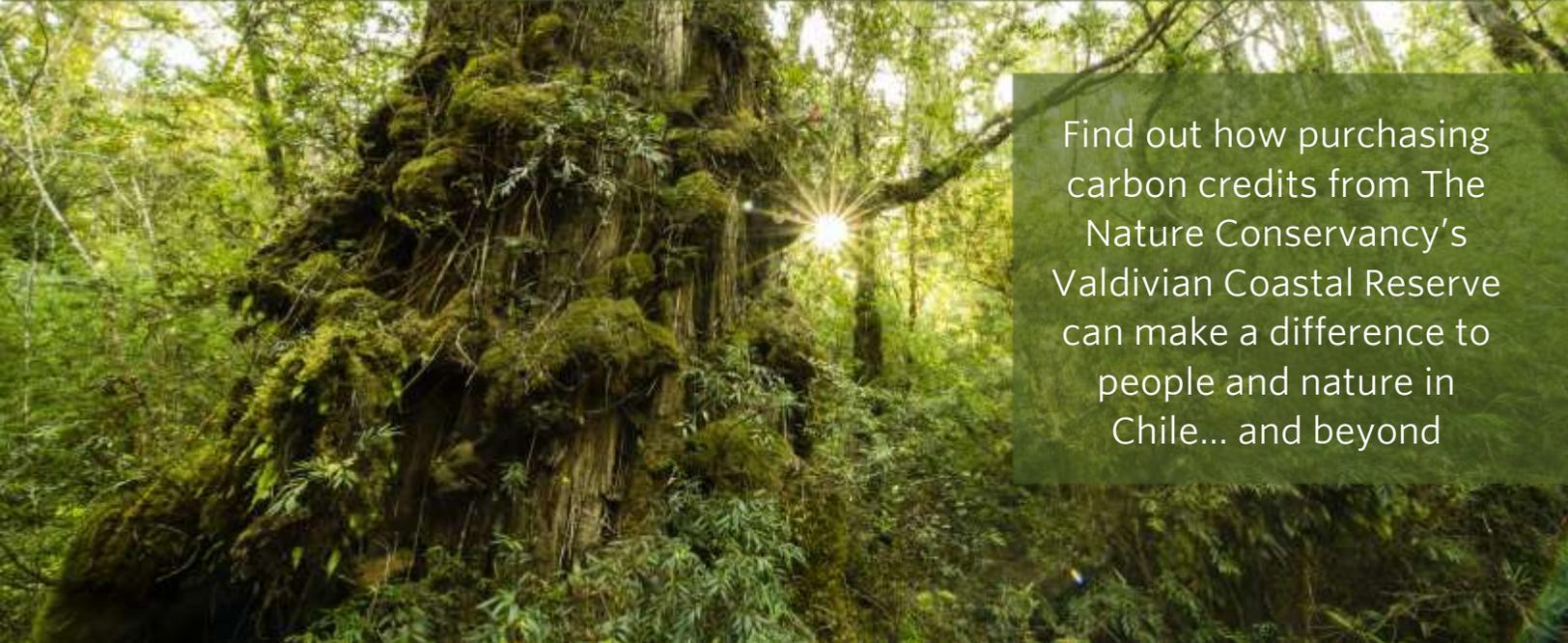


The Valdivian Coastal Reserve

Carbon Offsets that Help to Keep Fires Away



Find out how purchasing carbon credits from The Nature Conservancy's Valdivian Coastal Reserve can make a difference to people and nature in Chile... and beyond

“Chile burning and unique ecosystems on the verge of extinction” is how the National Geographic ¹ described the dramatic environmental tragedy that struck Chile’s forests at the start of 2017. In three weeks, wildfires destroyed more than 550,000 hectares of forests in central Mediterranean Chile and in the cooler climates of southern Chile. The fires—which began in the middle of Chilean summer—are the worst ever recorded in the country and it is calculated that 40% of the surface burnt contained native forests.

In Chile, the threat of forest fires has become a problem that will not go away in the foreseeable future. But knowing this means we can plan how to prevent fires, and how to restore damaged forests. The Nature Conservancy’s experience throughout the world tells us that we need to do a lot of planning, now and in the future. We need strong climate adaptation strategies and conservation-friendly management of forests, and we need to work together.

The Nature Conservancy is leading the way in Chile with the Valdivian Coastal Reserve. Its unique community-led conservation model that promotes public-private collaboration to protect nature from threats like wildfires. Purchasing carbon credits from this pioneering initiative ensures that we continue to deepen this unique experience and that we replicate its successes in Chile, Latin America and further afield. By looking after the Valdivian Coastal Reserve, we are all helping to take care of the planet.

¹ <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/01/chile-wildfires-photos/>

Photos Above: Millenary Alerce trees (*Fitzroya cupressoides*) in the Valdivian Coastal Reserve. and below: Reserve park ranger Patricia Poveda holds an Alerce sapling in the Reserve's greenhouse. ©Nick Hall

A decade of fires. Forests are important in Chile, for nature, people and the economy. But in the past 10 years the number of forest fires in Chile have increased, and in 2016 the fire season started early. By November 2016 the area burned by forest fires was 400% larger than the average for the last decade.

Stoked by record-high temperatures, droughts, water-hungry exotic tree plantations, and a flimsy firefighting infrastructure, the January 2017 fires swept through the country, destroying thousands of homes, farms, livestock, and wildlife and their habitats. They even reached three national parks in southern Chile, threatening millenary native forests.

Chile at a tipping point. The fire risks that institutions and organizations like The Nature Conservancy have been warning about for so long – water scarcity, droughts, deforestation and increasing vulnerability to climate change—have caught up with Chile. These threats are here to stay, at least in the foreseeable future, and Chile is seeing that fast and effective action is needed to prevent fires of this magnitude taking place again.

In Chile, the vast majority of land is privately owned, making it even more important that all sectors become involved in this effort: civil society, companies and government.

Pioneering the way forward. The Nature Conservancy in Chile is already working with others to mitigate the threats to nature from fire. The Valdivian Coastal Reserve, owned and managed by the Conservancy and the place where our credit carbons come from, is a perfect example of fire prevention through collaboration. The Reserve protects some of the world's last remaining temperate rainforests and is one of the largest conservation initiatives in Chile.

The Valdivian Coastal Reserve has become a model for community-based conservation in Chile and Latin America. It is also becoming a model for a new public-private approach for the sustainable management of Chile's forests and conservation of nature.

- In 2012, the Conservancy donated 9,500 hectares of Reserve native forests to the first public-owned national protected area in the Los Rios Region, the Alerce Coastal National Park that protects 75,000 hectares of temperate rainforests, including alerce trees thousands of years old.
- The two protected areas signed Chile's first private-public cooperation agreement for a joint conservation management plan for the forests and wildlife they safeguard.
- Our joint management plan includes actions to prevent fires throughout the year. Our fire brigades and park rangers accomplished their fire-prevention aims 100% in 2016. And we know they played a key role in ensuring that those temperate rainforests they protect were not affected by the dramatic situation of January 2017.
- Wildlife, plants and trees do not make a distinction between one protected area and the next. Neither do fires. By working together, we are ensuring that more forests and their wildlife are protected from threats such as fires.



The importance of reforestation and of preserving. Time is a great healer. Native forests can grow back –slowly-- and burnt areas can be restored using native trees. The Conservancy knows all about this. It has vast reforestation experience in other countries, and in Chile it is launching the country's largest ecological restoration project that will replace 3,400 hectares of eucalyptus plantations from the past, with native trees. But nature takes its time.

Whilst we wait for land, forests and wildlife to heal, preserving those forests that are standing is essential. This is especially so if we consider that the older a tree the more it helps to mitigate the climate change that is making our forests vulnerable to fires. The old growth forests of the Reserve –with its oldest tree dating back 2,500 years-- store the equivalent of 800 tons of carbon per hectare, some of the largest amounts of carbon per hectare in the world.

The Nature Conservancy is offering innovative solutions to key challenges in Chile today. We aim to balance the conservation of Chile's natural patrimony with the country's development needs whilst enhancing human welfare and creating a sustainable future for generations to come. **The challenges faced in Chile are faced the world over. Now more than ever, we need to pull together.**

Purchase carbon credits from the Valdivian Coastal Reserve and help create new solutions to urgent environmental problems.



RESPONSE TO RECENT FIRES AND NEXT STEPS

In the context of the dramatic fires that spread throughout Chile's forests in January 2017 –and that reached localities close to the Valdivian Coastal Reserve—the response from the Reserve administration in conjunction with the Chilean National Forestry Corporation (Conaf) and the adjacent Alerce Coastal National Park administration, focused on prevention on-site and rapid dissemination of information.

- The trained seasonal fire brigade and full-time park rangers increased patrolling and campers have been forbidden to use anything other than gas stoves in the two protected areas.
- An emergency awareness-raising campaign was launched that ensures that all visitors to the two protected areas receive information about fire prevention and fire risks. Door-to-door delivery of information was carried out in local communities.
- During the worst of the fires, Chile's National Parks closed for days to control the situation. Because the Valdivian Coastal Reserve has a public road within its grounds, it cannot restrict access to the site. Conservancy staff closed the Reserve “symbolically” in solidarity with their counterparts.

As regards next steps:

- Once the summer, and thus the fire season ends, in April 2017, the Conservancy, Conaf and the Alerce Coastal National Park administration will meet to evaluate lessons learned, plan next steps and gauge what further resources are required.
- At first glance, the Conservancy believes that we need to continue focusing on prevention as outlined in our five-year plan.
- It may be necessary to increase the number of temporary park rangers patrolling the two protected areas during the peak fire season.
- We will also propose working with fishing communities so they act as an early warning system for fire. Local fishers have a privileged access to the Reserve's 35-mile coastline where their fishing grounds are allocated. Training could enable them to become key collaborators in fire prevention.

We will continue to execute the five-year plan to prevent and combat fires drawn up with Conaf and the adjacent Alerce Coastal National Park. This plan includes:

- Detecting high fire risk zones and sharing information and prevention methods with landowners, farmers, ranchers, and other actors involved, and work with local communities to control risks, such as areas with fast-burning exotic species.
- Safeguarding water sources and access to these.
- Ensuring roads and trails for combatting fires are in good conditions.
- Identifying possible helicopter landing areas.
- Education campaigns in local schools.