

Ongoing Efforts Towards
Creating Environment and
Social Justice in the
Communities of the Martín
Peña Channel

PROGRAMA DEL
Estuario

de la Bahía de San Juan



Interactive Music Concerts in Schools of Martín Peña Channel

“With Vivaldi and Handel in the Channel... The four seasons and water-music”



These concerts were possible thanks to a contribution and matching funds made by the Titín Foundation.



We facilitated workshops/concerts in the elementary schools Jaime Rosario Benítez, Emilio del Toro Cuevas, Juanita García Peraza, Santiago Iglesias Pantín, Sofía Rexach, Moisés Meléndez, Manuel Boada and Haydee Rexach respectively. Almost 300 children enjoyed the concerts of featured water-themed music, mainly passages from Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" and Handel's "Water Music."



The musicians engaged the students in short conversations about the importance of keeping nearby bodies of water clean, how many entities are working toward cleaning their nearby channel, and how the wood and materials used to make their instruments came from nature.



The students responded amazingly to the concerts, especially to the parts where familiar tunes were played, and when they got to touch and play the musicians' instruments at the end of each concert.



The Visitor Center of the San Juan Bay Estuary



CAÑO MARTÍN PEÑA Metáfora de Puerto Rico

LÍNEA DE TIEMPO DEL CAÑO



Visitor Center



On December 2015 we launched our new Visitor Center, home of an exhibition dedicated to the Martín Peña Channel.



From the country to the Channel and New York

A partir de 1947, el Gobierno de Puerto Rico comenzó un proceso atropellado de industrialización para intentar salir de su atolladero económico. **El proyecto fue bautizado como Manos a la Obra** e incluyó una serie de exenciones para atraer e incentivos agresivos para atraer industrias a la isla.

Este cambio económico trajo consigo un proceso migratorio de decenas de miles de campesinos y obreros que se mudaron a las zonas urbanas de San Juan, como el Caño Martín Peña, o a ciudades de Estados Unidos, principalmente Nueva York.

The display valuable information was compiled by a team of professionals from social, environmental and human sciences. So far, the center receives about 500 visitors weekly.



Wildlife

During the Spanish occupation of Puerto Rico and the early years of the U.S. occupation, the Martín Peña Channel flowed naturally between San Juan Bay and the San José Lagoon. The Channel was lined with red mangrove trees that filtered the water when it rained and served as a breeding ground and refuge for fish, crustaceans, and coastal birds.

Among the wealth of wildlife that still lives today in the area we find brown pelicans, herons, coots, and even some fish that require little oxygen. There are also a fraction of the four types of mangrove trees that originally lived along the banks of the Channel: red, white, black, and "river" mangroves.

Comienza el poblamiento

The first settlements

The modern settlement of the banks of the Martín Peña Channel began in the years between 1910 and 1920. Country people who came to San Juan to work in the quarries and on the properties of the Rexach landholding family began arriving. At the same time, the Homestead Commission began the process of creating Barrio Obrero, the "Workingman's Barrio," in Santurce, to house 3,000 people.

At this time, the amount of water in the Channel was optimal. The older residents of the area still remember swimming and fishing in the waterway, and being able to sell and eat the fish and crustaceans they caught.

Entre el 1910 y 1920 comienza el poblamiento moderno en Caño Martín Peña. Llegan campesinos que comienzan a trabajar en las canteras y los terrenos del terrateniente Rexach. Al mismo tiempo, la Comisión de Hogares Seguros comienza a trabajar en el proceso de crear el Barrio Obrero en Santurce, para albergar a 3,000 personas.

En este momento, la calidad del agua era óptima. Los vecinos recuerdan de los vecinos nadando en el área, pescando y comiendo crustáceos que capturaban.

DONADORES / SPONSORS

TITÍN FOUNDATION

AGRADECIMIENTOS / CREDITS

Both the Visitor Center and the exhibition have been made possible thanks to funds donated by the Foundation Titín .



On Christmas Eve 2015, our Education Manager led a workshop conceptual drawing, with children from 3rd to 5th grade, about how would Christmas be in their communities if the Martín Peña Channel was dredged. The pieces were exhibited in our Visitor Center .



LAS VOCES DEL CAÑO

"...nunca nos debemos cansar de aprender, una educación horizontal entre pares, compartiendo lo que sabemos y empoderando a nuestros jóvenes..."

José A. Santiago
Contera



"...Estaba convirtiéndose mi hogar, en todo, todo esto"

Eladia Cruz
Buena Vista, Santurce



"Me veo en el balcón contándole a mis nietos de cómo logramos ese dragado, contándole las historias de lucha para crear sentido de pertenencia..."

Jerald Constanza
Barrio Obrero Marina



Oral History

Project of the SJBE

"...han tapado muchos de esos riachuelos y muchos desagües. De ahí es que viene la que..."

Carmela O...



"...las casas se inundan a cada rato, cuando caen esos aguaceros grandes se inundan por dentro..."



"Los últimos tres huracanes los he pasado yo aquí. Me acuerdo porque ese pasto se me cayó encima de la casa"

Raucha María



"...con los boricuas que viven por aquí compartimos (...) porque veían que nosotros los dominicanos... si demostramos una amistad es amistad..."

Cecilia Cabrera Serrano



"...la gente empezó a emigrar y hacer los casas en estilo batio, luego empezaron a rellenar el terreno para seguir viviendo..."

Pablo Ortega Rodríguez



"...que todos los trabajos que se hagan en nuestras comunidades sea con nosotros y para nosotros (...) y lo más importante, defendemos el dragado..."

Carmit L. Pérez



"...decidi estar aquí porque a esta comunidad yo la amo y a mí no me preocupa, la amo..."

Juanita Ojeda Barbosa



"...como éramos pequeños, lo que enseñaban a una era a vivir..."

Carmit L. Pérez



"...cuando hoy tormenta se mete aquí, eso es una laguna, es un brazo de mar..."

Francisca Martínez Cartagena



"Cuando el Caño subía se inundaba un poco, pero no era una cosa que se diga se dañó todo como si fuera un huracán"

Gloria Vicente Rivera



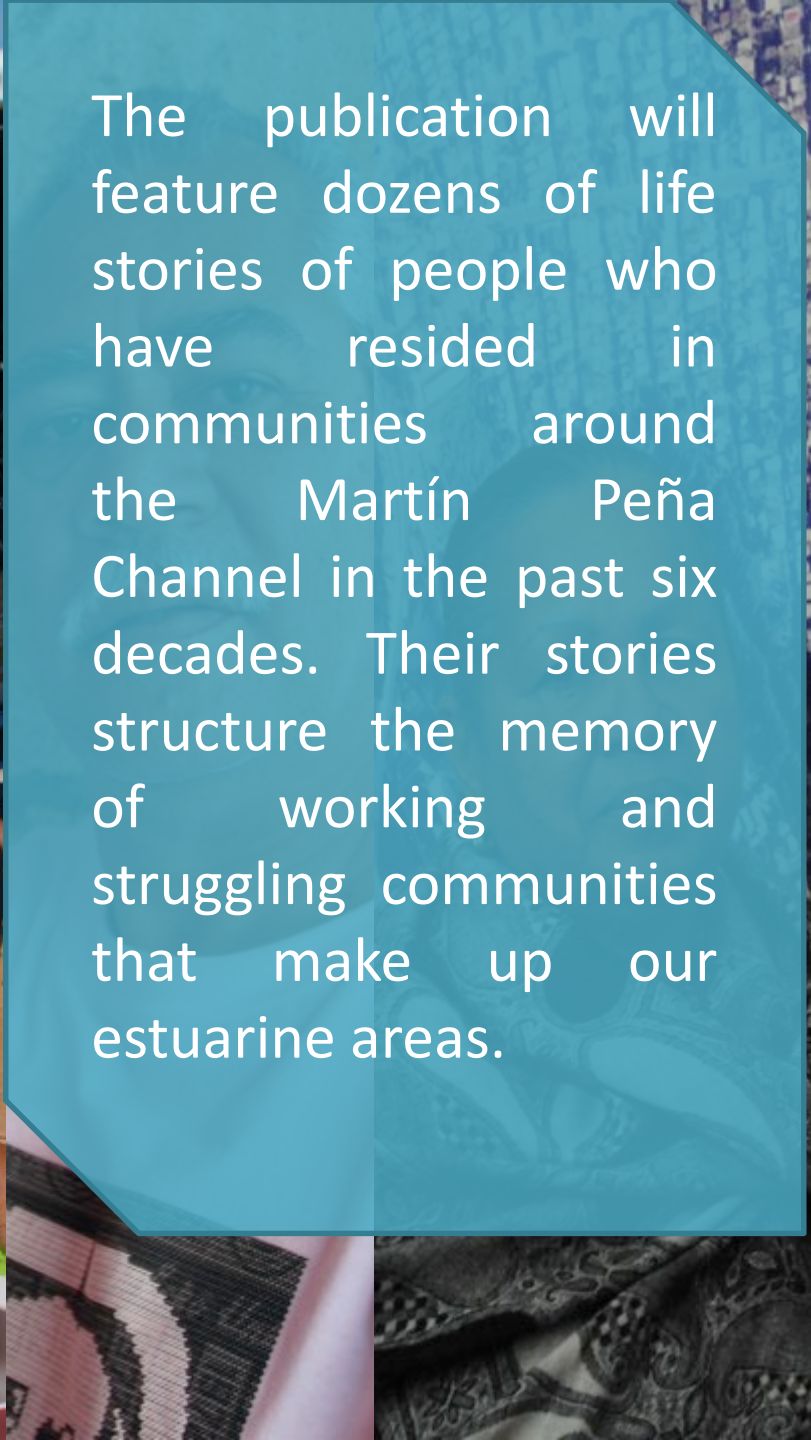
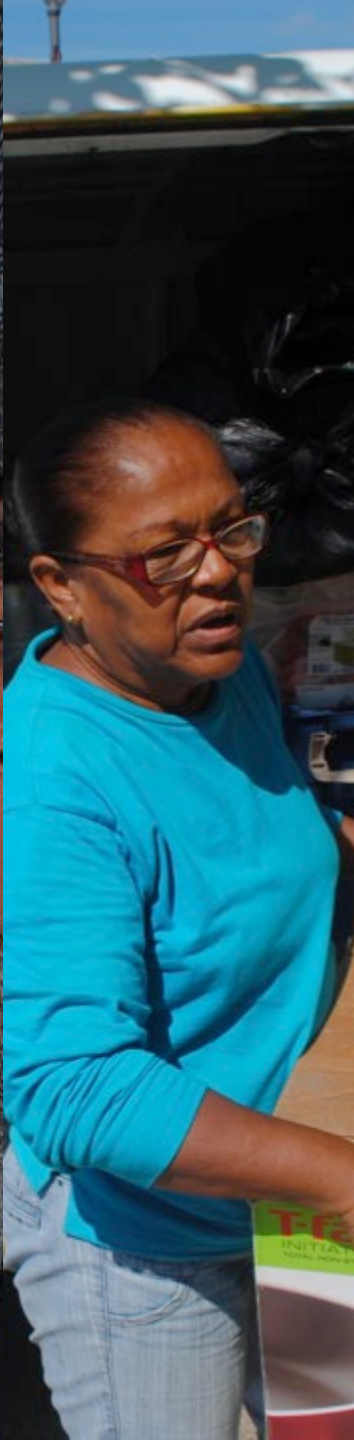
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Life Stories



Thanks to the donation and matching funds made by the Humanities Foundation; and the help of the Environmental Protection Agency, Universidad Interamericana, and the Martin Peña Channel ENLACE Project we will publish a book about our Oral History Project during 2016.



The publication will feature dozens of life stories of people who have resided in communities around the Martín Peña Channel in the past six decades. Their stories structure the memory of working and struggling communities that make up our estuarine areas.

Commitment to the Community





In addition, as part of the commitment of SJBE to the Martin Peña Channel communities and a budget of US \$ 9,600.00, we have hired the young community leader Melba Ayala in our Visitor Center. She works as a guide to the exhibition and is an excellent resource as a liaison between the SJBE and other community leaders.

Future Projects



The Initiative for and with the Martín Peña Channel Continue:

1. Currently, our educational team are editing and designing an educational guide on the most important issues in the Channel problems. The objective is to complement the educational mission of the Visitors Center.
2. Thanks to funds donated by the NY Community Trust we will be able to do an inventory of adaptation to climate change in the Martín Peña Channel communities.
3. As an initiative of continuous effort and projection in the short, medium and long term , we approach the field project to improve green infrastructure in the Channel.
4. At this moment we are working in the documentary about the urban sounds in the Martín Peña Channel, that will be produced by our communications team and released in may 2016. This audiovisual resource will help us continue the educational process and the integration of art with our effort to provide social and environmental justice in the estuarine area.