

Community Forests: A path to prosperity and connection

BOSQUE COMUNITARIO DE RÍO HONDO / RÍO HONDO COMMUNITY FOREST

NOTABLE BENEFITS



RECREATION



EDUCATION



FOREST-BASED PRODUCTS

ACRES: 67

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2017

OWNERSHIP: Mayagüez, Puerto Rico

MANAGEMENT: Proyecto Comunitario Agro-Eco-Turístico de Barrio Río Hondo, Inc.

COMMUNITY SERVED: The Río Hondo neighborhood of Mayagüez, Puerto Rico

POPULATION: 3,640

TOTAL ACQUISITION COST: \$500,000

FUNDING BREAKDOWN:



Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program

Cost Share

For a comprehensive review of the community and economic benefits provided by this forest and others, go to the full report at www.tpl.org/economic-benefits-community-forests



The last remaining large block of continuous forest had been privately owned but leased by Proyecto Comunitario Agro-Eco-Turístico de Barrio Río Hondo for community purposes for nearly a decade. But when the private owner presented several development projects to the Puerto Rico Planning Board and expressed a need to develop or sell, the community came together to ensure that the land would remain a community asset forever. With the Municipality of Mayagüez willing to commit time and energy to the long-term community forest vision and the support of the U.S. Forest Service Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP), a long standing effort finally became a reality and the **Bosque Comunitario de Río Hondo** now provides recreational, educational, cultural, and economic benefits for residents and visitors.





Enabling recreation: The project offers an immense opportunity for the residents of the local community by providing access to this space in an area that is otherwise densely populated with suburban and rural subdivision development. The Río Hondo community had a population of 3,640, a poverty rate of 36.3 percent, and an unemployment rate of 34.2 percent. AmeriCorps volunteers recently created a one mile system of nine trails throughout the property. These trails and other portions of the forest can be used for hiking, exercise, bird watching, camping, horseback riding, nature watching, picnicking, and dog walking.

Enhancing education: This forest provides a plethora of educational opportunities. It enables workshops for students from the Community Institute of the University of Puerto Rico’s Mayagüez campus, serves as a living laboratory for fourth- to sixth-grade students enrolled at Consuelo Pérez Cintrón Elementary School, and hosts community workshops focused on landscape conservation, food security, community gardens, and other topics that are attended by over 100 people each year.

Generating opportunities for agroforestry: Most of the site is forested, and 10 percent of the project area is devoted to nonforested uses such as a conference room that hosts community and educational events and a greenhouse that produces trees, herbs, and vegetables. The community envisions business opportunities created through the potential for renting the facilities, offering guided tours, birding, and selling trees, herbs, vegetables, and sustainably harvested wood and other forest products to artisans.



This project was completed in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and would not have been possible without generous support from the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

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