

BRENDA TORRES

(646) 510-7595 * brendaliztorres@gmail.com

PROFESIONAL EXPERIENCE

SAN JUAN BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

San Juan, PR

Executive Director

September 2016 – Present

- Primary responsibility for non-profit organization and a public-private partnership undertaking 70 watershed restoration actions in the areas of green infrastructure, water quality, fish and wildlife, solid waste management and public engagement as part of Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program.

NEW YORK STATE EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

New York, NY

Assistant Secretary for the Environment

January 2016 – July 2016

- Developed a statewide environmental justice framework to address gaps in New York State's approach to environmental justice, strengthen existing state programs in underserved communities, and eliminate redundancies and nonfunctioning programs. Oversaw the development of program initiatives and managed diverse statewide issues related to land stewardship, smart growth, brownfields redevelopment, and sustainability initiatives.

FEDERAL AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION, GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

New York, NY

Director, Northeast Regional Office in the USA

March 2013 – December 2016

- Supported and participated of the congressional delegation visit to Puerto Rico in January 2015 to discuss the socio-economic challenges facing the residents of the Caño Martín Peña in San Juan, and the removal of naval ordnance from publicly accessible areas of the island municipality of Culebra. Managed and coordinated community services programs for a constituent base of 3 million Puerto Ricans living in the Tristate. Managed intergovernmental affairs related to critical infrastructure, economic development and social projects impacting the Tristate region and the island of Puerto Rico. Worked directly with regional administrators of federal agencies in charge of ensuring environmental compliance and protection, healthcare access and federal economic incentive opportunities. Represented the Government of Puerto Rico in meetings with top-level executives and general public in addressing controversial and complex programmatic issues.
- Key accomplishments: developed a natural disasters and emergency management program for Hispanic communities in New York City with protocols and a comprehensive network of city/state/federal government officials, Latin American consulates, and community-based organizations; managed the collaborative efforts of the Vieques Sustainability Task Force and its community outreach strategy; supported the development of a diaspora network of 200 creative Puerto Rican leaders to generate economic activity amongst the community; and brought 20 US based foundations to Puerto Rico to develop local partnerships to deal with social and environmental challenges.

EL PUENTE

New York, NY

Consultant; Director

September 2010 – March 2013

- Developed the *Latino Climate Action Network* in coordination with the Rockefeller Family Fund. The Latino Climate Action Network is a national network of Hispanic leaders that participates in high-level policy discussions related to climate change and its impacts to the lives of Hispanics in the United States and US territories. The network is comprised of regional leaders in New York, Chicago, Florida, Connecticut and in Puerto Rico.
- Developed the *Green Light District* in the community of Williamsburg, Brooklyn to empower community residents by informing and training them on issues related to wellness, arts and culture, job training opportunities, retrofitting incentives and to the transformation of urban spaces into livable ones. Managed the Green Light District during its initial phase of community empowerment and launch. Engaged congressional leaders, and city and state representatives. Managed a staff of three full-time and three part-time employees, as well as a network of 50 active volunteers from the community. Developed employee performance assessment processes, as well as a volunteer recruitment and retention strategy. Developed program infrastructure and fiscal plan to support the implementation of community programs.

WILDLIFE TRUST

New York, NY

Program Officer

January 2007 – October 2008

- Managed Wildlife Trust's worldwide alliance of 15 science-based conservation organizations and individual members. Supported institutional capacity building process by providing organizational management tools and grants. Audited organizational and programmatic performance. Developed a comprehensive assessment tool to evaluate partner-organizations' institutional and programmatic performance.
- Supported Wildlife Trust's institutional restructuring process by leading the drafting of the organization's three-year strategic plan in coordination with consulting firm McKinsey and Company. Represented Wildlife Trust programs with donors, governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Executive Director

Santa Clara County, CA

February 2005 – June 2006

- Responsible for the management and development of the third largest Audubon Society (SCVAS) Chapter in California grouping 4,000 active members. Conceptualized and implemented conservation advocacy initiatives, environmental education programs, and nature-related recreational activities. Responsible for designing and executing successful member diversity, fundraising and community outreach campaigns.
- Represented SCVAS in local government forums addressing issues concerning habitat conservation plans, restoration projects and land development proposals. Affiliations: member of the Advisory Committee of Santa Clara County's Water District, Technical Advisory Committee for the Coyote Valley Development Plan, and member of the Environmental Solutions Forum of the Community Foundation of Silicon Valley.

SAN JUAN BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

Executive Director

San Juan, PR

March 2003 – August 2004

- Primary responsibility for non-profit organization and a public-private partnership undertaking 49 watershed restoration actions in the areas of water quality, fish and wildlife, solid waste management and public engagement as part of Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program.
- Coordinated the design, funding and implementation of 30 collaborative projects relating to: flood control and water quality benefits, designation of high ecological value areas within the watershed, dredging of the Martin Peña Channel, adaptive management and monitoring of environmental indicators, watershed reforestation, coastal cleanups, community empowerment and educational initiatives. Managed federal, state and private funds and ensured compliance with federal and state audits. Supervised office staff and contractors.

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

Director of Recycling Markets Development

San Juan, PR

July 2002 – February 2003

- Managed an incentive and permits program to attract recycling businesses to Puerto Rico. Performed technical screening of recycling projects applying for government loan guarantees and tax exemption programs. Responsible for the promotion and development of markets for recycled materials in Puerto Rico through private and public partnerships.

Deputy Environmental Policy Advisor to the Governor

August 2001 – June 2002

- Led Governor Sila Maria Calderon's environmental conservation agenda and provided advice on public policies for the sustainable development of Puerto Rico. Provided support to local government agencies related to the development, implementation and management of environmental public policy, urban planning and regulatory enforcement.

EDUCATION

YALE UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF FORESTRY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Masters in Environmental Management

New Haven, CT

2000

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO

BSc. in Environmental Sciences

San Juan, PR

1998

STANFORD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Executive Program for Non-profit Leaders - Center for Social Innovation Fellow

Palo Alto, CA

2006

CREDENTIALS:

LEED AP, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional by the USGBC

LANGUAGES:

English and Spanish

COMMUNITY WORK:

Corporation for the Conservation of the San Juan Bay Estuary

Board Member, Vice-President from 2005 to 2016

Puerto Rico Conservation Trust & Para La Naturaleza

Advisory Council Member, March 2016