



# 2023 Impact Report



Conservation  
Opportunity



# Message from the Founder

Having been born and raised in rural Puerto Rico, I have always had a deep appreciation for the island's natural biodiversity. Throughout my career, I realized that opportunities on the island to help individuals become more competitive in wildlife conservation and ecology were lacking. This realization led to the founding of Conservation Opportunity, Inc. in January 2021.

This 2023, we have celebrated numerous successes and collaborations that have propelled our organization forward. We partnered with 44 incredible organizations, including the Hispanic Access Foundation, Boy Scout Troop and Pack 334, Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, and many more. These partnerships have enabled us to expand our reach and impact significantly. Our organization operates on three pillars: professional growth, leadership development, and habitat enhancement. These pillars support the forming of our team, professionals, and the general public, as well as the conservation of our natural resources.

Puerto Rico is rich in natural beauty, offering diverse areas to explore and enjoy breathtaking views. To maintain this beauty and encourage continued interest in visiting, we must protect our resources. In 2023, we logged approximately 1,090 volunteer hours educating the public and creating outdoor experiences, published over 370 opportunities, and collected around 12,370 pounds of trash.

Our progress would not have been possible without the dedication and support of our volunteers, donors, and partner organizations. Your commitment to our cause has made all our achievements possible, and for that, we are deeply grateful. Thank you for being part of the Conservation Opportunity family. Together, we are making a difference in conserving Puerto Rico's natural beauty and biodiversity.

**Fabiola Torres**

Founder, President & Executive Director

# About Us

Conservation Opportunity is a 501(c)(3) & 110.01 Puerto Rican nonprofit organization that connects people with opportunities for professional and personal growth and development within environmental conservation. It has the goal of educating the public about the different ways in which they can care for the environment, whether through paid or volunteer work, educational workshops, beach cleanups, restoration of native and endemic populations, farm work with agroforestry practices, among others. The vision is to eventually offer paid internship positions to send people to gain work experience with different environmental entities/organizations around the Island, as paid opportunities within environmental conservation are scarce on the Island.

# Our Mission

Connect people with development and growth opportunities within natural resources conservation.

# Values

Sustainability

Collaboration

Integrity

Community

Development



*Hookeate Con La Pesca Activity- Wildlife Refuge Guajataca Reservoir*

# What we do

## Professional Development

Conservation Opportunity offers workshops, talks, and office hours focused on the professional improvement of individuals interested in pursuing a career in environmental conservation.

## Habitat Restoration & Education

We conduct outdoor educational events through conservation efforts such as beach cleanups, restoration of native and endemic populations, farm work with agroforestry practices, and more.

## Leadership Development

We help our members and stakeholders develop the skillsets and capabilities to lead community initiatives by providing training, information and support in their relevant interest areas.



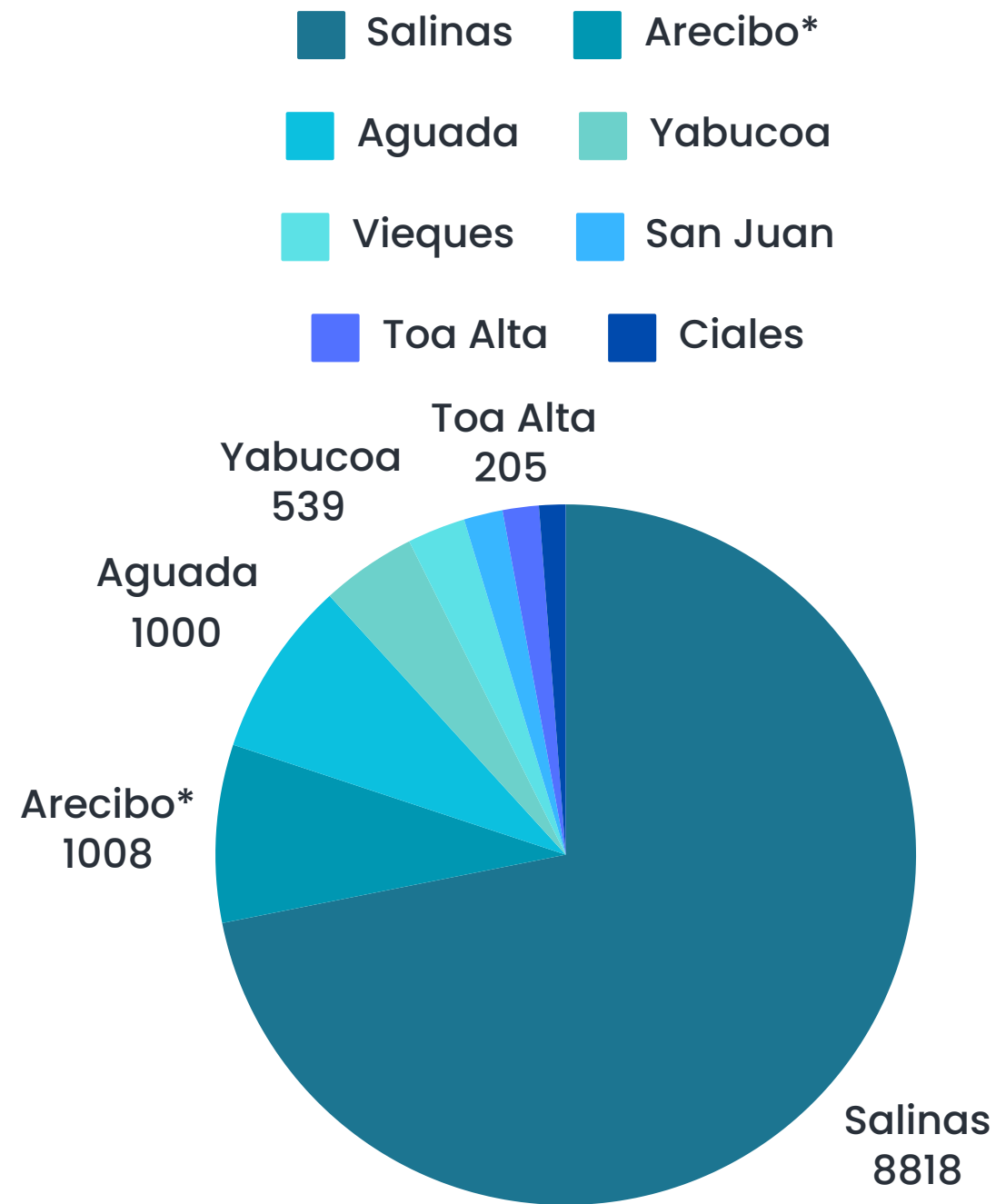
Beach Clean Up - Sun Bay Vieques

# Impact

FOCUS AREAS	ACTIVITIES IN 2023	OUTCOME
<b>Professional Development</b>	Shared more than <b>370</b> job, internship, grant, fellowship, and event opportunities.	Increased the organization's following and facilitated more people finding jobs through our platform.
<b>Habitat Restoration &amp; Education</b>	Promoted agroforestry practices, coral reef conservation, bird habitat conservation, and natural area cleanups.	Organized <b>15</b> activities, set up <b>3</b> informational tables, propagated various tree species, and removed over <b>12,370</b> pounds of trash, improving local ecosystems and enhancing knowledge on conservation methods.
<b>Leadership Development</b>	Engaged <b>3</b> Board members and <b>14</b> volunteers in leading positions (admin, marketing, project management, etc.) and events.	Established <b>44</b> collaborations, enhanced exposure to public and private stakeholders, and logged over <b>1,090</b> volunteer hours, strengthening our community impact.

# Volunteer Impact Highlight

## Pounds of Trash Removed During 9 Cleanup Activities



\*Two separate events

Our organization has consistently provided opportunities to directly impact the communities we serve, benefiting our collaborators and partner organizations through the direct involvement of our volunteer leaders, collaborators, and participants.

We installed **8** interpretative signs and cleaned **12,370+** pounds of trash across the archipelago through partnerships of community-led nonprofits and others that strategically identify natural habitats in need of our mobilization efforts. Cleanups were conducted in coastal areas, waterways, and inland forests. In an event in Aguadilla and Cataño we did not weigh the trash. We did a total of **11** cleanup events in 2023.



Lake Clean Up & Youth Fishing Seminar - La Plata Reservoir

# Interpretative Signs Installed

Each sign includes a QR code with information about the cleanup event, collaborators, and the ecological importance of the area. We hope to motivate people to keep the area clean and conserve it.

Select town names for more information and location pins in red and yellow for coordinates.



Installed in:



Signs look like this!



# Location of Activities in 2023

Here you will find the locations of most of the activities that took place in 2023.



## Interpretative Panels (IP) and cleanups:

- IP: [Aguada](#), [Arecibo](#), [Ciales](#), [Toa Alta](#), [San Juan](#), [Salinas](#), [Yabucoa](#), and [Vieques](#)
- [Arecibo](#), [Cataño](#), and [Aguadilla](#)

## Semila Farm:

- 2 work days at Finca Semila, 1 at [Arecibo](#) and 1 at [Barceloneta](#)
- 1 [Fundraiser](#)

## Informational Tables:

- El Yunque National Forest in Celebration of [International Day of Forests](#)
- Caribbean Creole Center for Science and Technology (C3Tec) for [Coral Reef Week](#)
- 2nd Great Environmental and Family Fair in Las Piedras for [pollinator awareness](#)



## Virtual Events:

- [3rd Annual Photo Contest](#): "Exploring the Reef: Science, Community and Action"
- [Agenda Ambiental](#) Radio Interview
- Short Film Documentary: "el medio ambiente desde mis ojos", "the environment through my eyes" in English. See trailer in Spanish [Here](#).

# Local News Highlight

([Link to Metro Article](#))

The screenshot shows a news article on the Metro website. The header is green with the Metro logo and navigation icons. The article title is "Conservation Opportunity logra otra exitosa limpieza de playas en Vieques" under the "Locales" category. The sub-headline reads: "El evento contó con la participación de 43 voluntarios, entre ellos organizaciones sin fines de lucro, líderes comunitarios y empleados municipales". The main image shows a group of about 40 people, many in purple shirts, posing on a beach with palm trees and several large black bags of trash. To the right of the article are three advertisements: a vertical one for Tropical Energy solar panels, a square one for luxury apartments in Punta Cana, and a horizontal one for a newsletter subscription.

# Informational Tables



Informational Table - Las Piedras, Puerto Rico

## RAISING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

**International Day of Forests at El Yunque National Forest (Rio Grande)**  
Promoted the importance of forest health, restoration efforts, and the role forests play in biodiversity.

## EXPANDING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

**Coral Reef Week at C3Tec (Caguas):**  
Highlight the need to protect marine ecosystems, which is vital for Puerto Rico's environmental conservation. Educated the public about coral reef conservation and restoration, fostering support for marine conservation efforts and volunteer programs.

## FOSTERING LOCAL CONSERVATION ACTION

**2nd Great Environmental and Family Fair (Las Piedras):**  
Promoting pollinator awareness. Pollinators are crucial for biodiversity, and by educating the community about their role, Conservation Opportunity can encourage local action such as creating pollinator-friendly spaces and supporting agroforestry, which is part of our larger conservation strategy.

# el medio ambiente desde mis ojos

UN DOCUMENTAL POR  
SHLEY SUAREZ-BURGOS Y FABIOLA TORRES

PRODUCCIÓN RANGER RANDY CREATIVE LLC EN ASOCIACIÓN CON CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY INC  
Y HISPANIC ACCESS FOUNDATION INTERPRETACIÓN POR ASL CARIBE ACCESS Y ASLES CORP.



## Multimedia



Highlighting our pillars of **Community** and **Collaboration**, our organization had the opportunity to collaborate with director Shley Suarez-Burgos who was able to capture on film our 2023 “Hookeate con la Pesca” event at the Guajataca Reservoir Wildlife Refuge.

It focuses on the efforts of our organization, which seeks the necessary change of normalizing access to environmental programs for the hearing-diverse community (deaf, partially deaf, deaf with implants, ...).

Conservation Opportunity's short film “the environment through my eyes” shares stories of passion, hardship and community; inspired by outdoor activities in nature of the hearing-diverse community.

The short film was funded by [Our Heritage, Our Planet Film Week](#) and featured at the event, an initiative led by the Hispanic Access Foundation.

Click [HERE](#) to watch the short film (in Spanish).

### Sponsor



### Collaborators



# Here is what people have to say regarding our impact

Thanks to CO, I have gotten two jobs with the National Park Service, I have been able to develop myself as a scientist, and I have connected with the environment. I recommend CO because organizations like these are extremely important in order for these opportunities to reach anyone who seeks to develop as a professional and connect with the environment." - Student, Julio Campis-Díaz

[See full message here](#)

"The experience helped create visibility of the impact of human actions that have deteriorated the reserve. Initiatives like this and the activities carried out by the communities surrounding the river (Lapa) have helped create visibility of the importance of volunteering and its impact on environmental conservation." - Environmental Scientist, Dr. Christopher E. Orozco González

[Read article here](#)

"We really can't do it alone, we don't have the staff for the amount of work there is, that's why volunteer work help us to continue here."

- DRNA Management Officer, Marinelly Valentin

[Read article here](#)

"Thanks to Conservation Opportunity, I got the job opportunity I am currently in, I am volunteering in Ghana, Africa through the Agricultural Education Fellowship Program (IAEFP). I am very grateful to this organization because it connects people to get jobs with other programs. It is very important because many times there are opportunities but many times we do not know they exist."

- Fellow in Ghana-Africa, Daniela Avilés

[See full message here](#)

# Acknowledgements

Our impact has been amplified by the support of our community partners and supporters since our founding.

## Groups & Organizations

- Hispanic Access Foundation
- Para La Naturaleza
- Boy Scouts of America
- Semila
- Finca Escuela de La Perla
- ASL Caribe Access
- Advancement in Sign Language Education & Services (ASLES)
- Departamento de Recursos Naturales
- Scuba Dogs Society
- Environment for the Americas
- Fundacion Amigos de El Yunque
- HatiCOOP
- Birds Caribbean
- NOAA Marine Debris Program
- Gobierno de Puerto Rico
- Municipio de Vieques
- Ticatove

## Board of Directors

- Fabiola Torres  
Founder, President, Executive Director
- Amilkar O. Cruz, Esq.  
Treasurer
- Paula I. Fournier, Esq.  
Secretary

Starting 2024, we expanded our board to include:

- Leopoldo Miranda  
Director
- Luis Augusto Martinez, Esq.  
Director, former volunteer leader

## Volunteer Leaders

- Ian R. Cruz-Garcia
- Carolina S. Colón Más
- Angely Berrios
- Jan Carrasquillo
- Ana C. Rodriguez
- Antonio Echevarria
- Alexia Morales
- Luis Augusto Martinez
- Julian Sotomayor
- Daniela I. Laureano Sotomayor
- Laura Marin
- Yamilet Aponte Claudio
- Orlando J. Geli Cruz
- Marieliz Dieppa Rodriguez

