



Dear Friends of Cochamó,

No trip into the Cochamó Valley is ever forgotten, no two journeys ever the same. Few places on Earth remain at once so pristine, so unharmed by human activity, and yet so accessible. Its granite domes are a constant canvas of ever-changing light, its yawning meadows a whimsical tapestry of wild flowers, its towering old-growth forests a concert hall of birdsong and falling water. No cars, no power lines, no deadlines.

Sadly, the Cochamó Valley, like so many wild mountain river valleys in southern Chile, faces the imminent threat of hydropower development. Where some find a rare gem of unspoiled wilderness, others see only economic opportunity. Competing domestic and international power companies are vying for the rights to harness the Cochamó River from its mountain headwaters to the sea. The two main highland tributaries – the Traidor and La Junta Rivers – are also targeted. More than a dozen overlapping and connected projects are envisioned. To realize even one of these, large swathes of ancient rainforest would be cut for roads and powerlines, clogging the rivers gorges with erosion and destroying the valley forever – long before most Chileans, let alone the world, know even its name.

About Cochamó Valley

This U-shaped valley in northern Patagonia stretches across 30,000 hectares with granite domes, waterfalls and ancient native forest. It is unique in all the Andes geologically, ecologically, culturally and historically. No roads carve through the valley, accessible only by foot or horse on a trail cut more than a century ago to link Argentinean ranchers with the fishing villages of the northernmost fjord of Patagonia. Tourism has quickly become the most important activity for the valley's inhabitants providing work locally. It is considered one of the world's best climbing destinations – labeled the Chilean Yosemite – and a haven for trekking and fauna-flora observation.

Power companies, however, have recently solicited water rights to build seven hydro electric projects throughout this valley, impending disaster. Unlike neighboring areas, timber companies have not yet commercially logged here, the unprotected home to the largest known stand of ancient Alerce – an endangered cousin of the Redwood and the second-longest living species on earth. The flora and fauna of Cochamó, including the world's smallest deer and marsupial, underscore the unique and complex biodiversity possible only in mature ecosystems. To effectively protect Cochamó we will create a park, and to achieve this, the project must begin to establish strong legal protection and educate the community that the valley's well-being extends beyond the interest of corporations.

Chile's legal code provides no sure protection of wild places from such devastation. Defending the Cochamó Valley requires a creative mix of national, international and local initiatives. That's where Conservacion Cochamó **and you** have a role to play.

What can you do to help?

You can be part of "Friends of Cochamó"

- Donate money to finance the campaigns www.cochamo.org
- Publish information on Internet (blogs, fotologs, facebook, twitter, etc.)
- Visit the valley and donate your photos
- Arrange articles in magazines, newspapers and television
- Present projects in coordination with Conservación Cochamó to add value to the Valley
- Spread the word within your community
- Use your imagination and contacts to help

How can you donate?

Cochamó Valley, the wilderness and the traditional culture within, needs your help. Pick up a shovel and join us on the trail or send us a contribution. **Or, better yet, do both.**

1. Donations by cheque can be sent to:

Conservation Cochamó
San Pedro 311
Puerto Varas
Region de los Lagos
Chile

2. Donations by direct deposit in Chile or international bank draft can be made to:

Agrupación Conservación Cochamó de Medio Ambiente
Libreta de ahorro (savings account)
N° 82360914271
Banco Estado
Rut: 65.003.999-0
SWIF code: BECHELRM

3. Donations by credit card using our web www.cochamo.org and pay by Pay Pall



The world's wild places are shrinking. But the Cochamó Valley vividly reminds us that even now, more than a century after the industrial revolution, there are still remnants of unspoiled wilderness on Earth. New technologies enable alternative energy strategies. Powering our cities no longer requires destroying our remaining forests and rivers. With your help, we can work to ensure that future generations may forever share the privilege of encountering wild places.

Saludos y gracias,

Rodrigo Condeza V.

Chairman

Conservación Cochamó