Our progress in restoration!

We have seeded and planted about 10 ha in the last two years, using 2500 seedlings and thousands of seeds.

Currently we are working on a 1ha size restoration area that will have the plants planted in a configuration of a labyrinth. This will be open to the public to learn about chinchillas and about the native plants in a fun way. We plan to complete it by December 2002 but the plants must grow for a couple of years before the maze becomes a true challenge.

Also, we have begun talks with the local community to rent the areas that have wild chinchilla colonies for opening a private park. When we reach an agreement, the land will be set aside for conservation of wild chinchillas and restoration efforts will be focused on the areas interconnecting the wild colonies.

Thirdly, we have moved the nursery into the restoration area. This is to acclimatize the seedlings to the microclimate that they will thrive in during the following years.

Finally, I (Amy) have visited all the schools in the area where wild chinchillas are found and have passed out books and chinchilla conservation items. I have taken the local children to the chinchilla reserve, which gracefully allowed us in free of charge. It was a great and fun-filled day.

Also, I have had the help of three additional local families in taking care and moving the nursery. Although we pay them, I feel that the community knowledge of and concern for the work has greatly increased. After a brief teaching job in Viña del mar I was completely glad to return to the land of the wild ones.

Our special thanks

At this time I must specially thank our good friend Sabine Cremer who has helped us greatly with her constant support. She has been ever enthusiastic about creating products (comics, games etc.) for creating awareness amongst people.

While I lived and taught in Viña del mar, I (Amy) made several copies of her chinchilla comic, wore a chinchilla costume and distributed the comics to the kids in the city who walked by the plazas. It was surprising to know that many people (adults) did not know about the existence of chinchillas in their country!! It was also heartwarming to hear some of them approach and thank us for helping the chinchillas and to know that some awareness was created. Thanks, Sabine!
Recent developments

Apart from the tending of the nursery and planting seedlings, there has been a new development. I have proposed to the president of the community outside the chinchilla reserve about renting 200 Ha of land from them for planting native plants and conserving wild animals and pre-existing plants. This will be in exchange for the following:

- Seed 200ha of native grass every year outside this conservation area to compensate for the land that the grazing livestock cannot enter.
- Plant 10ha of native bushes both inside and outside the conservation area.
- 10ha of conservation area will be accommodated in a different land that includes the nursery and the field station.
- 20 bales of alfalfa will be provided every year to the people in the community living outside the conservation area.
- 10 bales of alfalfa will be provided to the people living away from the conservation area, but within the community.
- 2000 native plants (seedlings) will be provided to the people in the community.
- All physical help that is required for the conservation work will be hired from inside the community.
- Burros, tractors etc., if rented, will be from the community.
- Apart from this, it is proposed to create 10ha of botanical garden in Cuyano.

A vote is going to be taken on this issue by the community member in a few days. So far, the president and others like this plan very much.

You can come and help!

If you love the wilderness, want to get away, or are simply interested in helping, you can visit us here in Chile. You can work and learn many things in a fun-filled way. So, if you want to forget the clock and the ever-ringing telephone and get in touch with nature, it is worth making a trip. We have work for you all year! Contact us for more information!

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