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Peter Keller is a Forest & Society Fellow of the Institute, studying and writing about national and private parks in Chile and Argentina.

Puyehue National Park

By Peter Keller

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AGUAS CALIENTES, Chile — When I was nine years old my family went on a vacation to Seattle, Washington from our home in central Minnesota. This was my first trip to the American West. After two days of driving across the Great Plains on U.S. Highway 2 through North Dakota and eastern Montana we arrived in a landscape foreign to my eyes — The Rocky Mountains. Memories of this experience are still fresh in my mind, such as seeing the distant snow-capped mountains from the plains of northern Montana and rolling down the car window to get a better view — but instead feeling a blast of warm, dry air hit my face.

I can still picture the moment we crossed the Flathead River at West Glacier and were greeted by the sign, "Welcome to Glacier National Park." I sensed we were entering a special place from the formality of the sign. Farther along inside the park, as we approached a mountain pass along the Going-to-the-Sun Highway, the landscape changed from a dark, impenetrable forest to "carpet-like" greenery high on the mountain slopes. I imagined lying on my side and rolling down the hill like a human rolling pin. At the mountain pass the green "carpet" changed to a color spectrum of wild flowers, lichen-covered rocks and patches of snow. These images have stuck with me through time and have perhaps provided inspiration for my career selection. However, I really don't know why I am so fascinated by national parks. All the reasons I have come up with haven't been able to capture the essence. And as time goes by I realize if I understood why, the mystery would be gone and my interest would fade.

Now that I am exploring the parks of Chile and Argentina there is ample mystery to keep me fascinated. As a Musser Fellow I have come here to examine the operation of parks in the southern cone of South America and compare them with my previous experiences in the U.S. Parks System. A majority of my newsletters will investigate a variety of parks and issues beginning with this edition describing the operations of Puyehue National Park in south-central Chile. In July of 2000 I spent two weeks as a volunteer in this park, interviewing staff and conducting research in the park library. What follows is an account of the experience.

History of Puyehue National Park and Evolution of the Park System

The first national park to be established in Chile was Vicente Pérez Rosales, in 1926. The mountainous park is just across Lake Llanquihue from my house. On a clear day I can see the peaks of Volcano Osorno and Mount Tronador from the second-story window next to my bedroom. On cloudless mornings as the sun appears over the mountains, the reflection against the snow-covered peaks provides an inspiring wakeup call. Mountain scenery has been the inspiration for the establishment of many national parks throughout the world. And like Mount Rainier National Park and Crater Lake National Park in the United States, the impulse for establishing Puyehue National Park came from the local community (Puyehue is a Mapuche word for "the place of fresh water"). In this case, *Club Andino Osorno*, the local alpinist club, had been organizing hiking and skiing trips

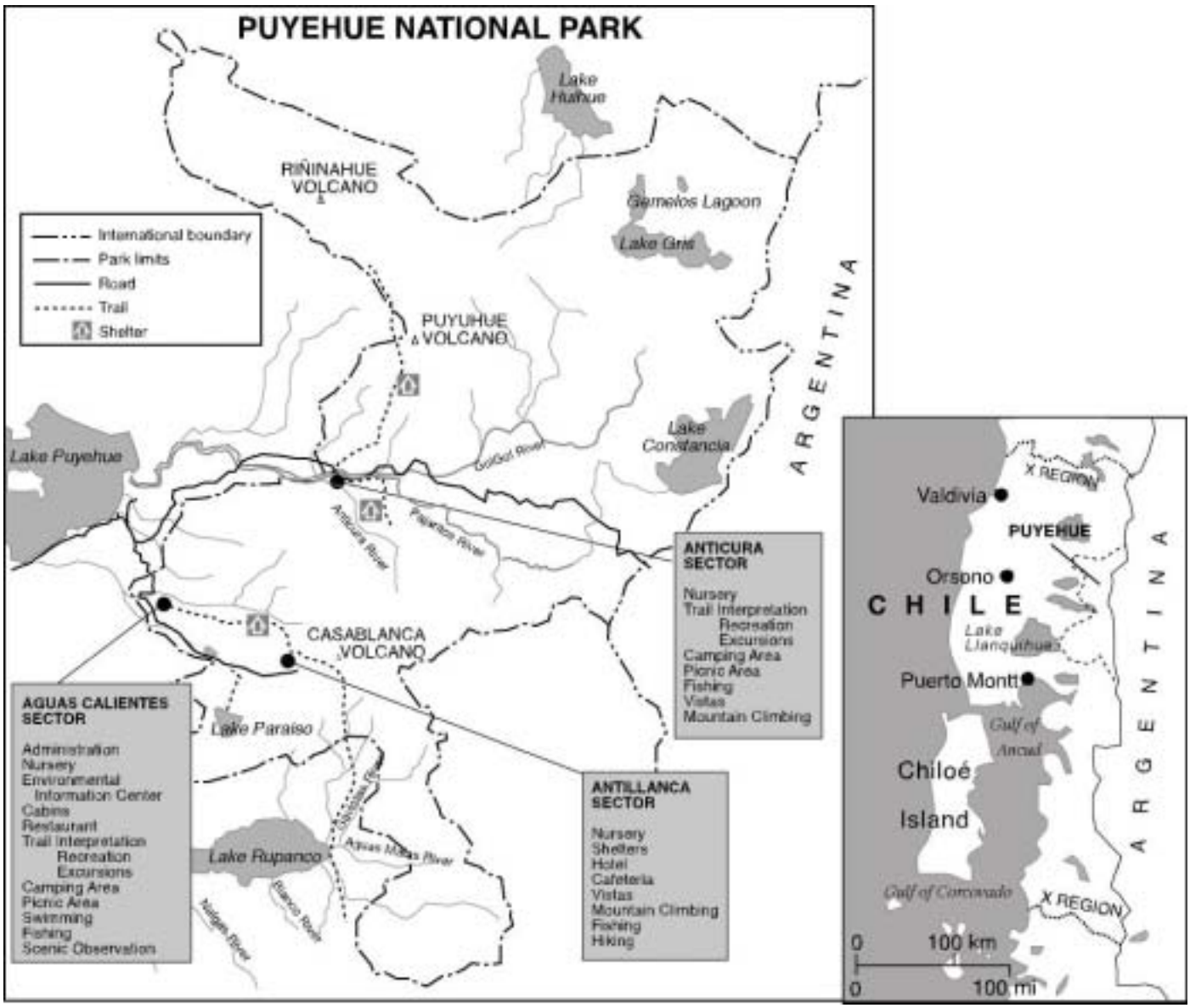
(above) Volcano Casablanca in the distance with a coigüe *(the darker trees with leaves) and* lenga *(the lighter colored trees without leaves) forest in the foreground. (right) The lower elevations of the park contain trees such as* tepa, arrayan, ulmo, canelo *and* tineo, *which are part of a temperate rainforest — known as the Valdivian Rainforest.*

to the mountains for over 60 years. In 1935 the Club purchased land near Volcano Casablanca and began to develop a ski area called *Antillanca,* a Mapuche term for "jewel of the sun." In part due to the Club's active interest, the government established the 65,000-hectare Puyehue National Park in 1941 to protect the native forest, the hot springs found within this volcanic region and also the high country surrounding Antillanca. Six years later the Club initiated the construction of a road from the current park headquarters in Aguas Calientes to Antillanca — the ski area it still owns and operates to this day.

In 1981 the Augusto Pinochet Government expanded the park to its current size of 106,772 hectares. I was surprised to learn this; I had thought a country under military rule would not put much effort into protecting the environment. But in fact, during Pinochet's 17 years, 22 protected areas were established — five of which are national parks. I made a list of all environmental-protection projects initiated during this time period. I was astonished again; it was more than I anticipated. For example, in the mid-1970s the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) under took a series of projects with park officials, including the development of a comprehensive park-system plan, a general interpretation plan and individual plans for Rapa Nui, Fray Jorge, Juan Fernandez, and Torres del Paine National Parks. Peace Corps Volunteers worked in several national parks and the Washington D.C. National Zoo conducted a study of *pudus*, a species of miniature deer in Chile.

During this period the Chilean Government ratified the World Heritage Convention and the Ramsar Convention for the protection of wetlands — although only one site has been nominated for each category (Rapa Nui National Park and Carlos Anwandter Sanctuary, respectively). However, in 1996 the Chilean Government added six more Ramsar sites to protect wetlands, mostly in northern Chile. Even an International Workshop on protected areas was sponsored by the government and held at Puyehue National Park. Finally, the current system of categorizing protected areas was developed in 1984. I recite this list not as a Pinochet fan, but to show that you can't trust initial impressions.

The system used to categorize protected areas was given an odd acronym, *SNASPE (Sistema Nacional de Areas Silvestres Protegidas del Estado*). The 1984 law created four categories within the national system of wild protected areas. They are national parks (32 sites), national reserves (43), natural monuments (12) and wilderness reserves (none has been designated yet). In total the system covers nearly 14 million hectares, or 18 percent of the country. Of this, 8.4 million hectares are national parks, about 10.7 percent of the country. In comparison, the United States has 33.3 million hectares of



parks, which represent 3.6 percent of the land area.

According to Carlos Hernández, a park ranger who's become a friend, one of the major problems internally for Conaf (*Corporacion Nacional Forestal*), the agency in charge of managing national parks, among other duties, is that forestry engineers dominate the agency. This isn't surprising, considering the origin of Conaf. It was created in 1972 when the *Corporacion de Reforestacion* was revamped and given more programs and a new name. These program areas include Wild Heritage (national parks, reserves and monuments), Forest Control, Fire Management and Forest Management and Development. Currently, all 13 regional directors have a degree in forestry engineering, and even the Chief of Finances and Administration for Conaf is a forestry engineer.

The newest Executive Director of Conaf, Carlos Weber, is also a forestry engineer, but in addition he has a postgraduate degree in environmental sciences from a North American university. He has worked in Conaf most of his career and by working his way up the ranks has developed a broad level of respect from the employees. He has already gained my respect because of a magazine interview I read recently. Usually he wears a turtleneck to work and the interviewer asked why. He said, "I don't tolerate ties. I believe that society is too concerned with appearances. The tie is the most perfectly useless thing that has been invented in the world. I prefer Beatles. They are comfortable." Besides showing that the Fab 4 transcended music and also set clothing styles, Weber demonstrated his sense of practicality.

The influence of forestry engineers has been a long-term phenomenon in Chile, according to Carlos. "Just look at the map of where our national parks are located. They are all along the Andes, where the trees are." But, looking at the map, I pointed out several parks along the coast, such as Fray Jorge, Pan Azucar and Chiloé. Carlos said that, "this is just a coincidence. The main reason for protection is because they have trees. Our system doesn't protect other ecological zones, such as Central Valley grasslands, the desert or marine ecosystems." Carlos then explained the history of parks in his country. They evolved for either one or two

reasons: the area was designated a forest reserve for protection of the trees, or it was set aside because of the beauty and opportunities for tourism.

In June I met three scientists from the World Wildlife Fund who were "ground-truthing" (carrying out field research) data from a "gap analysis" — determining voids in protection of various vegetation types. According to them, Chile has fallen into the same rut as many other countries in creating its system of protected areas — that is, they are protecting mostly rocks, ice and the forested flanks of the mountains. In 1985 Conaf initiated a basic system of classifying Chilean native vegetation. There are eight distinctive ecological regions and 17 sub-regions in the country. From this data, 83 different vegetation formations were identified. Of this total only 53 are represented within the system of parks, reserves and monuments. The gap of 30 vegetation types, ecosystems in their own right, has been completely bypassed in the development of the national system of protected areas. And time is running out for protecting some vegetation types, like the Central Valley grasslands that are diminishing every day as more fields are converted to agriculture crops, vineyards and housing.

Park Ranger Carlos Hernández in front of the information center in Aguas Calientes.

Managing Puyehue National Park

During my two-week stay at Puyehue, Administrator Javier Labra (referred to as a Superintendent in the U.S. Park system) was in the park for only one day. The rest of the time he was at meetings in Osorno (the nearest city), Puerto Montt (the regional headquarters) and Santiago (the national headquarters). On the day he was in the office, I was able to snatch one hour of his time. Between a half-dozen phone calls and signing various documents, Labra was able to respond to most of my questions about management of the park. He sat behind a desk filled with a typical manager's memorandums and reports. On his office walls hung the latest paraphernalia in new-age management, including an agency-mission statement and inspirational quotes from Confucius, Rousseau and Montaigne. The mission statement for Conaf is "to guarantee to society the sustainable use of the forest ecosystem and efficient administration of the national system of wild protected areas, with an objective of contributing to the improvement of the quality of life for current and future generations." Not much different from what I would expect of any land-management agency with diverse goals.

As Javier talked on the phone, I read the assortment of diplomas and certificates behind him. I also noticed that by the time we met his computer had still not been turned on. The park does not yet have an Internet connection, but he told me it would be coming eventually. I began to wonder if e-mail and web searches would make his job any easier. From my own experience I predict that once the novelty of his position wears off he will find himself in the office more, and spending even less time in the park getting to know the staff and ecosystem. He may begin to find that e-mail creates a life form of its own. Although the park system is ripe for the electronic age, I wonder if the Chilean system of stamps and certifications for every document can adapt. For example, one day I hand-delivered a letter to the information center from the park's administration office. The letter, written by the regional office, had three different types of date or authorizing stamps on it. In addition, it had been logged into the park tracking system. What was this important letter? An announcement of the hiring of a new human resources officer.

Javier ticked off many issues he was dealing with, mostly associated with the lack of funding and staffing. But, he caught me by surprise when he commented on a trivial problem at the park — getting employees to wear their uniforms correctly. He said some employees wore the uniform incorrectly by matching and mixing the various elements of sweaters, vests and jackets, or not keeping their shoes shined. For a moment I thought I was back in the U.S. listening to some of my former colleagues. Even the system of purchasing uniforms is similar, whereby the government provides a stipend each year for employees to purchase uniform accessories.

Javier is making progress on the issue of uniforms, but knows that other higher-profile subjects will be more difficult — like increasing visitation. Currently, between 160,000 and 200,000 people visit the park annually. Visitation has grown steadily since 1971 when 31,593 people came to the park. In terms of visitation, this is the most popular park in Chile. There is no mechanism for counting the exact num-

ber of visitors because there is no entrance station. (Nevertheless, it seemed to me that a simple pneumatic strip across the road could keep an accurate count of vehicles, the number could be multiply by a person-per-car formula.) In 1993 park administrators conducted a study to determine the profile of park visitors. Among other things, they gained a better understanding about where visitors were hailing from. For example, of Chileans visiting Aguas Calientes, 43 percent are from the region and 34 percent are from Santiago, 1,000 kilometers to the north. For foreign visitors, 81 percent are Argentine, 3.4 percent German and 3 percent from the United States. A majority of visitors enter the park by private vehicles and the rest via bus available from Osorno (pop.114,000) located along the Pan American Highway, 90 kilometers west of Puyehue. However, the bus provides access to only one sector of the park — Aguas Calientes.

Aguas Calientes is the main attraction in the park with hot springs, cabins and a restaurant. The main visitor center is also located here. Interestingly enough it is called the *Central Informacion Ambiental* (Environmental Information Center), or the "CIA" by park staff. It took me a little time to adjust. In the Aguas Calientes CIA there are interpretative exhibits, maps and an auditorium for showing videos about the park. Visitors wishing to buy a gift or a book have 15 different products to choose from. These are produced by Conaf, the Raices Foundation (*Fundacion Patrimonio Natural y Biodiversidad*) or the Natural Reserves Corporation located in Santiago. These last two organizations work with various parks throughout the system developing postcards, guidebooks, posters and hats. To reach the other two sectors — Antillanca (the ski area 18 kilometers beyond Aguas Calientes) and Anticura (the starting point for trails to Volcano Puyehue) — you need your own car or a good smile and a sturdy thumb.

In May of 1960, just 47 hours after a large earthquake struck Chile, Volcano Puyehue erupted, creating a mushroom-shaped cloud that rose 8,000 meters above the mountains. The earthquake caused landslides and tidal waves (tsunamis), besides the volcano eruption. Near Lake Rupanco, just south of the park, a small community of 125 people was killed when a landslide overtook them. Each night as I sit in the pools of the developed hot springs — right next to the source of the hot water — I think about the history of geologic activity in this region. I begin to wonder about the possibility of another earthquake happening at that moment and an infusion of red-hot, magma-heated water finding its way into straight to the pool and instantly cooking all of us. No, I am not morbid, just putting my planning background to use and thinking ahead. However, I am surprised that officials here have not put the same thought on their worry list. There is little information in the visitor center about past earth movements and no warnings at the pool about what to do if you feel the earth shake. But I was happy to see in a recently printed park brochure a listing of the previous eruptions of Volcano Puyehue — nine in the last century.

If any warning-system project existed, it would be in the park's management plan. I asked Javier about the plan, completed in 1995. Every ten years the park is scheduled to update and revise the plan. He said it is not used much, but if he ever get an influx of money he had a list of approved projects ready to implement. Some of the projects: construction of mountain huts, park housing and a road to Lake Rupanco from Aguas Calientes, plus replacing displays at the information center. Also in the two-volume management plan is a wish list of the optimum number of employees needed to manage the park efficiently. The list of park rangers, maintenance and administrative staff include 28 people. Currently, the staff numbers only 16 with additional support of five to eight people in the summertime. And for the next eight weeks the park will have two less employees. Two park rangers have been invited to a training course in Costa Rica along with 22 other people from parks throughout Latin America. The theme of the course is management of tropical protected areas. Eduardo Mora and José Antonio Gayoso, are the first park rangers from Chile to attend, although park managers and central office staff have attended in the past. This is an exceptional opportunity for them, although their presence will be missed — especially since this region has only 77 people in the parks branch dispersed among six sites and the regional office.

Eduardo Mora and José Antonio Gayoso, the two park rangers headed to Costa Rica for an eight-week training course.

Concessions Operations

In Chile there is a word that is rarely said and cannot be found in any dictionary, but it is evident everyday. Wherever I go it is apparent, whether at a hardware store, visiting a government office or in a national park. I encountered this word in an unexpected manner. While reading newspaper headlines over the shoulder of Carlos Hernández (my friend the park ranger) I made a comment

about one headline that said, "*Soccer Team has Problems of Concentration*."

"Ya, that's the problem, they are just not focusing on the game," I said as if I knew something about soccer.

Carlos quickly fired back, "No, that's not the problem. The problem is *Amistocracia*!" I asked him to repeat the word as I reached for my handy pocket dictionary, but he scoffed at my attempt and said, "You won't find it there or any other place." He repeated it slowly, thinking I would catch the play on words. "A-MIS-TO-CRA-CIA."

"Okay, it sounds like the word amistad or amistoso," I replied, "But what does the word 'friendship' have to do with government?"

Carlos defined the word for me by using the national soccer team as an example. He said that each person was selected based on a combination of skill, connections and whether this family name is well known. The soccer team is competing in the elimination round for the 2002 World Cup and has won only two games out of six (the second being the night after this headline in a match against Venezuela). Carlos reasoned that if the players were selected solely for their skill, some of them would have been cut by now and perhaps the team would have a better record. He said *Amistocracia* had replaced *Democracia* in his country ever since Salvador Allende was President (1970-73). I don't know much about the soccer players and how they were selected — so I can't refute what he said — but from seeing the Chilean system in action, I know he can't be far from the truth. There is even a *Chilenismo* describing this sentiment. A *pituto* is a connection, an in, a contact through someone or someplace to receive special treatment or privileges. And I was to learn national parks are not exempt from the practice of *Amistocracia*, nor concession operations within them.

Returning to the statement Carlos made about the dominance of forestry engineers in Conaf, what he was really telling me is that there is a lack of skill and diversity. Sure, forestry engineers are needed, but the agency also needs managers with skills in education and business, among other talents. Carlos thinks that if administrators had more business sense, maybe Conaf would receive a greater return from concession contracts. For example, when I asked the park administrator about the contract between the park concessionaire and Conaf, he told me the rate of return to the government was at a constant, set level and that prices for services were set by the concessionaire — all expect one. Through this contract the park has stipulated the price for the use of the open-air hot springs at $1,000 pesos (U.S.$2). In the U.S., the National Park Service sets prices by doing comparative pricing studies in equivalent resort areas. This piqued my curiosity, so I set out to learn more about this operation.

The park concessionaire *(Turismo y Cabañas Aguas Calientes Limitada*) provides services at the much-visited Aguas Calientes complex. As the word indicates, there are hot springs here, plus 29 cabins, a restaurant, a covered pool, an open-air pool (adjacent to the Chanleufú River), 15 individual hot tubs, a camping area and a large picnic area. In the middle of this complex is the Conaf-staffed CIA. Before the Salvador Allende government in 1970, none of these structures existed. The socialist Allende government promoted development of projects for the *pueblo* (the common people) and built all of these during its brief time in power. After 1973, and the *coup d'état* led by General Pinochet, operation of the development was privatized and sold to Hotel Termas Puyehue at an *Amistocracia* price, according to Carlos. The company took control of the land, but Conaf still owned the buildings.

In 1989, with the return of a democratically elected president, the courts got involved in resolving the issues of property ownership. They set the terms of a 30-year con-

The Aguas Calientes complex with cabins, hot spring pools and a restaurant from an overlook along the Pionero Trail.

tract between Conaf and *Turismo y Cabañas Aguas Calientes Limitada*. Twenty-five years remain in the contract, and when it comes due, the concessionaire will have the first right to bid on the new contract and will also have the ability to set the price for the sale. For this privilege, the government receives a return from the company of 75,000,000 pesos. That is about U.S.$150,000 and compared to the annual gross revenue generated by the covered pool alone — approximately half a million dollars — the company will more than likely want to continue the contract. If you want to stay at one of the cabins, expect to pay between U.S.$74 to $178 per night — nothing to sneeze at in a country where the minimum wage per month is U.S.$200. According to Carlos, there is also an agreement that when revenue surpasses 75 million pesos, profits are to be split 50/50 between Conaf and the concessionaire — but this has not been enforced.

The main attraction at Aguas Calientes, the covered pool and individual hot baths.

In general, the Conaf concession program has recently focused efforts to attract private-sector investment in the national park system. The program, ecotourism concessions, began in 1998 with the intent of providing more services within the national parks. Conaf has defined "ecotourism" to be tourism with an ethic that promotes the protection of natural resources, provides the community opportunities to receive economic benefits, maintains the cultural integrity of local communities and promotes satisfactory experiences for the visitor. For the first year of the program a commission developed a list of ideas for traditional concessions like lodging, camping, cafeterias and gift shops. Also, ecotoursim concessions such as horseback riding, excursions, climbing, boating, photography and mountain biking, among others, were selected as possibilities. With each year, or stage of the program, Conaf selects a short list of five to seven parks that are available for accepting ecotourism concession proposals. Prior to the initiation of this program 17 concession contracts existed for providing services in national parks. The majority were in Torres del Paine National Park — the most well-known park in Chile. In the new program no contracts have yet been finalized, but several businesses are participating on temporary contracts and are working toward completing the process.

The bidding process begins with an application. Then a more detailed proposal is submitted to Conaf by the prospective grantee. Conaf reviews the applications and evaluates them based upon the technical aspects and economic feasibility of each proposal. If the proposal is accepted Conaf may grant contracts for up to 20, 30 or 35 years. For example during the second stage of the program 17 project ideas were received and seven were selected. These investment opportunities are open to both national and foreign interests. One attraction, and possible reason for investment by businesses, is the growth in visitation to national parks in Chile. Between 1990 and 1997 visitation grew by 37 percent and Conaf officials predict that annual visitation will reach a new record by the end of this year with 1.2 million people coming to the national parks (by comparison the U.S. National Park System receives 286 million visitors annually, but the population of each country at 15 million and 270 million, respectively, skews the comparison).

Privately run businesses within national parks are not a new issue, especially for the United States National Park Service (NPS). Concession policies date back to the beginning of the NPS in 1916. The first director, Stephen Mather, knew that many visitors would not come to parks if facilities for lodging and dining were not offered. Businesses like hotels and restaurants, however, were reluctant to start operations in parks that were far from population centers and only open part of the year. Thus the Director enticed businesses into parks by offering them contractual incentives. He gave the early concessionaires renewable long-term contracts and charged relatively low fees for their operating rights. In 1948 the NPS offered another incentive to concessionaires by allowing them to have "possessory interest" in structures they build on parklands, which generally appreciate in value, thus building equity. Through the years national parks have become more popular and financial opportunities have increased, thereby lessening the needs for incentives. Since 1965, though, only seven of the approximately 1,900 contracts that have been awarded have gone to businesses other than the incumbent concessioner. This lack of competition has reduced the po-

tential for a fair return to the government in exchange for allowing businesses to operate on parklands.

Fortunately, conditions are changing under current NPS concession policy and the 1998 Concessions Management Improvement Act. These policies favoring outside-the-park private enterprises. Under the policy, "If an adequate facility exist or can feasibly be developed by private enterprise outside the park boundary, such facilities will not be expanded or developed within parks." Another policy provision states that concession services will be based on whether they, "Enhance the use and enjoyment of the park without resulting in impairment of park resources and values." Finally, and I think this policy is most important, "any facilities or services provided by a concessionaire [should be] necessary and appropriate for public use and enjoyment of the park."

In the United States, we have several places where facilities and services have surpassed this threshold of "necessary and appropriate." For me that line is crossed when the service or facility becomes an attraction in itself — for instance, a skating rink in Yosemite Valley. This has become an attraction within the park, just like going to Mirror Lake for the view of Half Dome or hiking to the base of Yosemite Falls. I am not against ice skating. Growing up in Minnesota I came to love the activity and spend many hours with frozen toes at the local ice rink. But times have changed for many of the larger parks. No longer are additional attractions needed to entice visitors to come. Now, the popularity of the resources within the parks are a major attraction in their own right. There is only one place to see Half Dome, but there are a thousand places to go ice-skating.

Labor Relations

It seems that in every national park, or perhaps in every line of work, there is a person like Carlos Hernández — one who is not afraid to tell it like it is. Usually this person is active in organizing others and getting information out to the workforce. Carlos is no exception. He is the President of the Workers Labor Union for Chile's 10th region. He represents 160 Conaf employees within this union. This is an important position, considering the fact that there is only one other union in Conaf, which is for professionals like lawyers and accountants.

One day, when I returned from exploring the Antillanca Ski Area, I met Carlos in the information center, where he told me that "Today is a significant day in the history of Conaf and one that deserves a celebration." I looked at my watch and thought, 'What is so special about July 28th'? I thought that maybe it was the anniversary of the founding of Conaf. Which wouldn't surprise me because Chileans celebrate all types of holidays and anniversaries. Recently it was the International Day of Firefighters (July 2) and on May 1st they observed International Workers' Day.

This special day for the employees of Conaf, however, was not an anniversary or some international day — but the Day of Judgment on a recent labor dispute. A 1973 law set the work week for Conaf park rangers and maintenance staff at 44 hours per week from Monday to Friday, with free days of Saturday, Sunday and holidays. As I wrote earlier, the management plan prescribes an optimum staffing level of 28 employees at Puyehue, although there are only 16 currently. To make up this deficit, Conaf required employees to work six days a week — without overtime. This had been the practice for the last five years, so three years ago the Labor Union filed a lawsuit to enforce the 1973 law.

International Workers' Day

The family I stayed with in Pucón told me about the history of this day. They said several people were killed during labor strikes in Chicago in the late 1800s. I was embarrassed that I had not heard of this significant event in my nation's history — maybe they had their facts wrong, or perhaps I slept through history class that day.

After a little research I found out that May 1st, International Workers' Day, commemorates the movement to secure an eight-hour workday by laborers throughout the world, and is recognized in every country except the United States and Canada. This is interesting considering that the holiday began in the United States. In 1884, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions passed a resolution stating that beginning on May 1, 1886, eight hours would constitute a legal day's work. The resolution called for a general strike to achieve the goal, since legislative methods had already failed. At that time many people were working ten, twelve and fourteen hours a day. As would be expected, support grew rapidly among rank-and-file workers for an eight-hour workday. The heart of the May Day activities were in Chicago and by May 1st the movement had already won gains for many clothing cutters, shoemakers, and packing-house workers in Chicago.

However on May 3rd, the peaceful strike turned violent when police fired into a crowd of strikers at the McCormick Reaper Works Factory, killing four and wounding many. Strike leaders called for a mass meeting the next day in Haymarket Square to protest the police actions. The meeting proceeded without incident, but as it ended nearly 200 policemen marched into the square, ordering the crowd to disperse. One of the strikers threw a bomb at the police, killing one instantly. Seven others died later. Police responded by firing into the crowd, killing one worker and injuring several others.

And I thought May Day was a holiday celebrated only in Moscow's Red Square! Now, if I can only figure out why we celebrate Labor Day on the first Monday in September, it would all be clear.

Just a few hours before I saw Carlos, the judge had ruled in favor of the suit filed by the Labor Union on behalf of the workers at Puyehue National Park. He not only ruled that the employees must be paid overtime (double pay), but that this was retroactive for two years and applied to all parks in Chile, not just Puyehue. Yes, he certainly had reason to celebrate.

(above) The maintenance staff filling in potholes on roads in the Aguas Calientes Sector. There is only one park-owned vehicle in this sector, which is used by all employees in a variety of ways. (right) To patrol park roads and trails, park rangers use motorcycles. They have five in total.

Cooperation with Neighboring Parks

One theme I've been exploring in my studies of parks in Chile and Argentina is the level of cooperation that exists across international borders, and for that matter, across park lines within the same country. Puyehue is adjacent to two parks, one Argentine, on the other side of the Andes — Nahuel Huapi National Park, and the other Chilean — Vicente Pérez Rosales National Park to the south of Puyehue. Between the two countries there is a long history of tension and rivalries, most recently in the late 1970s, when Argentina threatened war over the Beagle Channel claimed by Chile. The Beagle Channel at the tip of South America cuts between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans providing ship access to Ushuaia on the north bank (Argentina) and Puerto Williams on the south bank (Chile). At stake was the possession of three islands (Picton, Lennox and Nueva) that had been under contention since the early 1800s. The islands themselves were not so important, but by extension of the border around them they included fishing and oil rights. In 1977, an international court ruled in favor of Chile for possession of the islands. Argentina disputed the decision and repeatedly violated Chilean air and maritime space. Bilateral negotiations had failed and in January 1978 Argentina declared the court's decision "fundamentally null."

By December of that year, Argentina sent a naval squadron to the Beagle Channel and Chile followed suit. Both prepared for war. Pope John Paul II sent a personal message to the leaders of both countries, urging a peaceful solution. Nevertheless war preparations continued for two weeks, when Chile and Argentina accepted the Pope's mediation offer. Both sides signed pledges for a peaceful resolution, but tensions were not reduced until 1984, when both countries signed the "Treaty of Peace and Friendship." The final agreement was signed at the Vatican, giving the islands to Chile, but most maritime rights to Argentina.

During the Beagle Channel crisis, military forces on both sides of the Andes built up defenses along the mountains, should conflict escalate. In Puyehue the Army had a large presence. That threat has since passed and only a small brigade of 20-30 troops is stationed outside the park, with periodic patrols inside the park. (Currently, the only disputed border is along the southern Patagonia Ice Field, 800 kilometers south of Puyehue). However, permission is still needed from park rangers, through an agreement with the military, to enter hiking areas near the border. Considering this past conflict between the two countries I asked the Chief Ranger, Luis Santibañez, about the current state of affairs. He responded, "The relationship between the countries is better than it has been in years." And then he jokingly added, "Especially since Cecilia and Menem have gotten together." By this he meant former Argentine President Carlos Menem, and Chile's former Miss Universe, and aspiring actress Cecilia Bolocco. Recently they have been dating and are a hit in the tabloid newspapers. I suppose sound diplomatic relations have occurred in stranger ways.

Regarding international relationships between parks, Administrator Labra told me that very little communica-

tion takes place. In April of this year, though, he and five other rangers from Chile were invited to a meeting sponsored by the Argentine Park Rangers Association. The theme of this first national congress was "Perspectives on the Protection of Natural Areas." Even though the reason for the meeting was not transboundary cooperation, Javair said the participants were pleased by this first opportunity to meet their counterparts across the Andes.

On the Chilean side, Puyehue is adjacent to Vicente Pérez Rosales National Park. Even though a trail connects the parks, rangers rarely communicate across the boundary line. Soon, I think, this route connecting the parks will become a prime destination for active adventure tourists. The route skims along the flanks of three volcanoes, past two lakes and has two hot springs along the multi-day trek. I am interested in future coordination, because I am already seeing the need to develop this capacity. This is best illustrated by one example. Along the southern Andes are a wide range of parks and reserves on both sides of the ridgeline that forms the Chilean/Argentine border. Several people I have met from non-governmental organizations are starting to dream of the possibility of a trail, or network of trails, extending throughout the entire corridor. Interest is definitely building, but the main question is how to realize this dream. To this end, quite unexpectedly, the Chilean government unveiled an ambitious plan to construct trails, through state and volunteer efforts, that would link the entire corridor (on the Chilean side). When completed the path would be more than 3,700 miles long. This is a great boost for the local promoters who are trying to patch together a 300-mile stretch in south-central Chile. Many protected areas already exist and have trails; the goal is to somehow connect them.

Several organizers are envisioning a model like the Appalachian Trail or the Pacific Crest Trail, which have been successful in the United States. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail, a footpath of 2,158 miles along ridge crests and across major valleys of the Appalachian Mountains extends from Mount Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia. This trail traverses 14 states and hikers generally start from the South in early spring and hike the entire length in five to six months. It was constructed between 1921 and 1937, and is managed by volunteers in 32 local clubs under an agreement between the Appalachian Trail Conference and the National Park Service. The Trail, 98 percent on public land, was the first one completed within the National Trails System, established by Congress in 1968. The other trail, the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), spans 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada through three western states. The route was first explored in the late 1930s and largely through the efforts of hikers and equestrians, the PCT was also designated a scenic trail in the National Trails System. The proposal by the Chilean government is an encouraging start, but the goal of trying to complete it by the National Bicentennial in the year 2010 may be unreasonable, especially in a country where the concept of volunteerism is just that — a concept.

Enjoying the Moment

My second day at Puyehue I spent reading past and current management plans. For me, this is standard operating mode, and I have grown accustomed to plowing through a 200-page document. When I worked in the NPS planning office in Washington, D.C., I would usually receive an assortment of plans each year to review. So I am used to having my nose stuck in a book, but for some reason this day I could feel the walls closing in on me. All of a sudden I felt confined, and wanted to get out of the cold, book-filled park library. I began to wonder that when (or if) I return to the NPS after my fellowship, how would I readjust to the culture of office meetings, reports and plans that occupy the workday? I began to question whether I have begrudgingly accepted this way of business as necessary in order to continue my career in the parks. It seems to me that over the last five to seven years the work-culture has changed, or maybe I have just advanced to a level where it has always been this way. It seems the fun has been taken out of the calling. I spend my

The author "on assignment" for Conaf taking pictures of the Antillanca Ski Area for the park's photo collection. In the background are Volcanos Puntiagudo and Osorno within Vicente Pérez Rosales National Park.

working days replying to letters, writing reports and attending a variety of staff and community meetings. Very little time is actually spent in the park getting to know the trails, the vegetation, the wildlife and the people — the ecosystem. I remind myself not to lose sight of the reason that I entered this career — my love for wilderness. When I return (or if), my goal is to do what I can to, "Put the fun back into the game." I believe we can enjoy our work, have fun and be professional all at the same time. We need to enjoy it.

I certainly did at Puyehue (except for my day of reading management plans). The park's secretary had given me a free pass to enter the hot springs during my stay (the fee is usually $4,500 pesos or about U.S.$9). Each night I especially enjoyed my "work" as I walked from my house down to the hot springs and looked up at the thousands of stars, noticing the different constellations in the Southern Hemisphere sky. I would usually sit in the pool, cuddled next to the hot water ducts, until my body warmed up and the chill of the wintry day subsided. One particular evening in the pool as I drifted into a tranquil state of relaxation a smile raced across my face as I thought, "Well, if this is *Amistocracia* make the most of it." ❑

FELLOWS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

Institute of Current World Affairs

EUROPE/RUSSIA

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.

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.

Institute Fellows are chosen on the basis of character, previous experience and promise. They are young professionals funded to spend a minimum of two years carrying out self-designed programs of study and writing outside the United States. The Fellows are required to report their findings and experiences from the field once a month. They can write on any subject, as formally or informally as they wish. The result is a unique form of reporting, analysis and periodic assessment of international events and issues.

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Phone: (603) 643-5548
Fax: (603) 643-9599
E-Mail: ICWA@valley.net
Web Site: www.icwa.org

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