

Río Hondo Community Forest

Fact Sheet



Pioneer forest

- The Autonomous Municipality of Mayaguez in Puerto Rico, in partnership with the community-based nonprofit organization “Proyecto Agro Eco Turístico del Barrio Río Hondo Inc.” (Estampas), acquired 67.9 acres of land in September 2018 for the establishment of a community forest. This forest is the first one of its kind in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean to receive funds from the Community Forest and Open Space Program through State and Private Forestry.



- This project is a result of community and local government efforts to acquire, manage and conserve the forest for long-term basis. It is the only large block of continuous forest in the area and it's surrounded by sub-urban communities, rural subdivisions, and several housing projects. The property is 90% forested and consists of post- abandonment secondary forest as a result of abandonment of previous agricultural uses. The community forest will serve the Río Hondo Community in Mayaguez and the rest of the island.



Multiple benefits

- After the establishment of the project, the multiple community, economic, environmental, social and recreational benefits will be maximized. The community around is densely populated and there are ongoing housing development projects. The project can save the land from threats related to non-forest uses. With the project, the development of a one-of-a kind agro-ecotourism project will take place to promote eco-friendly practices and sustainable forest management to the general public. Business opportunities will also be created through the possibilities of hosting conferences, guided tours and bird watching, among others.

- Magaly Figueroa, Community Forest Program Manager at the International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF) in Puerto Rico, helped with technical assistance and funds approved by the National Program. IITF has been a crucial part of this project; monitoring activities, identifying key personnel, and providing essential information, among other duties.

- The University of Puerto Rico in Mayagüez has numerous ongoing research projects within the forest. In it, there are valuable hydrological sources that nourish the forests and mangroves of the western and southern area of Puerto Rico. The community competed with many other projects at a national level, and it was precisely this hydrological value that made its proposal much more valuable.

