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A Contribution to Multiple Use Planning of Forest Areas in Tierra del Fuego, Patagonia, Argentina

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Abstract

Land use planning focused on the proposition of rational and feasible sustainable alternatives bears a singular transcendence in many regions of Argentina, where the non-planned economic activity causes a perceptible deterioration of natural resources decreasing the possibilities towards a balanced and integrated development of the different uses.

In this study it was attempted to propose approaches and strategies able to promote at a regional level the spatial integration of land uses like timber extraction and tourism in forest areas with the protection of flora and fauna species, so that they can be developed and coexist with a minimum level of conflicts.

The main aspects and results were the following ones: **1)** Development of processes and criteria for decision making orientated to the creation of areas for species conservation, **2)** Landscape study linked to the possibilities of a touristic development of native forest areas showing that such environments can represent a plausible option near the “traditional” tourism, **3)** Exploration of new procedures for the sustainable management of lenga (*Nothofagus pumilio*) native forests related to the improvement or development of forest industries.

Main conclusions considered the following three significant issues:

1. The empirical application of suggested criteria for the protection of species is severe limited by serious deficiencies of basic information on habitats, habits and population densities of fuegian flora and fauna species included in protection categories at national and international levels. This lack emphasised an urgent need to initiate and maintain research activities able to support specific actions to protect threatened species.
2. Through the suggested approach to extend the touristic offer incorporating forest landscapes with high scenic quality it could be expected a perceptible improvement of the economic situation of Tierra del Fuego. It was also concluded that such circumstance would not be linked to the promotion of the tourism of masses but of one of high spending capacity, that can visit the “last limit of the earth”. This is the only well-known and accepted way of exploiting the scarce goods, here considered as the exceptional attractives that Tierra del Fuego has at an international level, capable to motivate the current or potential visitors flows.
3. Chances to apply the considerations about the development or improvement of the forest industries based on the enlargement of the products spectrum from timber wood as well as on the industrialization of the non-timber-industrial-wood, do not depend only of the financial possibilities or of the arrangement of the sawmills. They also require to a great extent that the provincial State supports financially the forest

administration to make possible the application of a control system, without which an improvement of the silvicultural practices will not be successful. It is also necessary a best and reciprocally more reliable joint work among the industry and the forest administration aimed to design the forest use planning at regional level and to make effective its practical application.

Keywords: Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego, regional land use planning, native forests, protection of species, tourism guided to nature, forest industries