ICWA
LETTERS

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THE AMERICAS

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The Futaleufú River

Part I: To be or not to be dammed?

By Peter Keller

June 2000

PUERTO VARAS, Chile – "*Nada, nada, nada, nada"* was the answer I received from the polite and direct woman on the other end of the telephone line. But, just to make sure she understood my question, I asked her again. "Does your company propose to build a dam on the Futaleufú River?" Again, she answered that nothing is proposed now, but there was a proposal several years ago. She even repeated the word "nothing" four or five times more to make sure I heard her final answer. Now, I was thoroughly confused. This conversation, with the public relations office of Endesa (*Empresa Nacional de Energia, Sociedad Anonima)*, a once state-owned energy company — now privatized — left me wondering if I had a dead story. If it is a dead issue, then why are so many people still speaking about it as if it were imminent? Perhaps I missed something along the way during my search down the proverbial "information trail." Thus I continue the search — so put on your hiking shoes and backpack as we knock on a few doors in pursuit of the illusive and wily "bottom line."

My original itinerary was for a one-week stay in Pumalín Park. However, I should have known that the weather was going to dictate my schedule, because each time I called the ferry transportation company, I received a different answer for the departure time. During the winter months there are only two ways of reaching Pumalín; one is by ferry from Puerto Montt to Chaitén and the other by airplane between the same towns. The ferry operates three times a week and the airline has daily connections. A road also connects these communities, but two fiords must be crossed and the ferry services this route only in the summer months. (Technically, there is one other way to reach Pumalín, and that is by car through Argentina — a long, circuitous route.) Since time was running out and I had only one week left before my trip to the United States (to attend ICWA's 75th anniversary celebration), I decided to take the more dependable alternative — the airplane.

On my way to the airline office in the center of Puerto Montt (the fare for the trip includes transportation to and from the airport) I was delayed by a peculiar incident. While I was walking with a full backpack through the busy morning streets, a man came rushing past me from behind. As he dashed between another person and myself, a plastic bag the size of a baseball fell out of his pocket. At first I thought it was just the usual garbage that people in Chile casually throw away. I kept on walking, but the man next to me noticed the bag was filled with money and he picked it up. He looked at me with a bright smile and cunning eyes as he said, "If you keep quiet I will split the money with you." The tightly rolled wad of peso notes in denominations of $10,000 (equivalent to U.S. $20 bills) looked to be a lot of money — perhaps for a mortgage payment. The owner of the money was already a block away and for a split second I actually considered the proposal, but then switched gears and wondered if it would be best to hold the wanna-be thief or run after the owner of the money. The man sensed my unwillingness to participate in the scheme and started to walk in the opposite direction in an in-

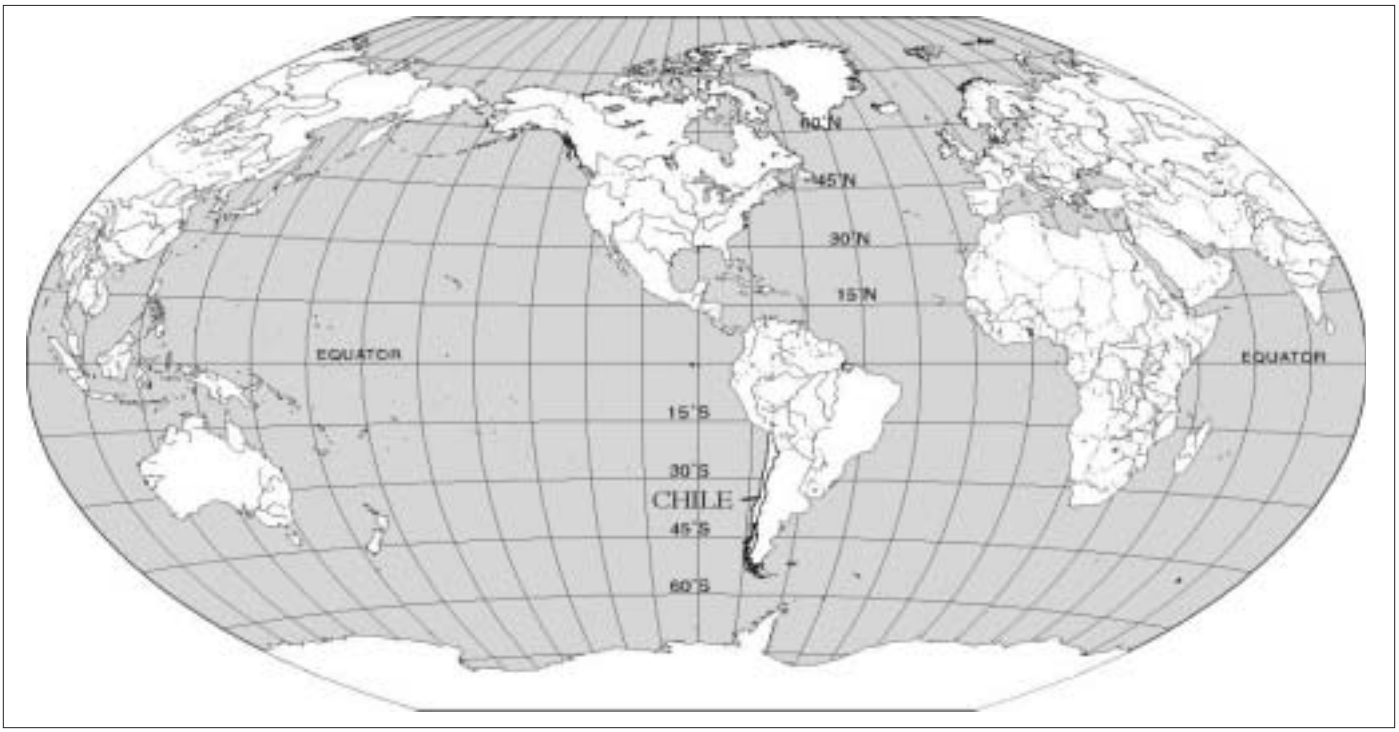
conspicuous manner, not to draw attention to him. I ran after the owner and finally reached him, as he was about to enter an office building. Out of breath from the "elephant" on my back, I told him in cryptic Spanish that the man in the blue hat down the street had his money. He was gone in an instant — and, in a matter of seconds, both were out of view.

A month later I found out that I almost became a "pigeon." Peter Martin, the editor of these newsletters who began his reporting career on the police beat of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, told me that this con is one of the oldest in the books. It is called the"pigeon drop." These two gents were working together. One dropped the plastic bag filled with money. The other, if I got carried away by greed, would have insisted that I give him some of my own money to insure my complicity in this plot to keep the found cash. I would have ended up with — if anything — a roll of cut-up newspaper with a ten-thousand-peso note wrapped around it. I tell this story not just to provide a good laugh about my naiveté but, hopefully, to help others avoid the trap.

I made it to the office just in time to board the bus for the airport. The half-hour flight south to Chaitén offered spectacular views of Chiloé Island on the right side of the nine-passenger aircraft and fiords to the left as we flew over the Gulf of Ancud. The geography of Chile south of Puerto Montt to the tip of Cape Horn is an immense archipelago that extends for over 2,000 kilometers. These islands and fiords receive the initial brunt of storms coming from the South Pacific Ocean. Some areas along the rugged and densely forested coast receive nearly three meters of rain annually. Inland the terrain is more hospitable, and that is where many of the communities and the main highway are located. When we landed in Chaitén (population 3,258) the partly cloudy sky quickly filled with rain clouds and light drizzle soon began. I asked the van driver to drop me off at the center of town, which turned out to be no more than the crossroads of two empty streets next to the plaza. The only sound I heard was a distant barking dog and the wind whistling off the gulf. It felt like I had reached earth's end. But, in terms of comparison with the Northern Hemisphere, I was no farther north than Boston, Massachusetts.

If you have a map of the world or globe nearby this would be the time to get it. Take a close look at the Northern Hemisphere and note how far the landmass extends north. Now flip your map or globe upside down. You will soon notice a lot of blue and the landmasses of South America, Africa, and Australia/New Zealand jutting into this expanse. In Chile I live along the latitude parallel of 42 degrees south, which —compared to the same position in the North Hemisphere — just happens to be the exact latitude where I lived when I worked at Redwood National Park. When I worked at Redwood, located near the California/Oregon border along the Pacific Ocean, I dreaded the rainy winters and thought nothing of a flight to San Diego just to see the sun (and my good friends there). The cruel irony is that I have voluntarily placed myself back into the same climate. The tip of South America, Cape Horn, may look like the nearest point of land closest to a polar ice cap. However, the latitude is only 55 degrees south, equivalent in the northern latitudes to Ketchikan, Alaska and Moscow, Russia.

Wherever I was in relation to my northern neighborhoods, I still needed to find a place to stay for the night. To my surprise every hostel I found was completely full. Highway workers had occupied every vacant lodging facility. They were fixing the "highway," which is really just a two-lane dirt road, but this southern highway called the *Carretera Austral* is the only land-access route within Chilean Patagonia. Finally, at the last hostel I encountered, the owner said his place was full, but that a friend might have an exra



room in his house. He did. Although the house was only a few blocks away the owner of the hostel was kind enough to drive me there. I was surprised how casually this family accepted me into their house. The *jefe* of the house, a local policeman named Manual Fuentes, showed me around my new abode and introduced me to his family — daughters Karine, Andrea and cousin Fabian (Fabian's family lives on a remote peninsula so he lives with his cousins during school year). I asked Manuel where I could find a good meal. Instead of giving me directions, he just drove me there. I was beginning to think that the people here were either very kind or had a lot of free time.

After lunch, during my walk back to the policeman's house, I stopped by the Pumalín Office in downtown Chaitén. I wanted to know whether there was transportation to the park other than the bus. Bus transportation to and from the park connects Chaitén with Caleta Gonzalo, the southern hub of the park. In wintertime the bus operates only every other day. I had already made reservations for the next bus, scheduled for the following morning, but was curious if other means of access were possible. To my disappointment the Pumalín Office and Information Center were closed, but a schedule listed on the door indicated the office should be open. As I walked away dejected, I heard a faint voice say, "They will return soon." I looked around but could not find the source of the voice. I kept on walking and again somebody said, "Wait a little while, they will be back." This time I focused on the direction of the voice and saw a bearded, middle-aged man approach me from across the street. We met halfway and I asked him several questions — including whether he spoke English. He said, "Yes, just a little bit." As I was to find out later, this was the first of many understatements spoken by my new acquaintance, Nicolas La Penna.

Five hours later I was still talking to Nicolas, but we had moved from the middle of the street to the table in his kitchen. In that time I found out that Nicolas was from North America and had moved to Chaitén nearly a decade ago. He now operates an ecotourism company with excursions to a variety of nearby attractions including glaciers, hot springs, beaches, old-growth forests and a sea-lion colony. Plus, his office serves as a bus station for buses with connections to the south. In his spare time he has taught himself to speak Spanish, play guitar — not just one, but four different types — become an accomplished photographer and learned about the biology and history of Patagonia through any book he could find. Just the week before he had bought a computer, printer and scanner. He had already scanned hundreds of his photos and was beginning to develop a web page. Everything he had seen or learned he wanted to share with me. Clicking through his scanned photographs I had him stop at one titled "Futa" because of the spectacular mountain scenery. "Where was this picture taken?" I asked. He responded, "Just up the road, about four hours from here near the Argentine border in the town of Futaleufú." I kept asking more questions about the area and he told me about a proposal to build a hydroelectric dam along the river of the same name. Curious to know more, he gave me a list of contacts that could help me learn about the project. However, at the moment I was on a different pursuit, so I stored the idea away for future use.

By the time I returned to the policeman's house the rain had changed directions — from vertical to diagonal. Throughout the evening, as the wind speed increased — and the rain eventually became horizontal — my host family began to question my idea of camping at Pumalín Park for an entire week. Privately, I was too — especially that night, as I lay awake listening to the wind and rain rattle the metal roof. I finally fell asleep, but woke up early to the beeping of my alarm clock and the howl of a storm that had increased in intensity. The last thing I wanted to do was get out of my warm bed, walk through the unheated house to the bathroom in back and take a shower in a room where I could see my breath. But I did so anyway, because I knew I would have to wait for the next bus to Pumalín. When I reached the bus station, they informed me that the bus was canceled for the day due to the winter storm — but they would try again tomorrow. Without complaint or hesitation the"wathered-

Nicolas La Penna on the right with friend Rolando Gatierrez in front of his office.

passengers quickly dispersed, including myself.

I spent the day with Nicolas, venturing out into the storm sparingly. In the afternoon we heard from his friends that the boat from Puerto Montt would soon be arriving — just seven hours late. The voyage between Puerto Montt and Chaitén usually takes 10 hours. We drove over to the boat ramp to assist the passengers after their 17-hour trip at sea. Nobody seemed annoyed or particularly agitated by this extended stay in the boat. It seems that people in southern Chile easily realize that travel plans need to be flexible — a notion I am beginning to heed. We found two people that needed a ride into town. Nicolas kindly provided boat-to-door service without asking for or expecting payment. After this excursion I returned to my "hostel" for lunch and Nicolas headed out to the airport to see if anyone else needed a ride into town on the flight that had just arrived.

The next morning there was less wind and rain. The bus driver decided the weather was decent enough for the two-hour trip to Caleta Gonzalo — the center of park operations and point of departure for boats crossing Reñihué Fiord. After an hour of driving around town picking up other passengers and packages, we finally headed north out of town towards the park project. I was filled with excitement because I was finally going to see the park, a place I had been reading about since 1995 when the project started receiving international attention. At that time Douglas Tompkins, the founder of North Face Inc. and Esprit Clothing, was just completing major purchases of real estate totaling 300,000 hectares (a little over 1,000 square miles or about the size of the State of Rhode Island). Several years earlier he had sold his interests in the two companies and used a portion of the money to buy this land in southern Chile to protect the temperate rainforest. At the time he faced stiff opposition from conservative politicians in the Chilean government and the military establishment who feared his purchase of land could be a national-security threat, since it stretched from the sea completely across Chile to the Argentine border. Five years later the atmosphere has changed. From my interviews with various people throughout southern Chile, there is general support for the project, which protects native forests — including groves of Alerce — a tree that can live for 3,000 to 4,000 years.

For now, this story about Pumalín Park will have to wait for another trip and another time. I stayed for only two days in the park, hiked a nearby trail and toured the information center, campground and main lodge. I left early because the storm was not letting up and transportation out of the park was looking doubtful; busses were consistently being canceled. Besides myself, only one other group of people were visiting the park, and they were about to leave in their car. They were kind enough to offer me a ride to town and I accepted, knowing it might be my last chance for days to come. [*Author's note: Since this outing I have made arrangements with park officials to volunteer in the park later this year — when the weather improves.*]

When I got back to Chaitén I went straight to the bus

The ferry docking at Chaitén after a 17-hour journey through a stormy night from Puerto Montt.

station and bought a ticket for the next bus to Futaleufú. (Futaleufú is a word from the indigenous people of this region, which means *Rio Grande* in Spanish or Big River in English.) Several hours later I was sleeping comfortably in a warm hostel in this mountain village (population 1,019). There is nothing quite like arriving in an unfamiliar city during the night and waking up in the morning to a New World you have never seen before. I opened the window to see through a thin layer of fog, a glistening blanket of new snow on the surrounding mountains. The sky was clear for the first time in weeks. I didn't want to lose this opportunity to explore, so I took a quick shower, ate breakfast in a hurry and dashed out the door with camera and map in hand. Futaleufú is only 400 meters above sea level and the postcard-perfect backdrop of the Andes Mountains barely reach 2,000 meters, but the open valleys and rocky mountain peaks provided an illusion of an elevation much higher. I searched for the nearest hill and climbed it. Here I scanned the horizon and waited for the fog to lift as the sun finally rose above the mountains — but not until 11:30 a.m. did I feel the warmth of the sun full upon my face.

The fog lifting from the town of Futaleufú as the late-morning sun finally reaches the valley floor

Later that day I began the process of collecting information about the proposal to build the dam. Days before, in Chaitén, Nicolas said I should pay a visit to his friends Veronica and Renzo Rojas, who run a rafting business and own *Hosteria Rio Grande* — the premier lodging facility in town. I stopped by the hostel, told of my interest in the proposed dam, and they said the best person to speak with was the President of their newly formed environmental group, *Amigos Defensores de Futaleufú* (Friends for the Defense of the Futaleufú). The President, Paula Coronado, was busy at the moment, but she would stop by my hostel later that evening to talk.

"Paula Patagonia" (as her gringo friends call her) arrived at my hostel with a flurry of questions for me. She was curious why I would want to know about this project and what I would do with the information. I gave her my answers and without responding to this issue she said, "Do you have some free time? Because I have a job for you."

Cordón de Los Galeses *(The Wales Strand), one of several mountain peaks surrounding Futaleufú.*

"Well, of course I do, I'm just sitting here watching TV," was my response.

After a short drive we arrived at a three-story house under construction. Her family was building a hostel that would also have a restaurant and artisan gift shop. I helped her move some lumber from the back yard to another house across town. During this excursion we talked mostly about her life — growing up in Futaleufú, attending school outside the region and now returning to the town where she was born. After I completed the task she dropped me off at my place and said, "I'll see you tomorrow at 4 p.m. Then we'll talk about the

hydroelectricity project." I guess this was her way of saying she approved of me and would share information.

Paula brought along her "futa" file, a folder about a half-inch thick filled with information about the project. I was expecting a larger file but, there were a few gems among the papers, including resolutions documenting Endesa's water rights, a data table with map coordinates for the proposed dams and the volume of river flow reserved to the company. A week later in a conversation with a contact at the *Ministerio Obras de Publicas - Direccion General de Aguas* (Ministry of Public Works — Water Division) I found out what these papers really meant. In Chile, water in the rivers, lakes, and territorial seas is considered national property.

It is not possible to actually own water, but rather a company or individual applies for the right to use water. This application is submitted to the water division and granted to the applicant after it is published in several newspapers. There is no fee for the right to use water, but the holder of that right is responsible for paying the price of the transaction. This includes legal fees, required survey data, and notarization of the document. The Futaleufú River already has one dam on it, but that is in Argentina where the river begins its westerly flow and connects with the Yelcho River before flowing into the Gulf of Corcovado and then the Pacific Ocean.

At this moment the river is free of dams on the Chilean side. However in 1995, Endesa obtained the right to use water at two locations along the Futaleufú River, plus they obtained rights on two tributaries — the Blue River in 1988 and Lake Espolón in 1996. For the Futaleufú rights they can use nearly 600,000 liters per second of water from the river (21,188 cubic feet per second). Of course holding these rights does not indicate that a dam will be built, just that the company has the right to use the water. Electric companies throughout Chile have obtained the rights to dozens of rivers in the country. The topography is ideal for producing hydroelectricity because of the rapid descent in a short distance from the Andean headwaters to the valleys below. The information Paula provided me was helpful, but I could not draw any firm conclusions regarding the fate of this famed river.

Now you may be thinking "famous river?" To whom? To the kayakers and rafters that flock here every summer, this is the pinnacle of rivers in South America. Several North American adventure travel companies organize trips to this destination. However, before 1985 the river was relatively unknown until former Olympian, Chris Spelius — a member of the 1984 U.S. kayak team and also former U.S. National Champion — put the "Fu" on the map. Chris now lives most of the year in the Futaleufú River Valley and operates a kayaking/rafting guiding business. The river offers Class IV and V runs during the height of the tourist season from December through February (rivers are rated from Class I to Class V, with the fifth class being the most difficult and dangerous). Just last summer the World Rafting Championship was held on the Futaleufú. Teams from 14 countries participated in the event, which takes place in a different country each year. The Russian team commandingly won the event, which is a combination of four races — a time trial, sprint, slalom and long-distance competition. The team from the U.S.A. placed seventh, behind six European teams. The world rafting and kayaking community is particularly keen on protecting this river after they lost the battle on keeping the other world-class river in Chile free of dams.

That "other" river was the Bio Bio, in south-central Chile halfway between Santiago and Puerto Montt. The Bio Bio hydroelectric project, also initiated by Endesa, will generate 570 megawatts of power for Chile's central grid when completed. After a series of unsuccessful lawsuits to stop the project, construction of the Pangue Dam has been fully underway since last year near the community of Ralco. The work is 20 percent complete and the company has already spent $160 million out of $540 million invested in the project. Endesa anticipates the dam will be operational by 2003. When the gates to the dam eventually close and water fills the reservoir, over 3,400 hectares (a little more than 13 square miles; nearly twice the size of Yosemite Valley) of ancestral homelands of the Pehuenche people will be flooded. This is the greater issue in the debate and the Pehuenche have been pursuing legal remedies since 1997. However, the courts have not agreed with the Pehuenche, and now the most recent battle has moved from the courtroom to the construction site. In May of this year there were several days of fighting between the construction workers and a group of Pehuenches. The scuffle included an exchange of rocks thrown with slings and arrows shot from primitive bows. In total, ten people were injured. The people interested in protecting the Futaleufú River are paying close attention to the Bio Bio case. Nevertheless, there is a larger socio-economic issue at hand — the supply and demand of energy in Chile.

Currently, three-quarters of the electricity supplied to Chileans is from hydro and thermo-electricity plants. The remaining electric generation is supplied by the natural gas and fossil-fuel sectors. However, natural gas has only been a player in the energy field since 1997, when two pipelines began delivering gas from Argentina. Economists at the Central Bank of Chile predict that energy consumption will grow at a rate of 8 percent a year for the next decade, thus making energy generation an attractive investment. This is good news for a company like Endesa, which is controlled by the Spanish Company Enersis (they own 64 percent of Endesa Chile). They make a good team because Endesa holds crucial information developed during the days when it was a state-held company and it now holds the rights to use water from various rivers. On the other side of the equation, Enersis is a world player in the energy business with access to large amounts of capital. Information and money — a good combination in any pursuit. Energy companies are not the only ones interested in the supply and demand of electricity in Chile. A quick look at the organizational chart for the Chilean Government indicates the high-pro-

(above) The first set of rapids on the Futaleufú River just a few kilometers from the Argentine border. (below) The Futaleufú River as it enters the first of many canyons, beyond this point there are few options for exiting the river before reaching the end of the run.

file nature of the energy sector in this country. In the Executive Branch chart, there are only two bodies above the level of Cabinet Ministry with direct access to the President - the State Defense Council and the National Energy Commission.

After my meeting with "Paula Patagonia," I returned to my home in Puerto Varas the next day via a four-hour bus ride to Chaitén and a flight above the clouds that had returned — showing their dominance once again, if I'd ever doubted it. I set up a full day of meetings for the following day and invited along my language-exchange classmate — who just happened to be good friends with a person in the Water Division. My first priority was to find a good map showing topographical features and coordinates so I could locate the precise location of where water would be "captured" and "returned" according the documents I had obtained from Paula. Our first stop at the National Property Office turned out to be fruitless because the entire staff, except one, was at a training session. But, as I found out later, they don't produce maps anyway. There is only one agency in Chile that produces maps similar to the maps created by the United States Geographical Survey, and that is the Military Geographical Institute. And there is only one location where maps can be purchased — in the salesroom of the Institute located in downtown Santiago. That expedition would have to wait until I visited Santiago in three more days — prior to my flight to New Jersey for the 75th Anniversary.

Our next stop, the public-works ministry, was the most productive. Catherine, my language- exchange classmate, introduced me to her friend Milo. I showed him the information I had already gathered and he chuckled when he saw it. As it turns out, he created the data tables I had, on a request from a government official in the Province of Palena, the province in which Futaleufú is located. He didn't ask, or maybe didn't want to know, how I received the data. He explained to me the process for acquiring water rights, and also the significance of the other information in the data tables. He frankly told me that just because an energy company applies for water rights one day doesn't mean they will be building a hydroelectric plant the next. It is a method of protecting the company's interest in the market and securing a potential investment. Even though I was concentrating on this particular case, Milo pointed out the larger issue in this situation — a proposal to change the water laws. If passed by the National Congress, comprising by two houses — the Senate and Chamber of Deputies — the process for acquiring water rights would significantly change. Depending on the scenario, the new law could possibly revoke some prior rights — like those obtained when Endesa was state-owned. This could set up an interesting dynamic. If it looked as if the law was going to pass, Milo reasoned, some water projects could be accelerated in order to prevent the loss of

those rights. According to him the proposed changes are needed to revise the antiquated law and provide equity in the use of water. However, the proposed change has been on the table since he started his job with the Ministry of Public Works five years before, and he didn't have much confidence it would be passed anytime soon.

After that informative discussion we headed over to the office of the National Environmental Commission. The commission, often referred to as *Conama (Comisión Nacional de Medio Ambiente)*, in one aspect serves a role similar to that of the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States. That role is to serve as a clearinghouse for coordinating the review of environmental-impact statements (EIS). When *Conama* receives an EIS it sends it out to all the government agencies that may be affected by the proposal. Each agency reviews the document according to the laws that guide their work. For a project such as a hydroelectric facility, Conama would be one of the first to know because it coordinates the review of the document. In this case, Conama did not have any documents or knowledge of a hydroelectric project proposed for the Futaleufú River. But they did tell me about a water project in the Cochamó Valley, which I had not heard of yet. This will be useful for a future newsletter about the effort to protect the Valley, which is referred to as the "Yosemite Valley of Chile." Currently, Cochamó is not part of the system of national parks, reserves or monuments.

According to local phone books and all the taxi drivers we asked, the regional Endesa office was suppose to be on *Avenida Petorca,* the main avenue leading into Puerto Montt. But, after an hour and a half of searching we gave up the hunt and relied on an option we should have chosen earlier — calling directory assistance. The operator said the nearest listing was in Los Angeles (Chile), which is 500 kilometers north of Puerto Montt. Catherine called the office and confirmed what we already suspected — there is no office in Puerto Montt. They had closed the office months before and sent the employees to Los Angeles. Los Angeles is a city of nearly 100,000 people that is close to the Bio Bio River hydroelectric project. It was one more sign that Endesa is concentrating on the Bio Bio project and is not about to propose a project for the Futaleufú River.

So what is the status of the project? From all the information I have received from official sources such as Conama, Endesa, and the Ministry of Public Works I am led to the conclusion that a proposal to build a series of hydropower generation facilities along the Futaleufú River is nonexistent. But the momentum of the rumor mill is picking up speed, and suspicion is growing that a proposal to dam the Fu lurks behind the scenes. I have spoken with a variety of non-governmental organizations involved with protecting the river, including rafting businesses, foundations, writers and a filmmaker. Each is adamant that the proposal is still alive. For their part they have many questions that haven't been answered. As an example, there is a proposal to construct an aluminum smelter near the town of Coihaique, about 300 kilometers south of Futaleufú. Some wonder if there is any connection between the energy needed to operate the plant and the possible damming of the Futaleufú (or closer rivers such as the Baker or Simpson). Also, if Endesa is serious about not proposing any projects for the Futaleufú, why are they still holding onto the water rights? These questions are leading me to explore the River itself, and in December several of my fellow boating-enthusiasts from the States will accompany me on this adventure. So stayed tuned and join me again as we trade in our hiking boots and backpack for a wetsuit and life jacket in preparation for a rafting trip of a lifetime down the deep blue waters of the Futaleufú. ❑

The author riding a bicycle back toward Futaleufú after an epic day exploring the captivating countryside

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Institute of Current World Affairs

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Adam Smith Albion—Uzbekistan

A former research associate at the Institute for EastWest Studies at Prague in the Czech Republic, Adam is studying and writing about the republics of Central Asia, and their importance as actors within and without the former Soviet bloc. A Harvard graduate (1988; History), Adam has completed the first year of a two-year M. Litt. Degree in Russian/East European history and languages at Oxford University.

Gregory Feifer—Russia

With fluent Russian and a Master's from Harvard, Gregory worked in Moscow as political editor for *Agence France-Presse* and the weekly *Russia Journal* in 1998-9. Greg sees Russia's latest failures at economic and political reform as a continuation of failed attempts at Westernization that began with Peter the Great — failures that a long succession of behind-the-scenes elites have used to run Russia behind a mythic facade of "strong rulers" for centuries. He plans to assess the continuation of these cultural underpinnings of Russian governance in the wake of the Gorbachev/Yeltsin succession.

Whitney Mason—Turkey

A freelance print and television journalist, Whit began his career by founding a newspaper called *The Siberian Review* in Novosibirsk in 1991, then worked as an editor of the Vladivostok News and wrote for *Asiaweek* magazine in Hong Kong. In 1995 he switched to radio- and video-journalism, working in Bosnia and Korea for CBS. As an ICWA Fellow, he is studying and writing about Turkey's role as nexus between East and West, and between traditional and secular Islam.

Jean Benoît Nadeau—France

A French-Canadian journalist and playwright, Jean Benoît studied drama at the National Theater School in Montreal, then received a B.A. from McGill University in Political Science and History. The holder of several Canadian magazine and investigative-journalism awards, he is spending his ICWA-fellowship years in France studying "the resistance of the French to the trend of economic and cultural globalization."

SOUTH ASIA

Shelly Renae Browning—Australia

A surgeon specializing in ears and hearing, Dr. Browning is studying the approaches of traditional healers among the Aborigines of Australia and the indigenous peoples of Vanuatu to hearing loss and ear problems. She won her B.S. in Chemistry at the University of the South, studied physician/patient relationships in China and Australia on a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship and won her M.D. at Emory University in Atlanta. Before her ICWA fellowship, she was a Fellow in Skull-Base Surgery in Montreal at McGill University's Department of Otolaryngology.

THE AMERICAS

Wendy Call—Mexico

A "Healthy Societies" Fellow, Wendy is spending two years in Mexico's Isthmus of Tehuantepec, immersed in contradictory trends: an attempt to industrialize and "develop" land along a proposed Caribbean-to-Pacific containerized railway, and the desire of indigenous peoples to preserve their way of life and some of Mexico's last remaining old-growth forests. With a B.A. in Biology from Oberlin, Wendy has worked as a communications coordinator for Grassroots International and national campaign director for Infact, a corporate accountability organization.

Paige Evans—Cuba

A playwright and former Literary Manager of the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City, Paige is looking at Cuba through the lens of its performing arts. With a History/Literature B.A. from Harvard, she has served as counselor at the Buckhorn Children's Center in Buckhorn, Kentucky (1983-84), as Arts Editor of the International Courier in Rome, Italy (1985-86), and as an adjunct professor teaching a course in Contemporary American Playwrights at New York University. She joined the Manhattan Theatre Club in 1990.

Peter Keller—Chile

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Susan Sterner—Brazil

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