YENDEGAIA
NATIONAL PARK
Chile: A territory so small, on the map it comes to seem like a beach between the mountains and the sea . . . In the South, the tragic caprice of the southern archipelagos makes great rips in the velvet sea, sharp shards, with clear and well-defined natural areas, like the character of the people.

—Gabriela Mistral
YENDEGAIA
NATIONAL PARK
Photography
ANTONIO VIZCAÍNO

Essays
SEBASTIÁN PIÑERA ECHENIQUE
DOUGLAS TOMPKINS
NICOLO GLIGO V.
HERNÁN MLADINIC ALONSO
SANTIAGO VALDÉS GUTIÉRREZ
ADRIANA HOFFMANN JACOBY
ANTONIO VIZCAÍNO
DEDICATION

For Alan Watson Featherstone, Adriana Hoffman, and Graciela Ramaciotti—
who first articulated a vision for Yendegaia’s permanent protection as a wild sanctuary.
Beauty is that enigmatic enigma deciphered neither by psychology nor rhetoric.
—Jorge Luis Borges
The western coast of Tierra del Fuego crumbles into a multitude of islands, among which meander mysterious channels, reaching to the end of the world... —Francisco Coloane
Green is the prime color of the world, and that from which its loveliness arises.
—Pedro Calderón de la Barca
As long as you’re on the side of parks, you’re on the side of angels.
—Robert Moses
My Patagonia is a landscape of infinite space, torn apart by a torrent of love, navigating a single river swollen by miracles.

—Mario Miranda Soussi
The smaller we come to feel ourselves compared to the mountain, the nearer we come to participating in its greatness.

—Arne Naess
FOREWORD

Sebastián Piñera Echenique

Chile is universally recognized as a country of great beauty and diverse landscapes. Its “crazy geography,” as described by author Benjamín Subercaseaux in one of his books, stretches from the driest desert in the world to some of the largest continental ice fields on the planet, with a long Pacific coastline running parallel to the majestic Andes mountain range, separated only by a few kilometers. Chile’s outstanding natural scenery is a major national asset; more than 4 million foreign visitors arrive each year, a great many of whom visit one of our national parks or reserves during their stay.

To date, Chile has 102 units in the National System of State-Protected Wildlife Areas, which includes national parks, national reserves, and natural monuments. The system covers approximately 35 million acres (14 million hectares), roughly 20 percent of Chile’s continental surface. This figure is the result of public conservation policies initiated many decades ago with the creation of the Malleco forest Reserve, in 1907. Chile’s first national park, Vicente Pérez Rosales, was designated in 1926. Later, in the 1960s, larger units of public land, such as the Bernardo O’Higgins National Park, were established. All of the following governments, to a greater or lesser degree depending on their specific objectives, have continued a policy of land conservation. Thanks to this, Chile today ranks well above its Latin American peers and fellow member countries, on average, in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in terms of area conserved.

However, this ongoing effort to preserve larger representative examples of all of Chile’s ecosystem types for future generations has not only come from the State. Over the last two decades, the participation of private parties in land conservation projects has increased considerably, adding almost 1.2 million acres (1.3 million hectares) to existing protected areas. Examples such as Pumalín, Tantauco, Futangue, and Huilo Huilo parks, to name just a few, speak of a society that has become increasingly concerned with protecting healthy ecosystems and point to a social-entrepreneurial interest that has gained more and more enthusiasm, making Chile the region’s foremost leader in private conservation innovation.

Several NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) have also entered the scene in recent years, advocating for the conservation of various habitats in the north and south of Chile, partially channelling the citizens’ voice for greater protection of imperiled ecosystems. This activism often leads to substantial changes in public policy. Every day, more examples emerge of an increasingly empowered citizenry demanding greater assertiveness from government authorities to protect the environment and regulate commercial exploitation of natural resources. This super-vigilance on the part of citizens has forced us to improve our environmental legislation and reveals important changes in our way of thinking since our parents’ generation.

All of this speaks of a new Chile. Whereas Chile’s early road to development was through the industrial exploitation and often careless use of nature’s bounty, the nation now treats natural resources with much more respect, fostering their protection and sustainable use. Not only has this created new opportunities for developing more sustainable activities such as nature-based tourism, but it has also enabled communities with few traditional productive capacities to grow and develop. Puerto Natales, near Torres del Paine National Park, and San Pedro de Atacama, which serves visitors to Los Flamencos National Reserve, are clear examples of this new Chile. However, much remains to be done, and we must continue to work together to ensure that future generations can benefit from the natural bounty that Chile offers.
examples of this transformation into park gateway communities, where tangible economic benefits are apparent.

All of this compels us to reflect on the role played by our country's protected areas, no longer as mere islands for conserving native flora and fauna, but also as catalysts for culturally appropriate economic development of our communi-
ties and territories. In this respect, Chile has slowly been moving away from the mistaken notion that national parks and reserves are comprised of productive land lost to potential development, and Chileans are embracing the idea that parks and reserves present opportunities to improve our quality of life. The State plays a fundamental role in promoting sensible public policies to conserve marine, coast-
al, and terrestrial ecosystems. The State can lead by both preserving ecosystems and by generating new programs that drive local develop-
ment through environmentally responsive activities.

Consequently, the creation of Yendegaia National Park has been for me, as President of Chile, a highly significant event during my term in office. Not only because it involved the joint effort between the State of Chile, which contributed 276,349 acres (111,913 hectares), and civil society through Fundación Yendegaia, which donated 95,827 acres (38,780 hectares), but also because of the key role this park will have on the development of the most southern area of continental Chile. Neglected by several previous governments because of its remoteness and diffi-
cult access, this area is being incorporated into the national scene through other initiatives that are complementary to the declaration of the national park, namely the extension of Route 7 to Calera 1 de Mayo, also known as the "Highway to the End of the World." This road, currently under construction by members of the Military Work Corps, will allow us in the near future to have land access to one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world. There is no doubt that this will create new tourism opportunities and future generations and by generating new programs that drive local develop-
ment through environmentally responsive activities.

The creation of Yendegaia National Park is a decisive step in this direction. An impressive number of work teams from several ministries participated, demonstrat-
ing unprecedented cooperation in the park's gestation, survey, demarcation, indig-
neous consultation, and enforcement. I want to note, with special thanks, the valuable contributions of Douglas Tompkins, María Ignacia Benítez, Rodrigo Pérez, Luis Mayol, and Santiago Váldez. I hope that the example of collaboration and public-
private partnership will be followed by future governments, so that new conserva-
tion areas may be enjoyed by the present and future generations of Chileans.

Projects such as these make our nation great and confirm that we are on the right path. During our government, we enthusiastically executed numerous other initiatives to protect Chile's biodiversity. Moto Motto Hiva Marine Park located in the province of Easter Island, with a surface of more than 17 million acres (7 million hectares), is now one of the largest protected areas in the world. We also created several other Coastal and Marine Protected Areas (AMCPs) around the country, such as the Juan Fernández Archipelago AMCP and Pudahuel-Mellihue AMCP; these initiatives reflect our desire to replicate Chile's successful land con-
servation work for our coasts, fjords, and channels. These protected area proj-
jects also integrate nature conservation with developing sustainable production for local communities and include them in the projects' administration. Likewise, the recent creation of the Mariño Contoro National Park in the Los Ríos Region, the expansion of the Punta del Tamarugal Natural Reserve in the Tarapacá Region, and the creation of the Paposo Norte Natural Monument in the Antofagasta Region convey our government's commitment to the ongoing improvement of Chile's protected areas system.

It's not for nothing that other countries refer to Chile as the "Land of Parks"; it's a name we should be proud of. Acknowledging this status and taking advantage of it should be part of our strategy for future development, while diversifying and decentralizing our current growth model. This is even truer considering that we are a young, developing nation that is increasingly seen as a global leader in park-
land conservation, whose policies and ideas are emulated by several countries.

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tion areas may be enjoyed by the present and future generations of Chileans.

This is how we treat the wonders of nature; not as an inheritance from our par-
ents, which we are free to dispose of, but rather as a loan from our children, to whom we must return this marvelous natural treasure, protected and in better condition.

...
INTRODUCTION
Douglas Tompkins

Since I began traveling to Chile some fifty years ago for mountaineering expeditions and ski racing, and during nearly a quarter century of living here, I’ve seen rapid change in Chile’s civil institutions and infrastructure. Today Chile has a strong judicial system, excellent labor laws, socialized medicine, better forestry regulations than many countries, and citizens willing to elect both women and men to serve as president. Chile has very little corruption and balanced budgets; in comparison with the United States, Chile spends only a small fraction of its GDP (gross domestic product) on its military, leaving resources for other social investments. While no country is perfect and there is much advancement still to be made, there is good reason for Chileans to feel proud when their homeland is touted as a model of a maturing democracy.

It is somewhat surprising, however, that Chile’s leadership in protecting parklands is not a similarly celebrated point of national pride. Too few of her citizens would name Chile’s national parks as a top national asset, worthy of vigorous societal support, including adequate funding. But Chile’s parks and other protected areas are in fact a major economic engine for tourism, a key tool for mitigating against climate change, and a reservoir of scenic beauty and wilderness perhaps unmatched anywhere on Earth. The newly designated Yendegaia National Park takes its rightful place in this expanding system of natural jewels.

National parks, the gold standard for land conservation, are not created every day, so Yendegaia’s birth is a special occasion and cause for celebration. The formation of new national parks is a positive step for any country, anywhere on the planet. This values they offer—for wildlife habitat, ecosystem protection, outdoor recreation, scientific research, economic development, and helping alleviate climate change, are priceless. A great system of national parks reflects a great nation, and it also provides some benefits to society that may not be “priced” in the marketplace. One of these is the development of a broad-based, cultural commitment to conservation. National parks further the adoption of a conservation ethic, principally for the nation itself, but also as an example for other nations around the globe. A second is what economists call “existence value.”

Unlike a shopkeeper in a park gateway community such as Puerto Natales whose livelihood depends directly on tourism, many individuals in a society receive no direct income from parks. But that doesn’t mean national parks are not valuable to every citizen. Many Chileans will never visit Easter Island or La Moneda Palace or see the granite spires of Torres del Paine—but these places help define the national character and are a source of collective pride. Whether or not any one individual physically goes to national parks, all citizens benefit from knowing that they simply exist. This generation of people and their descendants receive the intangible benefit of knowing their country’s natural wonders are secured. This is part of a citizen’s birthright—to experience the landscapes, coastline, and wildlife of Chile, and to feel them in a condition of good health. The other half of this social contract, though, is the responsibility to care for the national property, the collective assets of the nation, including its beauty and biodiversity. Every Chilean is partially responsible for their protection. No society will persist for long if the natural ecosystems that support human life and economic activity are destroyed. To be a true patriot means to be a lover and defender of the patria, the fatherland.

It is clear to most people that to be a good patriot, then, and care for the patria, has nothing to do with one’s passport and everything to do with one’s behavior.
In the birth of Yendegaia National Park, we can see another example of this important cultural commitment to sustaining Chile’s patrimony. Protecting the patria and being a genuine patriot are just what national parks are all about. Furthermore, they are symbols of true social equity, for national parks belong to all the people with no reference to socio-economic status. The parks are spot to everyone, a bona fide level playing field. Nations that establish national parks are, through them, putting the best face forward for that society, helping the citizenry know and love the country better, in addition to welcoming foreign guests. National parks are a rare institution that is totally positive, with no downsides—which is why the national park idea has captured the imagination of political leaders and their constituencies around the world.

Since the national park movement began in the 1870s (Yellowstone National Park in the United States is generally cited as the world’s first), some 120 countries representing every continent except Antarctica have created national parks. Thousands of the Earth’s most spectacular places are safeguarded in this way, and more are being designated every year, Yendegaia being a new and particularly outstanding example.

This victory for nature and future generations is particularly gratifying because we—my wife Kristine Tompkins, our very dedicated team of Chilean conservation colleagues, and I—had a prominent hand in Yendegaia’s creation. It is appropriate to note also the three “intellectual authors” of this park, who first brought Yendegaia to the attention of our foundation. Every park formation story includes the names of the people who gave their energy, and sometimes their personal wealth, to see a particular place protected. The story behind Yendegaia’s conservation efforts represents an extraordinary example.

In this, President Piñera continues a long tradition—for every full-term president since the genesis of Chile’s national park system in 1926 has created at least one new national park. These actions to protect the national patrimony have come from governments across the political spectrum—a true testament to the fact that parklands protection is not a program of the “left” or “right” but a universal Chilean value. Yendegaia becomes the 37th national park, a truly marvelous landscape. Hernán Mladinic, a board member of Fundación Yendegaia, details the founding history of the project from idea to land purchase to eventual donation for the new park. Santiago Valdés, President Piñera’s designated representative working inside the Chilean government to present the project to the various ministries and government agencies involved, outlines the legal, political, and other institutional challenges involved with shepherding the project through to completion. Longtime friend and fellow conservationist Nicolás Gligo, who was brought up on a sheep ranch in Tierra del Fuego, provides a brief cultural and landscape history of the region from the perspective of a native “fuegino.” Adriana Hoffmann, Chile’s preeminent botanist and a tireless advocate for Yendegaia’s conservation, presents an overview of the land’s biophysical features and wildlife.

As President Piñera notes in his foreword, the Chilean public increasingly has begun to demand from their government better regulation of natural resource extraction and more conservation. This is a welcome development and it will be clear for all to see if the leadership in both the political and the civil spheres recognizes the gigantic treasure that the national park system represents. Will future presidents seize the opportunity for other government lands under different status designations to be upgraded into national parks, expanding tourism opportunities and fulfilling international commitments regarding climate and biodiversity protection? There is tremendous potential here for Chile to lead the world in making parks—for the wild creatures who live in them, for citizens and visitors alike to enjoy, and for the future.

In addition to President Piñera, the contributors to this book provide a good introduction to a truly marvelous landscape. Hernán Mladinic, a board member of Fundación Yendegaia, details the founding history of the project from idea to land purchase to eventual donation for the new park. Santiago Valdés, President Piñera’s designated representative working inside the Chilean government to present the project to the various ministries and government agencies involved, outlines the legal, political, and other institutional challenges involved with shepherding the project through to completion. Longtime friend and fellow conservationist Nicolás Gligo, who was brought up on a sheep ranch in Tierra del Fuego, provides a brief cultural and landscape history of the region from the perspective of a native “fuegino.” Adriana Hoffmann, Chile’s preeminent botanist and a tireless advocate for Yendegaia’s conservation, presents an overview of the land’s biophysical features and wildlife. Special thanks and congratulations go as well to Antonio Vizzaiino, whose exceptional photography fills these pages. To take the reader on a visual journey through the new park, Antonio made many visits to Yendegaia, working in between the area’s infamous storms to capture the land’s beauty and light as the weather allowed.

For the person in London or Hong Kong or Sydney who picks up this book introducing Yendegaia to the world, a new national park in Tierra del Fuego may seem like the end of the world. (And it is.) Despite its remoteness—indeed, because of it—Yendegaia now stands for the entire world to see as a touchstone of wilderness and beauty. The collaborative nature of its creation is a good model for other nations to emulate. And, ultimately, Yendegaia helps us understand that whatever our nationality, we all are, ultimately, citizens of the Earth, our one true and only home.
No one noticed Yendegaia in the year 1520 when Ferdinand Magellan baptized the eastern banks of the Straits of Magellan as “Tierra del Fuego.” Nevertheless, there it was: a unique territory, ruggedly beautiful, a shining example of this huge southern island’s wild character. Nothing had disturbed, in over ten thousand years, the life led by the indigenous Selk’nam people who mostly used the north and center of the island. With bows and arrows they hunted guanacos, their primary sustenance. Further south, where forests spread out, the Selk’nam also roamed, beneath foliage of Magellanic coihues changing to hues of yellow, orange, and red in autumn, past peat bogs forming primitive coal deposits, amid the regular tok-tok of woodpeckers’ echoes. Their territories bordered the Azopardo River and the 100-kilometer-long (62-mile-long) mirror of water, Fagnano Lake. Only at the eastern end of the lake were they able to continue further south.

Before this, Yendegaia had been without human life. Millions of years were needed to form South America’s natural communities, and it was not until the last ice age and the following retreat of glaciers that the principal ecosystems were created. As the ice retreated, valleys, rivers, and canyons were formed. On the plains, a steppe natural community anchored by grass grass came to predominancy; the forested regions developed a distinctive association of fir, pine, and Magellanic coihue trees, along with camite, coihue, and other vegetation. Birds filled the air with their song andulpus foxes marked their territory.

The southeastern part of the island hardly knew the existence of man until the Yagán people arrived by sea some four thousand years after the Selk’nam people had settled in the north. The landscape did not suffer from any profound intervention and aggression, as is usually caused by humans. Right up to the arrival of the first European settlers, the native people lived in harmony with nature and did not produce any major ecological problems. The fate of Yendegaia, as part of the big island, was always linked to the larger history of Tierra del Fuego. In 1818, Robert FitzRoy, a British ship captain, came into contact with native people on the Beagle Channel and, after a conflict, decided to keep four Fuegians onboard his ship for the voyage home. The story of Jemmy Button, one of the Yagán taken to England and educated according to western standards, demonstrated the telluric force of these latitudes. All of FitzRoy’s efforts to acculturate him and his group were diluted on their return to Tierra del Fuego, as the three surviving Fuegians were reabsorbed by the culture and environment of their native land.

What FitzRoy, his shipmate Charles Darwin, and other early explorers accomplished was only a peripheral survey effort along the island’s shores. Not until more recently, a half century later, was the island of Tierra del Fuego occupied by settlers from abroad. It was the discovery of gold, in 1882, which attracted many pioneers to far-flung corners of the island. In 1880, Jorge Porte reached the beautiful Porvenir Bay, and by 1882 the gold rush had started in Cordón Baquedano, a massive moraine towering over the bay.

Gold mining and prospecting lasted almost ninety years. The town of Porvenir boomed with flourishing trade, inns, cabarets, and brothels. Countless epic stories
were written about the hardships of gold diggers—enduring cold, snow, and, most of all, wind. And all of it—the arrival of the town, partnerships with friends and acts of solidarity, quarrels and crimes, the brotherhood of prospectors surviving at a harsh land—died up on the moors, stagnated in the nooks and crannies of the Comán Barquedano, and vanished into thin air as once gold started to run out.

Meanwhile, the Sociedad Canalera Gente Grande, a livestock company, began to colonize grazing land. Hundreds of thousands of sheep quickly populated the habitat previously occupied by guanacos and aborigines. Fences and more fences were put up and huge areas were granted in concession for livestock husbandry.

The natives observed how their territory (designated by their god) was invaded and depopulated, the guanacos displaced then exterminated. Of the estimated original 3,000 native people, only 170 remained by 1906. Brutal campaigns to hunt them down, one of the darkest chapters of Chilean history, were compound-
In 1959, Torres del Paine National Park in the Magallanes Region was created during the administration of President Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez. Alessandri almost certainly was inspired by the spectacular beauty of the landscape—the breathtaking massifs that never cease to amaze every visitor to the park. In some corner of his mind, in the overloaded agenda of a president of a country that was very different from the one today—more impoverished and parochial and with hundreds of pressing priorities that could have delayed such a decision—these majestic, granite towers must have triggered in him the need to act. He seized the chance to preserve this landscape forever, leaving a magnificent legacy for future generations, the full scale of which he probably did not envision at the time. Today, fifty-five years after its creation, Torres del Paine National Park is considered one of the wonders of the world and Chile’s tourist destination par excellence. The park has not only changed the face and economy of neighboring town Puerto Natales but is undoubtedly a pillar of development for the entire Magallanes Region.

Nevertheless, for many Chileans the creation of national parks may seem, at first glance, a strange exercise, alien to our culture and more typical of foreign customs and experiences. The truth is that designating national parks is a near-century-long tradition in Chile, which has included governments across the political spectrum. Our first national park, Vicente Pérez Rosales in the Los Lagos Region, was created in 1926 under President Emiliano Figueroa Larrain. Since then, almost every Chilean president has expanded the national park system.

Most Chileans, however, know little about the history of our parks—their origin, the people who identified the opportunity or proposed the idea, those who explored them for the first time or reported their attributes for conservation, or the dozens of anonymous people who contributed to their enactment. Perhaps this lack of information is indicative of why this long-standing tradition does not have the recognition it deserves in Chilean society.

The story behind the creation of Yendegaia National Park is both similar and distinctive from the birth stories of other previously protected areas in Chilean history. In this case, the initial idea came from Alan Watson Featherstone, a Scottish activist and forest advocate, after he visited the southern section of Tierra del Fuego in late 1996. Featherstone, Executive Director of Trees for Life, an award-winning organization known for its work to restore the Caledonian forest, had a project in mind that would protect subantarctic forests by creating, in a first stage, a private park with public access. In December of 1996, he contacted a real estate agent in Punta Arenas specializing in farms who provided him with information on Estancia Yendegaia, a 95,827-acre (38,780-hectare) semi-abandoned property mainly dedicated to forestry and sheep farming. By the following months, he had started conversations with the Serkas, a family of Croatian origin that for three generations had owned the estancia initiated by Jerónimo Serka at the turn of the twentieth century. Miguel Serka, the heir and owner at the time, expressed his affinity with the objectives of the project, as he preferred to see the land protected rather than see it end up in the hands of mining or forestry companies.

In March of 1997, Featherstone, along with Graciela Ramaciotti (who passed away in December of 2010)—an Argentinean conservationist then living in Ushuaia and former president of the NGO Finis Terrae—first
approached the Conservation Land Trust, a nonprofit foundation established by Douglas and Kristine Tompkins. Featherston and Ramaciotti presented an overview of the project and the possibility of purchasing the Yëndegaia tract. In April of 1998, they invited Kristine and Douglas Tompkins and other wildlife advocates on a multiday expedition to explore the place. All were impressed with the excellent opportunity it offered for conservation. Particularly exciting was Yëndegaia’s potential to establish an ecological corridor between Chile’s Ñimeguén Regional National Park and Tierra del Fuego National Park in Argentina, with the future hope of forming a transborder protected area, or peace park, similar to ones established in other parts of the world.

After a few months of deliberation, Douglas Tompkins, through the Conservation Land Trust, spearheaded the purchase of the property. Two of his friends were major contributors to the effort—Peter Buckley, an environmental philanthropist and former business partner of Tompkins, and Ernst Beyeler, a Swiss philanthropist and renowned art dealer, who died in 2010. Metaphorically speaking, we could say that this visionary and innovative pattern of land acquisition helped paint pieces of art for all eternity throughout the wild forests of Tierra del Fuego.

Once the funds were assembled, the property was purchased on December 10, 1998, by the “Amigos de Yëndegaia” Functional Community Organization, created in August of that year by a group of Ñimeguén nature lovers, for this purpose. Ownership of the land was later transferred to Fundación Yëndegaia, a nonprofit organization constituted in Punta Arenas in October of 2000, when the partners of “Amigos de Yëndegaia” foresaw the need to have a more structured institution with a legal framework that would ensure the property’s administration, conservation, and financial stewardship in the long term. The objective of Fundación Yëndegaia is to protect the native forests and natural landscapes of the Magallanes Region. From its inception until 2007, the Fundación was presided over by Adriana Hoffmann, the renowned Chilean botanist who gave the organization in prestige and national recognition. She worked tirelessly for the area to receive nature sanctuary status and thus have official protection; however, despite her advocacy, the authorities at the time were not unanimous in their support. After a period of financial and administrative difficulties, Fundación Yëndegaia added several Chilean conservationists deeply knowledgeable about private landholders to the board, and continued to oversee the Yëndegaia tract’s stewardship.

A few years later, in March of 2009, during a visit to the Magallanes Region, Douglas Tompkins met with the governor and regional authorities to propose the idea of Yëndegaia’s donation to the State in pursuit of creating a new national park and the possibility of a future transborder park between Chile and Argentina. The idea reached congressmen and a few ministers, spreading quickly and receiving wide coverage. However, it was not until March of 2011 that it was taken up again when Kristine and Douglas Tompkins presented their Chilean president Sebastián Piñera with a comprehensive proposal for creating several new national parks, expanding others, and rededicating specific reserves to national parks status, through the joint contribution of public and private land. President Piñera, who as a concern had previously established Ñimeguén Park, a private conservation initiative on the island of Chiloé, knew well the difficulties and opportunities presented by large conservation projects. From the start, the president was determined and resolute, with a genuine interest and sensitivity toward the project.

In 2011–2012, an ad hoc government commission was appointed to fully analyze the proposal. Representatives from several Ministries and agencies worked side by side with the technical teams of Fundación Yëndegaia to understand the scientific, environmental, territorial, cultural, and economic/trustee aspects of the areas under consideration. By 2013, after a period of deliberation which included extensive analyses and onsite visits, an agreement was finalized to create Yëndegaia National Park, mainly for its ecological attributes and tourism potential. (Other parts of the larger park creation proposal were not rejected but were set aside for future governments to consider.) The decision was made. The former Estancia Yëndegaia tract comprising 95,827 acres (38,740 hectares) would be devoted to the State under the condition that the property would be annexed to the adjacent 276,343 acres (111,882 hectares) of government land, thus creating a park of 372,170 acres (150,612 hectares).

Park creation, however, does not occur just because of pure chance, happy coincidences, or sheer willpower, although these factors are sometimes present and often necessary; it also requires significant teamwork and effort. This involved gathering background information to prepare the land donation proposal, holding dozens of meetings and making onsite visits, drafting maps and technical reports; reviewing demarcations and contour lines; updating land titles and registrations; reviewing aspirational, and complying with the indigenous communities involved. Every meeting with the work teams was another step toward clearing up doubts and building trust and a spirit of collaboration, indispensable ingredients for moving forward to complete every necessary step. And, once everything was ready, approval was required from several state agencies such as the Ministerial Council on Sustainability, Borders and Frontiers Department of the Chancellery, and the Ministry of Finance as well as the final review of the Office of the Comptroller General, an agency that oversees the legality of public acts.

Hence, we may not always know the complete story and full details behind the creation of every national park, but we know for certain that park-making is a complex task including technical, scientific, legal, administrative, and logistical aspects and, most of all, patience—lots of patience. But despite these complexities, it is above all and essentially a political act as it embodies the decision and vision of the head of state—his or her long-term outlook and dreams for the future, it is above all and essentially a political act as it embodies the decision and vision of the head of state—his or her long-term outlook and dreams for the future, that go beyond the day-to-day limitations of government to leave a legacy that is transcendental, a true gift for all citizens of future generations. Indeed, not only is designing protected areas a technical issue, it is also one of conviction and leadership. Vision and courage as well as knowledge and comprehension of conservation history are required, given that the creation of parks has almost always been opposed in their initial stages and if we were to avoid such challenges, there simply wouldn’t be any national parks. In the end, however, we have seen how communities located near national parks have prospered, making them the parks’ most fervent allies and protectors today.

Ultimately, creating a national park is an ethical act, for it centers on intrinsic values such as beauty, diversity of life, and the opportunity to capture, in a forest of soil, a piece of paradise, a part of eternity, where all visitors are welcome without discrimination. It was U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt, a pioneering conservationist, who said, “Conservation is a great moral issue, for it involves the patriotic duty of insuring the safety and continuance of the nation.” Thus, by visiting national parks our collective spirit and identity are renewed; we better understand ourselves as members of a community and a place. Parks inspire new generations to preserve their environment and build a better nation.

The creation of parks is a political act, which, when made in cooperation with donations from private parties, constitutes a kind of reparation of land from the private to the public realm, a way of conferring public property for the benefit and pleasure of all citizens. It increases and strengthens the natural heritage of the Chilean state, which is the ultimate guarantor of these assets for all future generations of Chileans, in a world pressured by overdevelopment and one in which large, intact wildlife habitats are increasingly rare and threatened.

Yëndegaia National Park, the final result of this public-private collaboration, indubitably leaves the country with an expanded conservation legacy and an incentive to continue growing and professionally administering Chile’s system of world-renowned protected areas.
The creation of a new national park is not something that happens every day. An event of this kind is excellent news for all those involved: the individuals and nongovernmental organizations that promoted the idea, local communities which benefit from the initiative, regional and national authorities charged with protecting imperiled ecosystems, and certainly the people of the country who gain a new recreational area in the midst of scenic splendor, to be safeguarded for future generations.

The creation of Yendegaia National Park is a story we can all be proud of, not only because it resulted from the cooperation between the Chilean government and Fundación Yendegaia to preserve a unique area in our country’s far south, but also because it reflects the growing trend of the active participation of civil society in promoting and perfecting public conservation policies. Moreover, the creation of this new park is notable due to the commitment and drive shown by then-President Sebastián Piñera Echenique. Prior to his term in office, Piñera, an avid conservationist, created Tantauco Park, an expansive and ecologically rich, private nature reserve on Chiloé Island. Demonstrating his ongoing interest in conservation, he did not hesitate to embrace the Tierra del Fuego initiative while serving as president.

In order to understand the process by which Yendegaia became a new national park, it is useful first to understand the role played by the State in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem protection. In fact, the government of Chile is constitutionally committed to “enforce nature conservation in the country.” This translates into three key objectives embodied in the prevailing legislation, namely, to sustain biological diversity, conserve environmental heritage, and ensure the sustainable use of resources over time. In pursuit of these goals, the State created the National System of State-Protected Wildlife Areas (its Spanish acronym is SNASPE), comprised of natural monuments, national reserves, and national parks across Chile. Likewise, as part of this initiative and with a view to defining a long-term map consistent over time, the State also established a National Biodiversity Strategy, which includes the goal of representing in protected areas at least 10 percent of all of the country’s native ecosystems.

More than a hundred units of the protected areas system have been designated to date, from Arica to Punta Arenas, all of them administered by the National Forest Service (CONAF) and covering an estimated 36 million acres (14.6 million hectares), equivalent to 19.3 percent of the surface of continental Chile. This percentage of protection, well above the average 11 percent standard of OECD countries, reflects the value assigned by Chile to protecting its biodiversity. This commitment is especially important because of the many unique and endemic species and ecosystems in Chile. It is no wonder, then, that Chile is renowned for its ecological diversity and scenic beauty, which deserve special and dedicated protection.

One of these highly distinctive but also fragile ecosystems is the eastern section of the Darwin Range, between Almirantazgo Sound and the Beagle Channel. Although a good part of this area had already received protection in 1965 when Alberto de Agostini National Park was established (and later expanded in the...
1970s, curiously enough its only accessible area had been left unprotected. Comprised of rivers, steppe, peat lands, and hanging glaciers dropping off to the area known as Yendegaia Bay, this is probably the most vulnerable section with the highest ecosystem value of the entire area.

This is where private initiative entered the scene, without which the new park’s birth would not have occurred. Indeed, the park’s creation was based on many years of stewardship work carried out by Fundación Yendegaia, which in 1998 acquired the ranch of the same name for conservation purposes. A few years later, not far away, another private land protection project had succeeded when the Karukinka Nature Reserve had been established on lands formerly held by the Trillium forestry project. That defunct development scheme, which had threatened to destroy most of the millennial beech forests in the Condor River basin, was vigorously opposed by Chilean and international forest activists.

These two events, unforeseen but triggered by circumstances, heralded a new era for the Magallanes Region and especially for the island of Tierra del Fuego, as private nonprofit institutions, financed from abroad, invested in the conservation of vast tracts of land in the southern reaches of the world. This outside investment, among some local people. Conspiracy theories abounded and were supported by regional as well as national authorities. The idea of environmental philanthropy, of vast tracts of land in the southern reaches of the world. This outside investment, threatened to destroy most of the millennial beech forests in the Condor River basin, was vigorously opposed by Chilean and international forest activists.

The skepticism, along with a series of odd conjectures about the motivations of conservation organizations, finally waned in August of 2013 when fundación Yendegaia, through the person of Douglas Tompkins, approached the Chilean government with the proposal to join forces to create a new national park. The proposal was that the fundación would donate its approximately 94,000 acres (38,500 hectares) while the government contributed the adjacent 276,000 acres (111,000 hectares) of state-owned land. This idea was certainly very appealing, as well as proof of an increasingly empowered citizen movement committed to environmental protection; these factors immediately motivated and involved President Piñera and his cabinet.

In order to make an in-depth analysis of the park proposal, 1 was commissioned with creating an interdisciplinary task force of professionals from different government ministries and agencies, which worked hard over the following months compiling the necessary background information. The team focused on analyzing the proposal from a global point of view, specifically studying its technical and political viability and formulating possible alternatives for any necessary improvements. The analysis was based on six general criteria, dividing each one into individual characteristics of the proposed new national park. More than 25 topics were analyzed in depth, which included the territorial context of the proposal; its ecological importance at local and national levels; tourism potential; economic-development potential under different scenarios; administration costs as part of Chile’s protected areas system; and implications of the eventual declaration of a national park on the neighboring local communities.

Each one of these criteria was considered in detail by specialized teams from CONAF, the undersecretary for tourism; and the Ministries for Economy, Public Works, Environment, National Assets, and Social Development. This endeavor also required the help and commitment of some 25 professionals including biologists, architects, civil engineers, business administrators, forest engineers, geographers, journalists, and lawyers. This collaborative work, a completely new experience for a State used to working in units that are operationally independent, led to a record-time review of the main difficulties that the new national park would face, hence anticipating them and proposing creative solutions for quick implementation. The technical teams sought to implement solutions that would safeguard the conservation interests proposed by Fundación Yendegaia while making the proposal compatible with certain strategic interests of the State—such as ensuring public access and transport connectivity in the area, maintaining national sovereignty, and supporting appropriate development of communities affected by the new park.

In parallel to the work carried out by the inter-ministerial teams, a roundtable was jointly created with Fundación Yendegaia that met weekly to follow up on the information collected and address the problems arising day to day. Some of these issues included how to sequence the national park designation with the private land donation, and whether to leave the road connecting the Azopardo River and Caleta 2 de Mayo on the Beagle Channel inside or outside of the protected area (ultimately it remained out of the park). During these sessions, the efforts representing President Piñera’s administration and Fundación Yendegaia worked collaboratively to adjust the proposal boundaries to the north and south as well as extend the area reserved for future developments in the Caleta 2 de Mayo sector, thus addressing the concerns raised by different ministries involved in the study. This work in turn built trust between the parties and created new allies in drafting an adapted proposal for the park.

This last point is not a minor detail as it became obvious that successful implementation of an initiative of this scope was linked to the capacity for deeply understanding the needs of each party involved, seeking flexibility in both public and private interests to build consensus on key issues without losing focus of the main objectives. This work arrangement proved to be highly efficient as the Ministers’ Committee on Sustainability, a formal entity responsible for recommending the creation of the new national park to the president, presented a strong proposal capable of answering the questions of even the most demanding counterparty within the government and local communities.

Finally, fifteen years after a group of idealists began this almost-heroic conservation effort, it became a reality during the January of 2014 visit by President Piñera who signed the decree creating Yendegaia National Park. Thus, public and private interests aligned to preserve an additional 370,000 acres (150,000 hectares), protecting one of the most spectacular and wild places on the South American continent. Yendegaia became unit number 101 of the National System of State-Protected Wildlife Areas, or national park number 37, which our children and grandchildren can proudly visit today, and the generations to come will experience long into the future.
CONSERVATION AT THE END OF THE WORLD
Adriana Hoffmann Jacoby

Yendegaia Bay is located on the northern shore of the Beagle Channel in the far east of the Darwin Mountain Range, only three kilometers away from the international border with Argentina. It is a wide bay entering the island of Tierra del Fuego in a northwesterly direction. Administratively, this area and the entire Yendegaia tract belong to the province of the Chilean Antarctic, within the Magallanes and Chilean Antarctic Region.

The northern section of Yendegaia is an Andean subrange watershed where the Marcou and Deseado peaks rise to 3,000–3,300 feet (900–1,000 meters) above sea level. To the west it extends parallel to the northern shore of Almirantazgo Sound, separating the headwaters of the Rasmussen and Las Turbas Rivers. To the south of this first mountain range lie the deep, rift valley lakes known as Deseado and Despreciado (Arata) and the Paciencia Valley. This trough is followed by another transversal mountain range that separates the headwaters of Las Turbas River from those of Fragno Lake and its source, the Ampardo River, which meets the sea at Calaf Maria, a small settlement. This is the area where President Sebastián Piñera and Douglas Tompkins, representing Fundación Yendegaia, signed the act that created the new Yendegaia National Park on January 5, 2014.

A half-century before, in 1956, the famous Salesian explorer Alberto De Agostini crossed the area from Almirantazgo Sound to La Patana Valley. He wrote a compelling description of the untouched Fuegian cold jungle:

The forest we passed through is one of the most entangled and darkest I had ever seen, and truth be told it invoked an undefined sense of fear in one’s soul… the near absence of light that penetrated in solitary places gave such a dismal and sinister feeling to the landscape that we were under the illusion of having penetrated mysterious forests of which legends are made, populated with elves and witches.

Today, these forests are no longer as dense because of human intervention via cattle farming and forestry. Fires and indiscriminate logging have inflicted wounds on the earth and the southern light rebounds, in some places, off naked soil. The original raison d’être of Fundación Yendegaia was to conserve natural habitats and restore the degraded landscapes on the former Estancia Yendegaia property. With this and adjacent government land now joined to create Yendegaia National Park, the tremendous ecological and scientific value of the area will be secured. Moreover, Yendegaia will receive the necessary funds to continue with its conservation and recovery trajectory, and it will become an important center for recreation and environmental education for the entire society.

BIODIVERSITY IN THE NEW PARK

VEGETATION

The soils and climate are the main abiotic factors that directly influence the types of vegetation on Tierra del Fuego. Thus, and in response to the different combinations of these factors, we can define several main types of vegetation:
which tolerate highly saline conditions. This vegetation type also includes large areas of lowlands with very salty soils (marismas), where species such as *Puccinellia*, *Chenopodium*, *Arjona*, and others can be found, which tolerate highly saline conditions. Deciduous and Evergreen Forests. In the mountainous uplands, where the flora does not vary significantly, the buzz of game is inter- rupted now and again with enormous patches of sphagnum. Phytogeographers have decided to include these forests, known as “sphagnum forests,” in a new phytogeographical region that represents the last frontier of pristine sphagnum forests, a wild natural community from the ancient Gondwana continent that is not replicated anywhere else on the entire planet. In fact, protecting Yendegaia was originally intended to be the first step of the Gondwana Project, an immense and wonderfully utopian idea to establish an Intercontinental Sanctuary of Native Habitats.

Sphagnum moss has been effective in filtering and treating domestic sewage and industrial wastewater that contains acid and toxic discharges, high levels of heavy metals, and organic substances such as oils, detergents, and dyes.

Low temperatures prevent the accumulated vegetation from decomposing and in pH level turns acidic. Leaves and branches pile up on top of each other, creating an ideal environment for fungi and lichens to thrive. The ground is normally soft and flooded, and a hazard for anyone who tries to walk on it. Along the edge of peat bogs one can find bulrush (*Schoenoplectus californicus*) and, in association, a terrestrial community that the tree is an evergreen frequently found together with the Magellanic coihue. The notro, on the other hand, grows on the slopes up to an altitude of 330 feet (100 meters) and stands out for being more robust than other surrounding trees. This tree is an evergreen predominantly found in valley bottoms. Fungi, lichens, and insects commonly establish a relation with the tree, perhaps because of its preference for more humid habitats.

Magellanic Tundra. Starting at 1,600 feet (500 meters) above sea level, the shape of the trees changes and takes on a form resembling a shrub. These small mosses are an adaptation to the strong winds that sweep across the mountains. The tundra, also found in this area, is a tree species that is well adapted to the rigorous conditions imposed by the region’s cold climate; it has adopted a creeping form when found at its maximum elevation, while in lower areas it can reach 100 feet (30 meters) in height. Older trees have diameters of approximately 60 inches (150 centimeters). Since the lenga loses its leaves, it is a deciduous tree; by fall the foliage has turned to myriad shades of greens, yellow, and red, and the forest displays its characteristic warm. Each season of the year offers a different visual experience to visitors, who take pleasure in admiring the shifting colors, a sublime gift from nature. The Magellanic coihue (*Nothofagus betuloides*), on the other hand, does not lose its leaves in winter, remaining green year round. It also grows to a considerable height, up to 115 feet (35 meters), and replaces the coihue (*Nothofagus dombeyi*) in the subalpine forest starting at approximately 400 feet altitude. It grows in groups, forming small communities within lenga forests up to an altitude of 655 feet (200 meters) and stands out for being more robust than other surrounding trees. This species is most commonly found in the eastern portion of the park where it grows in communities with the concrete in the rainforest sections of the archipelago.

Both the lenga and coihue can be attacked by parasites, such as *Myciella* pantelotermes Banks (leafless shrub-herb) and the *Cytoponas aerovora*, known as Indian bread (pan de indio, in Spanish) because it was one of the staples that the natives included in their diet. This round, yellowish-white fungi appears in the fall and winter and is roughly 1.5 inches (3.8 centimeters) in diameter. When attacked to the tree, this parasite causes a deformity of the branch or trunk, known as a knot.

Some forests in Tierra del Fuego have been badly damaged by beavers. A non-native rodent from Canada that was introduced by the fur industry in the 1940s, the beaver has caused major devastation. Beavers currently are a plague because they do not have natural predators. Government authorities continuously carry out campaigns to eradicate them. Similarly, the introduction of exotic trout in the region was extremely detrimental for native fish that were preyed upon by these intrusive species.

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Despite their name, the viserte has yellow flowers and the primula stand out for their white flowers. In summer, with the flowering of arrowroot (Dryopteris rever- tice), the scene is awash in pink petals and fields of white with yellow and white daisies (Cleome hassleriana spp.). However, flowers bloom year-round in the park, changing the landscape with every season. In winter, for example, the mindy berrid (Rheinichia dichotoma) pushes through the snow, opening its amber-colored flowers. The leaves of this shrub are of a deep green color, similar to that of mistletoe. It pushes through the snow, opening its amber-colored flowers. The leaves of this shrub are of a deep green color, similar to that of mistletoe. It pushes through the snow, opening its amber-colored flowers. The leaves of this shrub are of a deep green color, similar to that of mistletoe. It pushes through the snow, opening its amber-colored flowers. The leaves of this shrub are of a deep green color, similar to that of mistletoe. It pushes through the snow, opening its amber-colored flowers. The leaves of this shrub are of a deep green color, similar to that of mistletoe. It pushes through the snow, opening its amber-colored flowers. The leaves of this shrub are of a deep green color, similar to that of mistletoe. It pushes through the snow, opening its amber-colored flowers. The leaves of this shrub are of a deep green color, similar to that of mistletoe. It pushes through the snow, opening its amber-colored flowers.
LANDSCAPES
mother rock, father sky,
your weeping rests at the foot of the snowdrifts
and every star perches on your white summit
lighting the road to silence
—Rubén Patagonia
FORESTS
Why Patagonia? . . .
Pulled for a moment with civilization and its surroundings,
I wanted to escape somewhere,
where I might be as far removed from them as possible.
—Lady Florence Dixie
We need to listen more to the biologists and naturalists, sociologist, philosophers, and artists. Let us pay more attention to poets and environmentalists and learn from our forests, which offer multiple values.

—Adriana Hoffmann
PEAT BOGS
No synonym for God is as perfect as Beauty.
—John Muir
MOUNTAINS
A stupendous panorama, indescribable for the profound vastness of the horizon and the sublime grandeur of the hundreds of summits. . . . This is the first time human eyes have gazed upon these frozen solitudes, at times with raptures of joy; at other times with astonished awe. . . . I peer intently across that immense expanse of snow, ice, and mountain peaks, rendered even sharper by the crystalline transparency of the air and the glittering sunlight, and try to divine its secrets.

—Alberto María De Agostini
One light is left us:
the beauty of things, not men;
the immense beauty of the world, not the human world.

Look—and without imagination,
desire, nor dream—directly at the mountains and the sea.
Are they not beautiful?
—Robinson Jeffers
It is called the “Land of Fire”
as if in mocking irony
by man in his always
misguided obstinacy.
Who would not be appalled
at such turning of the truth
on its head, calling
“fire” what is in fact “cold”?
It would be like shouting “Blasphemer!”
at the Soul of Piety itself.

—Nicolás Granato
Trees have historically and mythologically represented many things—the Tree of Life, the axis of the earth, tribal ancestors, homes of spirits.

—Stephanie Kaza
WINTER
Among the scenes which are deeply impressed on my mind, none exceed in sublimity the primeval forests . . . temples filled with the varied productions of the God of Nature.

No one can stand in these solitudes unmoved, and not feel that there is more in man than the mere breath of his body.

—Charles Darwin
Parks should be dominated by the spirit of beauty. . . .
Is not outstanding beauty one of the rarest and greatest possessions a land can possess?
It should be looked upon as a national asset and given an important place in every programme of conservation.

—J. B. Harkin
PATTERNS AND FORMS
Protean steppe of Tierra del Fuego, your paintbrushes every instant spread the rainbow of color offered by the setting sun. And the snows of your winters magnify your reflections scattering the longings of your trembling shadows.

—Nicolo Gligo
The natural world is the greatest source of excitement; the greatest source of visual beauty; the greatest source of intellectual interest. . . . The greatest source of so much in life that makes life worth living.

—David Attenborough
Protected areas . . . counteract what has been called the extinction of experience in the wake of the downhill spiral of generational ecological amnesia; this effect refers to the narrowing range of potent experiences of the natural world, accompanied by a cumulative collective ignorance of how rich life on Earth is when left free of human chiseling and hammering.

—Eileen Crist
On mountains, latitude’s imperceptible changes can become altitude’s striking transformations. Ecology and climate change rapidly from balmy foothills to glacial heights. . . . Up high, biology vanishes to reveal a world shaped by the starker forces of geology and meteorology, the bare bones of the earth wrapped in sky.

—Rebecca Solnit
Mosses and Lichens
Just at the limits of ordinary perception lies another level in the hierarchy of beauty, of leaves as tiny and perfectly ordered as a snowflake, of unseen lives complex and beautiful. . . .

Mosses . . . [are] a vehicle for intimacy with the landscape, like a secret knowledge of the forest.

—Robin Wall Kimmerer
The parks are an object lesson for a world of limited resources. In the national parks the visitor learns that satisfaction is not correlated to the rate at which he expends resources, but that just the opposite is true. The parks promote intensive experience, rather than intensive use. The more one knows, searches, and understands, the greater the interest and satisfaction of the park experience.

—Joseph L. Sax
Located in one of the most spectacular regions of the world, Yendegaia National Park requires travelers to the area to undertake meticulous preparation and overcome several hurdles before reaching its incomparable rewards. The only access is by boat, by sailing on the Strait of Magellan to reach Yendegaia Bay. Planning for this leg of the trip always involves leaving some leeway for the unexpected, with weather as the decisive factor.

Taking the photographs for this book entailed several extensive trips whose common denominator was always waiting for the right weather and light conditions to occur. Tierra del Fuego’s legendary weather is ever changing: One may experience rain, sun, snow, and wind on the same day. I witnessed this when walking, and occasionally riding on horseback, through the valleys on fascinating explorations of the terrain. Similarly, when I sailed by sea with Oceana Joss Gregoir and Aramara Vizcaíno, I was awestruck by every detail of the fjord coastline where the rocks and stone, sculpted and painted by glaciers, were displayed as natural abstract art. Shooting the aerial photographs during the four seasons of the year demanded careful planning and lots of patience and was successful thanks to pilot Rodrigo Noriega. When the wind conditions and cloud coverage allowed, Rodrigo’s experience and weather knowledge let us seize windows of opportunity to enter the area. But, just as the climate is extreme, so is its stunning beauty.

Exploring Yendegaia on a photographic search of its natural beauty is like entering a land of fantasia. The diversity of colors and textures in plants, rocks, or lichen never ceases to amaze me. Whether in the visual close-ups I obtained during extensive expeditions on land, the images gathered while crossing enormous valleys, or wide panoramas seen from a distance and afforded by hours of overflight, the textures and color factors are, from a photographic point of view, what make this place extraordinary. For this reason I chose a visual language that would show, on the one hand, panoramic landscapes that impress us with their grandiosity and, on the other hand, intimate details of the smallest plants or facets of rivers and valleys that offer abstract images that not only record their beauty but also evoke their emotional impact.

The diversity of this landscape comes forth on a grand scale through its mountains, glaciers, coastlines and fjords, forests and tundra, rivers and lakes. Life in this park is revealed in its vastness, and photographing it has been a privilege that has allowed me to perceive the dimension of our planet. In addition to the insight gained through my personal experience crossing this magnificent territory and photographing it, the truly transcendental thing offered to me was the opportunity to participate and provide images for a project of this magnitude hand in hand with the conservation program led by Douglas and Kristine Tompkins.

The fact that the Yendegaia property was purchased for the purpose of eventually donating it to Chile’s national parks system demonstrates the clear vision of a conservation project with a firm strategy. Yendegaia borders with Argentina to the east, specifically with Tierra del Fuego National Park, and with Chile’s Alberto de Agostini National Park to the west. Donating the property and turning it into a national park has enabled the completion of a protected corridor between these two natural areas. Thus the new Yendegaia National Park’s conservation impact is multiplied, as it has helped establish a broad, permanently secure habitat linkage and a binational protected area.

I was fortunate in that I was able to closely follow the process that led to the former Estancia Yendegaia property becoming a national park. Personally, I was deeply moved to see how a dream came true, and I am grateful to know that this is still possible and that we can hold onto areas where life preserves itself through its ancestral cycle.
Douglas Tompkins is a wilderness advocate, mountaineer, organic farmer, and conservationist. For more than two decades, he has worked alongside his wife, Kristine Tompkins, to restore degraded farms and to establish large-scale protected areas, including national parks in Argentina and Chile. Through a family foundation, Doug Tompkins supports environmental activism campaigns in North and South America and has helped produce numerous conservation-related books, including Corcovado National Park: Chile’s Wilderness Jewel and Monte León National Park.

Miguel Juan Sebastián Piñera Echenique, popularly known as Sebastián Piñera, former president of Chile (2010–2014), was born in Santiago, Chile. A businessman and politician, Piñera has been a protagonist at several Chilean summits, has served as senator (of East Santiago), and has been instrumental in creating projects with an ecological nature, including Fundación Futuro and the privately funded nature preserve, Tierra del Fuego National Park. He holds a degree in Business Administration from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and MA and PhD degrees in Economics from Harvard University.

Santiago Váldez Gutiérrez is an entrepreneur with degrees in civil engineering and business management. His enthusiasm for Chilean nature conservation inspires his work to create national and private parks in Chile. Váldez spearheaded efforts to create Tierra del Fuego National Park in Chile, one of Chile’s largest private nature preserves. He later founded some initiatives focused on the establishment of Yendegaia National Park, Tierra del Fuego Park, Punt околinos and Juan Fernández Protected Coastal Marine Areas, and several national monuments, as well as the expansion of Siete Cotos Coastal National Park.

Adriana Hoffmann Jacoby is a distinguished Chilean botanist who specializes in wildflowers and ecology. An founder and coordinator of Defenders of the Forest, she was named one of the 25 environmental leaders of the 1990s by the United Nations. In 1999, she received the National Environmental Award for Environmental Education from the National Environmental Commission, where she later served as executive director. From 2000 to 2005, Hoffmann presided over Fundación Yendegaia. She has authored numerous books on Chile’s flora and natural heritage, including The Tragedy of the Chilean Forest.

Contributors

Nicolo Gligo V., born in the Magallanes and Chilean Antarctic Regions, is a professor and director of the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Chile. Gligo has held senior positions in the Chilean Ministry of Agriculture and the Research Institute of Natural Resources and international posts with the United Nations’ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Consultant to numerous agencies and guest professor at universities throughout Latin America, Gligo launched the comprehensive report, “The Status of the Environment in Chile.”

Hernán Mladinic Alonso is a sociologist and a native of the Magallanes Region. He coordinated the Antarctica and Environmental Program of the Foundation for the Development of Magallanes, has served as the Regional Ministerial Secretary of Planning and Coordination (Aysén Region), and worked with the National Environmental Commission, among other professional roles. Executive director of the Pumalín Project and Park since 2008 and a director of Fundación Yendegaia since 2009, Alonso oversaw negotiations with the government that led to the creation of Yendegaia National Park.
**YENDEGAIA NATIONAL PARK**

**In Brief**

A land of striking beauty and diversity, Yendoegaia National Park offers unique scientific, scenic, and cultural value. The park’s mountains, glaciers, lakes and rivers, steppe, and forests are of outstanding ecological character. The park features pristine and lightly modified terrain representing ecosystems—a globally rare natural community. Bordered on the east by Argentina’s Tierra del Fuego National Park, and bordered by Chile’s Alberto de Agostini National Park to the west, Yendoegaia National Park offers unique land of striking beauty and diversity, with Argentina.

**Date of enactment**: December 24, 2013, through Decree No. 118 of the Ministry of National Assets.

**Size**: 372,170 acres (150,612 hectares)

**Location**: 69°0´14.23´´ W on the Grand Island of Tierra del Fuego, from the easternmost point of the mainland to the westernmost point of Tierra del Fuego, having an area of 10–15 kilometers (6.2–9.3 miles) at the furthest broadest part.

**Climate**: Subantarctic climate with an average temperature of 9°C (48°F) in summer and 2°C (36°F) in winter. Rainfall occurs year-round with an annual average of 100–140 inches (25–36 centimeters).

**Soils**: Glacial, with high post-glacial peat. Predominantly podzolic, typical of cold and wet or cold temperate climates.

**Natural species**: Megafauna include the elephant seals, sea lions, fur seals, and southern river otter; ruddy-headed goose, Magellanic strawberry; various mosses, lichens, and fungi, especially species adapted to peat bogs; extensive coastline; lakes; the Yendoegaia, Lapataia, betbeder, and Rojas Rivers; glaciers and bordering Chile's Alberto De Agostini National Park and the border with Argentina.

T he creation of Yendoegaia National Park is the result of innovative public-private cooperation. Many people were united in this collaborative effort to make a dream become a beautiful reality. There are too many individuals who helped bring the park (and this book including this) to life to thank comprehensively, but we want to note some of the key actors. We thank the women who contributed so much. Mr. Sebastián Pizana, then president of Chile; Douglas Tompkins, president of the Conservation Land Trust, Nicole Chip, former director of Fundación Yendoegaia and a native of Tierra del Fuego; Helvète Michelsen, director of Fundación Yendoegaia, who oversaw relations with government institutions that led to the park’s creation; Santiago Videla, international coordinator of the Government of Chile; Adrián Hoffmann, one of the project’s architects, along with Alex Watanabe Funahashi and Gonzalo Ramonetti (1996–2011), had the original idea of conserving the land; and photographer Antonio Vicentini. His marvelous images, captured during photo expeditions made possible due to the skill of pilot Rodriguez Ninemta transporte the reader to the furthest crooks and corners of the park. Many other individuals added Antonio Vicentini with his travel logistics and photographic production work, they include: Paloma Díez de Sollano, Lorena García Mendieta, Francisco Gómez, Graciela Ramaciotti, Oscar Acevedo, Marisol Matarese, Carmen Gloria Pacheco, Sofía, Andrea Mena, Angel Sandeved, Jorge Sandeved, Loretta Valdezhino, Fernando Vivaceta, Artemio Vicentini, Matías Vicentini.

We are grateful for the constant support, vision, and legal counsel of Pedro Pablo Gutiérrez, head attorney on the other and CLT conservation projects, as well as attorney Mauriana Sáez, a member of the Tompkins Conservation team for more than a decade. Thanks also to Isidro Sollano, a geomorphologist engineer in charge of the Land Program of the foundations that spearheaded the technical and cartographic aspects of the project. We invite also, with thanks, the board of Fundación Yendoegaia—Board President Carolina Morgado, Victor Gallegos, Rodriguez Ninemta, Gonzalo Gloria José, Juan Toro, and Carlos Cárdeno Castro, as well as project directors María Luisa Sierra, Jaime Chaves, and Tina Garzón.

Many local people in the Magallanes Region believed in this project from the beginning and contributed in one way or another by creating the community organization “Amigos de Yendoegaia.” Key individuals in that group included José Ruiz Dos Santos, Juan Manuel Draguisevic, Fernando Hinojosa, Juan Echegaray, Aurelio Prete Segrera, Hugo Vera Caracas, Eduardo Pérez, Maxi Ojeda, Claudia Maritza Gauso, Alfredo Sato Otis, Yolanda Lobos Vigo, and Beatriz Burgos.

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The Conservation Land Trust (CLT), a nonprofit conservation organization incorporated in California, was founded in 1992 to acquire and expand national parks in Chile and Argentina. Since its founding in 1992, CLT has developed innovative projects in South America that preserve wilderness, conserve biodiversity, protect endangered species, and restore degraded ecosystems. CLT has conserved more than 1.6 million acres to date and has partnered with government agencies and other nonprofit organizations to establish multiple new protected areas including Chile’s Corcovado National Park and Monte León National Park in Argentina.

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