

Backpacking in Patagonia

Application for funding from the Wolfgang Schlitz Adventure Fund



Anne Raymond & Victoria Allen, '06
December 7-30, 2005

Trip Summary

Our destination is the dramatic landscape of Patagonia in southern Chile and Argentina. We will spend the majority of our 24-day trip hiking in two national parks, Torres del Paine in Chile and Parque Nacional Los Glaciares in Argentina, where there are both well-traveled backpacking routes and more remote areas to explore. Our decision to go to Patagonia is prompted not only by the unparalleled opportunity for spectacular hiking, but Chile also has the added benefit of relative safety and ease of fairly inexpensive internal travel.



Budget

The main expense for this trip is transportation, primarily airfare to and within



Chile and buses between smaller towns. As we will be camping or staying in hostels, our average cost per night should not exceed \$10, and we will primarily buy food from markets. The following outline is for one person, with approximate prices based on those listed in our guide, as well as

recent online air-fare searches. We are asking for \$500 each, which will cover slightly less than one-third of our total costs.

Transportation:

Air

Boston – Santiago, Chile	\$830
Santiago – Punta Arenas, Chile.....	\$200

Bus fare in Chile & Argentina: (return tickets)

Punta Arenas – Puerto Natales	\$10
Puerto Natales – Torres del Paine National Park	\$15
Puerto Natales - El Calafate, Argentina	\$15
El Calafate – El Chalten, Argentina.....	\$26
Incidental bus and metro fare.....	\$30

Accommodations:

~6 nights in hostels (6x15).....	\$100
~17 nights camping (~5).....	\$85

Food:

Estimate \$10/day for 24 days.....	\$240
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Miscellaneous:

There will undoubtedly be other costs, such as entrance fees, topo maps, occasional dining out, etc.....\$50

Total.....\$1,600

Itinerary

This plan is, as any travel-plan must be, subject to small changes and is intended to be flexible while providing a good outline of how we will manage our time and get where we would like to go in a safe and cost-effective way. We have also left room in our



schedule for unexpected delays, due to weather, transportation, or other causes, so that we will not feel pressured to hike in conditions that are not safe.

December 7

- Depart Logan Airport

December 8

- Arrive in Santiago, Chile
- Fly from Santiago to Punta Arenas, Chile and stay at a hostel

December 9

- Travel by bus from Punta Arenas to Puerto Natales, where we can purchase food and topo maps of the park.

December 10-17

- Hike the “Circuit” route of Torres del Paine National Park.
This route passes through much of the dramatic scenery and varied terrain of the park. Due to its popularity, the route has established campsites to minimize impact as well as some refugios, or huts, that we can stay in if the weather is terrible. It is also frequented by non-Spanish speakers, so we should be able to navigate. Average daily hiking distance is 14km. While we expect the route to take eight days, we will bring extra supplies in case we cannot or chose not to follow our plan exactly.

December 18

- Extra day to relax, go on a day hike

December 19

- Travel by bus from Puerto Natales to El Calatae, Argentina (this border is easily crossed for recreation, without visas)
- Re-supply in town, buy new topo maps, go to visitor center, stay at hostel

December 20

- Bus to El Chalten, Argentina, go for an afternoon hike, camp or stay at hostel

December 21-25

- Hike in and explore Argentina's Parque Nacional Los Glaciares, following a suggested route of 3-5 days, depending on side trips and weather around Monte Fitz Roy. There are also numerous short hikes into the park from the town of El Chalten, allowing us some flexibility. This park is also has established campsites along the way, as well as several refugios.
- Celebrate Christmas in the southern hemisphere!

December 26-27

- Return to Punta Arenas by bus, take return flight to Santiago
- spend evening in city, stay at hostel

December 28

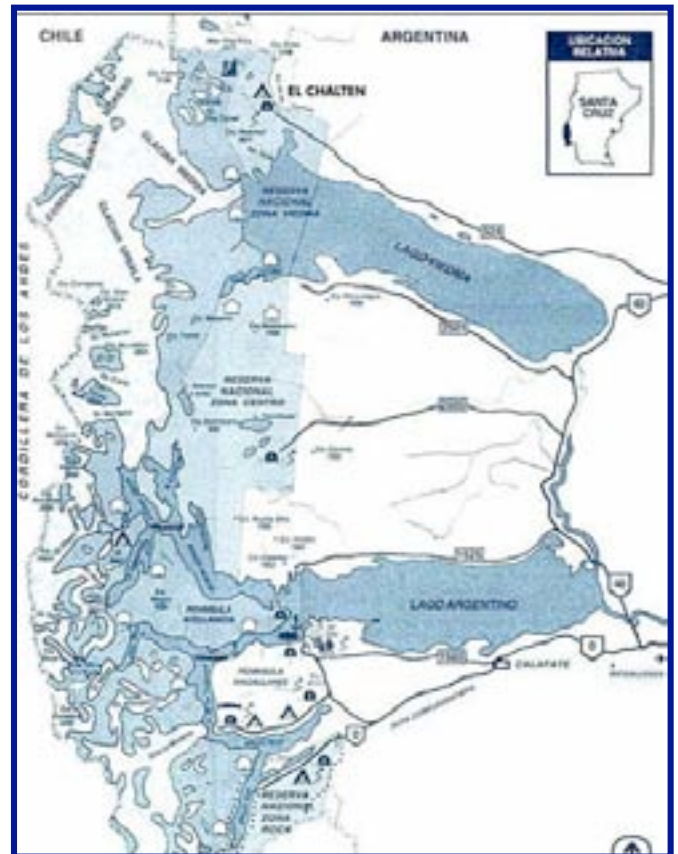
- Extra day in Santiago to go to a museum or concert. Buffer day in case we are delayed in traveling.
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December 29

- Spend morning in Santiago, bus to airport and late flight home to arrive the next morning, drive north to New Hampshire, and play in feet of lovely fluffy snow that will have accumulated in our absence.

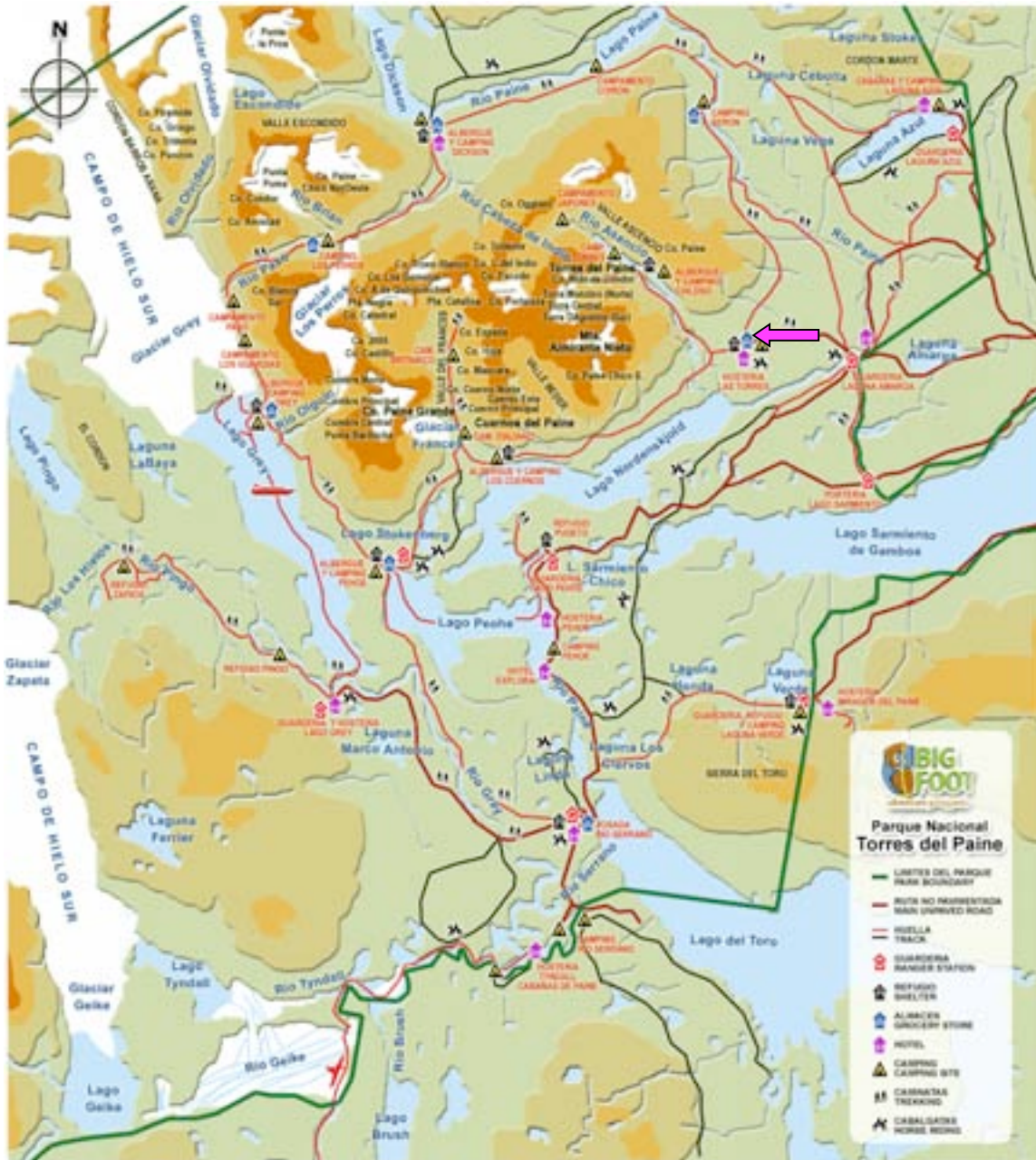
Maps

These are not the topo maps that we will hike with, as we plan to purchase them upon arrival, but they provide a rough idea of where we will be.



Parque Nacional Los Glaciares

Torres del Paine National Park, Chile



← Indicates the starting and ending point for our 8-day circuit

Candidate Details

Throughout our first three years at Dartmouth, beginning with first-year trips, we have been involved in the DOC, as participants as well as leaders and teachers. Our hope is that this trip will be both an adventure in a new and exciting place, and a kind of culminating experience for the outdoors education we have received from the DOC. With our respective experience in the outdoors and foreign travel, we feel confident in our ability to have a safe and adventuresome trip to Patagonia. We are very excited to spend time in this region of the world, as it offers fantastic scenery and hiking opportunities, as well as interesting new flora, fauna and rocks.

Vicki ~ I came to Dartmouth with limited knowledge of the out of doors, but over the past three years have greatly increased the breadth and depth of my skills and experience. I have done this by leading trips for Cabin and Trail, Ledyard, and the First Year Trips program, as well as organizing and supporting many other DOC-sponsored events. I will give back to the DOC by continuing to lead trips for CnT, in particular the spring break trip, which will benefit from my experience. I also plan to finish updating the outdated DOC AT Trails Map by this spring.

Anne ~ I grew in up New Hampshire exploring the outdoors with my family, and traveled with them across the country to hike and bicycle in new and different places. In more recent years I have done more hiking on my own, abroad and in the United States, in addition to trips with family and friends. The DOC has had three major roles on my outdoor pursuits at Dartmouth. First, it provided my freshman self with a way to go hiking and to meet other people who enjoy the outdoors. Second, its members, other students, have taught me more than I could learn solo. And third, it has provided an effective way of using my leadership skills and experience to help introduce other students to the greatness that is the outdoors of New Hampshire. This trip will be great fun, but it will also be inspiring, and I hope that in my last year as a CnT leader I can have some of my enthusiasm, bolstered by such an adventure, rub off on everyone!

Summary of our Skills and Experience with Travel and the Outdoors

- Foreign travel: Central & Eastern Europe 2004, rural China 2001 (Vicki, solo traveling with no language experience) France, Italy, Britain, Canada (Anne, many different years, both alone and in good company)
- Backpacking Experience: Between us we have experience on many backpacks ranging from weekends to week-long treks, both solo and in groups.
- Extended Trip Experience: We have both been on extending boating trips of more than a week, such as a sea-kayaking trip in the Everglades (Vicki) and Casco Bay, ME, two weeks of canoeing in the Allagash and Saco River in ME, 9 weeks cycling across the United States (Anne) and many days and weeks away from home, abroad and traveling in the United States, including the Stretch ('04) and doing field work in Utah this summer (Vicki).
- Experience with each other: Roommates in the Model Sustainable Residence Hall Room, 03W, 04S, and housemates 04X, friends for a long time.
- Cabin and Trail: Council members, Vicki since 03F, Anne since 04W.
- DOC First Year Trips: Vicki has led three freshmen trips (canoeing, whitewater kayaking and moderate hiking) and Anne has led one advanced hiking trip, as well as being on the first ever VOX-Croo.
- Wilderness First Aid: We took the SOLO WFR class last December, and had both taken WFA several times previously.

Risks and their Management

-Weather-Wind coming off the glaciers is the most significant threat, as well as highly variable precipitation. We will be prepared for snow just as one would be in boundary season. Though we plan to camp, there are huts at a few locations along the trail that are available should the weather become serious.

-Animals-Even pumas are not a threat to humans here and we would be lucky to see one. Mosquitoes are an issue but malaria is not.

-Minefields-On the border between Chile and Argentina are a potential issue, but we will be staying on well-marked trails, avoiding said well-marked minefields, and local park guides are instructed to direct visitors as well and political climate is no longer an issue (http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1088.html)

-Sunburn-UV rays are particularly intense, however, we both spent all summer hiking 9,000 ft. in the sun and SPF 45 works well. We will carry such and apply multiple times each day. We will also have sunglasses and face coverings with us in case of snow/ice glare (and for the weather).

-Language: Spanish in the Wilderness and in Emergencies-Anne speaks French, and Vicki understands very basic Spanish. We plan to review the language (including wilderness terms). More importantly, we plan to write a bilingual SOAP note(s) that we will travel with.

-Injury Potential-Anne has no injury potential and also has 20/20 vision!; Vicki has short legs but can still go the distance, and she has mastered dealing with blisters.

-Safety in Numbers-Traveling as a pair significantly increases our safety, both as young women and as blatantly relatively well-off backpackers (and of course for medical emergencies).

-Contact info in Chile-We are in the process of establishing contact with a friend-of-a-friend in Santiago who we could contact in case of emergency.

-WFR certified -Both since 12/04; including, perhaps more importantly, opportunities to practice.

-Have and will continue to inform ourselves about "Things that go wrong in the backcountry" so as to better prepare ourselves and be aware. We also personally have experience hiking in different climates. Anne's backpacking experience has more winter/boundary season experience than Vicki, which will help us as a team and also provide opportunity for our experiences to expand.

Why We're Smitten By Patagonia

Though we have explored the United States extensively, traveled in foreign countries and even gone on long, beautiful backpacking trips in some of them, our plans for Patagonia constitute a trip beyond comparison for us. It the kind of place one dreams of exploring some day, and there is no better time in our near futures, with the end of these four years of academic pursuits approaching so soon, for a multi-week adventure than this winter break. We want to not only see the spectacular scenery of Chile and Argentina, but to set out on a challenging hike that will immerse us in the land and make the place all the more real and memorable.

In Return

We have already mentioned our histories of involvement with the DOC and our intent to continue to lead, teach, encourage and inspire other students to enjoy and appreciate the outdoors. We were inspired as freshmen by tales of other Dartmouth students going on great adventures, in particular The Pete's on their 6-month Scandinavian trek, and we hope to inspire future Dartmouth classes to pursue their outdoors-adventure dreams. This will be partly accomplished by sharing photos and stories, as well as through the improvements we will have made ourselves, as leaders, through the experience. We would also like to compile a one-page poster or handout in coordination with the First Year Office that would contain several spectacular photos and brief descriptions of a few Schlitz-funded trips. This could then be mailed or distributed to prospectives and freshmen to give them an idea of the really cool things you can do at Dartmouth.