

# Saving rainforests may help reduce poverty

May 25 2010

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A new study shows that saving rainforests and protecting land in national parks and reserves reduced poverty in two developing countries, according to research by a Georgia State University professor.

Paul J. Ferraro, associate professor of economics in GSU's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, with four co-authors, looked at the long term impacts of the poor living near parks and reserves established in 1985 or earlier in Costa Rica and Thailand.

The logic goes against the conventional wisdom that says taking away resources, such as farm land and forests, exacerbates [poverty](#).

"The results are surprising," Ferraro said. "Most people might expect that if you restrict resources, people on average will be worse off."

The research, entitled "Protected areas reduced poverty in Costa Rica and Thailand," was published in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#) of the United States of America journal.

The authors speculate that the conservation of biodiverse areas may have helped the poor because of tourism and infrastructure, such as new roadways, which may have provided new economic opportunities.

While Costa Rica and Thailand are not representative of all developing nations, Ferraro said the results are promising. He said the study can be replicated elsewhere in the world to look at the impacts of efforts to protect the environment and reduce poverty, two of the United Nations

[Millennium Development goals.](#)

**More information:** For a copy of the study, please visit:  
[www.pnas.org/content/early/2010/05/25/107177107.full.pdf+html](http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2010/05/25/107177107.full.pdf+html)

Provided by Georgia State University

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from <https://phys.org/news/2010-05-rainforests-poverty.html>

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