

Land for Life

Fundación Refugio

Circular No. 19 February 2013

New Year – Slow Start

The New Year in Argentina typically gets off to slow start, and 2013 is no exception. School holidays extend through to the 25th Feb, which is the point at which the wheels really start turning again here. As mentioned in our previous circular (No 18), we are using this relatively quieter time to review our work, and rethink our approach to what we now refer to as Creation Care ministry.

One of the results of our review is that we will change the focus of the research we had begun to implement on the effects of deforestation on birds. We are proposing to work more closely with Churches, and develop a church-based, social survey of local perceptions of environmental and climate change across the Chaco. There are church congregations of various sizes and denominations right across the Chaco region, which means this work could potentially provide a unique regional perspective of changes at the local level, and in so doing encourage Christians to become more aware and engaged in caring for Creation.

Our attempts at raising interest in land purchases in the Chaco have yet to generate any response. This again is leading us to rethink our approach with this initiative. We are convinced (now, more than ever) that the establishment of privately owned reserves is one of the very few approaches that can help secure conservation of some regions of the Chaco, but we obviously need to put more thought into how such an ambitious goal might be realistically achieved.

Deforestation across the Chaco continues unabated. A recent [study](#) has revealed that some 53 thousand hectares (approx 120 thousand acres) of the Chaco fell to the bulldozers between 2009 and 2011, a period during which Argentina's Supreme Court had imposed a ban on deforestation in a vast stretch of the Chaco in Salta. It is blatantly clear that legislation alone will not protect the Chaco's forests.



Wichi Indians on ancestral lands that have been cleared for cattle. (REDAF)

You can download the cited deforestation study (in Spanish):

http://redaf.org.ar/leydebosques/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/REDAF_informedeforestacion_n1_casoSALTA.dic2012.pdf

Connections

Networking at international level continues to grow. Andrew was recently invited to join the Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN) executive committee, which meets monthly via SKYPE. ACEN is generating some interesting materials, one of which is the proposed Carbon Fast for Lent. See below.

Marcelo, Andrew's work colleague, is currently identifying opportunities through which he can help local land-owners (criollos) get government grants for forest protection on the plots that they own. This should contribute to strengthening contacts with local people.

We are also looking at ways of linking up with Christians interested in environmental issues here in Argentina, and will be focusing on this in the coming months.

Carbon Fast for Lent

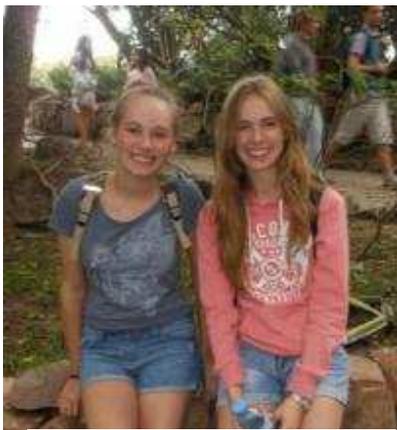


This is a useful resource that may serve to help you, your family and Church be more aware and interested in caring for Creation during Lent: *Lent is a time of repentance and fasting, of turning away from all that is counter to God's will and purposes for his world and all who live in it. This year, Anglicans and all local faith communities are invited to focus on Lenten 'acts of love and sacrifice' (of which our Ash Wednesday speaks) on our contribution to climate change, and those most impacted by it. To each of the "forty days" a specific action is prescribed which educates the participant and provides a significant action affecting creation positively. Originally developed by Tearfund, the programme has been re-configured by Rachel Mash of the Province of Southern Africa and is distributed through the ACEN and ACSA.*

You can download the here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/pfl6zno8cnhyxi/Carbon%20Fast%20for%20Lent.pdf>
For more information contact Rachel Mash at mashr@ctdiocese.org.za. Ken Gray rector@colwoodanglican.ca

Family news

We are yet again adjusting to the "empty nest syndrome", this time as a consequence of Cecilia's move to Cordoba, where she is already immersed in studying for her entrance exams to study Law at the Universidad Nacional de Cordoba. She and Tomas are moving into a new flat, which is located close to her faculty and a few blocks from where Tomas catches the bus to his University, which is on the outskirts of Cordoba.



Carolina and Cecilia



Tomás, Condorito N. Park (Córdoba)

On the 12th February we will drive down to Cordoba (800 km) for a 10-day break in Carlos Paz. This will allow us to combine holiday with helping Cecilia settle in at University. We had hoped to get to a beach, but had not fully taken on board how much studying Cecilia needed to do for her University entrance exams.

We plan to be in the UK as from the 12th July. Maria and Carolina will be return on the 28th July, while Andrew will continue visiting our supporting Churches through to the 11th of August. Andrew may be travelling to Africa sometime in March/April as part of consultancy work with Compassion International.

Prayer Pointers

- For patience and wisdom as we pursue our vision.
- For guidance as we develop the idea of a Church-based survey.
- For Ceci and Tomás, as they cope with the demands of their studies.
- For a car for us to use during our visit to the UK in July and August

Contact: andrewleake@gmail.com