



# 2010 National Achievements in Environmental Justice Awards



*Recognizing Successful Partnerships  
Achieving Public Health and Environmental Justice Goals*

## **ENLACE Caño Martín Peña Project** **San Juan, Puerto Rico**



Caño Martín Peña Cuentos del Caño School Reading



Caño Martín Peña public participation meeting



Caño Martín Peña view from Barbosa Avenue

**EPA is pleased to recognize the **ENLACE Caño Martín Peña Project** for establishing and implementing a land use and comprehensive development plan that works to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions for eight communities in the Caño Martín Peña Special Planning District.**

The Caño Martín Peña (CMP) is a 3.5 mile long natural tidal channel located at the heart of the San Juan National Estuary. It provides a vital connection between the San Juan Bay and the San José Lagoon. Impoverished squatters who migrated to San Juan during the first half of the 20th Century built their houses in the mangroves bordering the CMP. For decades, the CMP has been a symbol of urban poverty and environmental degradation. Legislation established the Project ENLACE Caño Martín Peña, whose mission is to implement the \$744 million land use and development plan. Caño Martín Peña Special Planning District Act (Law 489) also created the Caño Martín Peña Community Land Trust, a first in Puerto Rico, which guarantees affordable housing, resolves land tenure issues, and reinvests any future increase in land value back into the community. The Land Trust is essential to the Plan's implementation, as it prevents gentrification and ensures that the current residents benefit directly from investment in infrastructure, urban reform, and environmental restoration.

The partnership addresses environmental justice through mechanisms that allow for transparency, trust in institutions, bottom-up participation, interdisciplinary approaches, respect for diversity, concurrent planning and implementation, constant evaluation, and celebration of successes. Successful projects have included outreach on environmental awareness to more than 3,000 students, the construction of the first vacuum sewer system in Puerto Rico, and the relocation of hundreds of households to allow for dredging of the contamination in the channel.

### **Partners**

Corporación del Proyecto ENLACE del Caño Martín Peña  
Fideicomiso de la Tierra del Caño Martín Peña (Community Land Trust)

Grupo de las Ocho Comunidades Aledañas al Caño Martín Peña