

November 10, 2014

## **NOTICE TO CLIENTS AND FRIENDS**

### ***P.R. Developments: Puerto Rico Model Forest***

On November 3, 2014 the Governor of Puerto Rico signed Act No. 182-2014 (“Act 182”) which created the Puerto Rico Model Forest (the “Model Forest”). The Model Forest has 390,000 *cuerdas* of land covering thirty one (31) municipalities<sup>1</sup> in Puerto Rico and twenty six (26) natural protected areas<sup>2</sup>. Pursuant to Act 182, the public policy of Puerto Rico will be the conservation and sustainable development of the region’s agriculture and forests.

Pursuant to Act 182, government agencies shall integrate the international principles established for model forests in projects and programs that shall be implemented within the Model Forest. These principles include: (1) Partnership; (2) Landscape; (3) Sustainability; (4) Governance; (5) Program of Activities; and (6) Networking.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Act 182 establishes another series of principles that government agencies<sup>4</sup> shall foster with their programs and projects within the Model Forest, including but not limited to the following:

- Natural Resources Management and Conservation – promote adequate management and conservation strategies for lots that are within the or adjacent to the Model Forest;
- Agriculture – promote regional agricultural and agro industrial practices and programs that shall incentivize the development of modern agriculture as well as, create jobs and generate revenues;
- Tourism – develop sustainable tourism within the Model Forest and promote tourism projects that comply with the following principals: (1) local economic development; (2) resource conservation; (3) education; and (4) community participation.
- Education – promote educational programs and activities on the Model Forest; and

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<sup>1</sup> Cabo Rojo, Lajas, Guánica, Yauco, Guayanilla, Sabana Grande, San Germán, Maricao, Mayagüez, Peñuelas, Adjuntas, Ponce, Jayuya, Orocovis, Utuado, Morovis, Arecibo, Vega Baja, Lares, Juana Díaz, Villalba, Coamo, Barranquitas, Corozal, Aibonito, Ciales, Las Marias, Florida, Barceloneta, Manatí, y Hatillo.

<sup>2</sup> These include: (1) Reserva Natural Cibuco; (2) Reserva Natural de la Laguna Tortuguero; (3) Reserva Natural de Caño Tiburones; (4) Bosque Mata de Plátano; (5) Bosque Cambalache; (6) Bosque Río Abajo; (7) Finca Guillermeti; (8) Bosque Tres Picachos; (9) Bosque Toro Negro; (10) Bosque Cerillos; (11) Bosque del Pueblo; (12) Bosque La Olimpia; (13) Bosque Guilarte; (14) Bosque Maricao; (15) Bosque Susúa; (16) Reserva del Lago Lucchetti; (17) Bosque Seco de Guánica; (18) Reserva Natural Las Cabachuelas; (19) Bosque Boquerón; (20) Refugio de Vida Silvestre de Cabo Rojo; (21) Área Natural Protegida Hacienda Buena Vista; (22) Área Natural Protegida Maricao; (23) Área Natural Protegida Río Encantado; (24) Reserva Natural Privada El Tallonal; (25) Reserva Natural Hacienda La Esperanza; y (26) Cueva del Indio.

<sup>3</sup> See Article 3(c)1-6.

<sup>4</sup> Such governmental agencies include but are not limited to the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, the Department of Agriculture, the Tourism Company and the Department of Education.

- Planning – promote mix uses in urban areas, green permits as defined in the Joint Regulation for Construction and Land Use<sup>5</sup>, and renewable energy uses.

It is important to note that Act 182 specifically states that these principles do not alter or modify the existing natural protected areas, and zones of interest for tourism. Furthermore, Act 182 establishes that these principles do not entail or constitute a rezoning or reclassification of land uses or zoning districts, or a change in ownership.

Act 182 also creates the *Mesa Multisectorial del Bosque Modelo*, a multi sectoral group that will assist the newly created Model Forest Office in the development of a Regional Strategic Plan for the Model Forest. The Plan shall include the goals and objectives necessary to promote the development of the Model Forest. The Model Forest Office shall also be in charge of coordinating programs and projects with different agencies and municipalities; making decisions regarding the applicability of Act 182; and promoting the development of the Model Forest. The Office shall exist for four (4) years (but may be extended for an additional 2 years), after which its duties and responsibilities shall be transferred to the Model Forest Trust, a without profit independent public entity. The Trust will be irrevocable and for life. It will continue the implementation of the Plan as well as new projects and programs related to the Model Forest.

Given the potential impact of the Model Forest on the intended land uses of properties, we believe that this development may interest you. To further discuss or obtain additional information on how this development may impact you, please feel free to contact us at your convenience.

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<sup>5</sup> Regulation No. 7951 of November 30, 2010, as amended.

Jorge L. San Miguel - [jsanmiguel@ferraiuoli.com](mailto:jsanmiguel@ferraiuoli.com)  
Lillian Mateo-Santos - [lmateo@ferraiuoli.com](mailto:lmateo@ferraiuoli.com)  
Eduardo Tamargo-Motroni - [etamargo@ferraiuoli.com](mailto:etamargo@ferraiuoli.com)

Víctor R. Rodríguez - [vrr@ferraiuoli.com](mailto:vrr@ferraiuoli.com)  
Eidalía González-Tosado - [egonzalez@ferraiuoli.com](mailto:egonzalez@ferraiuoli.com)  
Karla M. Villanueva - [kvillanueva@ferraiuoli.com](mailto:kvillanueva@ferraiuoli.com)