



IMPACT REPORT 2023

FUNDACIÓN
Amigos
de
El Yunque

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A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear *Amigos de El Yunque*,

As the Executive Director of *Amigos de El Yunque* Inc., I am proud to present our impact report for 2023. Since our establishment in 2009, we have dedicated ourselves to supporting and enhancing the mission of the USDA Forest Service in Puerto Rico, focusing on El Yunque National Forest.

With a mission to develop initiatives that promote conservation, education, and responsible recreation in the El Yunque region, we are driven by a vision to engage communities and partners in the stewardship of El Yunque National Forest, a resource of immense social and ecological value. This year has been marked by several significant milestones for *Amigos de El Yunque*:

Voluntary Donation Program:

We successfully implemented a voluntary donation program in various hotels across Puerto Rico, which will play a crucial role in funding our conservation efforts. Now tourism visitors can become stewards in the conservation of our National Forest.

Educational and Cultural Events:

In the past year, we proudly hosted over 80 educational and cultural events at El Portal, demonstrating our steadfast commitment to engaging the community in both environmental stewardship and cultural enrichment. Looking ahead, we are excited to further expand these offerings, increasing the variety and involvement of all disciplines in the arts and culture. This expansion is not just about quantity but also about enriching the quality of our programs, with the goal of benefiting both the local community and our visitors.

Our vision is to create a vibrant hub of learning and cultural exchange that resonates with and inspires everyone who joins us at El Portal.

Mellon Foundation Partnership:

A Cornerstone for ArteYunque's Growth: We are thrilled to announce that our ArteYunque program has garnered crucial financial and technical support from the Mellon Foundation. This partnership is a testament to the value and potential of ArteYunque. With the Mellon Foundation's backing, we are poised to not only continue but also significantly expand our exhibits and residency programs.

As we look to the future, our commitment to protecting El Yunque National Forest for future generations remains unwavering. We are dedicated to increasing environmental awareness and fostering a love for this natural treasure of global significance.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to you, our partners and supporters, for your continued trust and collaboration. Your involvement is crucial to the success of our mission, and together, we are making a lasting positive impact on Puerto Rico's natural heritage.

Warm regards,




CARMEN N. PORTELA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



MISSION

Support the efforts of the Forest Service through the development of initiatives that promote conservation, education and responsible recreation in El Yunque region.

VISION

Friends of El Yunque Foundation fosters the interest of communities and partners in the pursuit of benefits for the invaluable social and ecological natural resources of El Yunque National Forest.

We are a robust organization that generates green jobs based on the success of the 3 pillars of our mission:

- Education
- Responsible Recreation
- Community Integration and Sustainability

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





OBJECTIVES

- Optimize the visitor's experience at El Portal de El Yunque through our cultural and educational programming.
- Facilitate the involvement of the community and the private sector in activities that promote the conservation of the Forest and its sustainability in the medium and long term.
- Create opportunities for capacity building and for the creation of green jobs through education and volunteerism in order to support the economic development of El Yunque region.
- To increase environmental awareness and foster responsible recreational practices in order to protect our national treasure for the enjoyment of future generations.



EDUCATION FOR CONSERVATION



YEAR IN REVIEW

Education for Conservation
Children and Youth Nature Immersion Experiences



Group of students participating in our Nature Immersion Experiences.

Children and Youth Nature Immersion Experiences

This year we continued and tailored our experience for elementary and middle school students. Through our children and youth nature immersion experiences, students can expand their knowledge about history, biodiversity and El Yunque National Forest conservation opportunities.



Students learning about El Yunque's biodiversity.



900+

Students participated in our interpretative nature immersion experience in El Yunque.

32

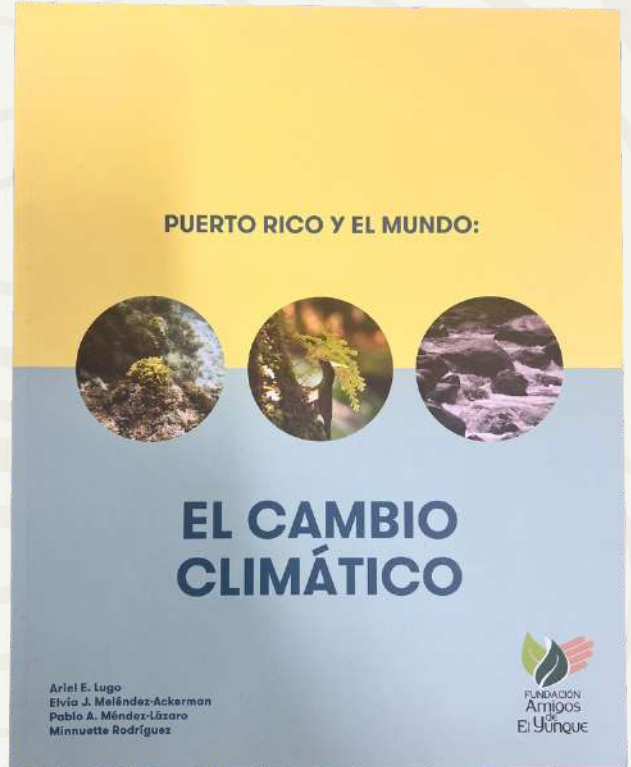
Children and Youth Nature Immersion Experiences provided by FADEY at El Yunque.



Teach the Teacher

Puerto Rico and the World: Climate Change, developed by Friends of El Yunque, Inc in conjunction with the USFS program Tropical Forest for Kids and PhD. Ariel E. Lugo, PhD. Elvia J. Meléndez-Ackerman, PhD. Pablo A. Méndez-Lázaro & professor Minnette Rodríguez. Is a comprehensive publication in Spanish that addresses global climate change trends and offers actionable knowledge and strategies for adaptation, mitigation, and resilience.

This publication was specifically designed for Puerto Rican classrooms. It aligns seamlessly with the goals outlined in Executive Order OE-2018-051 of the Government of Puerto Rico, which mandates the inclusion of climate change topics in school curricula. It is a document with useful and reliable information, which includes scientific data in the global and local context. Internationally, it complies with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030 Agenda.



“Puerto Rico y El Mundo: El Cambio Climático” book cover written by Ariel E. Lugo, Elvia J. Meléndez-Ackerman, Pablo A. Méndez-Lázaro and Minnette Rodríguez.





300+

participants (students, teachers and collaborators) impacted through our publication, "Puerto Rico and the World: Climate Change".



EL YUNQUE DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP



YEAR IN REVIEW

El Yunque Destination Stewardship
El Portal de El Yunque



El Portal de El Yunque, Río Grande

El Portal de El Yunque

El Portal de El Yunque is a place to explore, discover and connect. It is the most important visitor center at El Yunque since it opened its doors in 1996. It recently reopened in January 2022 and offers visitor information, exhibits, a store, a café and a theater.

It is currently co-managed by Fundación Amigos de El Yunque. At El Portal, we organize educational and cultural events for the community such as festivals, artisan workshops, conferences, live cultural performances and wellness activities.



Turban workshop as part of our cultural events.



12

Cultural activities provided for the community.





88
Local musicians performed as part of our cultural programming.



A brown frog with a prominent blue eye is perched on a mossy tree trunk. The background is dark with faint, concentric circular patterns. A large white number '300+' is displayed in a dark green circle in the upper right quadrant.

300+

*participants in our
educational and
interpretative night
activities at El Portal de El
Yunque.*



6
Recreational and wellness events hosted at El Portal.

70+

Artisans who participated in our activities.





455

Participants in our educational events at El Portal de El Yunque.





60+

*Participants who
volunteered in our
activities.*

YEAR IN REVIEW

El Yunque Destination Stewardship
ArteYUNQUE Program

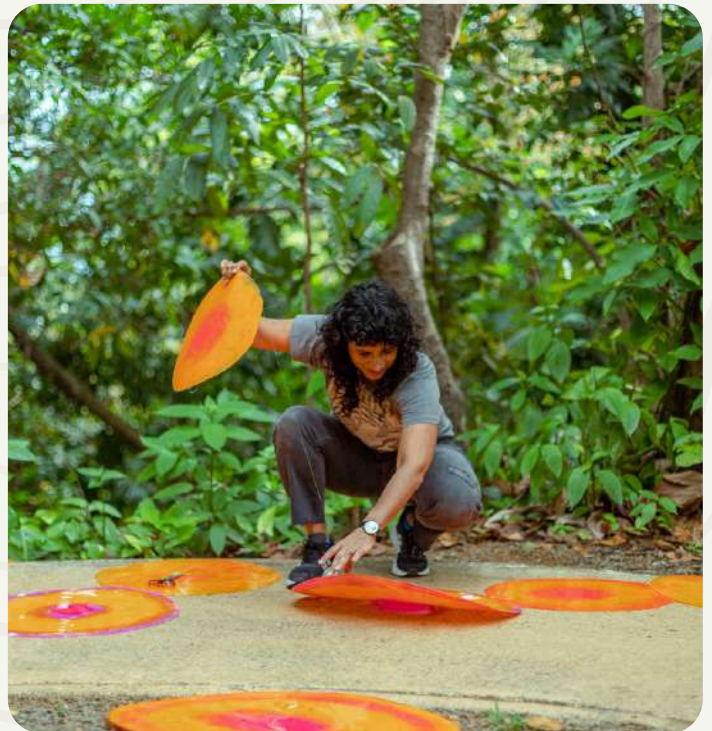


Memoriam (2023) by Jaime & Javier Suárez. Photography Credit: Adriana Vázquez Acevedo

ArteYUNQUE Program

ArteYUNQUE presents the exhibition, NATURA, which consists of eight installations created by Puerto Rican artists. These works are located in the recently inaugurated *Vereda de Ciencia y Conservación*, located at the El Portal Visitor Center in El Yunque.

NATURA is a poetic exploration at the intersection of art, nature and El Yunque. The works address themes that include the political dimensions of landscape, biodiversity, soil, traditions, and ancestral connections to El Yunque.



El Portal del Yunque: Presencia y Liquen (2023) by Ivelisse Jiménez. Photography Credit: Adriana Vázquez Acevedo

This exhibition is possible thanks to the sponsorship of:

US Forest Service El Yunque National Forest, Fundación Segarra Boerman, Nachman & Guillemard PSC, Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, Kehle Family, Carlos Cabrero (Tres Palmas), Casillas, Santiago & Torres Law, Rachel Templeton, Familia Elías-Sierra, GIB Development, PR3 Investment, Hiram Pérez Arrillaga, Jerry Szilagy, Beatriz Martí Soler, HACEDORMAKER_Arquitectos, Diego, Sebastián y Gastón Vázquez-Guillemard, The ArtWalk Puerto Rico. This project is curated by Georgina Vega Porrata/ theartwalkpr.



ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY



YEAR IN REVIEW

Economic sustainability
Voluntary Donation Program



Voluntary Donation Program

We celebrate the signing of the agreement between *Wyndham Grand Rio Mar Rainforest Beach & Golf Resort* and *Wyndham Palmas Beach Golf Boutique Report* and *Fundación Amigos de El Yunque* where from November 1, 2023, guests staying at their properties will be able to donate \$1 per night to support the conservation efforts of our *El Yunque National Forest*.

This initiative is a historic one in Puerto Rico and shows how the hospitality industry and the conservation sector can collaborate in favor of the protection of our natural resources. We look forward to expanding this program in additional hotels, *Bed & Breakfasts* and industries in the island.



"Pact for the protection of El Yunque", article written by Adriana Tirado Díaz published in *El Nuevo Día* newspaper.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Economic sustainability
Venue Management

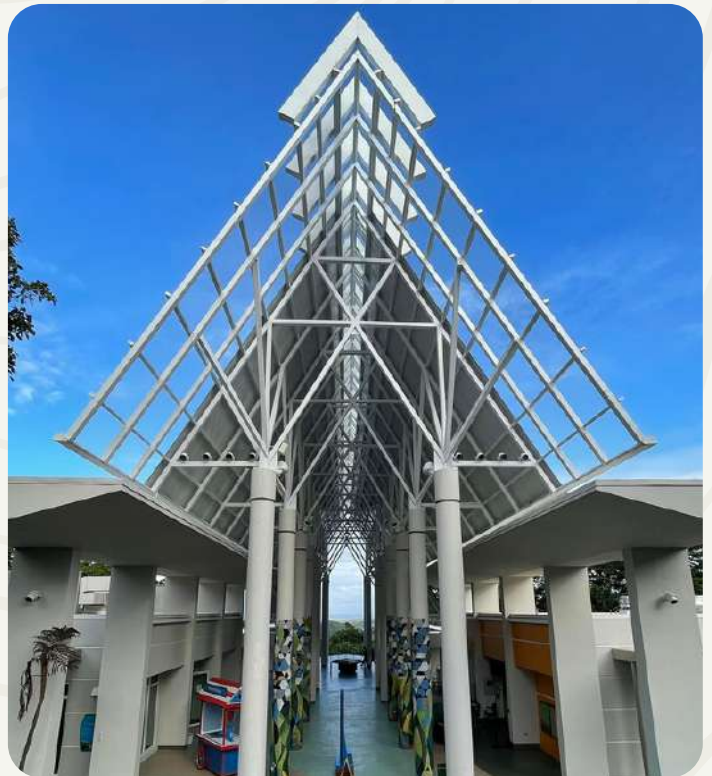


Private event setting at El Pabellón de Conexiones, located in El Portal de El Yunque.

Venue Spaces

By booking El Portal you will not only enjoy this beautiful venue surrounded by nature, but you are also contributing to the sustainability of the educational programs of the Amigos de El Yunque Foundation.

All proceeds from events held at El Portal are used for environmental conservation programs in support of the U.S. Forest Service - El Yunque National Forest. It is also one of the most eco-efficient architectural structures in the country. El Portal commercial events are managed in part by the support of our partner *7.29 Event Planning & Venue Management*.



Celebrate your event in El Portal de El Yunque.

MEET OUR TEAM



CARMEN N. PORTELA MARTÍNEZ
Executive Director



NANCY MERLO HERNÁNDEZ
Partnerships and Community
Engagement Director



YARITZA BOBONIS VÁZQUEZ
Programs and Events
Coordinator



CRISTINA GONZÁLEZ RODRÍGUEZ
Marketing and Events
Coordinator



MARÍA DEL C. MATOS TORRES
Artesanos Program
Coordinator & Events Support

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Board Member

KATALINA PUIG
Board Member

KEENAN ADAMS
Ex-officio



A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COLLABORATORS!

Arte-Suelo-Ser, Inc.
Artesanos del Este
Asociación de Observación, Difusión
Astronómica y Ciencias del Espacio (AODACE)
Asociación Puertorriqueña de Interpretación y
Educación (APIE)
Birds Caribbean
Birding Puerto Rico
Centro Ambiental Santa Ana
Club 4-H
Corazón Latino (CIRMA TEAM)
Comité de Desarrollo Barrio Cubuy, Inc
Coalición Pro Corredor Ecológico del Noreste
Conservation Opportunity
Departamento de Educación – Prog. de Ciencias

Eastern National
Ecological Conservation PR
Environment for the Americas (EFTA)
Fundación Alma de Bahía
Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín
Geoambiente del Caribe, Inc.
Grupo Bombaé
La Maraña
Love In Motion (CIRMA TEAM)
Luquillo LTER Schoolyard-UPR, Río Piedras
Luquillo Long-Term Ecological Research
Program
MarEducados
Metamorfosis Yoga
Moviarte
Movimiento Juvenil de Educación Ambiental
Municipio de Canóvanas
Municipio de Río Grande

Para La Naturaleza (CIRMA TEAM)
Pajareo Virtual
Peacework
Polinizadores Solidarios
Producir, Inc.
Red para el Desarrollo del Voluntariado de
Sagrado Corazón
RCE Puerto Rico-Red de Educación para el
Desarrollo Sostenible (REDeS)
Scuba Dogs Society
Servicio de Extensión Agrícola
Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña (SOPI)
Tropical Breeze Escapes
Tropical Responses to Altered Climate
Experiment (TRACE)

Organización Pro Ambiental y Sustentable (OPAS)
Puerto Rico Hardwoods
Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Gurabo
Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico -
Recinto Metropolitano
Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico -
Recinto Fajardo
Universidad de Puerto, Recinto Carolina
Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto Río Piedras
Universidad de Puerto Rico, Departamento de
Ciencias Ambientales – Río Piedras
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service - El Yunque National Forest
US Forest Service - International Institute of
Tropical Forestry (IITF)
Vitrina Solidaria (CIRMA TEAM)
Zenderos Forest Therapy



DONORS & FRIENDS OF EL YUNQUE

Banco Popular de Puerto Rico
Birds Caribbean
Casillas Santiago & Torres LLC
El Yunque Food Corp.
First Bank Puerto Rico
Fundación Segarra Boerman
Fund II Foundation
GIB Development LLC
Nachman & Guillemard Law
National Park Trust
Ocean Lab Brewing Co.
PR3 Investment, LLC
US Forest Service El Yunque National Forest
The Nature Conservancy
Tres Palmas Entreprises
Travel Unity



VOLUNTARY GUEST DONATION PROGRAM:

Wyndham Grand Rio Mar Rainforest Beach & Golf Resort
Wyndham Palmas Beach Golf Boutique Report

BECOME A RECURRENT FRIEND OF EL YUNQUE!



Assist in the conservation, education and responsible recreation of El Yunque National Forest region.

DONATE TODAY!

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www.amigosdelyunque.org



@fundacionamigosdelyunque



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