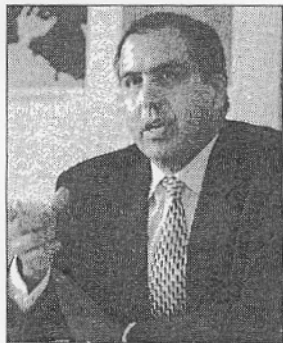


An educational effort that glows

As part of an effort to protect and conserve Puerto Rico's bioluminescent bays, the Conservation Trust and Education Department have launched an instructional program on the rare phenomenon for public school students, officials



STAR PHOTO BY FRANCISCA VON RABENAU O'REILLY

Fernando Lloveras

announce Friday. Bioluminescence, caused by microscopic organisms in water that light up when disturbed, is not unique to Puerto Rico but the island has three lagoons with concentrations of the dinoflagellates that are not seen elsewhere, says Trust Executive Director Fernando Lloveras. The animals are fragile and require unique environments of bays that let them in but keep them trapped, as well as proper salinity and nutrient levels. One such bay in the Bahamas was destroyed, and the luminescence of La Parguera in Lajas has deteriorated.

"It's a phenomenon that all of us in Puerto Rico are responsible for," Lloveras says. **Local News, Page 4**

Conservation Trust and Education launch instructional program on bioluminescent bays

BY JON RUST

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Bioluminescence

The program includes a instructional video, "Visions of Light," describing how bioluminescent bays work, how they are threatened and how to help protect them.

The effort will start at schools in communities surrounding La Parguera, the Trust's Las Cabezas Nature Reserve in Fajardo and in Vieques, where the third bioluminescent lagoon, Mosquito, is located.

"The development of ecological values has to be part of the message that we send to the children of Puerto Rico," Education Secretary Rafael Aragunde said.

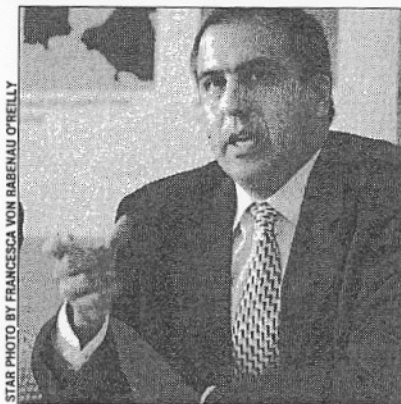
The Trust also developed a new exhibit

where visitors at Las Cabezas can experience bioluminescence during the day and is organizing nighttime interpretive trips, for the general public, to the reserve's Laguna Grande.

As part of "concrete steps" to protect Puerto Rico's bioluminescent bays the organization recently acquired 500 acres of land in the La Parguera watershed, is working on reducing light contamination from communities around the lagoons, and is in discussions with the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources on limiting kayakers' access to Laguna Grande, Lloveras said.

The Trust has also taken legal action against illegal development around biobays, he said.

The unique lagoons need to be protect-



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Conservation Trust Executive Director Fernando Lloveras

ed "not just because of their biological importance, but because we are the custodians of a great natural treasure," he said.