




CONSERVATION TRUST  
OF PUERTO RICO

# LEADING CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN PUERTO RICO

2012 ANNUAL REPORT





The Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico is a non-profit, non-governmental organization devoted to protecting lands and ecosystems for the benefit of people and nature for generations to come. Since its founding in 1970, the Trust has protected over 24,000 acres of land (over 1% of the islands' territory) and has rescued and restored important historical landmarks throughout the islands. As part of its mission, the Conservation Trust engages over 75,000 participants every year through diverse nature immersion activities, educational programs and active conservation efforts, promoting individual actions that protect and preserve the islands' remarkable natural wealth. The Trust also operates a tree nursery program to produce, distribute and plant Puerto Rico's native species to help conserve biodiversity in our islands.

The sole beneficiaries of the Conservation Trust are the people of Puerto Rico.

**Our Mission:** To secure functional and healthy ecological systems for the islands of Puerto Rico and to inspire its people to be stewards of nature so that we may together reach our shared social, economic and quality-of-life goals.

**Our Vision:** We can only achieve our full potential –both individually and collectively – if we can sustain the ecosystem services of the islands of Puerto Rico and respect all forms of life with which we share our natural environment.

Gender:  
*Tricholoma* sp.



# CONSERVATION MATTERS

## A pink forest preserved

For over thirty years they've looked after this land they named "La Robleda", reveling every day in its rosy forests of trumpet trees, the "roble nativo" (*Tabebuia heterophylla*). But the encroaching city made them fear for their beloved land's future, so they donated all 255 acres in the mountains of Cayey —valued at \$1.5 million— to the Conservation Trust, ensuring it will continue to awe visitors for generations to come.

*"When in bloom, they display color variations ranging from nearly white to almost purple, which last for weeks. So my question is: how is it that people have not noticed this? How can you walk through a place like this and simply not look? It's about feeling something, about your entire surroundings compelling you to react. So, if this is so beautiful, and I'm enjoying it so much, will it be there next year? Will those trees be there? That has always been our concern. So we said, let's take La Robleda to the Conservation Trust... Because we want to make sure that this becomes part of Puerto Rico's patrimony once Natalio and I are gone. This must be here forever. Forever."*

Rafael Maldonado Figueroa,  
La Robleda, Cayey

White Cedar  
*Tabebuia heterophylla*





## A landmark in conservation: reintroducing the Puerto Rican crested toad

It takes a lot to turn a place into a home to welcome a newborn. For the Trust, it took a year-and-a-half of innovative work by staff, friends at Fish & Wildlife Service, the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, the local Department of Natural and Environmental Resources and dedicated volunteers. Like proud parents they prepared a site at Río Encantado with reforestation projects and monthly monitoring of competitors and predators of the Puerto Rican crested toad (*Peltophryne lemur*), or Sapo Concho. The ideal habitat was ready by the summer, and in June 2012, 800 crested toad tadpoles were released into artificial breeding ponds in the Río Encantado site. By December, the number released had soared to 23,000 in several of our reserves.

The successful release marks a historic moment for conservation, reintroducing this critically endangered species at multiple sites. And the work goes on: the Trust continues to monitor predators and competitors of the species while optimizing its data collection methods.

*“When I heard that the Trust had a project to manage and preserve the [crested toad] species, I was eager to participate. We are doing our part to improve the chances for this threatened species, which may be in greater peril than the Puerto Rican parrot. Some might say that we’re being idealistic, that we will not see the results in our lifetime. But the important thing is that we are paving the way for future generations. Even though I may not live to see the resurgence of the crested toad, I will have contributed to its future and to the future of those who will rejoice in seeing the crested toad moving freely in its natural environment.”*

Manuel Rodríguez Santiago, Volunteer

Puerto Rican crested toad tadpoles  
*Peltophryne lemur*





## Sharing the knowledge

Last September we offered an educational workshop at the Land Trust Alliance's Rally on our experience with the successful Map of Life and Citizen Science initiatives. The well-received workshop, "Mapping Life: Citizen Science for Strategic Conservation and Increased Local Stewardship", will help other land trusts across the United States integrate scientists and citizens to advance research for conservation, improve management decisions and increase community stewardship.





## Mapping Life

There is more to life than what we see at first glance. A lot more. So to find out, the Trust is creating a Map of Life encompassing all ecosystems around the island, involving volunteers in ground truthing activities regarding species distribution and land use. Steering the volunteers is a new crop of leaders, which, thanks to a donation from Pfizer, has allowed us to significantly expand data collection points. Our purpose? To gather the information necessary to transform how we treat our vital resources and achieve a true balance between conservation, urban development and agriculture.

*"I am proud to be part of the Trust's Map of Life project as a Volunteer Leader, where I can help others experience what I now know: that this Hacienda doesn't just speak; it has life and we are all a part of it. I am learning the language of nature every time I participate in the Trust's different projects. Now I understand the language of nature, and we communicate better."*

Elizabeth Lozada Hildebrando

PROMOTING  
STEWARDS  
OF NATURE





## Hands-on Experiences: The Active Participation Program

Planting trees to restore a river bank. Listening in the field for predators of the endangered crested toad. Taking different measurements along Puerto Rico's coasts... Experiences like these allow people to connect with nature in a unique and personal way. That is why the Trust has established a new Active Participation Program so that more and more of our visitors may live the wonder of nature. By expanding our offerings and establishing partnerships with other organizations such as the Scuba Dogs Society, we deliver a permanent impact on how people relate to nature.

*"I have been a volunteer along with my family in various Trust activities. My children have been in the [Nature Immersion] camps at both Cabezas de San Juan and Hacienda Buena Vista. We have participated in tree plantings, the Earth Day fair at Parque Central and at Luis Muñoz Rivera Park, and we've also been citizen scientists, so I know all about getting my hands dirty, about how everyone at the Trust works and how helpful you can be. Congratulations to all the staff for making it possible for our future generations to fall in love with nature".*

Lizzette Vélez, Active Participant





## A new crop of leaders for nature

Nurturing a new generation of nature leaders is one of the outstanding results of the Trust's Nature Immersion Program, also referred to as our Summer Camp. The transformative experience helps youths connect with nature in a profound way. It also gives them a sense of purpose, building leadership skills and helping to forge their individual character. Over 100 kids and youths ages 9 to 18 experienced a weeklong immersion in nature while attending one of seven different camp workshops during the summer of 2012.

*"Participating in the camp made me want to achieve more, it made me want to be more adventurous. This is the opportunity that the Conservation Trust gives us: the chance to develop as leaders. But the work does not stop when the camp ends. Being a leader is a way of life, a challenge to grow and to help transform others."*

Andrea Báez, age 15, youth leader





RAISING  
AWARENESS

## Bearing Fruit: The Biocomiso School Tree Nursery Program

How to convey the urgency of conservation to a new generation growing up in a world dominated by gadgets and technology? With help from the Trust over 300 young students are taking conservation into their own hands. The Biocomiso School Tree Nursery Program currently impacts 344 students in eight schools in Barranquitas, Aibonito, Ceiba, Juana Díaz, Manatí and San Juan.

By planting native and endemic trees, students learn the importance of reforestation and the role of native species in enhancing wildlife habitat. Besides participating in reforestation activities, the students have added garden vegetables and herbs to their nurseries' production, thus supplying other school programs –such as baking and marketing classes –and the community at large. Their enthusiasm for the nursery has spilled over into other conservation activities, with students like José Miguel, a tenth-grader at Albert Einstein school in San Juan, participating in several Map of Life activities.

*“The nursery has had a positive imprint on the students. They have shown a lot of interest, motivation, ability and responsibility for the Biocomiso project. Students have developed skills such as structure and organization in the way they plant and care for their trees. Our students show their love for and knowledge about their crops, with the nursery also helping to increase the students' self-esteem, as they feel useful performing the required activities to maintain a tree nursery. I gain such satisfaction engaging these students in environmental conservation! This is one step toward securing a better quality of life for all Barranquiteños.”*

Marta Molina, Biocomiso teacher  
Escuela Superior Luis Muñoz Marín, Barranquitas






## Bridging the waters

Where can you learn about the water cycle, measure trees, learn about conservation easements, shop in a farmer's market and get first hand information from Puerto Rico's top conservation organizations in just one day? At the Trust's Conservation and Reforestation Fair. Held at centrally located Luis Muñoz Rivera Park in San Juan, the 2012 fair saw over 3,800 registered participants and 109 volunteers. By early afternoon, all 5,000 free native trees had already been handed out. This year's event underscored the urgent need to protect and properly manage our freshwater sources, and featured the participation of seven leading conservation organizations in Puerto Rico with which the Trust has had long-time collaboration: Sociedad Ornitológica (SOPI), Scuba Dogs Society, Proyecto Enlace del Caño Martín Peña, Comité Yabucoños Pro-Calidad de Vida, Comité Pro Desarrollo de Maunabo Inc., Excursiones Eco, Inc., San Juan ULTRA, and Organización Madre Tierra Atabey de Guayanilla.





## Unforgettable experiences

A candlelight dinner under a canopy of trees in the middle of the forest. Kayaking a world-renowned bioluminescent lagoon. Admiring bats inside a cave... Creating intense and personal nature immersion experiences is what sets the Trust's EcoDetour program apart. The innovative initiative provides life-changing educational experiences to promote a profound understanding of Puerto Rico's natural resources while challenging and inspiring participants to contribute and help the Trust in furthering its mission. Working its magic on land trust experts, journalists and communication specialists, green building designers, and even European royalty, participants universally praise the EcoDetour's precise coordination, excellent service and visionary approach to nature awareness.

*"This was the finest conservation adventure I have ever experienced: a sunset dinner on the beach, trudging through the mangrove forest, hiking the soaring bluffs of Las Cabezas. You introduced us to the best that Puerto Rico has to offer. I know that my staff, board members and National Council members all came home impressed and inspired by what you have done at the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico. I was especially impressed by the level of commitment that you have to engaging people with the natural and historic resources of Puerto Rico."*

Rand Wentworth, President,  
Land Trust Alliance





HIGH  
STANDARDS

## Taking interpretation to new levels

More than just a tour, our focus on nature interpretation inspires visitors to establish lifelong connections with their surroundings, going on to participate in Citizen Science projects, Champion Tree counts and our Crested Toad efforts, among many others. To make sure its nature interpreters adhere to the highest standards of their profession, the Trust invested in certifying all of its nature interpreters through the National Association for Interpretation (NAI), even qualifying one of its own as a Certified Interpretive Trainer.

*I want to highlight the excellent work of Omar and everyone in the Conservation Trust; it goes beyond the mere completion of a workday. Omar Monzón is an excellent guide, a young man who conveys love and respect for his work. Thank you for giving us opportunities and experiences such as these, and thanks to Omar for faithfully embodying the mission and vision of the Conservation Trust."*

Prof. Mayra L. Rodríguez-Sierra  
and Darío Alvarado Rodríguez

*"The interpreter, Jean Manuel, literally dazzled this group of professional women with his intelligence, sensitivity, willingness to listen and be asked questions, and by always having an answer that was supported by strong and diverse knowledge on La Hacienda La Esperanza in the social and historical context in which the hacienda evolved."*

"Las vecinas en las marquesinas"  
Yamila Azize Vargas, Sonia Guerrero,  
Sylvia Rivera, Ineke Cunningham,  
Lolin Piñeiro, Panchita Vargas Azize





Black-necked Stilt  
*Himantopus mexicanus*

## Making our mark

February 2012 was a huge month for the Trust. After an extensive, external review of our governance, management and land protection practices and policies, the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico became one of only 158 conservation groups in the United States (out of 1,700) to receive the prestigious accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The coveted seal certifies that the Trust meets stringent national standards for excellence, upholds the public trust and ensures that conservation efforts are permanent.

Additionally, on February 15, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) admitted the Conservation Trust, the first organization in Puerto Rico to be accepted as a member of this prestigious global union. Attending its first World Congress in Korea during September, the Trust joined 10,000 participants and 5,000 conservation experts from 153 countries. Our participation allowed for much networking, especially with the Mesoamerican and the Caribbean delegations, learning about the history, politics and work of other members, and sharing our own achievements with a worldwide audience.

*“I am very proud to be a collaborator of the Trust. Obtaining the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Seal is no coincidence. I wrote an article recently about Puerto Rico’s lighthouses, and the Fajardo lighthouse is definitely the best preserved in all our islands.”*

Javier Hernández





## The Wildly Important

What happens behind the scenes is many times more important than what can be seen onstage. What you'll find behind the curtain at the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico is an impressive combination of good governance, highly qualified personnel and a powerful commitment to a far-reaching cause. The Trust places great importance in skill development of its employees and providing an efficient structure where all can excel as they endeavor to advance our mission.

For the first time in 2012, the Trust implemented a methodology usually used by high performance organizations: Franklin Covey's Wildly Important Goals. Establishing our overarching objectives and guiding all our employees to support key goals has transformed the organization. Now everyone is clear on what we're working for, know how to prioritize to achieve set goals, and freely make commitments for which they are accountable. It's just one of the elements behind what members of the Land Trust Alliance have called *"one of the most high performing land trusts in the country"*.





# DONORS

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Jamaican fruit bat  
*Artibeus jamaicensis*



# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

(\$ in thousands)  
For the year ended December 31, 2012,  
with comparative totals for 2011

## REVENUE SOURCES



Income from Notes and Preferred Securities			Income from Portfolio			Grants and other Income			Total		
2011	2012	↓	2011	2012	↑	2011	2012	↑	2011	2012	↑
4,259	4,173	-2%	3,046	5,636	85%	3,045	4,149	36%	10,349	13,958	35%

Increases in revenues are mainly due to the favorable changes in the financial market. Also, two significant land donations were received during 2012, totaling \$2.3 million. Programmatic funding for the citizen scientist program contributed to the increase by \$574 thousand.

## OPERATING EXPENSES



Finance & Development			Land Acquisition Support			Management and Support			Education, Science & Public Policy		
2011	2012	↓	2011	2012	↓	2011	2012	↓	2011	2012	↑
1,260	1,143	-9%	396	372	-6%	2,870	2,849	-1%	268	513	91%

Main increases in operating expenses occurred in structuring the Education, Science and Public Policy department and investments in the development of the digital presence for the Trust.

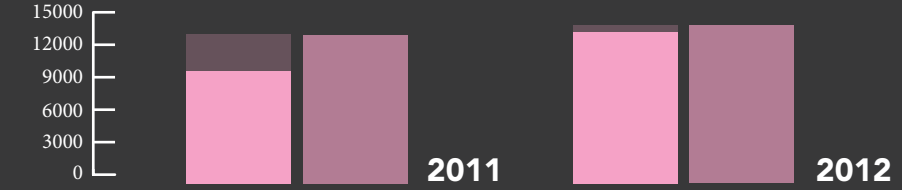
Outreach & Communications		
2011	2012	↑
808	1,140	41%

Natural Protected Areas		
2011	2012	↑
8,085	8,159	1%

Education, Science & Public Policy		
2011	2012	↑
268	513	91%

Total		
2011	2012	↑
13,687	14,176	4%

## ALLOCATION OF REVENUE SOURCES



Revenue			Expenditures			Excess Funds		
2011	2012	↑	2011	2012	↑	2011	2012	↑
10,349	13,958	35%	13,687	14,176	4%	(3,338)	(218)	93%

Allocation of funds before capital expenditures resulted in a deficit of \$218 thousand for the year ending December 31, 2012. The Trust is still recovering from the loss of \$2.1 million from the secured notes program related to the banking crisis. This amount was absorbed by our reserve fund.

## CAPITAL EXPENDITURES



Land Acquisition			Furniture & Equipment			Site Development & Improvements		
2011	2012	↓	2011	2012	↑	2011	2012	↑
1,698	1,686	-19%	171	609	256%	1,259	1,369	9%

Increase in capital expenditures is mainly the result of investments in systems infrastructure and land improvements from a wetland restoration in the North Region.

Total		
2011	2012	↑
3,128	3,664	17%

## TOTAL EXPENSES



Operating Expenses			Capital Expenditures			Total		
2011	2012	↑	2011	2012	↑	2011	2012	↑
13,687	14,176	4%	3,128	3,664	15%	16,128	17,840	6%



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