



United States
Department of
Agriculture
Forest Service



International Institute of Tropical Forestry

2012 Accomplishment Report



Sabana Field Research Station

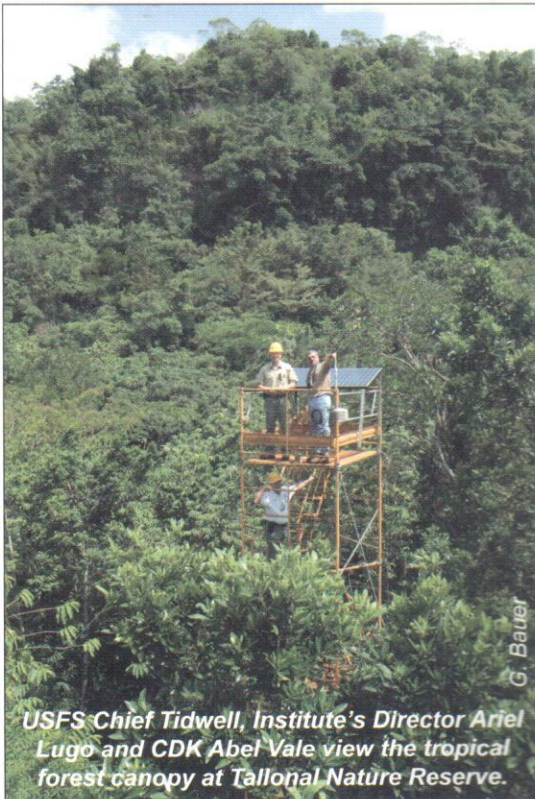
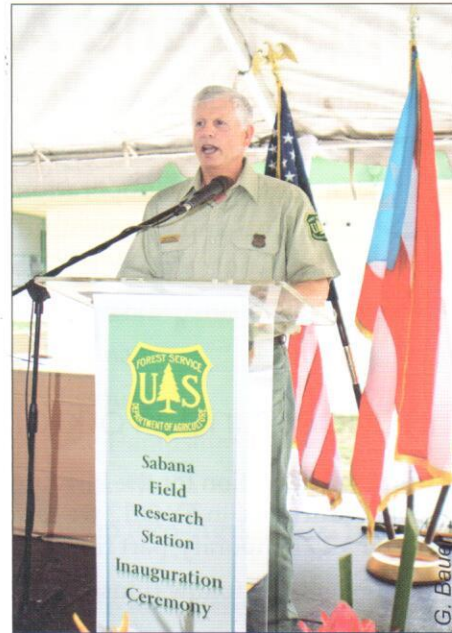
On July 16, 2012, with the help of Chief Tidwell, we celebrated the inauguration ceremony of the newly remodeled Sabana Field Research Station.

The Sabana Field Research Station has a rich history; it was originally established by the Forest Service in 1938 with the objective of maintaining security and surveillance of all surrounding forest areas. Later, between the 1970s and the 1980s, the station was a saw mill, and finally, after 1989, the station was fully dedicated to research activities.

The Sabana Field Research Station has all the amenities to accommodate individuals and groups interested in completing scientific work in the surrounding or nearby areas located within the Luquillo Experimental Forest, like the Sabana River and Bisley (experimental watersheds).

The station is located on PR Road 988 km 6.5 in the Sabana neighborhood in the town of Luquillo and offers multiple facilities:

- Dormitory building with restrooms, showers, and kitchen; and
- A multipurpose building with a mycology laboratory, oven room, sample preparation room, laundry room, and storage areas.



A Visit From the Chief

With State and Private Forestry Partners at El Tallonal

Strong partnerships are the foundation of State and Private Forestry programs. U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell spent a day with the Institute's director, State and Private Forestry staff and, several partners at El Tallonal, a biological reserve in Arecibo administered by the Citizens for the Karst (CDK).

Each person had an opportunity to talk with the Chief and with the other guests, to share the goals and accomplishments of their respective programs and ongoing projects. The day's activities provided the Chief with a sample of the great diversity of State and Private Forestry programs and projects ranging from fire to forest production, urban forestry, community gardens, outdoor classrooms, and forest health.

Partners represented at Tallonal included the following.

- Tropic Ventures (Thrity "3t" Vakil and Andrés Rúa).
- Puerto Rico Fire Department (Sgt. Joel Figueroa).
- University of Puerto Rico–Mayagüez Agricultural Extension Service (Dr. Hipólito O'Farril).
- University of Puerto Rico–Río Piedras, Center for Urban, Community, and Business Action (Germán Ramos).
- Juan Ponce de León High School in Florida (Elliot López).
- San Patricio Urban Forest (FSB) (Víctor Hernández).
- Puerto Rico Conservation Trust (Juan Rodríguez).
- Citizens for the Karst, Inc. (Abel Vale).

5 were lost to development. This means there is an opportunity to designate new champions for *Spathodea campanulata*, *Thrinax morrisii*, *Cassia javanica*, *Ficus sintonissi*, *Samanea saman*, *Albizia lebbbeck*, and *Cordia collococca*. Already two new species of trees have tree nominations pending, a sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) and groucho (*Quarariba turbinata*).

Several activities have been held to promote the program. The Conservation Trust provided information and hosted a tree-measuring exercise at their Annual Conservation and Reforestation Fair held at Parque Luis Munoz Rivera in April. More than 3

dozen fairgoers took the tree-measuring challenge. A presentation to the college environmental association Capítulo Estudiantil Sociedad Ambiente Marino at the University of Puerto Rico yielded a number of volunteers who helped locate and measure trees in the Metro Central Región. Over time we hope more communities will choose to participate and people will nominate trees from their own neighborhoods and local forests.

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Communities, Conservation, and Public Land

The organization Ciudadanos de Karso (Citizens of the Karst) received a grant from the Forest Stewardship Program to host a series of activities to share information about sustainable tourism, conservation initiatives, and economic development opportunities. The first of two workshops—held on May 17, 2012 and titled El Yunque and its Periphery: Uses and Preservation of Land in the Northeast Region of Puerto Rico—targeted architects, engineers, and planners in Puerto Rico. The workshop provided an overview of the development impacts and conservation initiatives in northeastern Puerto Rico and the Northeastern Ecological Corridor. Hitesh Mehta, an international expert on sustainable tourism, ecotourism, and eco-hotel design, offered a lecture and described the different alternatives that are suitable for the area. An interdisciplinary panel of renowned experts discussed the integration of conservation and development of the northeastern region of Puerto Rico. The workshop was co-sponsored by the College of Architects and Landscape Architects of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico Conservation Trust, Puerto Rico Society of Planning, Interamerican University, Puerto Rico Conservation Foundation, and El Yunque National Forest. The event was also supported by private entities such as El Nuevo Día, one of the major newspapers in Puerto Rico, and Yaucono, a local coffee-producing company.

Ciudadanos del Karso (CDK) hosted a second workshop titled Eco-hotels Planning and Management on May 18, 2012. The workshop was co-sponsored by

the College of Architects and Landscape Architects of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico Conservation Trust, Puerto Rico Society of Planning, and El Yunque National Forest. This workshop also was led by Hitesh Mehta, author of *Authentic Ecolodges*, a reference book on the subject of eco-hotel planning, design, and operation. Dr. Mehta shared various experiences he has had over the course of his career and shared key considerations in the development of successful eco-hotels and the elements that must be taken into consideration during operations. A closing presentation took attendees on a virtual tour to the most successful projects Dr. Mehta has developed throughout the world.

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Forest Products in Puerto Rico?

Tropic Ventures, a Patillas, PR, non-profit entity and landowner participant of the Forest Stewardship Program, teamed with the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources and the Institute to develop a forest products assessment for Puerto Rico. The assessment, coordinated by Adrés Rúa from Tropic Ventures, provides information on markets and types of wood use in Puerto Rico. This includes information

on timber supply sources, types of wood used, buyers, and the source of demand for forest products.

Rúa developed a list of sawmills that are operating in Puerto Rico (Table 6) and created a register of those facilities for artisans and local wood consumers. He visited sawmills and spoke with wood dealers and forest landowners to gather information of the kinds of services and the types of wood that are typical in

Puerto Rico. He also interviewed local artisans to identify their needs in terms of types of forest products they work with, the size specifications of wood, and the type of non-timber forest products, such as seeds, that were being sold.

On April 11, 2012, Tropic Venture and the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources hosted a symposium, *La Madera y Otros Productos Forestales de Puerto Rico* (Wood and Other Forest Products in Puerto Rico). The targeted audience was the general public, landowners, artisans, woodworkers, government agencies, students, and non-profit organizations. More than 80 people attended the event, which featured presentations on topics that exemplify all aspects related to wood and non-timber forest products in Puerto Rico, including a description of the types of wood that are available in Puerto Rico, where they are available, and their uses. As an alternative to those who are interested in developing businesses related to non-timber forest products, there was a presentation on ethnobotany. The forum also provided information to landowners on the potential of tree plantations in Puerto Rico, the potential for a sustainable small-scale industry, and the opportunities available for support through Federal and State programs.

Thirly ("3t") Vakil shared Tropic Ventures' experiences in land management and gave an overview of the Sustainable Forestry and Rainforest Enrichment Project that was established in 1983. The University of Puerto Rico presented a proposal for the establishment of a forestry curriculum to prepare the forestry professionals of the future and provide educational opportunities to our partners. At the end of the symposium Tropic Ventures presented a report of the partial results of the assessment. The assessment

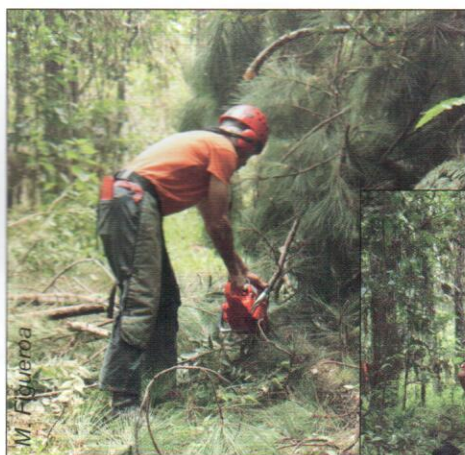
will be available to our partners on the Web site, *Las Maderas de Puerto Rico* (<http://www.nuestramadera.org/>).

The group that attended the symposium was highly motivated and expressed interest in getting more information on the wood harvesting and processing processes. By popular demand, on August 8, Tropic Ventures hosted a workshop that included demonstrations on how to use the chainsaw, safety equipment, safe working practices, tree removal, and sawmill operation. The symposium was dedicated to Peter Weaver, a retired Institute Scientist, and Carlos Domínguez, also retired from the Institute. A demonstration of tree harvest and milling operations was held at Tropic Ventures in Patillas, PR.

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Table 6. Active sawmills in Puerto Rico (visited by April 2012).

Name	Location
Aserradero Nando Otero	Ciales
La Cialeña	Ciales
Taller Zayas	Naranjito
Aserradero Bayaney	Hatillo
Taller Alvarado	Orocovis
Taller Miraflores	Patillas
Aserradero Toño Rivera	Morovis
Vicente Valentín	Vega Baja
Aserradero Luis Hidalgo	Camuy
Aserradero Casa Vieja	Lares



Bucking tree limbs.



Skidding logs out of the woods.



Sawmill demonstration