

**LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN**

# **LOS ALERCES NATIONAL PARK**

**ARGENTINA**



Lake Futalaufquen © IUCN / Tilman Jaeger

# WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

## LOS ALERCES NATIONAL PARK (ARGENTINA) – ID N° 1526

**IUCN RECOMMENDATION TO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE:** To inscribe the property under natural criteria.

**Key paragraphs of Operational Guidelines:**

Paragraph 77: Part of the nominated property meets World Heritage criteria.

Paragraph 78: Part of the nominated property meets integrity, protection and management requirements.

### 1. DOCUMENTATION

**a) Date nomination received by IUCN:** 24 March 2016

**b) Additional information officially requested from and provided by the State Party:** Following the IUCN World Heritage Panel, an interim report was sent to the State Party on 20 December 2016. The letter updated the State Party on progress and sought additional responses on several points. These included clarifications on the rationale for only nominating this property when the nature conservation values proposed are evident from a wider region and more comparative analysis to confirm the nominated property's relative value within this context; details of any plans for new infrastructure such as dams and hydropower which may impact the nominated property; further details on existing studies on the value of Valdivian Temperate Forests and initiatives to enhance connectivity with other protected systems in the region; finally, more precision was sought regarding the nature of the opposition to World Heritage listing which was openly reported in the nomination and confirmed during the evaluation mission. The State Party responded to only some of these matters in its letter received on 28 February 2017.

**c) Additional literature consulted:** Various sources consulted including: Allnutt T.R., Newton A.C., Lara A., Premoli A., Armesto J.J., Vergara R., and Gardner M. 1999. *Genetic variation in Fitzroya cupressoides (Alerce), a threatened South American conifer*. *Molecular Ecology* 8: 975-987. Basso N. 1994. "Una nueva especie de *Batrachyla* (*Anura: Leptodactylidae: Telmatobiinae*) de Argentina. *Relaciones filogenéticas interespecíficas*." *Cuadernos de Herpetología* 8(1): 51-56. BirdLife International (2016) Important Bird Areas factsheet Parque Nacional Los Alerces y Laguna Terraplén. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org>, assessed in November 2016. Burkart R., Barbaro et al., 1997. *Eco-regiones de la Argentina*. Administración de Parques Nacionales. Lara A., and Villalba R. 1993. *A 3620-year temperature record from Fitzroya cupressoides tree tings in Southern America*. *Science* 260: 1104-1106. Martin G.M., Flores D., and Teta, P. 2015. *Dromiciops gliroides*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2015: e.T6834A22180239. Monjeau, JA et al. 2006. *Biodiversidad, amenazas a la conservación y prioridades de inversión en el parque nacional Los Alerces*. En: Monjeau, J.A. y S. Pauquet (Editores). 2006. Estado de conservación, amenazas y

prioridades de inversión en áreas protegidas andinopatagónicas. Ediciones Universidad Atlántida Argentina, 240 pp + ilustraciones. Napolitano C., Gálvez N., Bennett M., Acosta-Jamett G., and Sanderson J. 2015. *Leopardus guigna*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2015: e.T15311A50657245. Premoli A.C., Kitzberger T., and Veblen T.T. 2000. *Conservation genetics of the endangered conifer Fitzroya cupressoides in Chile and Argentina*. *Conservation Genetics* 1: 57-66. Premoli, A., Quiroga, P., Souto, C. & Gardner, M. 2013. *Fitzroya cupressoides*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2013: e.T30926A2798574. Rovere A.E., Premoli A.C., and Newton A.C. 2002. *Estado de conservación del ciprés de las Guaitecas (Pilgerodendron uviferum (Don) Florín) en Argentina*. *Bosque* 23(1): 11-19. Rusch, V., 2002. *Estado de situación de las áreas protegidas de la porción Argentina de la ecoregión valdiviana*. Mimeo APN. Schiaffinia M.I., and Vila A.R. 2012. *Habitat use of the wild boar, Sus scrofa Linnaeus 1758, in Los Alerces National Park, Argentina*. *Studies on Neotropical Fauna and Environment* 47(1): 11-17. Serret A, 2000. *El huemul. Fantasma de la Patagonia*. pp: 1- 129. Zagier y Urruty publicaciones. Bs. As., Argentina. Vaira M., Akmentins M., et al. 2012. *Categorización del estado de conservación de los anfibios dela República Argentina*. *Cuad. herpetol.* 26 (Supl. 1): 131-159. Vila A.R., and Borrelli L. 2011. *Cattle in the Patagonian forests: Feeding ecology in Los Alerces National Reserve*. *Forest Ecology and Management* 261: 1306-1314.

**d) Consultations:** 10 desk reviews received. The mission held detailed consultation with officials and staff of the National Park Administration (APN) at national, regional and site level as well as representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MoESD) within whose portfolio APN sits. Discussions were held with other relevant Ministries including those concerned with Foreign Affairs; Tourism; Education and Sports; and Culture. The mission met with the UNESCO National Commission in Argentina (CONAPLU); the National Directorate for International Cooperation and Financing; National Institute of Anthropology and Latin-American Thinking; National Commission of Monuments and Historical Sites; Manager of the Futaleufú Hydroelectric Complex; National Institute of Agrarian Technology (INTA); Andean-Patagonian Centre for Forest Research (CIEFAP); National University of Patagonia San Juan Bosco, National

Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET); representatives of provincial and municipal governments; and several NGOs including the Fundación Naturaleza para el Futuro. The State Party arranged a meeting with some 30 members of the “Association of Rural Inhabitants of Los Alerces Reserve” who communicated to the mission their explicit opposition to the World Heritage nomination of inhabited areas of the nominated property, namely, within the National Reserve.

**e) Field Visit:** Paula Bueno and Tilman Jaeger, 31 October – 8 November 2016

**f) Date of IUCN approval of this report:** April 2017

## 2. SUMMARY OF NATURAL VALUES

The nominated property, Los Alerces National Park, is located on the Argentine side of the Andes of Northern Patagonia in north-western Chubut Province and has a western boundary which coincides with the Chilean border in its entirety. The nominated property is made up of two contiguous protected areas (although recognised as one by the legal declaration instrument): Los Alerces National Park (LANP) and Los Alerces National Reserve (LANR), and covers an area of just under 260,000 ha (259,822 ha). A 10 km buffer zone of 135,870 ha has been defined surrounding the nominated area apart from the western boundary where it coincides with the international border.

The property’s name “Los Alerces National Park” is used in two different ways. First, it serves as an umbrella to refer to the combined area of the legally declared Los Alerces National Park (188,379 ha) and the Los Alerces National Reserve (71,443 ha), i.e. the nominated area. Second, it can specifically refer to the smaller Los Alerces National Park, which is only one part of the nominated area. This ambiguity frequently leads to confusion. To avoid confusion, this report carefully and consistently uses “nominated property” to distinguish between the area proposed for inscription and the two protected areas (LANP and LANR) which comprise this. The nominated property is part of a cluster of several Argentine national parks and provincial protected areas and is also contiguous with the privately owned and managed Parque Pumalín in Chile, which in turn is part of a cluster of several contiguous Chilean protected areas all the way to the Pacific. Since 2007, part of LANP has been one of several core zones of the “Andino Norpatagonica” Biosphere Reserve. This biosphere reserve serves as an umbrella for the management and conservation of 21 core zones covering 581,633 ha and forming a partially contiguous chain along the Argentine side of the Andes, of which LANP constitutes an important element near the southern end of the Biosphere Reserve. Note that the LANR is not one of the Biosphere Reserve core zones.

The part of the Andes to which the nominated property belongs has been visibly shaped by past glaciations and numerous (shrinking) glaciers which continue to exist. The nominated property also sits within the

highly active Andean Volcanic Belt, part of the “Pacific Ring of Fire,” and is subject to periodic major eruptions. Ranging from some 480 to 2,250 m.a.s.l. (Cerro Situación Mountain), the nominated property is located in the upper basin of the Grande or Futaleufú River, which eventually joins the Pacific as the Yelcho River in Chile. The vegetation is dominated by dense temperate forests, which give room to alpine meadows higher up under the rocky Andean peaks. Clear lakes, rivers and creeks of various shades of blue and green are ever-present features and contribute to impressive scenic beauty, particularly in the National Park. The ensemble of majestic, partially glaciated mountains transitioning into dense and largely intact forests, interrupted only by the countless crystal-clear lakes, rivers and creeks, is visually stunning. Several major natural lakes were ‘submerged’ under the large Amutui Quimey reservoir, which extends into both the National Park and the National Reserve. The reservoir was created by the Futaleufú Dam and associated hydropower infrastructure, completed in 1978 within the National Reserve.

According to Argentina’s national ecoregional classification, the nominated area is part of the “Patagonian Forests”, a narrow forest strip with a major latitudinal extension mostly along the Chilean border, sometimes also referred to as the Andean Patagonian Forests. The dossier suggests that around three quarters of the nominated area is covered by forest. The nominated property sits within Udvardy’s Southern Andean biogeographical province and is distinguished by its location at the southern and eastern limits of the areas showing influences of the Valdivian Temperate Forests, next to an abrupt transition to the much drier lowland steppes of Eastern Patagonia towards the Atlantic. Some of the forests in LANP have a very high degree of natural protection due to their remoteness and rugged terrain, combined with a longstanding formal conservation history and are therefore exceptionally intact. Dominated by a number of Southern Beech species, they contain several tree species, such as the Guaitecas Cypress (*Pilgerodendron uviferum* - VU<sup>1</sup>) and the Cordilleran Cypress (*Austrocedrus chilensis* - LC). The arguably most conspicuous tree species is the endemic and globally endangered Patagonian Cypress or Alerce (*Fitzroya cupressoides* - EN). Alerce, locally often called Lahuán, is the longest-living tree species in the Southern hemisphere, globally second only to Bristlecone Pine (*Pinus longaeva* - LC) in California in terms of longevity. The nominated area contains some 7,000 ha of famous old-growth montane and riparian Alerce stands, including Argentina’s oldest known tree (2,600 yrs). Jointly, they amount to more than one third of all Alerce forest remnants in Argentina.

The nominated property is reported to host 544 species of vascular plants, of which 441 are native. Synchronized mass flowering events of the native Colihue Bamboo (*Chusquea culeou*), believed to follow cycles of 40 to 70 years, are a noteworthy natural phenomenon with major ecological consequences in

<sup>1</sup> These codes reflect the conservation status of each species as recorded in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species at the time of the evaluation; for more information please visit <http://www.iucnredlist.org>



and around the nominated property. They include the massive die-offs of the plants across vast areas, thereby changing the entire forest understory, while also making forests extremely vulnerable to fires. The populations of native (and today several non-native) rodents strongly respond to the mass availability of seeds, which in turn favours numerous avian and mammalian meso-predators, and even introduced salmonid populations. To appreciate the scale, recent mass flowering occurred on an estimated 85,000 ha within the nominated area.

The fauna includes most of the mammals occurring in this part of the Andes. The elusive and globally endangered Huemul or Southern Andean Deer (*Hippocamelus bisulcus* - EN) is the largest native deer of the Andes and considered a flagship species of conservation attention in the nominated area. LANP is also home to the Southern Pudú (*Pudu puda* - NT), South America's smallest deer species, which is more common and easier to observe. Other examples of the 23 native mammals noted in the nomination include the Puma (*Puma concolor* - LC), Patagonia's mammalian apex predator, and two threatened smaller cats: the Kodkod or Guigna Cat (*Leopardus guigna* - VU), and Geoffroy's Cat (*Leopardus geoffroyi* - LC). Other distinctive fauna includes the "Monito del Monte" (*Dromiciops gliroides* - NT) a nocturnal marsupial which is monotypic, endemic to Patagonia and a "living fossil" which can be linked to ancient and extinct marsupials. The nominated property is believed to coincide with the southern range limit of the species. Exotic mammals include the American Mink (*Neovison vison* - LC), Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus* - LC), Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa* - LC), and Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus* - LC), as well as several rodent species.

The dossier notes an avifauna of some 133 confirmed species, including charismatic species of global conservation concern, such as the Andean Condor (*Vultur gryphus*), Chilean Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*) and the Spectacled Duck (*Specularis specularis*), all near threatened according to the IUCN Red List. The nominated property is recognized as part of the Parque Nacional Los Alerces y Laguna Terraplén Important Bird Area (IBA). It also constitutes the eastern limit of the "Valdivian Forests" Endemic Bird Area (EBA) and is influenced by the Southern Patagonia EBA – and as such home to some of the endemic bird species of both.

While the reptile fauna is limited in diversity (three species), the nominated property has a relatively high diversity of amphibians protecting some 15 species of amphibians including three species endemic to Patagonia: the Short-brow Frog (*Batrachyla taeniata* - LC), Gracile or Marbled Wood Frog (*Batrachyla antartandica* - LC), and Emerald Forest Frog (*Hylorina sylvatica* - LC). It has been noted that many of the amphibians found in Valdivian Temperate Forests have very narrow distribution ranges. The Red-spotted Toad (*Rhinella rubropunctata* - VU) has been reported in the literature as potentially occurring within LANP and there is a site endemic *Batrachyla fitzroya* (VU) believed to be restricted to a single island in Lake Menéndez within the nominated area.

Patagonia is famous for its 100 % endemic native freshwater fish fauna and the nominated property is home to five of them. The conservation status of Patagonia's native freshwater species is overshadowed by the fact that most freshwater systems have been invaded by several introduced salmonid species. The nominated property contains some rare areas free of non-native fish species, which is of major freshwater conservation importance.

Human habitation and use of this region dates to well before European arrival and there is archaeological evidence of human presence for at least 3,000 years. The history of colonization of this part of Argentine Patagonia began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and the establishment of protected areas started only a few decades after the "colonial frontier" had reached Patagonia's Lake Region. Therefore, many of the old-growth forests were not subject to prolonged logging or forest conversion, as they did in most temperate forest zones of the world prior to the establishment of formal protected areas. Today a small resident population lives within the National Reserve. Villa Futalaufquen is the main centre of park administration and there are other rural residents spread across 38 localities.

### 3. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER AREAS

The nomination dossier offers a very brief and somewhat unconventional method of undertaking the comparative analysis. The analysis does not separate the comparative value attributes of the nominated property against the two criteria for which it is nominated, namely (vii) and (x). Rather than an explicit comparison of specific sites, it establishes five themes to justify the relative value of the nominated property. Paraphrasing the dossier, these include firstly an argument that the nominated property is located within a larger region which has been identified as a global forest conservation priority and a gap on the World Heritage List. Secondly that the nominated property, if inscribed, would become the first site listed within the Valdivian Temperate Forest, a global priority ecoregion (thus becoming a "first step" in what might be implied as a future extended site). Thirdly, are arguments centring on the nominated property's long-lived species (Alerce trees as the second longest living species recorded). Fourthly, the dossier goes on to argue that the good condition in large solid blocks of forest within the nominated property protect an old growth species which in other places has suffered widespread fragmentation. Here comparisons are drawn with the Sequoia and Redwood forests in the USA and other Alerce forests in the region which are argued to be in a poorer condition than the nominated property. Lastly the dossier speaks to the nominated property's singularity in terms of its natural beauty and aesthetic values. References are made with similar scenic landscapes such as the Canadian Rocky Mountains Park (Canada) and Plitvice Lakes National Park (Croatia) without drawing any comparisons.

In terms of direct comparisons with other protected areas in the region, Los Glaciares National Park in the Argentine part of Southern Patagonia is the nearest

comparable natural World Heritage property. In IUCN's view, the nominated property's focus on temperate forests sets the two places sufficiently apart, besides the major physical distance. While there are Magellanic forests (sub-Antarctic forests) in Los Glaciares, which according to some classifications are part of the broad "Patagonian Forest" and according to some definitions even the "Valdivian Forests," there are important differences to the forests in the nominated property in many aspects. Los Glaciares is also not inscribed for its biodiversity values. On the Chilean side, Torres del Paine and Bernardo O'Higgins National Parks have jointly been on Chile's Tentative List since 1994. In terms of comparative analysis, those need to be assessed primarily against the adjacent Los Glaciares National Park. Like the latter, they are considered quite distinct from the nominated property due to their location much further south. There are, however, multiple national parks and other protected areas along both sides of the Northern Patagonian Andes in the vicinity of the nominated property. Many of them boast very similar values, including from the perspective of criteria (vii) and (x).

Regarding the case for criterion (vii), the nomination primarily advances justification on the basis of natural beauty and aesthetics, not superlative natural phenomena; however, the fact that Alerce trees are the second oldest living organism on earth could be considered a superlative phenomenon in the natural world. The landscape and grandeur is indeed very impressive within the LANP and can be considered extraordinary in terms of landscape beauty. However, past land use and impacts have compromised the aesthetic value within the adjoining LANR. At the same time, the nominated property is located within a much larger region, which is characterized and famous for exactly the type of landscape featured in this site. Peaks and glaciers descending into a mix of forests and meadows with numerous crystal-clear lakes, streams and creeks is the visual essence of the Patagonian Andes.

IUCN and UN Environment WCMC have supplemented the comparative analysis within the nomination dossier for biodiversity values. Here spatial analysis and literature review confirms the biodiversity that characterises the nominated property is of global significance, under criterion (x), and probably also under criterion (ix), despite the property being nominated only under criterion (x). Concerning criterion (ix), the nominated property is found in a terrestrial hotspot, Chilean Winter Rainfall and Valdivian Forests, and a priority ecoregion, Valdivian Temperate Rain Forests / Juan Fernández Islands, which are not yet represented on the World Heritage List. The site also coincides with a Centre of Plant Diversity, Altoandina, only represented by one existing World Heritage site, Los Glaciares National Park (Argentina), but this site is not listed for biodiversity values. Notably, the nominated property protects over 7,400 ha of millennial forests of Alerce, over one third of Argentina's known distribution. This species is the largest tree species found in these forests and one of the longest living species on earth. The Alerce is a monotypic genus and a globally threatened species.

The nomination notes that the site is very important for the conservation of the forest ecosystems found in the most southern and the easternmost areas showing influences of the Valdivian Temperate Forests, where important speciation processes have occurred in biogeographic insularity. These latter forests have indeed been highlighted as one of a small number of temperate rain forests in the world. The forests have been isolated from other continental forest biomes for millions of years, and as a result, the Valdivian Temperate Forests are characterized by a very high level of endemism.

Aside from the Alerce, which is a globally threatened species of great conservation importance, the site hosts a very diverse flora and fauna and has a high level of endemism, factors which strengthen the case under criterion (x). Several threatened mammal species are present, such as the Patagonian Huemul, Pudú, Kodkod or Guigna Cat, and Monito del Monte. The site also has a high bird diversity, including numerous birds of prey. Overall, it appears to have a level of biodiversity at least equal to other sites found in the same biogeographic unit, such as Los Glaciares National Park, also located in Patagonia, and is part of an Important Bird Area (IBA).

The nominated property's high levels of endemism are borne out by the results of irreplaceability analysis which suggests that the site is globally important for the conservation of a number of range-restricted species endemic to Patagonia. This is demonstrated by very high irreplaceability scores for LANP specifically (the protected area comprising 72% of the nominated property), especially with regard to amphibian species. This protected area encompasses 100% of the entire distribution of the vulnerable amphibian *Batrachyla fitzroya* which is only known from Isla Grande in Menendez Lake within the nominated site.

The nominated property is found in the Neotropical Temperate Broadleaf and Mixed Forests biome and the Chilean Winter Rainfall and Valdivian Forests biodiversity hotspot, which have both been mentioned as a gap on the World Heritage List in several past studies. This hotspot's unique nature stems from its position at the crossroads of two major floristic and faunistic regions (the Neotropical and ancient Gondwanan provinces) and its island-like location, being surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, Andean mountains and desert. There are currently no existing World Heritage sites within this hotspot, but there is one Tentative List site under biodiversity criterion (x): Juan Fernández Archipelago National Park in Chile.

The fact that the nomination mentions that the site might be the first step in a listing for the broader Temperate Forests of southern South America suggested a predisposition by the State Party to future areas being nominated in the region. IUCN's feedback to the State Party following its 1<sup>st</sup> Panel meeting reflected a view that other areas within the Andino Norpatagonica Biosphere Reserve complex of protected areas and in neighbouring Chile had potential to add significant values to this nomination.

The response of the State Party indicated it is willing to consider future progressive additions (in the ecoregional corridor - in congruence with the Biosphere Reserve) but would like to proceed with this nomination as a first step. The State Party advised that pursuing a broader nomination at this time would trigger lengthy negotiations and consultation with more protected areas, provinces and many more local communities.

In terms of comparative integrity, the claims in the nomination that the site contains “important cores of old-growth forest in a highly relevant state of conservation” are supported and very important even though there are comparable larger forests in remote locations in nearby Chile. This however, needs to be qualified as LANP does contain extremely valuable old-growth forests which are difficult to access and perhaps the best protected old-growth forests in Argentina. This is not however the case in the adjoining LANR. The contiguity that LANP shares with additional large non-fragmented blocks of forests in Chile is noteworthy and strongly adds to the conservation value.

In conclusion, an important distinction needs to be made between the values of the two protected areas making up the nominated property. LANP, as opposed to LANR, contains more than 7,000 ha of famous old-growth montane and riparian Alerce stands, including Argentina’s oldest known tree (2,600 yrs) and the most intact and least vulnerable stands in Argentina. LANP lies within a region renowned for its scenic grandeur and is a stunningly varied landscape which instils in visitors a sense of awe and scale. The National Park possesses an overall high degree of naturalness and exhibits a remarkable concentration of peaks, glaciers and associated landforms contrasted with lush forests, meadows and pristine lakes and rivers.

On biodiversity values, it is also clear that the nominated property is not the only protected area in the region exhibiting globally exceptional characteristics. Nonetheless, given the high degree of integrity of the majority of the nominated property within LANP, and the peculiar location at the eastern and southern edge of the ecoregion, a strong case can be made that LANP constitutes a very important and in some ways distinct area within the ecoregion. Particularities include relatively large and intact old-growth forests, high levels of endemism among amphibians and fish, and very rare freshwater habitat free of introduced predatory fish species. The property also coincides with a region of high value under criterion (ix), although it has not been nominated as such. Whilst not the only forest area with potential to satisfy biodiversity criteria, part of the nominated property (LANP) demonstrates values that are at the level necessary to meet the relevant criteria, and also provides an important platform for further extensions in Argentina, and in neighbouring Chile.

## 4. INTEGRITY, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

### 4.1. Protection

The entire nominated area is part of the National System of Protected Areas in Argentina (SNAP - Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas de la Argentina), which is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Administration (APN), a legally established self-governed body. The nominated property is a National Protected Area under National Law No. 22,351 of 1980 and has been established with legal objectives centred on the “protection and conservation” for “scientific research, education and enjoyment of the present and future generations.”

In 1971, the two protected areas LANP and LANR had their boundaries and areas re-defined by Law No. 19,292. Southern areas of the LANR include some areas of private land (1,942 ha – 0.027% of the nominated property according to the dossier). There are restrictions and disagreements over land titles both of which have created longstanding tensions and controversy. Some livelihood activities are explicitly permitted in the National Reserve such as firewood collection, livestock husbandry and harvesting of some wild biodiversity products.

Several specific APN regulations are applicable to the nominated property, for example the 1994 Forest Regulations for Natural Monuments, National Parks and National Reserves in the Andean-Patagonian Region; 1997 Regulations for the Exploitation of Dry Quarries and Soil Removal; 1994 EIA regulations for areas within APN’s mandate; and the 2007 regulations for Building in National Parks, National Monuments and National Reserves.

In addition to national park and national reserve status, the nominated area has benefited from recent and specific legislation aimed at protecting native forests (Law No. 26,331, “Ley de Protección de los Bosques Nativos de Argentina”), which stipulates “minimum standards for the environmental protection of native forests.” The law is highly relevant for all forested national parks. In terms of the nominated area, the application of the law implies that 167,630 ha of forests, some three quarters of the total area, deserve strict protection (equivalent to IUCN Category I), with the remainder triggering IUCN Category II status. Despite this, the IUCN mission reported there is no enforcement of these laws.

In terms of the broader landscape, major protection efforts include the Biosphere Reserve and a related Global Environment Facility (GEF) project. The Biosphere Reserve articulated a strategic plan based on a comprehensive process of regional participative planning. A “preliminary” version of this plan is reported to have been approved “with the consensus of political authorities and regional key actors in participating jurisdictions”. The nomination further notes that a “network of institutions and actors is working toward the plan’s implementation, and toward the greater participation and inclusion of new actors.”

IUCN considers the protection status of the nominated property meets the requirements of the Operational Guidelines.

## 4.2 Boundaries

The nominated property comprises two adjoining protected areas and a 10 km buffer zone of 135,870 ha which surrounds the property except in the west where it adjoins the border with Chile. The configuration of the nominated property in general encompasses the necessary elements that contribute to its stated Outstanding Universal Value in terms of scenic features and vistas, and biological attributes. However, there are two caveats: firstly these elements are largely concentrated within the LANP which is in a markedly better natural condition than the LANR, and secondly the configuration does not consider watersheds, in particular to the north and east, where the boundaries are straight lines. In both cases, critical headwaters are cut off. Some of them are under increasing pressure from land speculation, forest loss and degradation from fires and excessive livestock grazing. Offsetting this, LANP is relatively large and part of a vast region with an exceptionally low overall human footprint. The contiguity with the large Pumalín private protected area in Chile and vicinity to many protected areas on both sides of the international border is of major conservation importance and this setting adds to the integrity. Efforts should be made to extend the boundaries of both LANP and LANR to include important upper catchments.

The nominated property is comprised of two contiguous protected areas with somewhat differing legal regimes and management objectives albeit underpinned by conservation. LANP is much more remote and has no inhabitants. Use is severely restricted, in particular in the areas zoned as IUCN Category I and access is difficult for the most part, in particular in the roadless, remote forests and rugged higher elevations. The adjoining LANR includes some private land although this occupies only 0.027% of the area of the reserve. A larger area of LANR is subject to use rights and bears a legacy of impact despite the strict regulations on the use of private areas. The number of local people living in the reserve is small and largely concentrated in Villa Futalaufquen, the park's administrative centre. LANR contains a significant large dam and associated infrastructure which was created in the 1970s and is further discussed below under 4.5 Threats. As a function of location, management objective, zonation and adequate management, the National Park has a far higher level of integrity than the Nature Reserve. Although the LANR includes some high conservation value areas such as critical habitat for the endangered endemic Huemul Deer ("Cerro Riscoso Critical Area"), IUCN considers that on balance, the inclusion of the National Reserve within the nominated area is not warranted due to its past and current impacts and modified ecosystems. IUCN considers that the LANR provides a very effective buffer zone for the LANP, thereby considerably strengthening the 10 km buffer zone noted in the dossier. The Nature Reserve is managed for conservation and APN exercises full

control over both the Nature Reserve and adjoining National Park, thus providing seamless management between the two protected areas ensuring that LANR buffers threats to the more pristine LANP.

It is not clear from the dossier what the exact rationale of the intended 10 km wide buffer zone is and what measures and mechanisms exist to address threats from the surroundings. Beyond the site level, the buffer zone proposed for the nominated area per se does not appear to be underpinned by any institutional arrangement or stakeholder involvement. The Biosphere Reserve initiative and the related GEF project dedicated to an "ecoregional conservation corridor" are the most tangible manifestations of conservation efforts beyond the site level. While the project implementation and the establishment of the Biosphere Reserve has stimulated consideration of the need for conservation and management beyond the site level, more work is needed to strengthen the regulatory, awareness raising and incentive regimes in the buffer zone to afford meaningful additional protection. As noted above IUCN recommends the LANR be excluded from the nominated area thereby strengthening the buffer zone.

Most desktop reviewers agreed that the conservation significance of the region consists in the existence of multiple protected areas and that the key conservation challenge will be to maintain connectivity and resilience in the face of fragmentation and climate change. In this sense, IUCN welcomes the expressed interest from the State Party to consider future extensions should the current nomination be inscribed.

IUCN considers that the boundaries of part of the nominated property meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines but that the Los Alerces National Reserve should be excised from the nominated area and included in the buffer zone.

## 4.3 Management

As noted above, APN is the authority charged with responsibility for the nominated property. The management system is a conventional government-driven, top-down approach with some opportunities for public involvement. Governance arrangements are focused on decision-making by a central government agency with some room for decentralized elements at the regional and site level. The nominated property also benefits from direct and useful access to scientific information. There are functional networks linking park management with renowned Argentine research institutions, such as the Andean-Patagonian Centre for Forest Research and National Institute of Agrarian Technology. Despite the absence of a formalized scientific advisory body, the communication and networks seem to be effective at the working level, including across the international border where there exists good technical exchange with Chile. IUCN notes that the relatively recent institutional changes which have moved APN from the Ministry of Tourism back to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development appear to have resulted in a positive

institutional and policy re-emphasis on conservation outcomes.

The nominated property is a combination of the National Park (classified as IUCN Category II) and the National Reserve (Category VI); however, the entire legally declared National Park is uninhabited and roadless and contains significant areas zoned as de facto IUCN Category I areas. These include an “Intangible Area” (comparable to IUCN Category Ib) and a “Strict Nature Reserve” (Category Ia) adding up to 47.7% of the nominated area. The State Party suggests a further 6% located in the National Reserve can be classified as IUCN Category Ib (Wilderness Area) and protects critical habitat for Huemul Deer. A case can thus be made that the nominated area contains a significant portion of IUCN Category I areas. LANR is inhabited by rural settlers, descendants of the first “European” settlers, as well as park staff. The National Reserve is also the location of the main visitor infrastructure and services as well as the 1970s hydropower infrastructure. According to the nomination, LANR “possesses important conservation values in its own right”, while also serving as “an inner buffer zone”.

The nominated property is covered by a 1997 management plan that notes seven objectives focused on conservation of Andean-North Patagonian ecosystems and natural processes; protection of scenic values; providing opportunities for research and education; and facilitating recreation and tourism. The management plan is currently being revised and updated with a view to increased participatory elements. There is a more developed planning context specific to tourism including a “Strategic Federal Plan for Sustainable Tourism (PFETS 2020) - National Tourism Plan 2020”, which recognizes protected areas as a pillar of Argentina’s tourism offer and niche. Other activities prescribe tourism promotion plans at the regional and provincial levels, such as an Andean trails programme and efforts at the level of Chubut Province.

Day to day management relies on widely used tools such as zonation, management planning, operational planning on an annual basis, management effectiveness assessments and Annual Operational Planning. Some spasmodic management effectiveness assessments have been carried out since 2002 concluding the management of LANP as satisfactory or above average when compared nationally.

The nominated property has a staff of 100 people, including a ranger corps of 38 and 32 firefighters. A small number (12) are temporary staff. Further support is granted from APN’s Patagonia Regional Office in Bariloche in the form of technical assistance and cooperation in projects and overall management implementation; however, LANP reports directly to APN headquarters. Management is structured in various thematic conservation and use areas, such as forest restoration, monitoring, alien species control and management, and tangible and intangible cultural heritage. LANP benefits from a professional National Park Rangers Body. Argentina is one of the few

countries in the region to offer professional training and careers for rangers.

The nomination dossier provides budget figures for 2014, noting an operational annual budget of ARS 3,688,000 for that year and ARS 22,942,480 for staff salaries (roughly USD 245,000 and USD 1.5 m, respectively, at the time of writing). The central government is the primary budget source. Despite some past fluctuations, APN enjoys strong institutional standing and budget security. While it is clear that additional resources would strengthen the position and open up additional opportunities, the funding levels are acceptable and there appears to be no current concern about major budget decreases in the foreseeable future.

IUCN considers the management of the nominated property meets the requirements of the Operational Guidelines.

#### 4.4 Community

A limited number of residents live in Villa Futalaufquen, the only settlement in the nominated property, located in the LANR. The nomination reports a total of 209 permanent and temporary residents (2012 census). The State Party facilitated good interaction between the IUCN mission and residents, including a meeting with the “Association of Rural Inhabitants of Los Alerces Reserve”, and has transparently chronicled resident concerns and opposition to possible World Heritage status. IUCN notes that this issue concerns the entire National Reserve as there are local rights across the whole protected area, the key concerns relating to increased restrictions to those rights. A very high percentage of residents expressed an overall sense of excessive restrictions and a lack of opportunities to influence or be considered in decision-making. The consistent message was that the nomination of the National Park was fully endorsed, whereas the association explicitly opposes the nomination of the National Reserve. Their main objective in the LANR is the resolution of longstanding land claims, which they feel might be further compromised by possible World Heritage status. The mission reported, however, that many residents have benefited from protected area status in several ways. The many involved in tourism fully understand that the National Park is their main resource. Many have at some point worked full-time or at least seasonally for APN so it would be simplistic to describe the setting as a polarized encounter of two groups of actors. In general, there appears to be a lack of clarity locally in terms of what possible World Heritage status may or may not mean but there is, nevertheless, powerful local opposition to listing the LANR.

In summary, IUCN notes that whilst consultation procedures within national parks in Argentina remain at an early stage of development, there are initiatives to redress this, for example through the updating of the LANP management plan. The State Party has made a transparent and laudable effort to openly present and discuss the tensions and conflicts. The issue affects to varying degrees almost the entire LANR and a stated



opposition to World Heritage listing is from a very high percentage of residents. Whilst World Heritage status should not materially bring further restrictions on the use of natural resources, as those regimes are already in place, it is not considered appropriate to include the National Reserve in the nominated area. This view is reinforced by the markedly poorer integrity of LANR over LANP. On the contrary, with good management and benefit sharing policies, World Heritage status should be used to leverage improved benefits to local people, as has been demonstrated in many World Heritage sites through, for example, the UNDP/GEF supported Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation (COMPACT) initiative. The State Party, through APN, is encouraged to work towards resolving these private land conflicts capitalizing on the lessons learned in other World Heritage properties on access and benefit sharing to improve relationships and foster local community stewardship.

#### 4.5 Threats

Tourism is an important dimension of management and is explicitly an objective of the site's management plan. The nomination dossier reports tourism is focused in the National Reserve and levels have increased, surpassing 170,000 tourists in the 2013-14 season. Most visitors arrive between January and April and the majority are regional residents. Visitors enjoy a range of outdoor recreational activities and demand is increasing for adventure sports such as canyoning, windsurfing, kayaking, kite-surfing, and stand-up paddling which is creating facility and policy challenges for park management. Highway No. 71, which runs through landscapes of high scenic quality, allows visitors to travel through the reserve and is proposed to be upgraded to a sealed road. Tourism is not excessive at this stage but steadily growing driven by growing local demand from nearby towns like Esquel and Trevelin. APN has undertaken selective carrying capacity assessments in high visitation areas such as the Millennial Alerce Forest walking trail. APN authorizes and controls all activities in the park, such as tourism and recreation, fishing, building and research, etc. Private tourism operators and concessionaries expressed some frustration with slow and unpredictable handling of permits but generally relationships are positive. If the site is inscribed, tourism levels will likely increase more strongly necessitating effective early management responses.

The most visible and direct impact of human use is certainly the dam and associated hydropower and access infrastructure in the National Reserve. This 1970s infrastructure project preceded the nomination and it has dramatically changed the visual characteristics and ecology of a considerable part of the property, as its 40 km long reservoir extends into both the protected areas comprising the nominated area. Such large infrastructure development overall is a significant negative impact on integrity, and would clearly be inappropriate if proposed as a new activity in any natural World Heritage Site. Although the reservoir areas extend into the adjoining National Park, the bulk of the intrusive development is within the more altered National Reserve. IUCN does not see an effective

means by which this development in total could be excluded from the area proposed for inscription without jeopardizing the significant values of the LANP, and therefore considers that the LANR should be excluded from the nominated area, thus becoming part of the buffer zone for the more intact LANP. It is important to note that APN retains full management authority over the LANR so this recommendation does not compromise the ability to manage impacts arising from this development, including any potential upgrading or maintenance activities.

LANP also suffers from a range of introduced species. The nomination notes "544 species of vascular plants [...] of which 441 are native" which would suggest the presence of 103 introduced vascular plant species, roughly one fifth of the total number. It is not clear, what exact challenges those species may or may not present but the mission noted introduced pines, Douglas Fir and willows as being among the most conspicuous alien invasives in terms of the vegetation. The nomination notes pathogens potentially putting at risk Alerce and other tree species; however, it is not clear what the status and risk is.

Among introduced animals the most visible are European Red Deer, Wild Boar, European Hare and feral livestock, including cattle and sheep but also predators like feral cats and dogs. The latter are likely to prey on Huemul and Pudú. Less conspicuous introduced mammals include the American Mink, a meso-predator, known for major impacts on avifauna through nest predation and spreading of organisms across water bodies. There are two exotic rat and one mouse species. One dimension of the feral livestock is concern about disease interactions with wild animal populations, as well as potential human health risks, such as diseases known to be transmitted by non-native rodents. In the case of feral cats and dogs, the main concern are predation and stress induction.

The freshwater systems are extremely vulnerable and have suffered from past introductions of several trout and salmon species, which have resulted in self-sustaining populations across most of Patagonia. Native species are known to be impacted by both predation and competition besides more complex habitat alterations. The management requires difficult tradeoffs, as the presence of the various species is both a major conservation concern and also the basis for a thriving high-end tourism experience. Paradoxically the dam has prevented the upstream migration of non-native salmon contributing to an unintentional conservation benefit.

Within the nominated area, livestock keeping is restricted to areas within the LANR. The area affected is reported as approximately 22,000 ha, with an estimated 1,000 to 1,200 large animals and 1,700 small animals. This impact applies to less than 8.5% of the overall nominated property and current reported stocking levels are relatively light; however, significant areas of the LANR exhibit evidence of many years of serious grazing pressure with little evidence of any regeneration of degraded forests. Grazing is excluded from LANP, although there are some challenges in

terms of compliance and an unknown number of feral livestock roams part of the National Park, as confirmed by camera trapping.

The nominated property has a history of wildfire with records from the 1940s suggesting that some 50,000 ha were affected in that period. APN has fire suppression capabilities, a staffed Forest Fire Brigade and is implementing a Forest Fire Protection Plan prepared in 2014/2015. Despite this wildfire appears not to be considered a significant ecological threat and there are no prescribed burning programmes to reduce summer threats or for ecological purposes.

To sum up, IUCN recognizes the nominated property is an integral and important part of a much broader region of high global conservation significance but the LANP clearly displays exceptional conservation values in its own right, as evidenced by the high irreplaceability which the area has for species conservation. There are several integrity concerns centred on the LANR which are considered to have compromised the inherent basis for inscription of the nominated property as a whole. IUCN thus recommends the excision of the Nature Reserve from the nominated area.

IUCN considers that the integrity, protection and management of part of the nominated property, namely the Los Alerces National Park, meets the requirements of the Operational Guidelines.

## 5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

IUCN notes that the nominated property is contiguous with several impressive protected areas in Chile including the privately owned and managed Parque Pumalín which provides a very effective de facto buffer zone for LANP to the west. There is regular technical exchange between the Chilean and Argentinean conservation communities across the border and recent dialogue about transboundary conservation at the governmental level. A good example is the joint identification of conservation priorities in the “Valdivian Temperate Forests” involving a large group of governmental and non-governmental actors from both countries. Another concerns cooperation on the two biosphere reserves, which were coordinated despite not constituting a formal transboundary biosphere reserve initiative. Strong and recent political commitments to joint approaches are on record for both countries. Opportunities have been noted above for progressive extensions to create a more ambitious World Heritage property that reflects the wider values of this ecoregion. From a technical perspective, there are obvious benefits to enhancing the transboundary coordination and cooperation between the States Parties of Argentina and Chile.

## 6. APPLICATION OF CRITERIA

The **Los Alerces National Park** has been nominated under natural criteria (vii) and (x).

### **Criterion (vii): Superlative natural phenomena or natural beauty or aesthetic importance**

A majority part of the nominated property, namely the Los Alerces National Park, conserves a variety of landscapes and scenery. It contains an extensive system of interconnected, natural clear-water lakes and rivers. These waters display spectacular colours with shifting hues of green, blue and turquoise according to the intensity of sunlight and the time of the year. Crystal-clear rivers and lakes are surrounded by lush temperate Valdivian forests in an environment of mountain ranges, glaciers and snow-capped peaks. The Alerce forest is a celebrated feature of this majestic landscape; the forest is particularly remarkable in the north arm of Lake Menéndez which contains the Millennial Alerce Forest, located amidst a rainforest environment of ferns, moss, lichens, vines and bamboo, and with the largest and oldest tree being nearly 60 metres tall and approximately 2,600 years old. The Los Alerces National Park retains a high degree of naturalness providing a profound visitor experience.

IUCN considers that part of the property as nominated meets this criterion.

### **Criterion (x): Biodiversity and threatened species**

A majority part of the nominated property, namely the Los Alerces National Park, contains globally important undisturbed areas of Patagonian Forest, influenced by elements of Valdivian Temperate Forest, which is a priority ecoregion for biodiversity conservation worldwide. The Valdivian ecoregion has developed in marked biogeographic insularity, in which important speciation processes have taken place. This is evidenced by the presence of relict genera and even taxonomic orders, as well as numerous endemic and threatened species: 34% of woody plant genera are endemic, from which 80% are known from only one species, and some are relict having survived periods of glaciation. The globally threatened Alerce tree is the second longest living tree species in the world (> 3,600 years). Unlike many other Alerce forests, which show signs of alteration due to exploitation, livestock farming or fire, the Alerce forest in the nominated property is in an excellent state of conservation, which contributes to the long-term viability of the species' natural populations.

IUCN considers that part of the property as nominated meets this criterion.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopts the following draft decision:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents  
WHC/17/41.COM/8B and  
WHC/17/41.COM/INF.8B2;

2. **Inscribes Los Alerces National Park (Argentina)** on the World Heritage List under criteria (vii) and (x), taking note that the adopted boundary includes only the formally gazetted Los Alerces National Park, and includes the Los Alerces National Reserve within the buffer zone to the inscribed area.

3. **Adopts** the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

#### **Brief synthesis**

*Los Alerces National Park is located within the Andes of Northern Patagonia and the property's western boundary coincides with the Chilean border. The property coincides with the formally gazetted Los Alerces National Park covering 188,379 ha and has a buffer zone of 207,313 ha comprising the contiguous Los Alerces National Reserve (71,443 ha) plus an additional area (135,870 ha) which forms a 10 km wide band around the property except where it borders Chile.*

*The landscape in this region is moulded by successive glaciations creating a scenically spectacular variety of geomorphic features such as moraines, glacial river and lake deposits, glacial cirques, chain-like lagoons, clear-water lakes, hanging valleys, sheepback rocks and U-shaped valleys. The Park is located on the Futaleufú River basin which encompasses a complex system of rivers and chained lakes, regulating the drainage of the abundant snow and rain precipitation. The property is dominated by the presence of Patagonian Forest which occupies part of southern Chile and Argentina. This forest is one of the five temperate forest types in the world, and the only ecoregion of temperate forests in Latin America and the Caribbean. The property is vital for the protection of some of the last portions of continuous Patagonian Forest in almost a pristine state and it is the habitat for a number of endemic and threatened species of flora and fauna including the longest-living population of Alerce trees (*Fitzroya cupressoides*), a conifer endemic to South America.*

#### **Criteria**

##### **Criterion (vii)**

*The property conserves a variety of landscapes and scenery. It contains an extensive system of interconnected, natural clear-water lakes and rivers. These waters display spectacular colours with shifting hues of green, blue and turquoise according to the intensity of sunlight and the time of the year. Crystal-clear rivers and lakes are surrounded by lush temperate Valdivian forests in an environment of mountain ranges, glaciers and snow-capped peaks. The Alerce forest is a celebrated feature of this majestic landscape; the forest is particularly remarkable in the north arm of Lake Menéndez which contains the Millennial Alerce Forest, located amidst a rainforest environment of ferns, moss, lichens, vines and bamboo, and with the largest and oldest tree being nearly 60 metres tall and approximately 2,600 years old. The Los Alerces National Park retains a high degree of naturalness providing a profound visitor experience.*

##### **Criterion (x)**

*The property contains globally important undisturbed areas of Patagonian Forest, influenced by elements of Valdivian Temperate Forest, which is a priority ecoregion for biodiversity conservation worldwide. The Valdivian ecoregion has developed in marked biogeographic insularity, in which important speciation processes have taken place. This is evidenced by the presence of relict genera and even taxonomic orders, as well as numerous endemic and threatened species: 34% of woody plant genera are endemic, from which 80% are known from only one species, and some are relict having survived periods of glaciation. The globally threatened Alerce tree is the second longest living tree species in the world (> 3,600 years). Unlike many other Alerce forests, which show signs of alteration due to exploitation, livestock farming or fire, the Alerce forest in the property is in an excellent state of conservation, which contributes to the long-term viability of the species' natural populations.*

##### **Integrity**

*The inscribed area corresponds to the Los Alerces National Park, a legally protected area equivalent to IUCN Category II. The property is uninhabited and road less; it contains significant strictly protected zones (equivalent of IUCN Category I). These include an "Intangible Area" (comparable to IUCN Category Ib) and a "Strict Nature Reserve" (Category Ia) adding up to 125,463 ha or two-thirds of the property. In addition, some of the forests in the property have a very high degree of natural protection due to their remoteness and rugged terrain, combined with a longstanding formal conservation history and are therefore exceptionally intact. The property contains the most intact and least vulnerable Valdivian Temperate Forest stands in Argentina and is of sufficient size to sustain its Outstanding Universal Value. Other areas in Argentina and neighbouring Chile also offer the potential for the future expansion of this property.*

*The contiguous 71,443 ha Los Alerces National Reserve forms part of the property's buffer zone and is also a protected area equivalent to IUCN Category VI; thus allowing sustainable use of its resources. The National Reserve is inhabited by a small number of rural settlers and is subject to grazing. It is the focus on most tourism activity and contains the main visitor infrastructure and services. The National Reserve is also the location of the 1970s Futaleufú Dam, reservoir and associated hydropower infrastructure. The reservoir created by the dam extends into areas of the nominated property. One of the most striking values of the property is its impressive scenic beauty. The ensemble of majestic, partially glaciated mountains transitioning into dense and largely intact forests across most of the property, interrupted only by the countless crystal-clear lakes, rivers and creeks, is visually stunning. The dam is a major non-natural landscape element that is a long-standing and permanent damaging feature in the natural landscape.*

##### **Protection and management requirements**

*The property is part of the National System of Protected Areas in Argentina (SNAP - Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas de la Argentina), which*

is under the jurisdiction of the National Parks Administration (APN), a self-governed body created by Law No. 12,103 in 1934, regulated by National Law No. 22,351 of 1980. The overarching legal objective of the property is protection and conservation for scientific research, education and enjoyment of the present and future generations. All land is in the public domain in accordance with the legal provisions.

Long-standing conflicts exist in the National Reserve, which forms part of the buffer zone, concerning land tenure rights on private property. Private land only occurs over a small area however, use rights extend to much wider areas of the National Reserve. It is important to seek a satisfactory resolution through working with local communities to limit impacts and optimize the benefits of World Heritage listing for stakeholders.

The property has a management plan which was legally adopted in 1997 and will be revised and updated when required, including provisions to enhance participatory approaches to management. The property benefits from adequate human and financial resources for its management and has a highly professional ranger corps responsible for on-ground control and law enforcement. However, operational resources are very limited and should be improved.

As one of the key values of the property is its high degree of naturalness, it is therefore imperative to avoid any further developments that could lead to fragmentation of the property. The impacts of the Futaleufú Dam, reservoir and associated infrastructure should be carefully monitored to mitigate against legacy, current and possible future impacts. Any major upgrades of this infrastructure should be avoided. Any ongoing routine maintenance or unavoidable upgrades should be subject to rigorous environmental impact assessment to safeguard against impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

Provision of sustainable tourism and recreation is an important management objective and subject to major spatial and management restrictions through zoning. In

spite of these measures there are concerns about growing tourism and recreation driven by growing local demand from nearby towns. Such demand could increase with the World Heritage designation of the park. Invasive alien species, which is a key threat throughout the region, requires effective control measures particularly to avoid impacts to the fragile freshwater ecosystems that are present in the property.

4. Requests the State Party to carefully monitor the operations and impact of the Futaleufú Dam, reservoir and associated infrastructure to avoid, and/or mitigate adverse impacts on Outstanding Universal Value, and to ensure that ongoing routine maintenance or any planned upgrades are subject to rigorous prior environmental and social impact assessment.

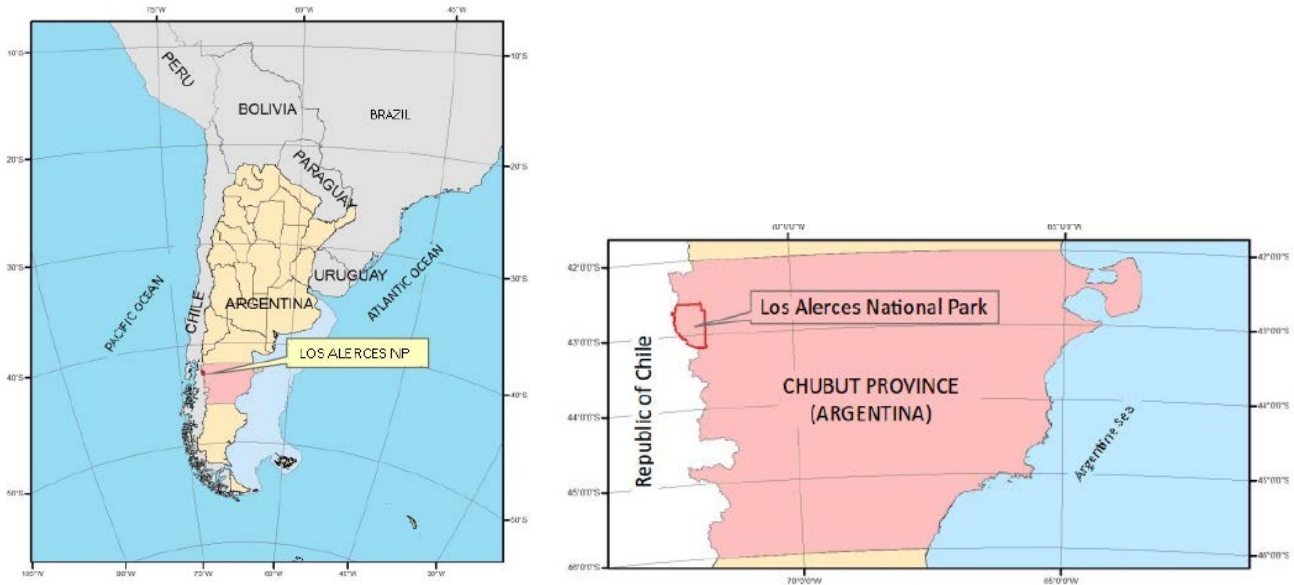
5. Further requests the State Party, in cooperation with the State Party of Chile as appropriate, to consider the potential future extension of the property to include additional areas along the ecoregional corridor of the Andino Norpatagonica Biosphere Reserve that would enhance the conservation of the natural values of the Valdivian Temperate Forests and associated habitats of the ecoregion as a whole.

6. Welcomes the efforts of the State Party to reduce habitat fragmentation and mitigate climate change impacts through the Global Environment Facility project and the Biosphere Reserve Initiative that are currently being implemented within the region where the property is located, and recommends the State Party carefully consider the results and recommendations from these projects and initiatives when preparing a potential extension of the property as recommended above.

7. Encourages the State Party, with the support of IUCN if requested, to work towards resolving the relationships with private land owners in the buffer zone, capitalizing on the lessons learned in other World Heritage properties on access and benefit sharing to improve relationships and foster local community stewardship.



**Map 1:** Location of the nominated property in South America and in Argentina



**Map 2:** Nominated property and buffer zone

