



NRHP E-Blasts

Electronic blasts from the National Register of Historic Places, sharing news and information with the Historic Preservation Community
October 2024

Core Bulletins Revision and Reissuance Project Update

Last fall, the National Register of Historic Places formally launched the project to update its core guidance for preparing National Register actions with an interactive session at the National Trust's PastForward conference in Washington, D.C. Revisions are underway to *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Criteria Bulletin, formerly referred to as Bulletin 15). NPS is working with the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers to secure the services of a consultant to support this project.

Ross Bater, New Social Science Technician, to Join National Register Staff

Ross Bater will join the Workflow Team (currently consisting of Jeff Joeckel, Alexis Abernathy, and Rustin Quaide) as a Social Science Technician on November 4, 2024. Ross will be filling the position left vacant by the death of long-time NPS employee Kevin Moriarty, who passed away on October 23, 2023.

As part of the Workflow Team, Ross will assist in processing all incoming National Register actions, including inputting data into the National Register Information System (NRIS) before sending the actions to the National Register historians. Additionally, Ross will support the management of the growing electronic National Register archives.

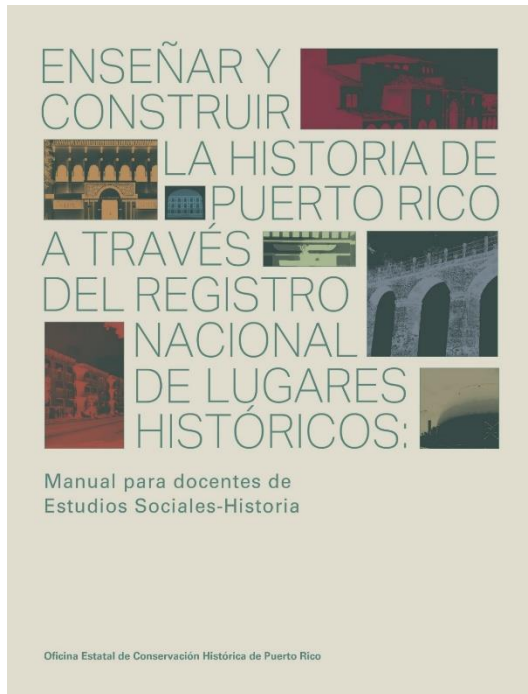
Ross previously worked with NPS as a Cultural Resource Intern with National Capital Parks-East where he researched, wrote, and managed data for cultural resource inventories and reports, including materials gathered from Cultural Landscape Inventories, Historic Structure Reports, and National Register listings. Ross brings a diversity of experience to his new position, including work as a substitute teacher, and as an intern for the Maryland Historic Trust and for Preservation Maryland. Ross earned his master's degree in Historic Preservation from Goucher College.



Fortunately, new National Register staff will not have to deal with the vast paper record collections of the National Register and National Historic Landmarks Program. Electronic scanning has resulted in cost-savings on climate-controlled rooms and ever-growing numbers of lektrievers (automated carousel-like filing cabinets). Photo courtesy of PRAAD International archives repository.jpg, Wikipedia Commons.

Puerto Rico SHPO's Teacher and Student Outreach

The following article is based on an interview with José Marull, Senior Historic Property Specialist in the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office, about the SHPO's success in engaging teachers and students as custodians of the island's cultural sites and history.



A place-based education manual was issued in 2023 and is available from the [government of Puerto Rico \(pr.gov\)](https://pr.gov).

In 2013, PR SHPO hired an education curriculum specialist. The specialist took charge of coordinating with the Puerto Rico Department of Education's social studies program and with school principals to implement an outreach program for public primary schools focused on historic preservation. Each presentation that was developed linked National Register of Historic Properties in Puerto Rico with important historic events. In 2017, in an effort to reach more educators and widen the impact of this program, PR SHPO, in agreement with the Department of Education, organized and conducted island-wide workshops on place-based education for grades 6-12 social studies and history teachers. This program consisted of two phases: (1) training educators on listed properties, and (2) encouraging educators to develop research projects with their students using the methodological principles of place-based learning (PBL). This program provided students the opportunity to study the built heritage associated with their school community and to undertake one of three types of projects (a reconnaissance-level physical survey, an intensive-level physical survey, or a thematic overview). From 2017 to 2019, 11 workshops for public social studies and history teachers were held in historic buildings; 276 educators were trained; and 7 research projects were developed by the educators.

As a result of the 2020 pandemic and the earthquakes on the island that same year, the program was suspended. Nevertheless, the PR SHPO continued a dialogue with the Department of Education to develop guidance and training for educators to further disseminate the place-based education. In 2022, the PR SHPO began work on a manual for 6th to 12th grade educators within the public education system, and in 2023 1,000 volumes of this document were issued. That same year, a collaborative agreement between PR SHPO and the Puerto Rico's Department of Education was signed to formalize historic preservation education. It provided for the distribution of the manual through training sessions and allowed public educators to attend the PR SHPO's training sessions. In the first year, in 2024, seven training sessions were provided to 263 teachers from 68 municipalities. Additional training sessions are planned for 2025.

Training teachers and providing instruction to students at their schools has promoted identification of historic properties and commitment of school communities to the conservation of their schools. For example, a project that resulted from this program was one developed by an eighth-grade social studies teacher and their eight students at Federico Degetau Rural Consolidated School in Arecibo. Led by history teacher Luis René Rivera, the students researched and gathered documentation on the history of the oldest building within the school's campus. The project resulted in first-ever National Register nomination by Puerto Rican middle-school students and the building was listed in the National Register in 2020.

By way of background, this school in the Santana neighborhood of Arecibo opened its doors in 1917, with ornamentation in the neo-Egyptian style as designed by its architect Adrian Finlayson. The style of this early 20th century school building was one-of-a-kind in the area, and its uniqueness encouraged the current school

community to investigate its history. Documentation was collected and compiled in the first phase of the study by students Antwan O. González Bonet, Christopher Reyes Gabriel, Ingrid S. Rodríguez Orta, Mabel Ramos Vélez, Zabdiel Santiago González, Zoeris González Rivera, and Zulimar Santiago López. In the second phase, the team prepared the National Register nomination. On May 24, 2020, the Federico Degetau School of Arecibo was listed in the National Register at the state level of significance, under Criterion A for social history and C for architecture, with a period of significance of 1917. A copy of the approved registration form is available [here](#).



Schoolhouse' front elevation, looking northeast. Photo by Luis René Rivera

After the listing of the Federico Degetau School, Luis René Rivera, the teacher who led the nomination project, proposed to PR SHPO the establishment of a museum dedicated to telling the story of the school. The design, curation, and assembly of the *Museo Histórico Federico Degetau de Arecibo* (Historical Museum at the Federico Degetau School) was proposed for a small supply building on the school campus. Yara Colón Rodríguez, PhD, and conservationist architect Evelyn Villalobos Rivera, both specialists in historic property at the PR SHPO, oversaw the curation of the exhibits. Ms. Rivera also assisted in the production of the exhibition, together with Gloria M. Ortiz Lugo, PR SHPO deputy director. Working with the Conservation Laboratory of the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, architect Villalobos Rivera discovered that the mosaics at the school's main façade had been covered over the years with 24 layers of paint. She led the effort to recreate the mosaics for the museum's exhibition, and the school is developing plans to restore the original mosaics. A unique addition to the museum's collection is a work dedicated to the students made by the plastic artist Garvin Sierra.



Model of the Federico Degetau School, part of an exhibit developed at the school. From left to right, Yara M. Colón Rodríguez, PhD, Historian, PR SHPO; Lillian M. Lara Fonseca, Ed.D., Coordinator of Institutional Program, PR SHPO; Carlos A. Rubio Cancela, Architect, State Historic Preservation Officer; Evelyn M. Villalobos Rivera, Architect, PR SHPO; and Natalia Nuñez, museographic specialist. Photo courtesy of the PR SHPO.

The school model was created by the artisan Omar Figueroa. Graphic artist Natalia Núñez directed museographic design and production. The school community joined in the project with the planting of the museum's garden. The permanent exhibition was subsidized by PR SHPO and displays the extensive primary and secondary documentation identified by the eighth grade students. The exhibition was opened to the public on May 8, 2024.

The success of this initiative came from the joint effort among teachers and students, supported by assistance from PR SHPO personnel. PR SHPO encourages others to pursue similar projects to engage students at an early age and encourage them to be active participants in the preservation efforts of their cultural heritage.

