



Meet the Scientist!



Dr. Lugo is pictured second from the left during field research with volunteers and staff.

I am a tropical ecologist, and I study forests, wetlands, and cities in the tropics.

Dr. Ariel Lugo

Ecologist

Ph.D., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

USDA Forest Service scientist



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

Important Scientist Characteristics

- ★ Discipline and desire to understand how nature works.
- ★ Systematic and comprehensive in your approach to issues.
- ★ Relentless in the analysis of data and writing articles in scientific journals.

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

Why do mangrove trees that live in seawater along dry coastlines decline in size from the ocean to the land?

Technology or equipment used in research:

I use electronic equipment in the field and the laboratory, but my favorite equipment includes my flip video for recording ecological systems, my Global Positioning System (GPS) unit for keeping track of where I go in the world, and my Mac computer where I keep my videos and maps, analyze data, and write scientific articles.

Most Exciting Discovery

I was very excited by the realization that native and introduced species are mixing and self-organizing to form new communities, called novel ecosystems. These novel communities function normally and could represent the ecosystems of the future in response to the activities of people.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

I wanted to study science since sixth grade when I learned about fossils. My desire to be a scientist developed after I graduated from college and spent a summer working with real scientists in the rain forest. Experiments in the rain forest were fun and I could learn a lot.

<http://www.sanjuanultra.org>