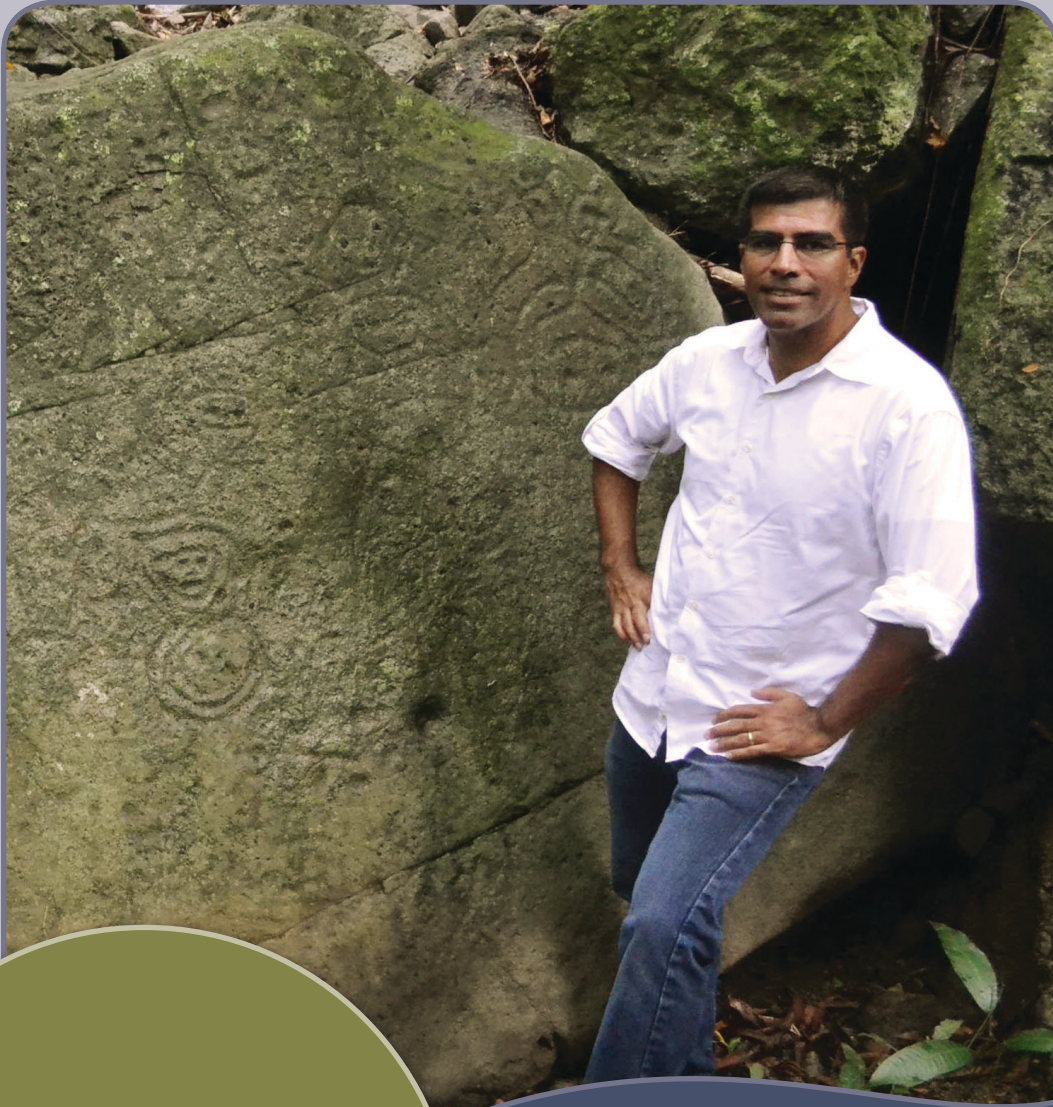




# Meet the Scientist!



A research social scientist studies the relationships between people and the environment.

**Dr. David Flores**  
Research Social Scientist  
Ph.D., University of Michigan  
USDA Forest Service scientist



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

### Important Scientist Characteristics

The talents that contribute most to my scientific research are curiosity, creativity, and careful observation. To design questions, I need to find out how the people and communities I investigate have historically used the land and what potential changes in the environment will take place in the future.

### Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:

How do communities that rely on the land for their livelihoods adapt to climate change?

### Technology or equipment used in research:

I use both surveys and interviews. Surveys enable me to ask a large number of people questions about how the environment has changed throughout their lifetime. I use interviews to ask smaller groups of people in-depth questions about how and why they believe the environment is changing.

### Most Exciting Discovery

My most exciting discovery is finding how people from the same regions, who experience similar ecological changes, but who come from different cultural backgrounds, express unique reasons and stories as to how and why the environment is changing.

### When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

My parents are Mexican immigrants who do not speak English, and I am the first and only person in my family to attend college. Therefore, I did not know that I wanted to become a scientist until I was in college. I learned how to better understand and voice the concerns of underrepresented communities.