

The Valdivian Coastal Reserve

Large Scale Private Lands Conservation in Chile

In 2003, The Nature Conservancy joined up with local organizations in southern Chile to save some of the world's last temperate rainforests from logging. These millenary forests overlooking the Pacific coast are now part of the Conservancy's Valdivian Coastal Reserve, a thriving model of community-based conservation.

We have worked hard with local people to protect their surroundings and create an opportunity for a good life and a healthy future for their children—and for generations to come. Using science, local knowledge, innovation and a collaborative approach, The Nature Conservancy and local partners have transformed the Valdivian Coastal Reserve into living proof that people and nature can coexist in harmony.



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Protecting a natural hotspot

The Valdivian Coastal Reserve is located in a global biodiversity hotspot, where the conservation of species has an enormous impact on securing Earth's diversity of life for future generations. During the last Ice Age, the coastal rainforests of southern Chile provided plants and wildlife with a freeze-free refuge. As a result, the Valdivian coastal forests harbor some of Chile's highest concentrations of rare and unique species found nowhere else on Earth. These include the critically endangered Darwin's fox; a tiny tree-dwelling marsupial known as the mountain monkey and regarded as a living fossil by scientists; the pudu, world's smallest deer, and at least 58 bird species.

With more than half of the world's temperate rainforests already disappeared, the 125,000-acre Reserve plays a critical role protecting one of the world's largest swaths of such forests. These old growth forests—including endangered Alerce trees dating back to more than 2,500 years—store some of the largest amounts of carbon per acre in the world, helping to mitigate climate change.

The Conservancy and its partners are managing the Valdivian Coastal Reserve to conserve these important plants and animals, and to abate threats to nature, including logging, road development, over-fishing of fresh and salt water species, invasive plants and animals, fire, and livestock grazing. A trained and professional staff of park guards, administrative staff, and seasonal fire crews—many of them members of the local community—work year-round to ensure the well-being of the site.

An innovative model of conservation

The Valdivian Coastal Reserve has become a model for community-based conservation in Chile and Latin America. It is also pioneering a new public-private approach for the sustainable management of Chile's forests and for the conservation of nature by donating almost 25,500 acres of native forests from the Valdivian Coastal Reserve to help create the adjoining Alerce Coastal National Park.

Together the two areas protect 150,000 acres of millenary temperate rainforests under Chile's first private-public cooperation agreement for a joint conservation management plan. Wildlife, plants and trees do not make a distinction between protected areas. Neither do threats to nature. By working together, we are ensuring that more forests and their wildlife are protected far into the future.

Parallel to this, we are implementing projects that ensure livelihoods and sustainability, including:

Chile's first forest carbon project: We documented and validated—through the Verified Carbon Standard—a project that avoided the release of almost 400,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

Massive ecological restoration: The largest reforestation effort in Chile with 8,400 acres of exotic eucalyptus plantations with native trees.

Land and sea conservation: Working with local artisanal fisheries and its partners, the Conservancy is promoting responsible fishing and support for creating marine protected areas

The Valdivian Coastal Reserve Our Legacy for the Planet



Benefits for the local community

- **New livelihood opportunities:** Activities generated for and by local communities include ecotourism, small business initiatives created by local women's associations, native tree nurseries, and traceable fishing products.
- **Clean water, improved health:** The protection of critical drinking water sources by the Conservancy for the local community ensures wellbeing and health for scores of families in the zone.
- **Environmental education:** Specially trained Reserve staff provide environmental education to primary schools in the zone, and implement awareness-raising projects with local people and institutions to ensure the protection of nature.
- **Conservation and science for everyone:** Key projects involving communities and their organizations, and public and private sector entities, include scientific research, conservation monitoring and government development initiatives.