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Chile's Temperate Rainforest

A Critical Review of a Proposal to Turn Native Forests into Wood Chips

By Peter Keller

July 2000

PUERTO VARAS, Chile — The story line sounds all too familiar. A big company comes to a small town and offers jobs extracting local natural resources. This could be copper in Montana, coal in West Virginia or gold in British Columbia. This time it is trees in Chile. When I first arrived in Puerto Montt, the hub of southern Chile, a small mountain of wood chips at the shipping dock greeted me — just a few blocks before the bus terminal. Every bus entering and leaving town goes by this 50-foot-high, 200-foot-wide pile of wood chips. Since that first trip I had been wondered where they come from and where they were going. With that intention I set out to research the mystery, but ended up diverted to a related story about a proposal to create another "Mount Puerto Montt."

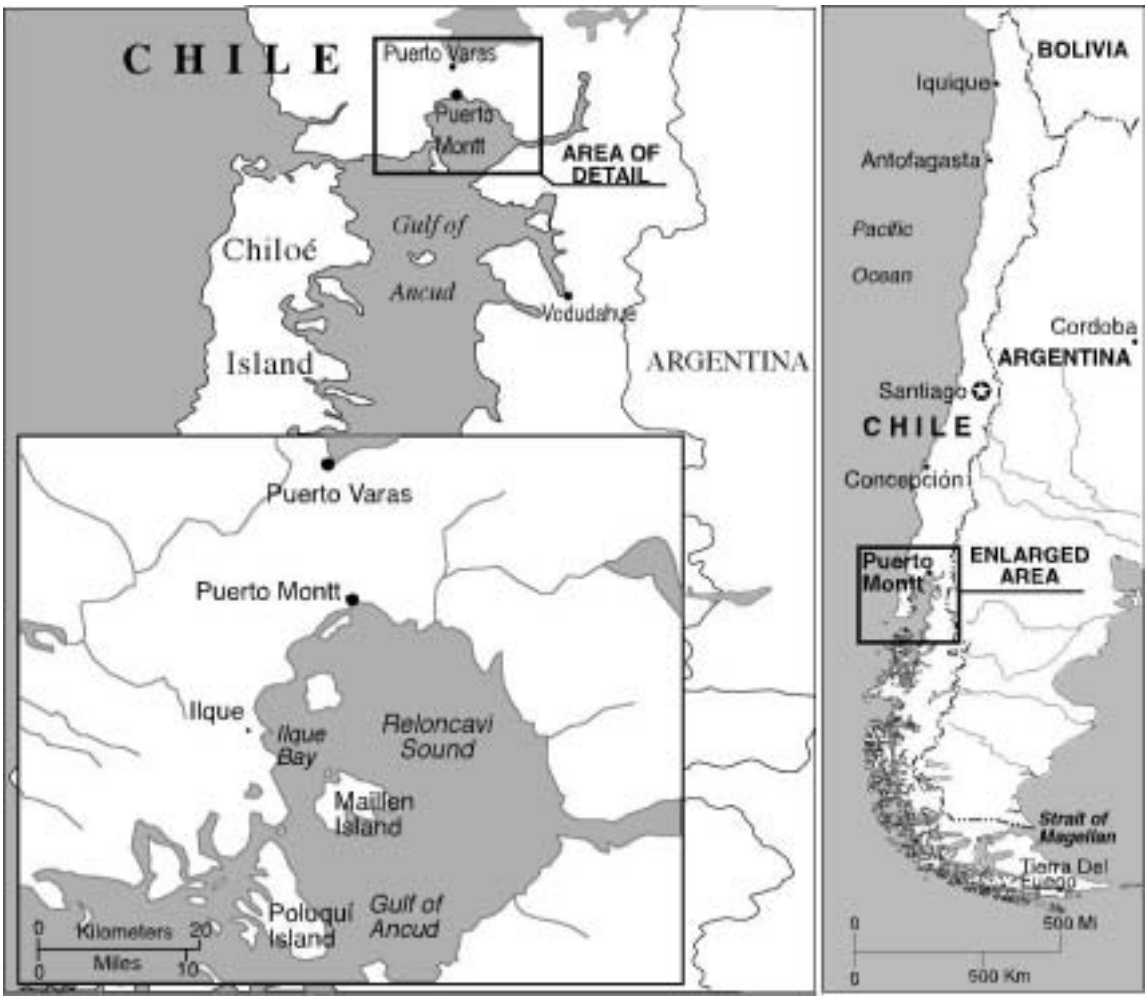
The Proposal

The project is called Cascada Chile. The proponent is the Puerto Montt Industrial Company, which is an association between the Chilean Company *Maderas Cóndor S.A.* and the Idaho-based Boise Cascade Corporation. In May of 1997 this joint venture was formed to develop a plant to produce wood panels called "oriented strand boards," or OSB as they're referred to in the wood-products industry. Besides producing wood chips for OSB and pulp for paper, the project also proposed developing a deep-sea port next to the plant for shipping products to North America and Japan. The proposed 177-hectare site is 25 kilometers southwest of Puerto Montt (population: 110,000) along Ilque Bay in the Reloncavi Sound. Boise Cascade estimates it will invest between $160 to $180 million to develop the proposal. Construction of the plant would require about 710 workers and operation would need 200 employees. Once construction is started, completion of the proposal will take approximately 18 months.

The plant will be able to use 925,000 cubic meters of wood per year — native tree species such as coigüe, mañio, tepa, canelo, ulmo, roble, tineo, avellano, notro and olivillo (generally southern beech or *Nothofagus* forest). Panels can also be made of Monterey pine, alamo and eucalyptus. However, the plant was designed to use native tree species because they offer structural advantages to the boards. The plant will be able to produce around 600 million square feet of OSB annually. In May of 1998 the project was submitted for review in a four-volume environmental impact study to the National Environmental Commission.

What does this all mean?

The local partner, *Maderas Cóndor*, is a relatively small company, but it has a presence in southern Chile and knows how to get projects approved here. It is one of hundreds of small-forest product companies that compete with the two largest in Chile, Arauco and CMPC. Last year they accounted for 57 percent of the export forest-product market. Boise Cascade, the other partner in the Cascada



project is now focused on paper mills, corrugated containers and wood products. Boise Cascade manages nearly 2.3 million acres of timberland in the Pacific Northwest, upper Midwest and southern United States. Through its subsidiary and biggest revenue generator, Boise Cascade Office Products, it distributes a variety of paper products. It operates 64 distribution centers in the United States, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Spain and the United Kingdom. In 1999 this company of 23,726 employees had sales of $6.9 billion and a net income of $199.7 million.

OSB is used primarily in construction of new homes as an outer layer covering the walls and roof. Making OSB begins with using the trunk and the main stem of a tree, then cutting them into smaller pieces, followed by a process of mincing the wood into chips and drying the flakes of wood. To form the panels, the sifted and mixed chips are poured into large trays, placed into a giant hot oven and compressed. The boards are then cut into various sizes for shipment. Two other products, plywood and particleboard, can be used to sheath a house but OSB is less expensive than plywood and holds together better than particleboard. Currently, Boise Cascade has one OSB plant, located in Barwick, Ontario.

Transportation**:** Several incentives are available from ProChile for exporting Chilean products. ProChile, The Chilean Trade Commission, is an agency within the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of the agency is "to support and advance Chilean business interests in the global marketplace by assisting in the development of the export process." The main one is so-called "restitution" to companies that export "non-traditional" products. If a company qualifies for the benefits, a percentage of the full value of a shipment is returned to the company. The percentage fluctuates between 3 percent and 8 percent depending on the product. For exporting OSB the rate of restitution is 5 percent. As an example of the savings, a 40-foot (2,684 cubic feet or 76 cubic meters) shipping container sent from Puerto Montt to Los Angeles, California, usually costs about $1,800. The value of the OSB product inside the container is at a minimum $7,000. After some simple math, the amount returned to the company is $350, which, in effect, reduces the freight charge by 20 percent in this case (a company still pays the full freight charge, but after applying for the restitution are reimbursed by the government). However, under the terms of an agreement with the World Trade Organization, this incentive mechanism must be reduced gradually until the year 2003, when the rate will stay at 3 percent for all products that qualify. The ProChile program for exportation incentives also includes a recuperation of all value added taxes and assistance with banks to secure credit, among other aspects of the program.

The demand**:** According to the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB), 1.3 million new homes were started

The large tree on the right side of the road is an alerce tree. Like a redwood tree, their size is difficult to capture in pictures.

in April of this year in the U.S. and the Association predicts 14 million homes will be started in 1999. To meet this demand the Cascada Chile plant will be able to produce 600 million square feet of (3/8-inch-thick) OSB annually. According to the NAHB, an average single-family house of 2,085 square feet requires 6,212 square feet of OSB to cover the exterior walls and the roof. Thus the plant could provide OSB for 96,000 single-family houses per year.

The supply**:** To keep up this pace the plant will use 925,000 cubic meters of wood annually. In Chile's 10th region, where this project would be located, 6 million cubic meters of wood are already consumed each year. Over half is for firewood, and the rest is used as lumber, chips and exported whole logs. The project would increase consumption of trees by approximately 14 percent.

Depletion of native forests in Chile is an ongoing issue. Some reports note that originally, there were 30 million hectares of native forests in Chile. Native forests now cover 13.4 million hectares and are decreasing (Region 10 contains 3.5 million hectares.). Protected native forests in national parks, account for only 1.4 million hectares. Some species of trees are protected from cutting by being designated as Natural Monuments, such as the alerce and araucaria. The alerce (*Fitzroya cupressoides*) is one of the oldest and largest trees in the southern hemisphere. It is an extremely slow-growing tree with some specimens more than 3,600 years old and 4.5 meters in diameter. The towering alerce resembles the U.S. coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), but it is not nearly as tall (the tallest redwood trees are over 360 feet). Both forest types share a long history of exploitation, particularly in the case of the redwood where only 5 percent of old-growth redwood forests remain, compared to what existed 150 years ago. In 1976 large-scale cutting of alerce ceased when the government passed a law to protect the tree. The araucaria (*Araucaria araucana*) is another protected tree. Spindly looking, it grows to 150 feet in height and can be more than 2,000 years old. The puzzle-shaped bark and unusual foliage give it a distinct form that can be easily recognized from a distance. The araucaria is recognized as an "archetypal" tree because fossilized remains of its early ancestors have been found in Argentine Patagonia and the Petrified Forest National Monument in Arizona

The alerce and araucaria may be protected, but other native forests in the region are vulnerable to depletion. Some forests are harvested and cleared to make way for plantations of species imported from Australia and North America. As a matter of fact, non-native trees account for the bulk of revenues generated by the Chilean forest industry today. The most prominent species are the Monterey pine, eucalyptus and Douglas fir. Oddly enough, the first Monterey pines were planted in Chile during the late 1800s when a person from Concepción, who had apparently ordered Douglas fir seedlings, received Monterey pine by mistake. As it turned out, the tree grows three times faster in some parts of Chile than in California. Prior to 1974, non-native trees

An araucaria forest in Huerquehue ***National Park located near Pucón***

were not a major part of the Chilean forest industry. This changed with Decree Law 701, which set up a major reforestation program that included subsidies for planting pine and eucalyptus plantations. As a result, plantations have rapidly spread across south-central Chile, occupying more than 1.9 million hectares by 1999, according to INFOR (the Chilean Forestry Institute). Nearly 75 percent of these plantations are covered by Monterey pine. The wood is used for lumber, wood chips, pulp to make paper and unprocessed logs for export.

Review of the Project

In May of 1998 a *Estudio de Impacto Ambiental* (EIA), similar to that used in the United States environmental impact statements, was submitted to the *Comisión Nacional del Medio Ambiente* (The National Environmental Commission, also known as Conama). In Chile a company proposing a project is responsible for completing an EIA. Cascada Chile proponents hired the firm Dames and Moore to complete the task. Dames and Moore is an architectural and engineering-services firm based in Los Angeles, California, with 250 offices in 33 countries. Obviously it is a sizable-enough international company to produce thorough environmental-compliance documents. In this case, the geographical scope of the EIA had to cover only the 177 acres where the proposed plant and port would be built. Since the wood supply is destined to be purchased from private landowners and not logged by the companies involved, it was not necessary to evaluate the impact of logging, according to Conama guidelines.

Inside a Chilean temperate rainforest. Depending on the location, these forests receive between 1,500 mm to 5,000 mm of rain annually.

The Conama-review process is done in two stages. First, the technical committee, comprising of representatives from 24 governmental offices such as transportation, housing, fisheries, forestry, agriculture and tourism, provide their evaluations to the Regional Environmental Commission. This body of elected and presidentially-appointed people includes provincial governors and regional secretaries of various agencies. They vote on whether to approve or reject projects. In January of 1999 the commission voted overwhelming to approve — only one person cast a vote of rejection. Since then a new President has been elected and new people have filled the appointed positions. The recently-appointed national director of Conama, Adrianna Hoffmann, is a well-known and respected botanist who was the Executive Director of the *Defensores Del Bosque Chileno* (Defenders of the Chilean Forest). This environmental organization is the only nationwide group in Chile dedicated entirely to sustainable forestry and preservation of native forests. She was publicly opposed to the Cascada Chile project while she was Executive Director of *Defensores*. Because of possible conflict of interest, she has elected to disqualify herself from any decision involving the project if the issue returns to Conama. However, it doesn't look it will be up for review again. In October 1999 the Chilean Supreme Court upheld the approval decision by the Regional Environmental Commission in a suit filed by environmentalists requesting an injunction for further studies of the proposal.

> "If you haven't been in a Chilean Forest, you don't know this planet."
>
> — Chilean poet and Nobel Prize winner (1971) Pablo Neruda.

Why care if a forest is native or non-native?

"A native forest is noted for its wide variety of tangled plant communities, distinct species and ecological characteristics that differ significantly from one part of the forest to the next" wrote Ken Wilcox in his 1996 book *Chile's Native Forests*. In contrast, a non-native forest is noted for little diversity in the types of plants and animals found within its ecosystem, which is often a monoculture. Southern Chile is home to one of the world's last two extensive temperate native rainforests. The other is the Pacific Northwest of the United States and Canada. There are over 50 species of trees

in the Chilean temperate rainforest and some scientists estimate that up to 90 percent are endemic — meaning they only grow in this area. As an example of the importance of conservation endemic trees, compounds from the leaves of the boldo tree have been used in the treatment of liver ailments and digestive problems. The bark of the canelo tree is high in Vitamin C and indigenous Mapuche people use other parts of the tree for traditional treatments and remedies. Still, according to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, Chile is the second-most deforested country in all of Latin America and the pace of destruction of native forests has more than doubled since 1984. Chile's Central Bank has predicted that unprotected native forests maybe gone in 20 years if the pace continues.

Besides genetic diversity, there are spiritual reasons for conserving native forests should not be overlooked. These woods provoke emotions and experiences that are different from those felt in a non-native forest. This is especially true in an old-growth forest, which is generally defined as a forest with trees greater than 200 years old. For me this is vividly clear from my own experience of working at Redwood National and State Parks. This park, cooperatively managed by the National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, contains 106,000 acres in three state parks surrounded by the national park. If possible I prefer to hike trails that form a loop, where you don't have to backtrack along the same trail. During one hike in the Little Lost Man Creek watershed, I came to the end of the trail, but looking at my map I could see that another trail was located just over the ridge in the next watershed to the north called Lost Man Creek. It was late in the afternoon, but according to the map it looked like the other trail was less than a mile away — so I decided to make my own way through the forest.

To imagine the terrain, think back to the *Starwars* movie *Return of the Jedi* during the final scene when they were flying around on the little scooters. [By the way if you seek to find where the scene was filmed, you can't. The location was on private land and has since been logged.] As I crossed the creek and hiked up the hillside the ferns were over my head. Quickly I came upon a tree knocked down by a windstorm; the 10-foot-high trunk created a formidable barrier. I followed the tree to the base and went around the massive, upended root wad. Making my way farther up the hill I nearly fell into a hidden sinkhole that contained a subterranean stream flowing through it. The deeper I penetrated the forest the thicker the vegetation became. To see where I was going I needed to look up into the forest canopy to maintain the right direction. At that moment I felt as if the trees had humanlike characteristics and were looking down at me, shaking their canopy-heads with branch-arms crossed making a "tsk tskin" sound from their trunk-mouths in disapproval. I could imagine them saying, "You mortal fool! What are you doing? Don't you know you can't impose your will upon us. We are here forever. That is why we are called sempervirens." I began thinking the name of the area, "lost man," was ironic because I could be one soon if I slipped into a sinkhole or fell off a log and broke my leg. I could be never heard from again — swallowed up in the biomass as worm-food and nutrient-rich fertilizer for the next generation of redwood trees. This thought and the setting sun led me to the wise conclusion of heading back — cautiously — to the trail and then to my car with a new sense of humility.

Environmental Activism — Chilean Style

Back to that bus ride into Puerto Montt. About 10 kilometers outside of town is a billboard promoting the Cascada Chile project and advocating the technological value of OSB. Once you reach town, there is another billboard before you get to the wood-chip pile, but it opposes to the project. The billboard shows a backdrop of a native forest and says; "*We save our native forest. No to Cascada Chile. No more Chips*." This battle of the billboards intrigued me to learn more about environmental activism in Chile. I had heard about the leader of the "no to Cascada" campaign from two of my housemates, Carlos and Anita, and they gave me his telephone number. I set forth to meet Mauricio Fierro and hear his opinion about the Cascada Chile project and the environmental movement in Chile.

Our first encounter was at the local meeting place — the *Barometro*. This place is similar to the bar on the television show *Cheers* — and yes, everybody does know your name. Mauricio arrived late after a meeting at which he and his fellow activists were designing a new sticker for the "No to Cascada" campaign. By now I was used to the Chilean tradition of arriving late, but I was not prepared for his directness and energy in discussing the issue. Usually, in conversation with new Chilean acquaintances there is a warm-up time of greeting and getting to know the other person's background. But not with Mauricio he wanted to get right to business and tell me everything he knew about the basics of the project. Then he suggested I read every-

Mauricio Fierro, the President of Geo Austral — the Southern Environmental Center. This group is one of the most vocalopponents to the Cascada Chile project.

The battle of the billboards. The billboard above, promotes the Cascada Chile project. The one below opposes the conversion of native forests into wood chips.

thing he would give me. *Then* we could discuss the topic with a more informed perspective.

Mauricio spoke with force and energy. He made his points with hand gestures, a clenched fist to accentuate his love for the native forests, a chopping motion of his right hand — in the form of an axe — against his left palm laid flat to indicate the urgency of the situation. This forceful style is also evident in the mission statement of his organization, called *Geo Austral*, which grew out of two citizens' committees originally initiated to fight against Cascada Chile. I have attached the full text below because I think it provides the reader with a sense of the passion of the members and the direction they are pursuing. Mauricio provided the translation of the mission statement from Spanish to English:

> **"Geo Austral,** or **the Southern Environmental Center**, is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, of a functional nature, of an indefinite duration, of a distinctly scientific and conservationist character, without any religious or political affiliation, and with a legal status that allows it to exist exempt from taxes and receive support from institutions and organizations through its research, development, and joint works projects. The general objective of ***Geo Austral*** is the protection of flora and fauna and Chile's diverse terrestrial and marine ecosystems, especially those found in the temperate rainforest zones of Southern Chile."

I spent the next week reading the information from Mauricio, the proposal by Cascada Chile, and carried out full web searches on all aspects of the project. After that I felt ready for another meeting. We arranged it the same terms as the first — in the bar, sometime in the evening. I brought along my tape recorder with a list of prepared questions. Reproduced below are my "Q's" and his "A's":

How did you become interested in the environmental movement?

"I have always been interested in the environment, especially since University where I studied Forest Engineering. When I graduated in 1985 I went to work in Santiago for CODEFF [*Comite Nacional pro-Defensa de la Fauna and Flora*, the most prominent and oldest environmental organization in Chile]. In a joint project with the World Wildlife Fund I helped with the first survey of the native forests in Chile. I worked on this project until 1989, when I wanted to leave my hometown of Santiago to work and live near the forest — because there are no forests in Santiago. Also CODEFF was too politically correct for me. So I left. In 1991 I moved to Puerto Montt with just my backpack. I worked in mapping or any type of work I could find. I spent most of my free time in the mountains. Spirit of the soul is very important to me. For me, I had many problems with the group of ecolo-

gists in Santiago and I did not want to work for a traditional environmental group. I felt they were just working for money and not from the soul.

"I wanted to get information out to people about forestry projects so they would know what is happening in the forests. In 1995, through a contact, I learned about Lighthawk and the work they were doing to document the destruction of the forest [Lighthawk is a group based in the United States that uses small aircraft to monitor forestry projects from the air]. I worked with Bradford Archer on this project until 1997 when problems began for Lighthawk USA and they removed the program from Chile. The program disappeared in the summer of 1997.

"But prior to this I went to the United States in 1994 for two months on what I call an environmental tour. It was not just a vacation, but a chance to make contacts with environmentalists in the United States. I spoke with many people as I traveled through five states, like California, Oregon, Washington, and New Mexico. I made some very good contacts and even met with corporations that had an interest in Chile. I wanted to be proactive and meet with them before projects were proposed in my country. I met with Boise Cascade officials and also went to Bellingham, Washington and met with people at Trillium [This is a company that has proposed a project in Tierra del Fuego called *Río Cóndor* to sustainably harvest 825,000 acres of hardwood forest — another topic for another time]. I told these people that there are many problems in Chile. For example, in the context of the forests, if a patient has cancer and it produces a headache, we would give them aspirin. But the problem needs a different medicine. We give the same solution to everything.

"In 1994 when I heard about the Cascada Chile project from my Boise Cascade meeting, I returned to Chile and gave this information to many ecologists in Santiago, but none of them reacted and did anything proactive. I knocked on many doors to ask for help to begin researching this project. Nobody helped me. So I gathered all my money and set a goal to work for two years with all my force to fight this project. I found others that would work from the heart and not just for money. The forests for us are a way of life. For [environmental groups] in Santiago, the forests are just a form of work. They don't have forests there; at 6 p.m. they leave their jobs and don't think about it any more. But for us living here, this is our life.

"For example, forestry companies work in the forests cutting trees in the summertime here. But ecologists in Santiago are on vacation at that time, so there is no one to watch the companies and document the damage that is taking place. So we formed a group to work on this, called the Puerto Montt Citizens Committee, and later formed one in Puerto Varas and also Osorno. These committees came together to form *Geo Austral*. I am lucky I have the time to do this — I don't have a wife, kids, or girlfriend. So I can dedicate my time to this project.

"One thing many groups and businesses lack is women. We need to have more women in these groups, because they have more of a conscience about the environment. Men lead the largest companies and governments in the world; therefore it is logical that the cause of the grandest problems in the world are due to men. So this group [Geo Austral] is different, the leadership is a mix of men and women, a balance."

Where does your passion for protecting the environment come from?

"My passion is for the mountains. I like mountain climbing, trekking — I love all outdoor activities, sailing and mountain biking too. I love this type of life. I have some property in the mountains, near a lake and river — the Puello River. I built a cabin there — it took four years to construct. For a Chilean I am pretty strange don't you think? My passion for the outdoors?

"Usually ecologists have a great heart but little money. But I want to use intelligence, besides the heart, to work on a project. To corporations everything is an economic issue. So we need to use the same method and meet them on their level with economic data. Maybe we don't have money, but we can use our imagination to progress forward. Economic data — like how many jobs does tourism produce? — is what we need to fight with. Our group is very sincere, and we can say without fear — if we feel it is true — that others are corrupt. In Chile many groups of ecologist are timid, they have fear. So they don't speak out. But, we do speak out and don't have fear. We are 100 percent transparent. We raise money for a project, not for ourselves to pay for salaries and offices, but to put toward the project. Other groups use a large percentage to pay for salaries. It seems to me, if you want to just make money you should work for a corporation or those other groups of ecologists.

"I don't like it when people work for environmental groups and then work for the government. It is the same excuse every time, people say it is better to change the system from the inside. But I don't agree with this excuse. You need to have a position, and can't be on both sides. Some are just looking for fame or to see themselves on television. In Chile there exists corruption. Except we use the 'tie,' the gentleman of business can be corrupt as well, with money under the table. [Mauricio uses the word 'tie' to refer to business executives and government officials in general, who partake in the corruption he describes.] There are different types of corruption. True democracy does not exist here, what exists is kleptomania. The politicians in Chile take money. Controls don't exist. Sure, they are laws they sign, but they are just paper. And many don't pay attention to them. There are no journalists in Chile. It's an error to think they exist. They are social communicators, because a journalist investigates and these people don't investigate. Because they have fear of the wastebasket; if the editor doesn't like it, he throws it out. The editors of the newspapers don't allow investigations. Papers are not criti-

cal of the government. Unless something is very evident, then they will publish it."

Is it difficult to organize people in Chile?

"In Chile it is easy to organize everybody, but the problem is that [the organization] never functions. The structure is based on bureaucracy and doesn't function. Always papers, papers, papers — we are very legalistic society. We are devoted to the law. The law is the law. But it could be wrong. They use the law when they want to. Even if the law is wrong."

What is the future of the environmental movement in Chile?

"This is my idea about the future after speaking with many people. It is 'AC' and 'DC.' *Antes* (before) Cascada Chile and *despues* (after) Cascada Chile. Before Cascada Chile, environmental groups worked against certain projects and would protest. But manipulation of the law is very easy and corporations use the law to their advantage. But, Cascada Chile marks the line of a different path. In the past a business would announce a proposal and ecological groups would protest. In the situation now, no ecological groups protested, because there was political dealing behind the scenes. The groups watched from afar and participated only when there was press around. I think there are different stages of fights for natural resources. The first stage is local businesses versus a few citizens. The second stage is organized citizens and ecological groups against the businesses. The third stage is citizens and ecological groups against businesses and the government. The fourth stage is where there exists no confidence in ecological groups. That is where we are now, ecological groups use environmental controversies just to gain money. In this stage the government is against corporations, and ecological groups just watch from the side. The fifth stage is where ecological groups, citizens and local businesses are together against the government and corporations. The final stage is corporations against corporations, where the citizens just watch and the government stays out of it. In the future governments will not exist; just corporations, and they will run the government and control the resources. You see this theme covered by many movies in Hollywood today.

"Ecological groups in Chile need to change. Businesses learn very quickly from others businesses that have made mistakes before them. They figure out what happened to that business before and use those lessons. Corporations evolve and learn very quickly from each other. And adapt rapidly. So we need to work now on problems we see coming in the future — like the Futaleufú project. Some say it may happen in ten years or more, so we don't need to work on it — but I think we need to prepare now. The solution is to work on the cause now before projects are authorized.

"The only solution left is to buy the property. When you buy property to protect it, this is the only form of complete protection. Ownership of property is much stronger than the laws for protecting the environment. We should buy all the water rights to protect rivers and buy the forest before they cut it down. This is the only form of protection. The problem is getting the money."

In your opinion what is the future of the Cascada Chile project?

"I think Cascada Chile is almost dead. They don't have the money to do the project. Boise Cascade has fear now of any projects in Chile because of problems in the United States with plants that have been burned. [On Christmas Day 1999, a Boise Cascade office in Monmouth, Oregon was destroyed by a fire causing $1 million in damage. An underground eco-terrorist group called Earth Liberation Front (ELF) took credit for setting the fire. In a letter to local media outlets, postmarked December 28 from Seattle, ELF wrote, "Boise Cascade has been very naughty. After ravaging the forests of the Pacific Northwest, Boise Cascade now looks towards the virgin forests of Chile. Let this be a lesson to all greedy multinational corporations who don't respect their ecosystems. The elves are watching." This was the seventh arson claimed by ELF in the past three years. The group also took credit for last year's $12 million arson at the Vail, Colorado, ski resort—the most destructive act of eco-terrorism in U.S. history.]There is a network for communications to get this information out, groups have many contacts. As an example of how this works, one bee around the head is a little annoying, but not a problem. But many bees buzzing around your head is a big problem. That is what we do. Forests are life. It is almost a war just to control the corporations. If you have a pebble in your shoe and walk a little way, it is no problem, but if you walk a long way it becomes a problem. We need to be like the pebble and be here for the long run. A small pebble to annoy. Our group uses strong words, like corruption and manipulation, and others don't like it. But someone has to do it."

Where do you get your money for your projects?

"We get it where we can. Local citizens and businesses contribute to the cause. I work in the summertime as an ecotourism guide by leading treks or fly-fishing trips. We have a lawyer that works on our cases for free; he works on divorce law and criminal cases, and he also contributes money when he can. We work because we like the forests not because we like money.

"I am against Cascada Chile using native forests. There are other plants in Chile that use plantation pines and that is all right by me. There is an OSB plant in Concepción that uses Monterey pines. That is okay with me. And now there is one more plant that was built by Louisiana Pacific in Panguipulli several hours north of here. The project went through without problem because they are using plantation trees."

After this interview I was a bit in shock because Mauricio spoke so freely and openly. He does not feel confined to hold back his thoughts, and these are strong statements. His tactics and dialogue are probably among the most radical and out-

spoken in the country. After the interview he showed me the newest sticker that will be coming out soon. He said other environmental groups were afraid of the words he used in this newest version and asked him to tone it down. He didn't, because he feels these are words of truth. The sticker is in the same format as the current one, but says, "Chao Cascada Chile. Chao Manipulation, Corruption, Destruction."

The current sticker is everywhere southern Chile, particularly in the communities of Puerto Montt and Puerto Varas. I continually see stickers on cars, in store windows and on bus stops. Mauricio told me that the design has a specific meaning. In Chile it is common to use the index finger raised in the air to indicate caution, to beware of someone or something. In the sticker the index finger is topped with the shape of a forest canopy — meaning that both the forest and Cascada Chile should be watched.

The ever-present sticker, this time in the back window of a car.

The stickers remind me of a time ten years ago when I lived in northwestern Montana — but the sentiment was in reverse. Throughout the towns of Libby, Kalispell and others, there were wooden signs, painted green with black lettering, posted in front lawns and windows of local businesses saying, "This Family [or This Business] Supported by Timber Dollars." In reality the issues — how to make a living in an economy dependent on the local resources — haven't changed significantly. It's just that perhaps the pendulum is beginning to swing away from *Ex*traction to *At*traction (the various forms of tourism).

In the latest chapter of this story, Boise Cascade recently announced it is delaying the Cascada Chile project. The reason for delaying the construction of the plant is the slumping price of OSB; now the "pace of development will be dictated by the market and economic conditions." So for now, the project that has been approved by Conama and upheld by the Supreme Court will have to wait for a stronger OSB market before beginning the 18 months of construction needed to complete the project. Project proponents have also come out with new information from a recent forest inventory. It confirms that enough "younger, renewal-forest trees" exist to support the project. Also, they state that no logs from old-growth forests will be used. This means they would supply the Cascada Chile mill only with harvests from the region's younger, renewal forests. They defined these forests as being less than 80 years of age and containing second-growth trees. The study concludes that current timber volumes and growth rates in the region are more than five times greater than that needed to sustain the Cascada Chile mill. But the core objection by Mauricio's group still remains — no matter how old the tree is, they are still using native forests to supply the mill — and thus enticing subsequent conversion of native forests lands to other uses (*i.e.* plantations of pine and pasture land).

Finally, last week, I went to Puerto Montt, about 20 kilometers from my home, to take a picture of the wood-chip pile. The infamous, "Mount Puerto Montt" is within easy view of anyone who takes the main route into town — including the thousands of tourists that come here every summer. To my surprise the hill was gone. City officials began to realize the bad rap this landmark was giving their town, so they asked the Port Authority to take care of it. They did — but by moving it to the port in Calbuco — about 45 kilometers to the south west of Puerto Montt, far off the beaten path. Mauricio called this just another sign that the symptom — the sight of more chips — is being treated, not the disease. ❑

FELLOWS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES
Institute of Current World Affairs

EUROPE/RUSSIA

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

Public affairs officer at Redwood National Park and a park planner at Yosemite National Park before his fellowship, Peter holds a B.S. in Recreation Resource Management from the University of Montana and a Masters in Environmental Law from the Vermont Law School. As a John Miller Musser Memorial Forest & Society Fellow, he is spending two years in Chile and Argentina comparing the operations of parks and forest reserves controlled by the Chilean and Argentine governments to those controlled by private persons and non-governmental organizations.

Susan Sterner—Brazil

A staff photographer for the Associated Press in Los Angeles, Susan received her B.A. in International Studies and Cultural Anthropology at Emory University and a Master's in Latin American Studies at Vanderbilt. AP gave her a wide-ranging beat, with assignments in Haiti, Mexico and along the U.S.-Mexican border. Her fellowship topic: the lives and status of Brazilian women

Tyrone Turner—Brazil

A photojournalist (Black Star) whose work has appeared in many U.S. newspapers and magazines, Tyrone holds a Master's degree in Government and Latin American politics from Georgetown University and has produced photo-essays on youth violence in New Orleans, genocide in Rwanda and mining in Indonesia. As an Institute Fellow he is photographing and writing about Brazilian youth from São Paulo in the industrial South to Recife and Salvador in the Northeast.

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