

Hello everyone! My name is Tatiana Quintana, and I am the new State Office intern with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in San Juan, PR. If I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you yet, I hope that day will soon come. I've been working here for two months so far, and it has been quite the experience...

I recently graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in Geography and a minor in Spanish. My concentration in Geography is Geographic Information Systems (GIS). I am an AmeriCorps volunteer, and I am being managed by the Student Conservation Association (SCA), which is the largest youth based conservation service in the US. This is my second assignment with the SCA, and Puerto Rico was a special opportunity for me. I ultimately decided on PR because I believed it would give me the chance to gain valuable working experience, immerse myself in a new culture, and challenge me to practice my Spanish and gain a rich experience by placing myself in unfamiliar territory and expanding my horizons. Jose Castro is the Program Manager and liaison between the SCA and NRCS, and he informed me about the vacancy of the position. Thanks Jose!



On the job, my primary responsibilities are administrative in nature – I staff the front desk, receive incoming calls and visitors and I help my Supervisor, Nilda Gonzalez with whatever tasks are assigned to me. I also assist all the State Office employees as well, to help them accomplish tasks. When I have extra time on hand, I seek to hone my GIS skills with the State Soil Scientist, Carmen Santiago, by working on her GIS related assignments and also by taking ESRI training online. I also assist Luis Garcia, the Support Services Specialist, with logistical preparations and outreach activities, for which I am very happy to participate in. Recently, I attended the State Technical Committee meeting which was held in El Yunque. At this meeting, different federal agencies briefed each other about the current challenges with conservation efforts in Puerto Rico. I saw that each agency brings different abilities and valuable expertise to the table and they all desire to combine their strengths collectively in order to reach common conservation goals. I also participated in the Army Earth Day at Fort Buchanan and the Agropolis in Dorado, which were both wonderful outreach activities aimed at raising awareness and informing the general public with regard to natural resource conservation.

During this year which I will spend with the NRCS, I hope to learn in-depth about the different ways the NRCS puts our tax dollars to use through conservation oriented programs, and more specifically, how they and the private citizen work together to manage our natural resources. I also look forward to familiarizing myself with how Soil Conservationists in the Field Offices do their part in 'helping people help the land'. My plan is to look for growth opportunities at all levels, and I look forward to learning much from the expertise that all of the NRCS employees have to offer.