

**EL BOSQUE PLUVIAL**

**Pablo Cruz**  
**Forest Supervisor**  
**El Yunque National Forest**  
**HC-01, Box 13490**  
**Rio Grande, PR 00745-9625**

**Phone: 787 888 1810**  
**Fax: 787 888 5622**  
**Email: pcruz01@fs.fed.us**

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**“Noche de Artes y Musica” events at El Portal**

For the last two years Rolando Feria had a vision of doing music and arts events at the El Yunque National Forest's El Portal Rain Forest Center. He figure that “such a beautiful place could host the type of events, that would be attractive to the tourist trade as well as to the local population.” It took him a while to work out all the details and obtain the necessary permits from the Forest Service, but finally it was approved and begun, Feria's first event was presented at El Portal on Friday night March 2, 2007, with a second on Friday night March 29. A third event is planned for April 27. The first



**FOREST SPOTLIGHT** 



Click-clack, click-clack; the familiar staccato sound her heels make as she races through the halls of the Catalina Service Center on another mission is well known by all who work there.

The boundless energy and cheerful demeanor of Lucy Cruz, the Forest Supervisor's Executive Assistant are legendary in the El Yunque National Forest; “if you want to get a job done quickly and accurately, with a minimum of fuss; take it to Lucy” is a common belief among the forest's staff.

Lucy was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico; as a youngster she moved with her family to Passaic, New Jersey where she lived for 25 years, attending Passaic High School, graduating in 1972. Later she attended Drake Business School in Clifton, New Jersey where she completed secretarial and business courses.

Returning to Puerto Rico she worked for 13 years at the Navy Exchange at Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Ceiba, holding assignments as Accounts Payable Clerk, Assistant to the Food Service Office manager, and Personnel Assistant in the Personnel Office.

Lucy has been with the Forest Service at El Yunque for 16 years, beginning in the Special Uses Unit before promotion to her present position as Executive Assistant to Forest Supervisor Pablo Cruz.

Lucy lives in Ceiba; she has two daughters, Lisandra and Veronica, and three grandchildren; Kamalish Nicole, Louie Devon and Nathan Omar. She attends the Iglesia Bautista Hermanos Unidos church in Fajardo, where she sings in the choir and is a member of the church board. Lucy says “I enjoy working in the forest with the great staff we have on-board.” We're just thankful to have Lucy as a both a friend and as an extremely valuable asset to the El Yunque National Forest!

two events were very successful, both featured local artisans, local food and drinks. The first had an exciting Bomba y Plena cultural dance show, while the second featured world renowned Latin Jazz musician Charlie Sepulveda and his band :Turnaround.” Feria said “It was amazing, to hear that great music and be surrounded by the beauty of El Yunque with a full moon overhead; it was spectacular.” Feria will continue to present these exciting events on the last Friday of each month. **Come and join the fun!**



Volume II, Issue I

**Welcome!**

To **El Bosque Pluvial's**

Spring 2007 issue. As usual it is packed with interesting stories about the El Yunque National Forest, America's only tropical rainforest and its staff who work to conserve this vital resource.



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Spring, 2007,

**President Signs Bill Changing Name to EL YUNQUE NATIONAL FOREST**



Forest” by President Franklin Roosevelt.

However, Puerto Ricans have referred to the area as El Yunque verbally and in literature, maps and newspapers for many years, largely ignoring all of the “official” name changes, and the forest is currently universally known by that name.

In 2003, as the island celebrated El Yunque's 100th anniversary as a federal forest, the Chief of the US Forest Service asked the Forest Supervisor to “explore the possibility of changing the current forest name to one that better reflected the cultural values and sentiments of the local population.”

A bill requesting that the Caribbean NF name be changed to the El Yunque NF was subsequently submitted to the US Congress by Puerto Rico's Resident Comissioner Luis Fortuno.

The change to the El Yunque NF is in name only; the forest's size, administration, and mission will remain the same.

Forest Supervisor Pablo Cruz announced that President Bush on April 2, 2007 ordered the name of Puerto Rico's National Forest changed from the “Caribbean National Forest” to the “El Yunque National Forest, effective immediately.

The forest has been known by many names over its long history; the aboriginal Taino inhabitants called it “Yuke” meaning “White land,” alluding to the semi-permanent white clouds that cover the forest peaks; later Spanish colonizers called it “El Yunque” or “The Anvil,” probably in reference to the shape of one of the forest's

peaks. Still later, when the peaks were used as navigational landmarks for ships, the forest's mountain range was shown on maps as “Sierra de Luquillo” or “Luquillo Mountains.” In the 19th century, Spain's King Alphonso XII decreed the Sierra de Luquillo a forest reserve, one of the first in the western hemisphere. During the American period the forest's name changed three times; it was first named the “Luquillo Forest Reserve” in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt. This name was later changed to “Luquillo National Forest” with the advent of the US Forest Service in 1907. Still later, in 1935 the name was again changed to the “Caribbean National

## From the Forest Supervisor's Desk



Our winter and spring seasons are at an end. They have brought us both seasonal changes and challenges. The first of these challenges was several months of a severe lack of precipitation for both the island and the forest. We received half of our normal average rainfall during the months of January through April, posing a huge threat to our ecosystem. Another challenge we addressed was a small fire that consumed five acres of our national forest. A further challenge was created by the recent US Department of State regulations that require American citizens to possess U.S. Passports when entering and exiting neighboring Caribbean island nations, resulting in a dramatic

increase in our forest's visitation. Concurrently, we lost our Senior Community Service Employment Program. For the past 45 years, the SCSEP program had provided our forest with a sustained workforce of dedicated senior citizens. The loss of these great people who labored unceasingly on a host of activities in this program over the years is a significant one to our forest. To take up the slack, we are transitioning to a substitute workforce; we will rely more on the use of dedicated volunteers, augmented by work-release probationers from the Commonwealth penitentiary system. It has been a very complex and challenging problem for us to continue to sustain the high level of public service and ecosystem management for our beloved forest.

To conclude on a happier note, I would like to share our joy with you

on the forest's recent name change. This initiative was begun during our 2003 Centennial celebration, when former US Forest Service Chief Bosworth observed that since most local people referred to our forest as El Yunque, the forest name should be changed to reflect this sentiment. It took four years to achieve this mandate, but the hard work and persistence of our forest personnel paid off when, on April 2, this year President Bush changed the name of the Caribbean National Forest to the El Yunque National Forest by executive order. It was a great moment for us and for the Puerto Rican people.

Hasta pronto,

*Pablo*

## EL YUNQUE NF NAMED PARTNER OF THE YEAR BY GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT TEACHING PROGRAM



The El Yunque National Forest Customer Service Team's Conservation Education Staff was recently named "**Partner of the Year**" by the Global

Environmental Teaching Program of the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. The award was given in recognition of the group's "**Dedication to teacher professional development**" during teacher exchanges in 2004, 2005 and 2006. CE staff members spent a large amount of time with teachers so they were able to gain a greater understanding of El Yunque, the only tropical rainforest in the US Forest System. For most, it was their first experience with a tropical rainforest. One teacher wrote: "I very much enjoyed the interpretive hikes on nature trails

and was enthralled by the Conservation Education group's informative presentations on endangered species, native and migratory birds and tropical forest conservation; all were superb."

"This is a fine example of the El Yunque National Forest's training expertise and our ability to successfully outreach" said Forest Supervisor Pablo Cruz; "Our Conservation Education staff is truly world class!"

## Camp Santiago Project: Forest Experts Work Outside the Forest!



Since 1998 experts from the El Yunque National Forest have been helping the Puerto Rico Army National Guard with ecosystem management at Camp Santiago, an Army National Guard base near Salinas on Puerto Rico's south coast.

Members of the Forest Service's Camp Santiago project team have assisted the National Guard in implementing programs covering a diverse cross section of technical areas including both natural and cultural resources management, conservation

management, and the maintenance and upgrading of the Geographic Information System (GIS) database.

Specifically, this little-known Forest Service program includes a reforestation project that plants 5,000 seedlings per year, the management of two small nurseries, building an irrigation system for endemic and sensitive plant species, all integrated within Camp Santiago's vast acreage.

The Forest Service cultural resources staff (an archaeologist, three archaeology technicians and four archaeology aides) is implementing Camp Santiago's Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan. The team performs archaeological surveys, evaluates cultural sites, and sorts and catalogs recovered cultural materials.

A Forest Service GIS data specialist is helping Army Guard personnel to

install and upgrade their GIS system, working with databases for cultural resources, natural resources, training and range facilities.

Forest Service Field Operations Supervisor, Luis Rivera said he and his 10 person team find the Camp Santiago project "both satisfying and challenging." He continued "the work we do and the expertise we provide to the PRANG is diverse and multi-disciplined, but best of all, it's never boring."



## 17th Annual El Yunque NF Clean-up Day a Great Success



As in past years, the El Yunque National Forest's 17<sup>th</sup> annual Clean-up Day was a resounding success! Responding to this year's theme "**El Yunque is our forest, today, tomorrow and forever**" a record number of participants from surrounding municipalities came to El Yunque and collaborated with US Forest

Service staff and the non-profit group "Yo Limpio Puerto Rico" to ensure the event's outstanding success. On the big day, April 21<sup>st</sup>, over 800 volunteers registered at the forest's El Portal parking lot volunteering to clean the trash from El Yunque, their beloved rain forest. The volunteer workers collected and bagged over 4,400 pounds of trash during the morning's event.

The amount of trash collected was slightly less than last year; an encouraging indication that our forest visitors are disposing of their trash in waste containers rather than leaving it on the forest's roads, watercourses and trails!

In the morning while their parents worked, there were programs for children including an activity that taught the kids how to recycle bottles, cans and plastics into separate containers.

The Croatto family provided musical entertainment for the volunteer workers when they returned to El Portal around noon to hear the results of their labor.

"All in all, the event was a great success; it combined the satisfaction of a public service job well done, with the joy of meeting and working with new and old friends." said El Yunque National Forest Supervisor Pablo Cruz.