

Proyecto de Reforestación y Conservación de la cuenca del Río Espíritu Santo (The Project for Restoration and Conservation of Rio Espiritu Santo watershed), one of El Centro's programs, provides reforestation and technical assessment to landowners free of charge.

How does this benefits me?

I can participate in programs to reforest my property free of charge, with the compromise of maintaining the plantations.

The value of my property will increase if I use certain practices to reduce soil erosion. This improvement in soil quality can be used to plant fruit trees or vegetables that provide food.

A forested area is attractive to wildlife, improves the landscape and provides environmental services that are important for water quality.

I will have the opportunity to participate in natural resources conservation programs, groups or initiatives in my neighborhood. I can also team with other neighbors to join in one voice for the conservation of our community.

"The Earth is not an inheritance from our ancestors; but a loan from the future generations and we ought to give it back"

-Unknown Author



Centro para la Conservación
del Paisaje

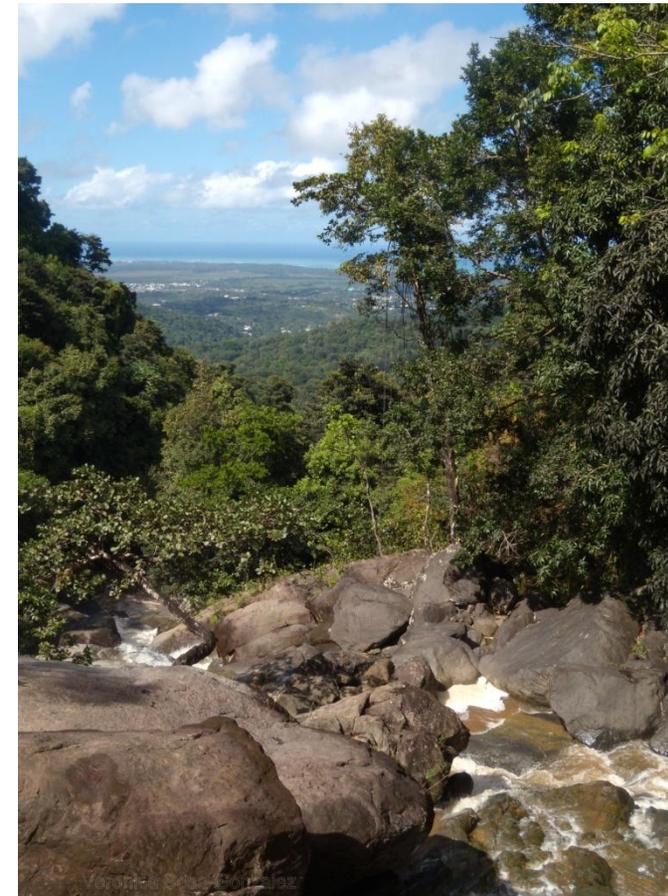
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Why reforest?

Information and answers

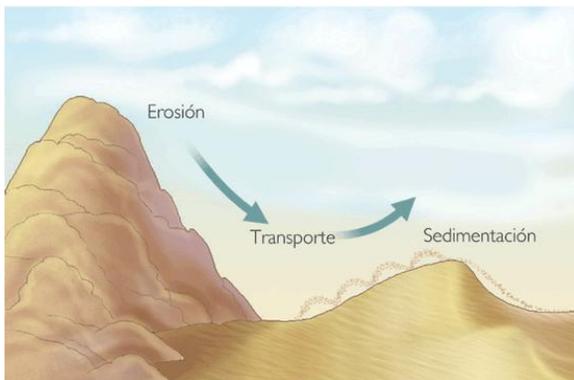


How is the forest related with water?

In the mountains and forests in high elevations rivers –that make their way to the ocean- are born, so forest conditions have a strong relationship with water quantity and quality.

A forested area, close to a river works as a sponge: they have a developed and complex root system that absorbs good amounts of water, reducing the quantity and velocity with which it reaches the river. This has an effect reducing floods and soil loss, as well as helping keep a continuous flow in the streams and rivers.

The vegetation strip found along the river sides is called riparian forest. This forests function as filters for the stream, since they can reduce or hold solid and liquid pollutants that are driven to streams after rain events. When there are landslides, or areas where with exposed soil, a rain event drives material to the rivers and streams. This process is called erosion of the soil; the fine material that is stripped from the soil is sediment; and once they reach a water body, it's called sedimentation.



Why is it important to reforest?

Reforestation consists of planting trees in areas where they were before, but have been cleared because of land use changes, construction or natural disasters. It is important to keep the natural controls that trees provide, to reduce floods and water bodies' sedimentation.

If the stream banks are vegetated, their temperature stays nice, helping aquatic life (fish, crustaceous, and plants) that depend on this natural systems to survive. If this vegetation is removed, the sun penetrates directly in the water and can change the temperature in some areas of the stream, having an adverse effect on water quality.

Our rivers carry some of the potable water that we need. If our streams and rivers are kept in good conditions, the costs of water management and purification can be reduced.

A river with clean and clear water can provide recreation and fun in the hot summer months.

What can I do?

The first and most important action is making a compromise with Puerto Rico and its natural resources, taking actions like these:

- Reduce or refrain from impacts to our water systems
- Keep and/or improve riparian forests
- Take part in conservation initiatives and efficient planning of the use of our natural resources.

Initial evaluation of your property:

If you have a stream or river in your property, you can do this evaluation of the area:

1. Does the river have forested banks?
Yes ___ No ___
2. The water that runs by the channel is clear?
Yes ___ No (it carries sediment) ___
3. Do animals, trash, or any other factor that can affect streamflow or water quality, enter the stream?
Yes ___ No ___
4. Does your property floods frequently?
Yes ___ No ___
5. These floods occur during hurricane and heavy rain seasons, or have they occurred with light rains?
Hurricanes and heavy rains ___
Light Rains ___
6. Do you or your family consume any edible product from your property?
We don't grow anything in my property ___
I plant fruits and vegetables but they don't grow ___
Fruits and vegetables grow, but we don't eat them ___

These simple questions can help you identify situations that can be resolved with technical support from agencies or organizations working towards the conservation of our forests and water bodies.

Centro para la Conservación del Paisaje (Center for the Landscape Conservation) is one of this organizations, that has the mission of protecting, restoring and improving the landscape while promoting a sustainable management of the natural resources.