



BIO

Andrés Rúa González

Date of Birth: 2nd February 1974

Citizenship: Puerto Rican, USA

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Andrés was born in Guayama, Puerto Rico in 1974, and grew up in Marin Bajo, Patillas. Andrés is a talented composer and musician who studied Comparative Literature and Pre-law at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras. He is a Spanish and English speaker.

Since 2005, Andrés has been living at Las Casas de la Selva, and has been passionately learning the hands-on business of sustainable forestry management. He has partaken in all aspects of getting the wood to the market, beginning with tree identification and selection for harvest. He is a qualified chainsaw operator, trained in directional felling by US forest-fire fighters, and is in charge of tree felling, hauling and milling wood. Along with GPS mapping, and enhancing the cyber-world, web, and technical developments at the project, he is a proficient tractor driver, skilled electrician, photographer, and organic gardener. As a musician and composer Andres has recently published his work, now available on Spotify.

Andrés has involved volunteers at Las Casas de la Selva in many community and local environmental projects, from beach and river clean-ups, to community construction work, and trash and recycling initiatives. Andrés organized a complex event in 2004, to clean-up the reservoir of Lake Patillas, calling hundreds of local people to action.

Andrés has worked with Earthwatch Expeditions as a Lead field assistant, since 2005, and has worked with many volunteer youth groups including Globalworks Expeditions to Puerto Rico, leading construction, road maintenance, and trail work at Las Casas de la Selva. He has participated in many seminars and talks to schools, universities, and other organizations all over the island, about the forestry work ongoing at Las Casas de la Selva, and other issues dealing with natural resources.

With support from the USDA Forest Service and the Puerto Rican Department of Natural Resources, Andrés has conducted a Forest Products Assessment over several years. This project enabled visits to all the saw-mill owners on the island, interviews with dozens of artisans who work with forest products, as well as large and small scale wood and product dealers. The aim was to investigate use of forest products in Puerto Rico; where the wood is coming from; what types of wood; who are the buyers; and what other forest products are in demand and use.

POSITIONS

2015 - Present: Founder and CEO Puerto Rico Hardwoods Inc.

2015 - Present: Fellow of The Institute of Ecotechnics, (U.S.A. Not-for-profit, U.K. Educational Charity).

2013 - Present: Co-founder & Director CADA, (Council for the Development of Agro-forestry)

2007 - Present: Secretary, Tropic Ventures Education & Research Foundation, Patillas, Puerto Rico

2014: Organized The Second Symposium and Exhibition of Forest Products December. International Institute of Tropical Forestry.

2013: Co-Founded CADA, Council for the Development of Agro-forestry. Open membership includes individuals from universities and the private sector, members of Government agencies, and many other institutions, all brought together with an over-arching interest in the development of policies pertaining to the sustainable and intelligent use of Puerto Rico's valuable & unique natural resources.

April 2013: Organized a conference at the International Institute of Tropical Forestry attended by key players in the DRNA, the USDA, University of PR, and IITF. The group formally became CADA (*Consejo Asesor para el Desarrollo Agro-Forestal*) at the meeting at Cayey University on 6th May 2013.

2012: Organized The First Forest Products Assessment Symposium, April. Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources.

2012: Organized Several key discussions, conferences and gatherings, including well-attended **symposiums** at the DNER, and the International Institute of Tropical Forestry, along with a *hands-on, in-the-field* timber workshop at Tropic Ventures.

2011: Created the NUESTRA MADERA website to document and archive the findings on products, artisans, fairs, woodworkers, sawmills after assessing the wood and non-wood forest products on the island. The Project was made with the help of a grant awarded by the PR Department of Natural Resources.

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