Association, really just trying to educate people about the Peace Corps and, you know, about the countries that we served in. And, you know, we've done events where we've educated Girl Scouts and, you know, had different types of events open to the public for people who are interested in Peace Corps service and really just trying to educate people about life in other countries. And you know how good I think we have it here in most respects and how it's important to really, you know, provide some support to these other places that really need it as well. And just, you know, again, just letting people know, you know, we're all pretty much the same regardless of where we live. You know, we have very different lifestyles, obviously, and very different economic backgrounds and diets and places where we live. But you know, we're all people and we need, you know. Humans, you know, we need water and we need shelter and we need, you know, friends and love and compassion and making sure that message gets spread around is really important.

KINSLEY: [00:56:01] How could you describe what effect your Peace Corps service has had on you, either a change in yourself or in your career plans or long term?

NENN: [00:56:13] Yeah, I mean, I think it really did probably change me. I mean, I was a biologist going in and I currently am now, but I think it really changed the way I feel about, you know, I think the importance of working with people working at the grassroots level. I think a lot of the work I do now is not dissimilar from Peace Corps in that I help out private landowners that have an issue, who might have an issue with, you know, bad water quality in their river and trying to figure out what's going on. And I'm trying to provide technical support to different landowners about, you know, what they can do to improve the water quality of the river. Very

similar to what I used to do in Ecuador, really. And, you know, trying to problem solve and come up with solutions and, you know, really working on a local community by community basis, which is really similar actually to what I did in Peace Corps.

NENN: [00:57:02] And a lot of the education type of work I do in my current profession, you know, you know, instead of, you know, meeting with a small group of Ecuadorians in a school, it's meeting with, you know, village common council or meeting with, you know, interested people who are interested in the environment. And, you know, a small community near here, a community for the environment, for a village or a school or a church even that is interested in the environment and needs some help. And so I think it really has, I think, influenced my future more maybe than I even realize.

KINSLEY: [00:57:34] Yeah, just one little thing that's maybe out of place. But you didn't really say anything about the Peace Corps staff or were you pretty much on your own or what? What kind of relations did you have with the staff?

NENN: [00:57:47] And I was pretty much on my own. I was very isolated. So I mean, I would come in regularly for shots and, you know, and deal with the nurses. I did have nurses come and visit me because I in particular had quite a lot of stomach and intestinal issues.

KINSLEY: [00:58:01] These were Peace Corps nurses?

NENN: [00:58:02] These were Peace Corps nurses that we had. They came and visited a lot of our sites and they did come and visit me, which was fun. I did have a visit, I believe, once from my APCD, Francisco Garces, who I love, who was our forestry APCD, who is just an inspiration and a really wonderful guy, but I was very isolated so. And I think in a lot of other volunteers maybe had more visits from Francisco based on his travel patterns. But he did visit me once and I was able to show him my work and some of the communities where I worked, and that was really great. But in general, I mostly interacted with Peace Corps staff when I came into the capital for really normally for medical issues, for either shots or issues

that I was having. Or, you know, we had a mid-term conference and our COS conference where we were required to essentially go back to the Quito area. So that was mostly when I interacted with employees of Peace Corps. But you know, in general, I probably had less interaction with them and more interaction with my host agency folks. But we also, we didn't have a phone in my neighborhood, in my town. The nearest phone was a five hour bus ride. So I mean, even if I could have went and called someone and asked for advice, I mean, it was difficult to do so.

KINSLEY: [00:59:14] Five hours for a phone?

NENN: [00:59:15] Five hours for a phone, five hours for money, five hours for a lot of, you know, for a lot of food really that you couldn't get in my little town. You know, you'd bulk up on, you know, peanut butter and tuna and things five hours away. And that was, you know, that was my nearest phone to call my family as well.

KINSLEY: [00:59:30] Has that changed now or do you know or? Do they have cell phones?

NENN: [00:59:35] I don't know. I think, I know that they, I heard that they had paved and improved the road going to my town. So I'm sure that that's changed things quite a bit.

KINSLEY: [00:59:41] As far as you know, they still don't have electricity?

NENN: [00:59:44] They do have, I think, electricity now. It started, they started building the infrastructure right at the end of my service but were having a very hard time with it because they were using hydropower and had a tremendous amount of energy, and not enough places to send the energy, because there weren't that many people living in the area. And we lived next to this Rio San Juan, which was a raging river that separates Colombia and Ecuador. And so my understanding is that they do have electricity now, but I think they still, you know, it's not, it kind of comes and goes, because I think they've been having trouble with the system. But yeah, and I'm sure it's changed quite a bit, actually. And that's why I'm

very curious and I'm also kind of trepidatious about returning and seeing how things have changed. But I know that they still don't have.

KINSLEY: [01:00:28] What do you think it would take to get you back?

NENN: [01:00:30] Oh gosh, a break in my work schedule probably. And a little bit of money. But no, I would really love to go back and I am planning to go back fairly soon. But I know that they still don't have phones. I know that they still, my friends at least who call me still have to go to the capital five hours away to call me. But, you know, I mean, that's calling the U.S. but.

KINSLEY: [01:00:50] If it's anything like my experience, you know, they didn't tell me at the time that they valued me and I didn't know if it was worthwhile. But when I did go back, they really laid it on. So I think that the same will probably happen to you.

NENN: [01:01:04] Yeah. It would be fun to go back now too because I've been gone for about 10 years.

KINSLEY: [01:01:09] Ten years, yeah.

NENN: [01:01:09] So to go back and see how things have changed. And I have heard little stories about, you know, some of the kids I used to teach getting married and having, you know, different lives of their own now. So it'd be really fun to go back and see everyone. Yeah.

KINSLEY: [01:01:25] OK, well I think that's pretty much it unless there's anything else you want to say. [tape break]

NENN: [01:01:32] And you know and hope that more people join and that we keep it going.

KINSLEY: [01:01:39] Well, thank you very much.

NENN: [01:01:40] Yep, thank you.

KINSLEY: [01:01:41] OK.

[END OF INTERVIEW]