ICWA
LETTERS

Institute of Current World Affairs
The Crane-Rogers Foundation
Four West Wheelock Street
Hanover, New Hampshire 03755 U.S.A.

PK-8
THE AMERICAS

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Pumalín Park

By Peter Keller

November, 2000

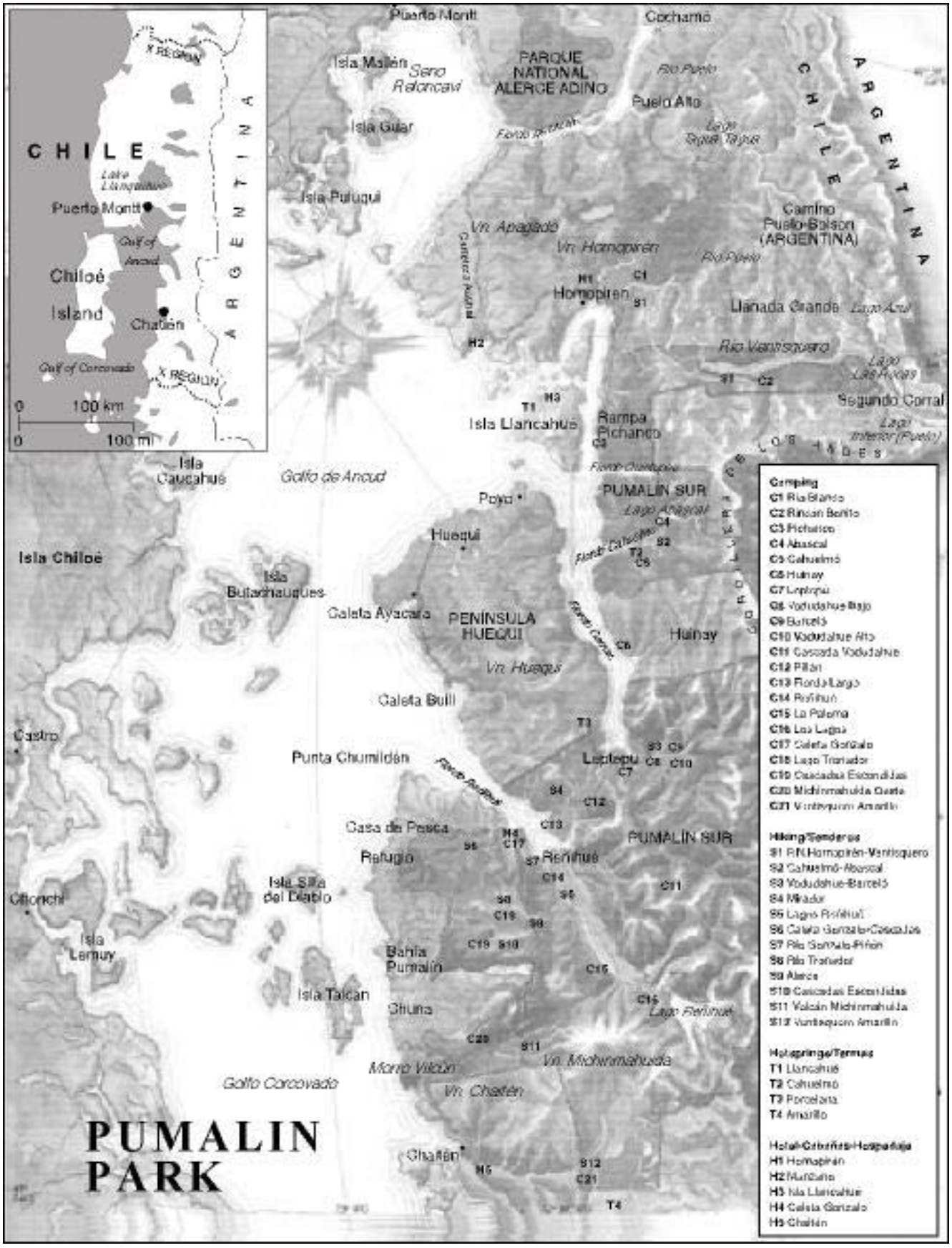
PILLAN, Chile – As Yogi Berra once said, "This is like *dejá vu* all over again." I had the same thought as I entered the house of Doug and Kris Tompkins in Pumalín Park. Mr. Tompkins was sitting at the dining room table reading his mail while three Pumalín employees were gathered around the table discussing recent travels. This image of Doug Tompkins at the table was one I had seen in numerous magazines. Even though this was my first visit to their home, everything looked as familiar as if I had been there before. The dining room table, pots and pans in the kitchen, greenhouse, airstrip and hangar in front of their home were all a part of my *dejá vu*. Several days later I asked about the origin of the table and Doug told me the usual table had been sent away for repairs and this one was just a replacement. "Aha," I thought. Things are not always what they seem.

Pumalín is the name for an 800,000-acre privately-owned park. It is one of the largest privately held nature reserves in the world. Located in southern Chile between the communities of Hornopirén and Chaitén, the park includes mountains, valleys, rivers, fiords and a large chunk of Valdivian Temperate Rainforest. Throughout the mid-1990, Doug Tompkins, a multi-millionaire from California, bought large tracts of land in Palena Province of Chile's 10th region. Since his first purchase of the Reñihué Ranch, where he now lives, he and a growing entourage have been working toward the development of the park**.**

I first learned about this project in 1995 and have been following it ever since. The practice of wildland philantropy, land privately purchased for public use, has existed for decades. One of the more well known examples includes land purchased by the Rockefeller family adjacent to Grand Teton and Acadia National Parks. However, this case is different in sheer size and management. Usually, privately-purchased wildlands are donated to a public land-management agency, like the park service, and the agency administers the property. In this case, the private entity is fully in charge of developing every aspect of the park. Eventually, Pumalín officials intend to transfer title of the land to a public entity, but the details still need to be worked out.

Ever since I started working in parks beginning in 1988, on a fire crew at Grand Canyon National Park, the idea of privately managed wildlands has caught my attention. Perhaps new and/or more efficient practices can be developed in them. With this objective in mind I came to Pumalín to learn about the daily tasks behind the controversies and personalities that have been presented in the popular media.

In the summer of 1999 after ICWA invited me to apply for the Musser Fellowship, I paid a visit to the Foundation for Deep Ecology (FDE) office in San Francisco. FDE was founded by Doug Tompkins in 1990. Throughout the development of my proposal for studying private and public parks in Chile and Argentina I had been in contact with John Davis, who manages the Biodiversity and Wildness program at FDE. He had supplied me with up-to-date information about the park and provided support in making contacts in Chile. During this visit John, Julie Lindow (who works in the office) and I went out to lunch at a local Thai restaurant. During the conversation we discussed my approach for studying


CHILE
ARGENTINA
Puerto Montt
Chaitén
Chiloé Island
Gulf of Ancud
Gulf of Corcovado
X REGION
0 100 km
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Puerto Montt
Cochamó
Isla Mallén
Seno Reloncaví
PARQUE NACIONAL ALERCE ANDINO
Río Puelo
Puelo Alto
Isla Guar
Lago Tagua Tagua
Isla Puluqui
Vn. Apagado
Vn. Hornopirén
Camino Puelo-Balsón (ARGENTINA)
Hornopirén
Llanada Grande
Lago Azul
Río Vuriloche
Lago Las Rocas
Segundo Corral
Isla Llancahue
Rampa Pichanco
Lago Interior (Puelo)
Isla Caucahue
Golfo de Ancud
PUMALIN SUR
Lago Amarga
Polpo
Huequi
Isla Chiloé
Isla Butachauques
Caleta Ayacara
PENÍNSULA HUEQUI
Huilhay
Vn. Huequi
Caleta Bulli
Castro
Punta Chumildén
Leptepu
Casa de Pesca
Refugio
Reñihué
PUMALÍN SUR
Isla Silla del Diablo
Chonchi
Isla Lemuy
Bahía Pumalín
Isla Talcan
Chuina
Lago Perimet
Monte Yate
Vn. Michinmahuida
Golfo Corcovado
Vn. Chaitén
Chaitén
PUMALIN PARK
Camping
C1 Río Blanco
C2 Rincón Bonito
C3 Pichatoro
C4 Abascal
C5 Cahuelmó
C6 Huilhay
C7 Leptepu
C8 Vodudahue Bajo
C9 Barceló
C10 Vodudahue Alto
C11 Cascada Vodudahue
C12 Pillán
C13 Florida Largo
C14 Reñihué
C15 La Paloma
C16 Los Lagos
C17 Caleta Gonzalo
C18 Lago Traidor
C19 Cascadas Escondidas
C20 Michinmahuida Oeste
C21 Ventisquero Amarillo
Hiking/Senderos
S1 P.N.Hornopirén-Ventisquero
S2 Cahuelmó-Abascal
S3 Vodudahue-Barceló
S4 Mirador
S5 Lagos Reñihué
S6 Caleta Gonzalo-Cascadas
S7 Río Gonzalo-Reñihué
S8 Río Traidor
S9 Alerce
S10 Cascadas Escondidas
S11 Volcán Michinmahuida
S12 Ventisquero Amarillo
Hotsprings/Termas
T1 Llancahue
T2 Cahuelmó
T3 Porcelana
T4 Amarillo
Hotel-Cabañas-Hospedaje
H1 Hornopirén
H2 Manzano
H3 Isla Llancahue
H4 Caleta Gonzalo
H5 Chaitén

Whether flying one of his airplanes, piloting a boat or managing daily operations, Doug Tompkins is always steering the direction of Pumalín.

Pumalín. This meeting took place just after *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine published a critical article about the Pumalín Project, which focused a great deal on controversies surrounding Doug Tompkins rather than the greater issue of wildland protection. John and Julie were happy to hear my intent was to study the practice of managing Pumalín and not the personality of the founder. Now I know I was naïve to say that. The two, project and person, are so closely intertwined that they cannot be discussed separately.

Whether literally or figuratively, Doug Tompkins is always in the driver's seat at Pumalín. One day while park ranger Felipe Rivas and I were following Doug (in a standard Pumalin vehicle of choice — a white Toyota double-cabin, four-wheel-drive truck) he stopped at the cement bridge (which I will return to later for another story) and waved us forward to his window. He leaned over out the window and told Felipe that the bridge railing needed to be repainted using dark green for the horizontal rails and creme color for the vertical posts. A second later we were headed down the road to review other projects on the "to do" list. I asked Felipe if it was normal for Doug to be involved in every detail. He said yes, and ticked off a list of how involved Doug was, from designing buildings to camp sites.

Who is Doug Tompkins and how has he come to this point? A high-school dropout raised in New York, Doug first visited Chile on a ski trip when he was 17. He moved to California in the early 1960s and worked as a mountain guide. He borrowed $5,000 to start The North Face, a company that specializes in outdoor equipment and clothing. A few years later he sold it for $50,000 and started the Esprit de Corps clothing business with his then-wife, Susie Russell. By the mid-1980s Esprit's sales had topped $1 billion, but the excitement of the fashion business began to diminish for Tompkins, now 57, as he began to question the process of economic globalization and his involvement in the consumption machine. In 1990 his marriage was slipping away and so was his company, his shares of Esprit were bought out by the other owners, including his wife. The sale left him with a reported $125 million and now he had the time to work on matters more important to him — protecting Chile's native forest. He moved to Chile for good, remarried to Kris McDivitt (a business partner of Yvon Chouinard in the Patagonia clothing company) and has ever since been working on projects such as Pumalín Park to protect wildlands in both Chile and Argentina.

A cabinet drawer of articles have been written about the Tompkins and their park, enough so that I feel I would be repeating common knowledge if I were to re-hash the entire history. It is mindboggling, the amount of international press coverage they have received in such publications as *Newsweek, Conde-Nast Traveller, Outside, New York Times Magazine, Los Angeles Times, Ecotraveler, WildEarth, Terra Nova, Paula, Caras, Mujeres y Compañia, Mi Parcela y Jardin, Planeta Humano, La Tercera and El Mercurio* (the last half of the list are a mix of magazines and newspapers from South America and Spain). I have read every story I've found in my research over the years. Most authors have

extensively covered the history of the Tompkins and their park. Several authors have thoroughly covered a variety of controversies with political figures and local extractive industries. For example, Tompkins accused a local salmon farm of shooting sea lions (a protected species) and he also opposed a land purchase by an energy company that divided the park in two. Other political battles have included the Catholic church's concern with Deep Ecology philosophy regarding birth control and the military's concern that his land purchase is a national-security threat. A local personality conflict continues between Tompkins and the former Provincial Governor — now mayor of Chaitén — who once denied a request by the park to fly the Chilean flag in Pumalin, however the current Provincial Governor has approved the request. Thus, with everything that has been written about the park, I intend to report on current operations and the future of the park as viewed through my own experiences after several months in Chile and volunteering in the park in November of 2000.

After my first trip to Pumalín in June of 2000 (which I remember as three days of intense rain and cold, dreary weather) I returned to the park's office in Puerto Montt and spoke with Carolina Morgado about the option of volunteering in the park — when the weather improved. Carolina's role in the office is that of combination press secretary and problem solver. She seems to have a contact in every line of business and has become somewhat of a headhunter for hiring new recruits. She suggested I write a letter to Mr. Tompkins, outlining my background and interest in volunteering. I wrote the letter and several weeks later Carolina told me he was open to the idea. We set a tentative date of early November when the weather would be more favorable and crowds of visitors had not yet arrived. Finally, in late October, I was given my assignment during a visit to the Puerto Montt office. Doug strolled into Carolina's office where I was sitting and told me his idea of building a trail to a vista point in the middle of the park. However, before a trail could be built he needed someone to scout out a path through the forest — this would be my job. I knew this would be a difficult task based upon my previous experiences of developing trails in the woods of western Montana and northern California. The more we looked at maps and air photos, the stronger my doubts became that we could make substantial progress during my stay at the park, but I agreed to the proposal and soon after we had the lodging and travel logistics confirmed.

The next week I flew to Tompkins' home at Reñihué Ranch with park pilot Rodriego Noriega, Carlos Cuevas (project director), his son Jerónimo, and a new employee who had just been hired to work in the greenhouse and garden. The six-seater Cessna airplane, one of five small airplanes (in various locations) owned by Doug, was specially fitted to carry extra luggage underneath the frame and was also modified for takeoff and landings on short runways — of which eight exist in the project area.

We arrived at Reñihué under grey skies and a slight drizzle. I followed the others into the house. This is where I found Doug at the dining room table reading his letters from the Puerto Montt office. Carlos began talking to Francisco Morandé, the park's architect who was seated next to Doug, about his recent trip to Portland, Oregon to participate in the International Conservation Rally. This was an initiative sponsored by the Weeden Foundation to gather people from across the Americas who are working on conservation projects through private means. Chile sent eight people, more than any other Latin American country. Later the conversation turned toward the trail project known as *El Mirador*, the vista point. Doug put down his mail and joined in the conversation with a heightened level of attention. He was eager to get working on this and said he would take me and park ranger Felipe Rivas in his airplane to get a better view of the area within a day or two, when the weather cleared. Rodriego motioned he was ready to take me to my lodging, so we finished up our conversation and I flew with him to Pillán, where he and his wife also live.

Several days later, after returning from a trip to the Cahuelmó Hot Springs, Doug asked me if I would like a change in scenery for the evening by coming over to his home in Reñihué. I accepted. After a quick five-minute flight from Pillán to Reñihué we were inside his home drinking tea and talking about the copper-mining industry in northern Chile. This reminded Doug of a picture book he had, *"Wasteland: Meditations on a Ravaged Landscape."* He opened the cover and read out loud the forward by William Kittridge, a University of Montana literature professor. Doug reread the last sentence for emphasis, "We have to quit wrecking the world piecemeal — bite by bite. Otherwise, we're just in the business of manufacturing a homemade coffin in space." He closed the book and repeated the phrase about a homemade coffin in space, in awe of the imagery it created.

Over the years Doug has been creating his own imagery of environmental conditions by way of the Foundation for Deep Ecology (FDE) and books it published. One of the more well-known books is *"The Tragedy of the Chilean Forest,"* which combines essays with photos of logged landscapes. Since the beginning years of FDE, now directed by Doug's daughter Quincey Tompkins Imhoff, the foundation has narrowed its focus to three program areas: Biodiversity/Wildness, Ecological Agriculture and Globalization/ Megatechnology. Doug first became interested in Deep Ecology after reading *"Deep Ecology: Living As if Nature Mattered"* by George Sessions and Bill Devall. In 1973, Norwegian philosopher and mountaineer Arne Naess introduced the phrase "deep ecology" to environmental literature. The Deep Ecology Movement refers to the level of questioning of purposes and values in environmental conflicts. The word "deep" means *deep* questioning, right down to fundamental root issues.

What Deep Ecology is — and is not — has been a point of controversy for opponents of Doug's work in Chile. Some of the accusations — that Pumalín is some sort of new-age commune, or a new Jewish state (he is not Jewish) — stem

from misunderstandings or misrepresentations of the Deep Ecology Platform. For that reason I have decided to list all eight points in the Deep Ecology Platform so the readers of this newsletter will know what motivates Doug.

"The Deep Ecology Platform." By Arne Naess and George Sessions.

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
4. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
5. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.
6. Policies must therefore be changed. The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.

Simply put, the goal of FDE is the reversal of the extinction crisis — whether it be extinction of wildlands, native wildlife species, plants or cultures. FDE promotes its philosophies through a grant-making program. Foundation assets total $170 million and Deep Ecology has provided $30 million in grants to hundreds of organizations. A spinoff of FDE is the Conservation Land Trust (CLT was originally known as El Bosque Pumalín Foundation) set up to acquire wildlands for conservation in Chile and Argentina. To date, CLT has acquired over 1.2 million acres of wildlands and has received nearly $25 million in charitable contributions ($12 million from FDE).

The idea of buying wildlands first began for Doug in 1988 when he and several friends shared the cost of a small araucaria (Araucaria is also called a Monkey-puzzle tree, but only by English speakers.) forest, now known as Cañi Sanctuary, near Pucón. Since that first purchase of 1,000 acres the program has expanded to include several other properties in Argentina and Chile. Projects in Argentina include a 40,000-acre parcel in Patagonia next to Perito Moreno National Park and some 200,000 acres in the wetlands of *Esteros de Iberá* in the northeastern part of the country between Brazil and Paraguay. In Chile purchases include *Yendegaia*, on the island of Tierra del Fuego, bridging a 100,000-acre gap between two national parks; a small ranch adjacent to Hornopirén National Park, land near Volcano Corcovado, and the largest purchase of all — the 800,000-acre Pumalín Project. (Author's note: Doug Tompkins is not the only multi-millionaire buying land in Patagonia. Others include Luciano Benetton, Sylvester Stallone with 35,000 acres, Ted Turner and his 11,000-acre ranch, and George Soros with one million acres. However, they are not as active as Doug Tompkins in wildland management.)

Pumalín is more than a park in terms of what we have come to imagine a park is in the United States. The formal title for the area is "Pumalín Park and Project." At the moment the 'project' aspect is utilizing most of the resources and personnel. The project includes five *fundos*, something like a farm or a ranch, with an administrator in charge of the daily operations. Each one is at a different stage of development, with Caleta Gonzalo and Reñihué fully developed, Pillán just a tad behind and Vodudahue and Ventisquero at the beginning stages. The goal of each is sustainable or-

The Reñihué huerto, *including the greenhouse, was the first one built at Pumalín. Plants include a variety of vegetables, herbs and flowers.*

ganic agriculture, but the product emphasis varies.

Reñihué, the first *fundo*, which began in 1993, features *huertos*, areas where fruits, vegetables and flowers are grown. The system for growing plants is a combination of greenhouses and raised beds of soil that provide the best means of adapting to the wet, cool climate. Several beehives are also present, as well as a large flock of sheep. Over a dozen people live at Reñihué, which also houses the state-run elementary school. Electricity is supplied by a generator that usually operates between 11 a.m. and 11:30 p.m.

Cabins available for rent to park visitors at Caleta Gonzalo.

Work at Caleta Gonzalo began in 1996. The *huerto* was built as a demonstration site to show productive methods and efficient designs for cultivating vegetables. The vegetables grown are used in the café that is a main stopping place for visitors that come for the day or those that stay the night in one of four cabins or at the campground**.** A 25-kilowatt hydropower turbine supplies electricity from a nearby mountain stream. An information center and trail await visitors here at the end of the road, or those boarding the ferry boats that operate in January and February between here and Hornopirén.

Pillán is the center of *apicultura*, the production of honey and wax from beehives. For the upcoming production season the bee experts in Pillán hope to begin selling honey domestically and internationally. Due to the abundance of flowering trees like Ulmos and Ciruelillos, Chile is a leading producer of honey. In 1998, five thousand tons were produced with a retail value of U.S.$3.7 million. Of this, 35 percent was exported. Soon construction of two greenhouses and a *taller de cera* — a building designed to extract wax from honeycombs for candle production — will be completed. Six families live at Pillán in houses scattered between the pastures for horses, cows and sheep that are beginning to populate the area. Future plans include the construction of a dairy to produce cheese and milk, and an upgrading of the hydroelectric turbine to double the production of electricity to 140 kilowatts. (FYI, an average laundry washing machine uses 2,500 watts per hour and one kilowatt is equal to one thousand watts per day).

A view of Pillán from the mountain stream that provides water for consumption and electricity generated by a hydroelectric turbine.

Fundo Vodudahue is a buzz of activity now with several dozen workers and a fleet of heavy equipment including tractors, trucks, trench diggers and tank-like earth movers. Houses and barns are being built along with *huertos* specializing in orchards of apples and cherries. Also, the program "Alerce 3000" is being developed here to grow alerce trees (often compared to the U.S. coast redwood and red cedar of the Pacific Northwest) in a nursery and sell them for restoring damaged forestlands. Electricity is genera-

tor-produced now, but in the near future a hydroelectric turbine system will be built.

Ventisquero is the most remote and least developed *fundo*. It is also at a higher elevation and receives snow in the wintertime. Only one person lives here now and he spends his days building a new cabin and tending the greenhouse.

The other aspect of Pumalín more famous to outside observers is the park. Development of facilities such as picnic grounds, camping sites, bathrooms, trails and information centers is progressing from the southern end of the park to the north. Most plans for the southern sector between Chaitén and Caleta Gonzalo will be realized within the next year, except for a larger proposal to develop a 100-bed hotel along *Carretera Austral* (the gravel highway across southern Chile) where it enters the park from the south. Last year nearly 7,000 people visited the park, and a majority came to Caleta Gonzalo.

Park Ranger Sebastián Raby patrols this sector of the park. I spent a rainy afternoon with him sipping tea at his home in Chaitén, which also serves as the park hostel, housing up to five people per night. On this particular day various carpenters and Sebastián's girlfriend Nicole Keller, the hostel manager, were scrambling around finishing up details in hope of opening by week's end. The hostel, designed in the same style as other Pumalín buildings, will charge 10,000 pesos (U.S.$18) per night, which includes breakfast.

Nicole and Sebastián, both in their mid-20s, met just six months prior to beginning work at Pumalín in a Viña del Mar restaurant where they both had worked. They have been in the park for three months now. Both are full of energy and gaining more confidence as they spread their wings and take on more responsibility each day. Sebastián, born in Valdivia with a tourism degree from a Santiago University, is the first person in this sector to have the title 'park ranger' — only the second in the park. I can sense he knows in the back of his mind he is involved in groundbreaking work, but he is too busy to be humbled by the notion. He pulls out his notebook and reads me a list of projects Doug has given him, which include replacing signs at river bridges from metal to wooden in the park's architectural style, constructing a cattle guard at the park boundary along *Carretera Austral*, familiarizing himself with the park boundaries on the ground and developing good relationships with neighboring *Colonos* (a term given to farmers who settle the land).

Right now cows trespassing into the park are his biggest problem and time consumer, but he would like to have time for developing typical park ranger skills such as emergency medical treatment, identifying trees and bushes and trail maintenance. Before I leave he shows me "*informe 5-15*" that he is just finishing up. He tells me this a weekly report he fills out; the numbers mean it should take Doug five minutes to read it and took him 15 minutes to prepare it. The form has three copies: one for the Puerto Montt office, one for the author and the other for Doug.

Besides weekly reports, other communication methods include a two-way radio system for instant contact throughout the project area and a monthly bulletin that is written and published in the Puerto Montt office. Every edition of "Puma Verde" includes editorials, profiles of people and project locations, memorandums, birthday announcements, lists of important visitors and an introductory letter authored by Doug or Kris Tompkins referred to as the "wide view." The bulletin is a relatively recent addition to Pumalín life, but already it is very popular among employees and serves a key role of closing the information gap between central office staff and people in the field.

Back in the field, Felipe Rivas patrols the northern sector of the park. He was the first park ranger to be hired when he started out just one and a half years ago. Originally from Santiago, he and his wife live with their two-year-old son in *Leptepú*, a small outpost with a boat ramp into Comau Fiord some 12 kilometers from Pillán. After lunch on my first day as a volunteer in the park, I met Felipe who was to be my partner in the *Mirador* Trail scouting expedition.

Since it was already too late to begin trailwork that day Felipe drove me around on an orientation tour of recent campgrounds being developed at *Fiordo Largo* and *Leptepú.* On our drive back to Pillán we stopped at Cement Bridge, the only one in this sector — hence the non-name, which crosses a river with no name. This is the starting point for the proposed trail to the *Mirador*. Felipe had already been working on clearing a pathway with a machete and he suggested we suit up and walk to the end of the trail, just a hundred or so meters upstream on the righthand bank. By 'suit up' he meant wearing full raingear of heavy-duty, plastic-bib overalls and jacket along with rubber boots that reach just below the knee. We made it through the maze of wind-toppled trees and dense brush to the end of the line where Felipe wanted to get a better vantage point for the work to come. We made our way down to the river and started walking along the rocky bank. At one point a large boulder formed a deep pool making the passage by foot dangerous. Felipe, who is a few inches taller than I, leaped up to grab hold of the boulder's edge and pulled himself to the other side. I made a valiant effort to reach the hand hold, but slipped and fell into the pool. My boots filled with water so Felipe called it a day since I was as wet inside my raingear as out.

The next morning Felipe came by *Alberque,* my lodging upstairs over the honey-making workshop. We gathered our equipment, two machetes with 14-inch blades, and returned to the site of my dunking the day before. After three and a half hours hacking away at the ferns and a bamboo-type plant called *quila*, we had gained about 120 meters. Not much, if we hoped to reach the *Mirador* some eight kilometers beyond our current point. We retired early for the day to Felipe's house and ate a well-deserved lunch of spaghetti. That evening after returning to Pillán, Doug flew

Park Ranger Felipe Rivas surrounded by the bamboo-like plant quila, *reviewing our daily progress in scouting this trail destined for the Mirador.*

in from Reñihué to switch airplanes and tell us he would be by in the morning to take us flying over the proposed Mirador Trail.

Working for a multi-millionaire does have its perks. In U.S. national parks scouting a proposed trail from the air is not normal practice. Usually, airphotos and topographical maps are used to plot a path through the woods. However, in Pumalín the lower elevations are so densely forested that the canopy layer blocks any view in air photos of what really exists below the green cover. Scouting from an airplane does help in realizing the overall size of the project and is a welcome respite from hacking away at *quila*.

Doug arrived at 8:30 a.m. in his Christian Husky airplane, a two-seater that he uses to explore the nooks and crannys of Pumalín. When he landed he taxied up to my location and waved me over with the motor still running. I neatly placed myself in the back seat, he closed the door and several seconds later we were in the air headed toward the Cement Bridge, nameless river and nameless peak referred to as *Mirador*. We flew gradually to the peak past the waterfall, the lakes — still frozen from the long winter — and above treeline to the snow-covered *Mirador*. Making our way down the valley in a spiral pattern we reviewed possible corridors to place the trail. We were descending at an unnoticeable rate — or maybe I was overwhelmed by the thought of completing this project — when I focused my attention ahead of us and saw that we had entered a box canyon. Doug wanted to get a better view of the large waterfall that he anticipates will be a prime feature of the trail. I agreed it was impressive and thought we were close enough to warrant a quick exit. Doug banked the airplane away from the canyon and soon we were touching down at Pillán. When we came to a stop I extracted myself from the backseat of the Husky to allow Felipe his turn at stomach flips. As I passed Felipe he gave me a look of reluctance, as one who has been on this ride too often.

For the following four days Felipe and I returned to the trail, progressing a little farther each day in the jungle of *quila.* The plant grows to form a nearly impenetrable web and is difficult to cut with one swing of the machete. It takes several whacks to cut quila and by the end of the day, with a dull machete and jello arms, the task is dismal. By Saturday evening I was worn out and was looking forward to Sunday — the only day off. Employees at Pumalín generally work ten-hour days and either work 24 days on and six off (mostly the construction workers and mechanics) or a six-day week with Sunday as the rest day.

I spent my Sunday morning washing clothes and hiking to the waterfall that supplies water and electricity to Pillán. After lunch Felipe stopped by and told me we were going to Cahuelmó with Doug. I sighed, thinking it was another day of work, but it turned out to be a day of play. We drove to Leptepú and boarded the park's patrol boat along with Francisco the architect and his friend Isabel. Cahuelmó is a valley that intersects Comau Fiord in the northern half of the park, and has a series of hot spring pools. After 45 minutes at sea in rough waters we reached the hot springs with Doug at the helm — as usual. In silence, each person selected his or her own pool and soaked in the warm waters. For me an my sore muscles, it was heaven.

On the walk back to the boat I asked Doug about his process or criteria for purchasing wildlands. In U.S. national parks, priorities for purchasing land are usually documented in a Land Protection Plan that evaluates which non-park lands adjacent or within the park are most important to acquire. Factors that warrant a high priority for protection may include the presence of rare plant or animal species, a crucial wildlife-migration corridor, lands within the watershed of the park or the threat of commercial development (such as a gold mine). Doug's process is much simpler: If he likes it and the property is for sale, chances are good he'll consider buying it.

On the boat ride back to Leptepú Doug asked Felipe to take the helm and he sat next to me. As we passed the Huinay site, a 30,000-hectare parcel of land that divides Pumalín from north to south, I asked Doug about a recent controversy regarding this chunk of land. In 1998 Catholic University of Valparaíso sold this land to the energy corporation Endesa, just after Doug made an agreement with

the government to cease any large land purchases for the year. At the time it really was a blow to his plans for the Pumalín project. However, since that time Endesa has transferred the land to the Endesa Foundation and has assured Doug that a conservation project will be undertaken. He doesn't have many worries about the property now and told me that eventually, he feels it will all become part of a "great national park."

Cahuelmó Hot Springs with fiord by the same name in the background.

His portion of this "great national park" is still in the development stage. He reasoned that the costs are high now because of the capital investments, but he speculates the cost of operating the park will be about $1 million per year when it is fully up and running. Currently, a search is on for a park superintendent, which will allow Doug to concentrate his time on other projects.

When we returned to the dock at Leptepú a young man was there waiting for us. He had pictures of a dead sea lion that appeared to have been shot. He showed these pictures to Doug who took them for evidence in future discussions with *Fiordo Blanco*, a local salmon company. Salmon-farming operations are located throughout the Fiords adjacent to Pumalín and are visible from Leptepú, Reñihué, Pillán and Caleta Gonzalo. Sea lions feed on salmon by ripping open the nets of the floating salmon farms. Even though sea lions are a protected species, salmon workers have been known to shoot them to protect their cash crop. Doug has filed several complaints with government officials and the courts, the practice still continues, although not as frequently.

On our drive back to Pillán Doug invited me to his house for the night. After the short commute to Reñihué and a discussion about the copper-mining industry, we migrated to the topic of other property he owns in Argentina. I told him of my interest of visiting San Lorenzo, a 40,000-acre parcel of land he owns adjacent to Perito Moreno National Park. He quickly grabbed some loose-leaf paper and began writing directions to this area and other places I should visit along this stretch. Three pages later he had included every detail I would ever need including where to camp and what gear to bring. (Doug writes everything out long-hand now and doesn't use a computer any more. In an oddly poetic way it seemed only appropriate that my computer laptop should die just before my trip to Pumalín). These directions, coming from a person like Doug, who has traveled throughout the world doing everything from tracking Siberian tigers in the Russian far east to trekking in Bhutan, surprised me with their level of detail. I would think the details would be lost or meshed together after so much traveling.

He has been exploring wildlands and not-so wildlands most of his life. In 1970 he took his family on a "little" camping trip from San Francisco to Tierra del Fuego — in a small airplane he piloted. When his daughter Quincey graduated from high school he took her on a trip from Milan to Moscow — by car. Traveling has been a big part of his life and he tells me that he probably knows Patagonia better than anyone else after three decades of flying, hiking and driving throughout this vast territory.

He turned his attention to the month ahead and his full schedule of visitors. "This guy named Tom Brokaw is coming down here to do some fishing. Do you know who he is?" He said this to me in a genuine tone, as if I wouldn't know the name. He ticked off a few more names of upcoming visitors, well-known in the world of environmental literature and wildland philantrophy. All of a sudden it was 11:30 p.m. and the lights went out as the generator stopped. We had spent the last five hours chatting and I had not even got around to my questions about Pumalín — plus we had totally missed eating dinner. I went to bed in the guestroom surrounded by pictures of Doug's family and friends — a gallery of uncommon people dedicated to a common pursuit of protecting wildlands.

By morning light I was preparing myself for a day of patrolling Comau Fiord with Felipe. After a rather quick and quiet breakfast (Doug thinks much and eats little) we flew back to Pillán where Doug continued onto Chaitén (by plane) and I in the other direction to Leptepú (by truck). I found Felipe refueling the boat, excited by the prospect of

the day-trip to Hornopirén. His usual schedule includes patrolling this stretch two or three times per week. The Fiord was much calmer than the day before and we made good time going past the valleys of Vodudahue, Huinay and Cahuelmó. The next valley to the north, Quìntupeu, begins with a fiord that has a narrow opening almost hiding the beautiful valley that lies beyond. The steep slopes covered with native forests and waterfalls give the appearance of a lost paradise. Felipe told me how this fiord was used in World War II by a German ship that was hiding from Allied forces that had been tracking the boat for weeks, but lost it here. The men on board had used the trees for fuel and waterfalls for fresh water to survive in their hiding place. Now, the only things hiding here were three salmon-farm platforms. The salmon workers looked at us suspiciously as we took photographs of the trash they had left on the shorelines.

Floating salmon farms known as "balsajaulas" *hidden within Quìntupeu Fiord.*

In Hornopirén (population 1,200), also known as Rio Negro for the river that flows through town, Pablo Carrasco met us at the dock. He supervises *Fundo Rio Blanco*, a small ranch owned by the Tompkins north of Pumalín Park but adjacent to Hornopirén National Park. Pablo took us to the ranch, which is about 20 minutes outside of town, to show us recent work on the road and cabin. In the future this spot, wedged in a narrow valley bordered by the national park on both ridgetops, will be the beginning for a proposed trail leading to Ventisquero River, southeast of here in Pumalín Park. As we drove back down the road we could hear an airplane overhead and the park hand-held radio in the front seat blared out *"Nube, nube....Águila."* Doug (the eagle) was calling Pablo (cloud) to check in and say hi. Also in the airplane was Rodriego Villablanca, an expert on fruit trees, who was traveling with Doug to *Fundo Ventisquero* to prune the cherry and apple trees. Doug flew above the corridor of the proposed trail to Ventisquero, that he later told me will be the 'mother of all trails.' I can believe it just looking at the mountainous terrain covered with a dense forest. Whoever works on this trail has my sympathy.

We returned to the dock in Hornopirén where the Pillán cook and her family were waiting for us. We loaded the boat with several boxes of food they bought during their days off in Puerto Montt. Just as we were about to leave, a young man traveling to Coihaique (a town of 36,000 people 260 miles south) approached us wanting a ride as far as we were going. Felipe motioned him on board and we embarked under the late afternoon sun. After about 20 minutes at sea Felipe turned to the hitchhiker with a perplexed face and told him that he probably didn't want to go where we were going because the only access on or off the Huequi Peninsula (home to Leptepú and Pillán) is by private airplane or boat. Our hitchhiker could be stranded there for days, and he had no raingear, tent or sleeping bag. Felipe decided our new acquaintance had better chances of reaching the *Carratera Austral*, which led to Coihaique, if we left him on Llancahué Island, which we were approaching. A few people lived in a village at the tip of the island and frequently made boat trips to Chaitén — or so Felipe reasoned. We came to shore and dropped him off as one of the villagers appeared in the clearing. I couldn't help think how odd it was that we were headed to the mainland, but he had better chances of reaching his destination from an island.

Later Carlos Cuevas, Pumalín project director and a Conservation Land Trust board member, told me about a proposal he is developing to award a concession opportunity to a local ferryboat company to provide public transportation along the route through Comau Fiord to Leptepú, and on the other side of the Peninsula to Caleta Gonzalo. This proposal was a little premature for our hitchhiker, but perhaps the next time he comes through he can use the service (It will more than likely operate in January and February — the height of the tourist season). Carlos, a forestry engineer who graduated from the University of Chile in 1979, has worked in the Ministry of National Lands and was also involved in the creation of Conama (an agency similar to the U.S. EPA). His background in resolving land-title questions has been an asset in his wildland acquisition work for the Conservation Land Trust.

Carlos recently returned from the International Conservation Rally in Portland, Oregon where he learned more about developing a foundation. He contends that a foundation is necessary for Pumalín to raise money for future viability of the project. Financial self-sufficiency is a long-term goal that may never be reached, but he feels in five

years it may be possible to generate 50 percent of the revenue needed to operate Pumalin Park and Project from the project itself — once the capital investments are completed. No entrance fee exists, but fees are charged for camping, use of the hot springs, and meals at the Caleta Gonzalo cafe. Currently almost 200 people work in the project; this includes nearly 75 that work for *Empresas Chiloe* (a construction firm created for developing the Fundos) and 125 that work directly for Pumalín in the Puerto Montt and Chaitén Offices and on the farms and in the park.

When I asked Carlos about the future of the park 50 years from now he responded very optimistically. He saw it as a model park for Latin America and perhaps the world in demonstrating public-private cooperation in developing economic opportunities while protecting wildlands. When the park is completely developed he thinks it will become a prime destination for tourists, one that is an integral part of any visit to Patagonia. He added that he feels Doug will be well-remembered, almost in a sense like John Muir, who is known internationally for his work in protecting nature at the turn of the 19th century.

One of Carlos' highest priorities now is working with government officials to declare Pumalín a Nature Sanctuary. The protection status of "Nature Sanctuary" was established in 1970 as a part of the National Monuments Law. Under this law 26 sites in Chile have been declared Nature Sanctuaries. They have been declared so because of their importance for study and research (geologic, paleotologic, zoologic, botanic, ecologic) or because they possess natural formations of interest to science or the state. The Council of National Monuments, within the Ministry of Education, reviews and approves requests for Nature Sanctuary status. Although it does not manage the sanctuary itself, previous authorization must be granted by the Council before initiating construction or excavation projects or development activities such as fishing, hunting, resource extraction or any activity that may alter the natural state. Given this requirement and all the construction that is taking place within Pumalín during this development stage, it is my opinion that the declaration should wait until the project is completely ready.

According to Carlos, "The ball is in the government's court" now for accepting or denying Pumalin's request to become a Nature Sanctuary. He has a meeting in several months with government officials who are establishing a commission (along with the Council) to review the proposal. He anticipates that it will be at least another year before a decision is made. One of the main questions is who will own and manage the property. The Conservation Land Trust (CLT), a non-profit organization from the United States, is the owner of the property now. Carlos is exploring options to develop or use a Chilean foundation/institution to directly receive land titles from CLT. (This entity could be the same one that is created to raise funds for future management of Pumalín).

One other feasible option (in the future) is declaring Pumalin a "Wild Protected Area of Private Property" otherwise known as a 'Private Park.' Article 35 of the 1994 General Environmental Law established this category as an incentive to stimulate private-sector involvement in the creation of parks. Parks within this category are to be administered and treated equally as other sites within the National System of Wild Protected Areas. However, no regulations have yet been developed for carrying out this law — hence no private parks have been declared. The General Secretary Ministry, along with Conaf, is responsible for promulgating the regulations. Carlos Baraona, a lawyer working with the Pumalin Park and Project, believes that when the regulations are developed this option will provide a higher level of protection than a Nature Sanctuary. Chilean land law strongly favors development activities like mineral extraction and hydro projects. Because of this Carlos is concerned that Nature-Sanctuary status will not be sufficient to block any future claims for extracting resources. He would like to see a team of lawyers, geographers and engineers formed to work toward the acquisition of mining and water rights in the project area. In U.S. property law this is akin to owning the "full bundle of sticks," where each stick represents a different property right such as water, trees, minerals and air.

The center for information regarding private conservation initiatives is CODEFF, the National Committee for the Defense of Flora and Fauna. It maintains a communication network for private protected areas. This environmental organization, based in Santiago, works with private-property landowners that wish to conserve their property. They have developed a list of legal tools that includes the process for declaration (nature sanctuary, historic or scientific place of interest, tourist protection area, soil conservation district, prohibited hunting areas, protection of water rights and copropriator) and the advantages/disadvantages for every approach. The current network of private protected areas includes 104 properties. Pumalín Park with nearly 300,000 hectares, overshadows all other entries on the list, with the nearest competitor being, *Alto Huemul,* a nature sanctuary that protects an oak forest in the 7th Region, with 19,000 hectares. In nearly all respects, it is necessary to remember that Pumalín is on a different scale, one that skews comparisons and challenges replication in the public sector.

When I meet people and tell them about my work involving the study of Pumalín Park just about every person asks me, "So, what is your opinion, what do you think about it?" Their next question is, "Have you met Doug Tompkins? What is he like?" However, I generally shy away from answering these questions directly. I don't see my role as one of a critic — with paternalistic views of what is good and bad — but rather on a mission of finding "best practices" in the protection and management of wildlands. Besides it is too early to pass judgment on a project that is still evolving. Time will tell whether this project is successful and in the meantime we need to give it any support we can. My impressions keep changing as I learn more about the park and I am reminded about that table in Doug's house — things are not always as they seem. ❑

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

FELLOWS AND THEIR ACTIVITITES

Shelly Renae Browning (March 2001- 2003) • **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.

Wendy Call (May 2000 - 2002) • **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.

Martha Farmelo (April 2001- 2003) • **ARGENTINA**

A Georgetown graduate (major: psychology; minor, Spanish) with a Master's in Public Affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, Martha is the Institute's Suzanne Ecke McColl Fellow studying gender issues in Argentina. Married to an Argentine doctoral candidate and mother of a small son, she will be focusing on both genders, which is immensely important in a land of *Italo/Latino machismo*. Martha has been involved with Latin America all her professional life, having worked with Catholic Relief Services and the Inter-American Development Bank in Costa Rica, with Human Rights Watch in Ecuador and the Inter-American Foundation in El Salvador, Uruguay and at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing.

Gregory Feifer (January 2000 - 2002) • **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.

Curt Gabrielson (December 2000 - 2002) • **EAST TIMOR**

With an M.I.T. degree is in science education, Curt is spending two years in East Timor, watching a new nation whose previous education system had been erased, create a new one. Since finishing at M.I.T. in 1993 (he took his last semester at Berkeley's education department), Curt has focused on enabling minority and low-income students to invent their own science education using "found" materials on the Tibetan plateau at Qinghai Normal University and Middle/High School, in San Francisco and in a low-income community in the agricultural town of Watsonville, California

Peter Keller (March 2000 - 2002) • **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.

Leena Khan (April 2001-2002) • **PAKISTAN**

A lawyer dealing with immigration and international-business law with a firm in the Washington, DC area, Leena will study the status of women under the "islamization" of Pakistani law that began in the 1980s and continues to this day. Born in Pakistan and immersed in Persian and Urdu literature by her grandfather, she is a Muslim herself and holds a B.A. from North Carolina State University and a J.D. from the University of San Diego.

Whitney Mason (January 1999-2001) • **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 (December 1999-2000) • **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."

ICWA Letters **(ISSN 1083-4303)** are published by the Institute of Current World Affairs Inc., a 501(c)(3) exempt operating foundation incorporated in New York State with offices located at 4 West Wheelock Street, Hanover, NH 03755. The letters are provided free of charge to members of ICWA and are available to libraries and professional researchers by subscription.

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Author: Keller, Peter
Title: ICWA Letters - The Americas
ISSN: 1083-4303
Imprint: Institute of Current World Affairs, Hanover, NH
Material Type: Serial
Language: English
Frequency: Monthly
Other Regions: East Asia; Sub-Saharan Africa; Mideast/North Africa; South Asia; Europe/Russia

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