

**PATAGONIA ECOSYSTEMS:
THE CHILE PROJECT**

January 3 – February 15, 2010

Meeting Place:

January 3, 2010

Los Angeles, CA

or Puerto Montt, Chile

(time and location to be determined)

12 semester system units (equivalent to 18 quarter system units)

Program Fee \$ 2595 plus \$75 Application Fee

Thank you for your interest in our Chile program. In this program, team members will take part in unique firsthand investigations of southern Chile's diverse wildland ecosystems and the wildlife species they support. We will gain personal familiarity with the ecological diversity of Patagonia, from the rainforests of the Pacific coast, to the ice-capped Andes, to the steppes in the rainshadow of the cordillera. We will examine the fascinating natural history and biogeography of this region, where some species remain little-changed since the breakup of Gondwana 200 million years ago. Together we will explore national parks, privately-owned protected areas, and unprotected places to study the ecology, conservation, and management of ecosystems and threatened wildlife populations.

The vast landscape of fjords, glaciers and mountains of southern Chile was one of the last places in the world to be explored and remains one of the most pristine on earth. Thus, Chile is the perfect setting to immerse ourselves in relatively intact wilderness while learning about the challenges of conservation in a developing nation with often dichotomous development and preservation goals. Through extensive backcountry field studies, information exchanges with experts, and time spent in places where local communities co-exist with wildlife and wildlands, we will examine the intertwined economic, ecological, cultural, and management dimensions of environmental problems and conservation strategies in Patagonia today.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Together we will travel to national and private parks throughout southern Chile to learn about the natural history, ecology, conservation, and management of wild lands and wildlife. This program seeks to provide team members with a firsthand introduction to several of Chile's diverse ecosystems (interior volcanoes, mountainous coastal temperate rainforests, islands, fjords, rivers and lakes, and marine systems) and the diversity of bird, mammal, fish, and plant species they harbor. Our group will learn about ecological research and conservation from local scientists and conservationists, through readings, discussions, and by conducting field research projects of our own. Our ecological studies and wildlife surveys will coincide with cultural interactions where we will see firsthand how various land use practices and policies have shaped the landscape. Our stays in rural communities in Chile will enable us to experience traditional lifestyles that are quickly fading in the face of globalization, and provide insight as to how community-based conservation strategies might be applied.

Much of our time will be spent in Chile's spectacular backcountry. Typically we will backpack to remote base camps from which we will conduct our field studies. **Please note that prior field research experience is not required. All necessary skills of data acquisition will be taught on-site in Patagonia.** The ability to speak Spanish is also not a course prerequisite. Our field studies will take place in the winter, Chile's summer, and will take advantage of the excellent weather at this time of year in the warmer latitudes.

PROGRAM GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Orientation and the first segment of the program will take place at the Senda Darwin Biological Station on the Grand Island of Chiloe. Here we will begin with an introduction to basic Spanish language skills and an initial examination of the culture, history, ecology, and biogeography of Chile. We will have the opportunity to work with ecologists in the Valdivian rainforests, and learn about the natural history of these ecosystems as well as conservation challenges and attempts by local non-profit groups to preserve them.

Next, we will cross back to the mainland coast to embark on an examination of fjords and coastal mountains during an extended stay in Parque Pumalín, perhaps the largest private nature reserve in the world. Here we will investigate the emergence, efficacy, and controversies surrounding privately owned nature reserves, a relatively recent conservation tool. We will also have the opportunity to stay and work at an isolated farm in a remote fiord, Vodudahue, where we will learn about the ecology of this wild and remote area as well as a unique conservation program that includes several sustainable community projects such as beekeeping, organic farming, sheep raising and a native tree nursery.

Next, we will travel north to Pucon to a small, private, community-run reserve, Santuario Cañi, that protects the ancient araucaria (or monkey puzzle) trees and contains areas of old growth forest. This reserve is situated in the interior of Chile, along the volcano belt, where much of the landscape has been affected by the large-scale disturbances volcanoes cause. At the reserve, we will interact directly with community members who are involved in its conservation. We will examine the efficacy of this type of conservation tool in comparison to the larger-scale conservation areas we previously visited. Here too we will conduct field work looking at the effects of current and past disturbances such as grazing and timber harvesting on forest vegetation.

For the final week of the program we will travel to another remote area of southern Chile for an extended backpacking trip into a pristine, unprotected valley that is threatened by dam construction. Here we will spend some time taking a critical look at the various conservation initiatives we immersed ourselves in during the course, reviewing preservation strategies and discussing which ones work well.

Through our field studies we will be able to assess major issues affecting wildland conservation and environmental sustainability in Chile today, and discover possible strategies to help meet Chile's future challenges. This is a special opportunity for on-site studies of conservation in Chile's wildlands, where each of us will have direct exposure to several of Chile's diverse ecosystems while at the same time learning the ecology and conservation of those ecosystems. We look forward to meeting you in the January.



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TRANSPORTATION

Arrangements will be made for team members to fly from Los Angeles, CA to Puerto Montt, Chile. You can also arrange to join the group in Chile if that works out better for you. In this case, you will need to meet the group flight when it arrives. At the end of the program, you can decide whether you want to fly home on the scheduled date or remain on your own in South America before using the return portion of your ticket.

All reasonable efforts will be made to follow the activities outlined above. However, please understand that in Patagonia travel arrangements can remain tentative until the traveling actually takes place. Weather conditions, road closures, volcanic activity, as well as political and bureaucratic considerations may affect our plans. Wildlands Studies has put together an innovative, unique program in Patagonia; and team members need to be flexible, patient, and prepared to adapt to unexpected situations.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

You will need a current passport that does not expire until after the end of the program. Visas (good for 90 days) are obtained upon arrival. We will send team members details later this fall.

PRE-PROGRAM MAILINGS

We will send team members supplementary information including a clothing and equipment list later this fall. We will also tell you what travel preparations are necessary and how to get ready for the program academically.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

Students will receive 12 semester units (18 quarter units) awarded through California State University Monterey Bay Extended Education. While students usually encounter no difficulties in transferring credit to their home campus, applicants should check with their advisors prior to enrolling. Our staff will be happy to explain the program in further detail to the applicant's advisor, if necessary. The Chile field studies program gives credit in three courses:

- ENVS 370, Environmental Wildlands Studies (4 semester system units)
- ENVS 371, Environmental Field Survey (4 units)
- ENVS 372, Wildlands Environment and Culture (4 units)

Letter grades are based upon the breadth of our endeavors. Team members receiving academic credit will be evaluated on the basis of: 1) active participation in all scheduled class and field activities; 2) examinations; 3) field journals; 4) the design, implementation, completion, and presentation of an independent research project/paper.

Team members are expected to conduct themselves in a mature and responsible manner. The Wildlands Studies Program reserves the right to require any student to withdraw from the program if their conduct is detrimental to or incompatible with the interests, safety, or welfare of any course participants.



PROJECT COSTS

Program Fee:	\$2595 plus \$75 Application Fee due November 1, 2009 Enrollment on a space-available basis after the fee due date until the program is full.
Estimated in-country Expenses:	\$1900 per person includes covers most in-country accommodations, travel in-country, instructor travel, camping costs/permits, logistical support, group supplies and materials/research costs.
Food Money:	\$400-500 (this varies according to taste - but don't be caught short)
Personal Spending Money:	\$300
Airfare:	\$900 (as of March 2009)
Santiago Airport Tax:	\$100

The In-country Fee is due **6 weeks before the program begins, by November 22, 2009**. If you cancel from the program no earlier than 6 weeks but no later than 3 weeks before the program begins, you are entitled to a 75% in-country fee refund. If you withdraw within 3 weeks of the program's start, and you cannot be replaced from a waiting list, your group fees are non-refundable. This policy is necessary because much of the group expenditures must be paid and/or committed to before the program takes place. For those of us on a limited budget, additional personal expenses can be held down with careful planning.

Students should inquire at the financial aid office of their home campus regarding the use of their loans or grants for this course. CSU Monterey Bay Extended Education/ Wildlands Studies are not responsible for non-refundable airline or other tickets or payments or any similar penalties that may be incurred as a result of any course cancellation or changes.

PROGRAM LEADERS

Esther Alsum is a botanist and naturalist with field ecology experience in a variety of ecosystems throughout North and South America. Her primary interest is river conservation and management issues.

Daniel Hagaman is an anthropologist and naturalist who worked on conservation and education projects in Bolivia for over five years and conducted field research on Polylepis forests in the Bolivian Andes.