

Good work continues on the Ranch of Hope

Thursday 28th February 2002

Amongst the negative press that currently surrounds Argentina, there is still some good news. Despite financial struggle, World Land Trust partners, [Fundación Patagonia Natural](#), are working to make the La Esperanza nature reserve a reality.

The World Land Trust (WLT) teamed up with local NGO, Fundación Patagonia Natural (FPN), in 1999 for its latest project, the [Patagonian Steppe Project](#). This partnership was created to protect the earth's last frontier, where the risk of unsustainable development is posing a great threat to this spectacular landscape and its abundant wildlife.

Estancia La Esperanza (translated into English, aptly meaning "Ranch of Hope") was purchased in 2000, and is home to many rare and threatened species of animals, such as the Puma and the Guanaco. From the 12km coastline of La Esperanza, magnificent views of the Southern Right Whale can also be seen, swimming in as close as 5 metres from the shore. Killer whales and several species of dolphin are also regular visitors.



An attractive new sign depicting one of the reserve's residents, the guanaco, adorns the entrance of La Esperanza.

Although the project faces financial difficulties, recent communications from FPN report only good news. There has been significant information that in the near future, La Esperanza is to be designated as a statutory nature reserve by the local government. Other reports confirm that progress is definitely being made, through the hard work and commitment of the FPN staff and local volunteers.



A Mara rehabilitation programme is run by FPN volunteers.

The reserve wardens have now installed solar panels, which now provide 100% of the energy supply needed for the farmhouse. Volunteers have been giving up their time to carry out essential maintenance on the reserve, as well as running wildlife rehabilitation programmes. Local researchers have put into place, important wildlife monitoring techniques, such as the radio tracking of Guanacos, in order to improve conservation methods. This season, there are an estimated 450 Guanaco resident on La Esperanza, a great improvement on the previous year's estimate of just 300 individuals. Other improvements in wildlife population numbers, such as Sea Lions and Mara (or Patagonian Hares), have also been reported.



New solar panels installed, provide 100% sustainable energy at La Esperanza,

However, money is still needed to keep up this progress, and to safeguard this important reserve. We still hope that an ecologically-sensitive resort will be developed separately by a corporate franchise, and in time, the profits from this enterprise will be used to fund the management of the reserve. In the meantime, approximately **£3,600 (US\$5,000) per month** is needed for ongoing management and protection of the reserve, and **money is still urgently needed to pay of £80,000 (US\$120,000) of outstanding loans** taken out for the original land purchase.

Once this has been paid off, and further funds are raised, it is hoped that the ranch can be extended to protect more of this precious habitat. To make an on-line donation on our secure server, [please click here](#).

Website links:

Fundación Patagonia Natural
Patagonian Steppe Project
Online Donation page

<http://www.patagonianatural.org/>
<http://www.worldlandtrust.org/projects/argentina.htm>
<http://www.worldlandtrust.org/supporting/donation.htm>