



## PRESS RELEASE

# Latin American Parks are key for Regional Development

**The largest environmental event of 2007 started yesterday:  
almost 2000 people will assist to the II Latin American  
Congress on National Parks and other Protected Areas**

Bariloche, Argentina  
30 September to 6 October 2007

**Bariloche, 26 September 2007.-** In Latin America, protected areas have always been the major instrument for nature conservation. Large portions of tropical forests, mountains, arid lands, temperate ecosystems, and coastal and marine areas are legally protected. However, every day they face even more and more threats.

The II Latin American Congress of National Parks and other Protected Areas aims to discuss all topics on the conservation and sustainable development of these special areas with a key ingredient: the full participation of all stakeholders, including governments, local authorities, indigenous peoples, private sector, conservation non governmental organizations, international cooperation agencies; among others.

Conservation, knowledge, capacity building and governance and equity will be the four thematic lines of the congress. Over seventy workshops and round table discussions are planned, sixteen priority themes were identified. Three cross cutting issues (climate change, indigenous peoples and marine protected areas) will form a red line through the entire congress program. Also, the indigenous affairs secretary of Argentina will host an indigenous and local community's forum along the six days of the congress.

"It is time to bring the Latin American region back to the international agenda", said Robert Hofstede, Regional Director of IUCN-South America, the organization in charge of the technical agenda. He highlighted the fact that only in South America, the extension of both the terrestrial and the marine protected areas, is over 3.5 million km<sup>2</sup>. "This is the perfect moment for the region to take the opportunities that protected areas provide to the sustainable development, adaptation to climate change and preservation of its enormous diversity", he said.

"The congress will show people's way of thinking and working in protected areas. It will become an opportunity for a wide variety of stakeholders to communicate their knowledge and experience on parks conservation", said Victor Hugo Inchausti, Congress Program Coordinator.

The Latin American Parks Congress is organized once every ten years. The last one was held in Santa Marta, Colombia. In preparation for Bariloche, every country is developing a national report of the state of art, to be presented during the event. It will bring the answers to the recommendations suggested in Santa Martha on issues such as: the need of governmental strong decisions and efforts, alliances with private sector and all stakeholders, and toolkits development for evaluating the effectiveness management of these areas.

The congress will start next Sunday (September 30), and Bariloche is expecting almost 2.000 people. So far, the presence of all Central American and most of the South American Ministers of Environment is confirmed.

"The Congress represents a unique opportunity for colleagues, friends and all stakeholders involved in the management of protected areas to get together, and help building an action plan and the steps to move forward on the conservation and sustainable development of the Latin American Protected Areas", said Juan Salguero, Chief of the Nahuel Huapi National Park, in Bariloche.

The congress' main product will be a political strategical message, which will be presented to the governments of the region, to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to the IUCN World Conserveation.

The II Latin American Parks Congress is organized by the Administración de Parques Nacionales, RedParques, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and its World Comission on Protected Areas, the United Nations Environmental Programme, and the Food and Agriculture United Nations Organization through Redparques.

For further information, please visit:

<http://www.congresolatinoparques2007.org>;

<http://www.sur.iucn.org>;

<http://www.parquesnacionales.gov.ar>

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