

Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment & the Life Sciences

Student Proposal Cover Page

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: Kathryn Pratt Date: 2/18/08
Project Title: Conservation as Practice: An Ethnography of Community-based Conservation in the Temperate Rainforest Region of Chile
Department: Geography College: College of Liberal Arts
Home address: 3206 38th Ave S City & State: Minneapolis, MN Zip: 55406
Faculty advisor name: Bruce Braun Email: braun038@umn.edu Not applicable
Dept. Head's name: Abdi Samatar Dept. Head's email: samat001@umn.edu
Dean's name: James A. Parente Jr. Dean's email: paren001@umn.edu

How did you hear about this funding opportunity? I received an email announcement.

Funding

Amount of funding requested: \$ 5,270

Funding justification: [a clear statement of what you will use the funds for without going into budget details]

I am seeking funds to support an additional four months of dissertation fieldwork in Valdivia, Chile. Extended time is need due to the complexity of the conservation work I am studying (which involves multiple sites and stakeholder groups), and initial unexpected difficulties in gaining rapport with cooperating organizations. Specifically, the requested funds will be used for living expenses from May 1, 2008 to August 31, 2008, as well as minimal material and supply expenses.

Approvals

Check all appropriate approvals required for your proposal. Approvals must be obtained prior to receipt of funding. If you have applied for approval but have not yet received it, indicate that below.

IRB Date submitted: Approved September 21, 2007 Number: 0709P16501
 IACUC Date submitted: _____ Number: _____
 Other Explain: _____

For Use by the Consortium Office

- The proposal is 1000 words or less excluding budget, biographies, references and citations.
The proposal includes a work plan with a specific timeline using months or quarters to identify work to be done and completion dates.
- The proposal includes a 1-2 paragraph biography of the applicant and all co-investigators.
The budget form is complete including the funds sought for this project, other pending applications for this project, and the amount/source of matching or other funds.
- The applicant's faculty advisor is copied on the application email. Professional students w/o advisors check NA.
- All necessary approvals are pending or received.

Conservation as Practice: An Ethnography of Community-based Conservation in the Temperate Rainforest Region of Chile

Background

Community-based conservation (CBC) is a participatory approach to environmental protection in which marginalized groups work cooperatively with conservation professionals to sustainably manage natural resources. In recent years, CBC has become a dominant approach to conservation in the temperate rainforest region of southern Chile. In this critically endangered eco-region, conservation requires the collaboration of rural residents who depend on forest resources for their well-being and who have been marginalized by Chile's economic and natural resource policies. Despite widespread support for CBC in Chile, there is little understanding of what makes some projects fail while others succeed.

One of the primary problems of CBC is that it rarely functions according to ideas about what conservation is, and how it is to be implemented. Assumptions about how communities, institutions, economies, and environments should work are often found to be lacking as CBC projects are realized on the ground. Stakeholders frequently discover that *doing* conservation requires practical familiarity and expertise, which can conflict with theoretical notions of how to manage social, political, and environmental circumstances.

I propose that we do not fully understand how conservation happens because we have inadequate knowledge of conservation practices. Because they emphasize abstract concepts, and too often believe in the objective existence of the categories they employ – 'community', 'state', 'resource' —scholarly accounts of CBC give insufficient attention to the everyday activities and routine interactions of conservation and as result remain largely unable to capture the experiential dimensions of CBC projects. When practice is described, it is usually depicted as a series of rational steps or objective behaviors which mechanically link abstract plans to tangible procedures, rather than as a way in which stakeholders develop the awareness and sensibility necessary for implementing CBC projects.

Although stakeholders often have a tacit understanding of what it is like to experience conservation through 'knowing by doing,' they do not always make this practical knowledge explicit. Indeed, they are sometimes unable to explain why they act in particular ways and not others, and may only reflect in depth on their practices when problems arise. As a consequence,

we have been very good at describing what conservation *should* look like, but remarkably unsuccessful at explaining how collaborations, project procedures, and environmental knowledge actually come about.

Objectives

Using ethnographic techniques including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups, I consider the culture of practice within CBC projects, paying particular attention to how people and materials interact within project activities. Specifically this research seeks to:

- Develop explicit accounts of how stakeholders experience conservation activities; including the values and understandings they bring to their practices as well as meanings and ideas that emerge within the activities themselves.
- Describe how a wide range of conservation practices (meetings, trainings, landscape management, etc) are physically carried out. I explore how people and materials interact in specific spaces, and how this physical interface advances or limits particular conservation skills and techniques.
- Describe how stakeholders order and make sense of the diverse activities that comprise conservation projects. I ask how CBC participants come to prioritize and value certain practices over others and how this affects the structure of conservation activities.

Innovative Contributions to Interdisciplinary Research on the Environment

Interdisciplinary research on community-based conservation typically takes the approach of combining three distinct areas of analysis—social, environmental, and economic—to create a comprehensive account of a particular project or trend (Agrawal and Gibson 2001; Berkes 2003; Brosius, Tsing, and Zerner 2005; Gray, Enzer, and Kussel 2001; Li 2002). While this has led to useful evaluations, it often means that the actual practices of conservation—practices in which social, environmental, and economic processes are fundamentally inseparable—are abstracted according to separate disciplinary perspectives. In contrast, my research examines practices holistically; asking what types of skills, encounters, and information are needed to negotiate *socio-environmental* projects, and how diverse forms of knowledge are synthesized *in action*. I therefore seek to contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which interdisciplinary know-how develops within conservation. My research is also innovative in that I bring theories of practice developed in sociology and geography that call attention to experiential processes into conversation with conservation science (Blumer 1969; Bourdieu 1977; Garfinkel 1986;

Ingold 2000; Manen 1990; Nast and Pile 1998; Szerszynski, Heim, and Waterton 2003; Thrift 2003b; Williams and Bendelow 1998). My research therefore addresses a vital gap in our understanding of how scientific norms emerge from human experiences.

Current Activities and Work Plan

In October of 2007, I traveled to Chile to begin dissertation research on two CBC projects. The first project involves a coastal rainforest reserve that was founded in 2004. Currently the park is working with neighboring communities to implement sustainable development initiatives. The second project concerns a newly-formed firewood certification system¹ that helps small landholders sustainably manage their forests for the production of high-quality firewood which they can sell to certified vendors at an increased price.

For the past several months I have been observing key encounters within these two projects and asking participants to reflect on how and why they perform activities the way they do. I am beginning to collect remarkable accounts of CBC practices that have been underemphasized in conservation literature. Some themes emerging in my work include the importance of mobility and motion as actors travel to and within conservation sites; the implicit ways that project activities get ordered in space and time; and the creation of new conservation knowledge as actors physically collaborate to manage particular landscapes. I am finding that within the mundane and sometimes chaotic work of conservation, there are practical ‘sensibilities’ which helps actors orient their actions and make micro-decisions which can have long-term consequences for the efficacy of conservation projects.

I initially anticipated a seven-month time frame for my research. However, gaining trust with stakeholders in what have proven to be politically sensitive projects required more time than I estimated. Now that I have built rapport, new dimensions are beginning to emerge in the study which will require further investigation and which are indispensable to my research as a whole. Therefore, I am seeking funds to continue my fieldwork for four additional months; a timeframe necessary for conducting a comprehensive ethnography that will provide meaningful results for the communities with which I am working.

¹ Firewood is the primary fuel for home heating in southern Chile. Although the production of firewood has been associated with the degradation of temperate rainforests, it remains is a significant economic activity for many rural residents.

Works Cited

- Agrawal, Arun and Clark C. Gibson, eds. 2001. *Communities and the environment: Ethnicity, gender, and the state in community-based conservation*. Rutgers University Press.
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- Thrift, Nigel. 2003b. Intensities of feeling: Towards a spatial politics of affect. *Geografiska Annaler* 86, no. 1: 57-78.
- Williams, Simon J. and Gillian Bendelow. 1998. *The lived body: Sociological themes, embodied issues*. London: Routledge.

Work Plan*

Timeframe	Activities	Status
October 2007	Arrive in Chile. Initial inquiries; discuss research plan with NGO and community contacts.	Complete
November – December 2007 (Chilean spring)	Participant observation of CBC project activities. Build rapport with NGO staff and community members. Collect secondary sources about history and development of the two projects.	Complete
January – February (Chilean summer) 2008	Firewood project: High season for firewood production. Accompany forestry extension workers on field visits, observe sustainable forest management practices. Focus group with extension workers and NGO staff. Reserve project: Beginning of a new funding cycle for the projects. Attend stakeholder meetings and interview participants regarding objectives and plans. Focus group with community participants.	In progress
March – April 2008 (Chilean fall)	Firewood project: Attend quarterly meeting of firewood producers cooperative. Observe transport and sale phases of wood production. Interviews with staff in cooperating organizations. Reserve project: Participant observation of harvest of non-timber forest products and construction of new infrastructure. Focus group with project coordinators and leaders.	Incomplete
May 2008 (Chilean Winter begins)	Firewood project: Attend professional fieldtrip to Argentina with firewood producers. Observe exchange of conservation knowledge and practices. Reserve project: Participant observation of indoor activities: production of crafts, furniture, and preserves. Follow-up focus group with community participants. Observe technical training for reforestation plan.	Incomplete
June 2008	Firewood project: Study system for creating management plans. Review management plans in the field. Follow-up focus group with extension workers and NGO staff. Reserve project: Participant observation of reforestation activities. Attend bi-annual stakeholder meeting. Follow-up focus group with project coordinators and leaders.	Incomplete
July 2008	Follow-up interviews with research contacts. Ask participants to reflect on progress of activities since October 2007. Solicit feedback on research findings.	Incomplete
August 2008	Address any outstanding concerns or questions. Present preliminary results to collaborating organizations. Return to Minnesota.	Incomplete
September 2008 – May 2009	Write dissertation and develop publications. Defend dissertation May 2009.	Incomplete

*** I am seeking funding for May – August 2008.**

Biography

My choice to study community-based forest conservation in Chile comes from my personal and academic trajectories over the past ten years. Majoring in zoology, my undergraduate curriculum at the University of Wisconsin, Madison focused on physical and biological sciences. However, I soon discovered that my passion lay with studying human-environment relationships. My coursework in the University's Institute for Environmental Studies exposed me to philosophical and political aspects of environmental issues, and I became keenly interested in the complexities of 'grassroots' conservation. As an undergraduate I also spent a year studying abroad in Quito, Ecuador, an experience that led to my regional interest in Latin America. As an M.A. student in geography at the University of Minnesota I became interested in debates concerning deforestation of Chile's temperate rainforests and for my thesis research I spent four months in Valdivia, Chile investigating the environmental politics of coastal temperate rainforest conservation.

As I doctoral student, my interests have shifted away from the broad politics of environmental protection to focus in depth on the everyday interactions and activities of conservation work. I have become fascinated by physical yet tacit ways that conservation projects come to life. This new direction in my research is in part influenced by my non-academic pursuits. I am a committed athlete and spend much of my free time biking, skiing, canoeing, and running. More than just hobbies, my athletic endeavors have helped me understand the importance of physical engagement with the environment for building relationships and forming ideas. Since 1999 I have also worked as an experiential educator for Outward Bound, leading trips in remote wilderness areas for teens and adults. Through this work I have come to understanding the power of 'learning by doing' and I have seen the effectiveness of using hands-on approaches in education. Teaching in a wilderness setting has also drawn my attention to the relationship between practice, community, and the environment. On Outward Bound courses, diverse individuals must work together as they learn new skills in an unpredictable environment. Conservation work has many similarities with Outward Bound and I enjoy drawing on my different interests as I develop my dissertation.

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Budget for Student Proposals

Project Title: Conservation as Practice: An Ethnography of Community-based Conservation in the Temperate Rainforest Region of Chile

Instructions: add rows for multiple personnel.

Category	Description & justification	Requested funding	Matching/other funding	
		Amount	Amount	Source
Personnel <i>Explain what hourly wage & fringe are based on-- departmental, community or other rate?</i>	Salary = 640 hrs x 10 hrly wage. This wage for the PI is based on UofM graduate students wages which range from \$10-\$17 per hour. Given the cost of living in Chile, a \$10 hrly wage is sufficient for meeting living expenses. 640 hours is based on 4 months (16 weeks) of work at 40 hrs per week. Total salary requirements: \$6,400.	\$4,900	\$1,500	Research assistantship with Bruce Braun
	Fringe rate			
	What work will this person do? The PI will perform all aspects of the proposed research including data collection and analysis. Salary will support room and board expenses during four month research period.			
	Subtotal	\$4,900	\$1,500	
Speaker Honoraria	<u> </u> speakers x \$ <u> </u> honorarium			
Supplies & Services	List items and explain use. \$100 for photocopy and printing costs associated with collecting secondary sources. \$150 for technology support including batteries and tapes used in digital media (voice recorder, digital still camera and video camera) for ethnographic research. \$120 for phone service and access to internet for communicating with research contacts.	\$370		
Equipment <i>Equipment costs are allowable only if the justification clearly shows that the equipment is necessary for the project. Include explanation of what will happen to equipment at completion of project.</i>	Identify and explain use.			
Travel <i>Travel costs must include a description of the purpose of the travel, start and stop dates of travel, transportation costs, housing costs, and allowable per diem (use University rates found at http://travel/umn.edu).</i>	Explain.			
	Subtotal research supplies, equipment, travel, other	\$370		
TOTAL BUDGET		\$5,270	\$1,500	

09/27/2007

Kathryn C Pratt
Geography
414 Social Sciences
Minneapolis Campus

RE: "Conservation as Practice: An Ethnography of Community-Based Conservation in the Temperate Rainforest Region of Chile" IRB Code Number: 0709P16501

Dear Ms. Pratt

The referenced study was reviewed by expedited review procedures and approved on September 21, 2007. If you have applied for a grant, this date is required for certification purposes as well as the Assurance of Compliance number which is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA 00004003). Approval for the study will expire one year from that date. A report form will be sent out two months before the expiration date.

IRB approval of this study includes the consent forms dated September 17, 2007 and recruitment materials received September 17, 2007.

The reviewer would like to compliment both the Principal Investigator and her advisor on a well thought out and prepared application.

The IRB would like to stress that subjects who go through the consent process are considered enrolled participants and are counted toward the total number of subjects, even if they have no further participation in the study. Please keep this in mind when calculating the number of subjects you request. This study is currently approved for 100 subjects. If you desire an increase in the number of approved subjects, you will need to make a formal request to the IRB.

The code number above is assigned to your research. That number and the title of your study must be used in all communication with the IRB office.

As the Principal Investigator of this project, you are required by federal regulations to inform the IRB of any proposed changes in your research that will affect human subjects. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Unanticipated problems and adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur. Research projects are subject to continuing review and renewal. If you have any questions, call the IRB office at 612-626-5654. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success with your research.

Sincerely,

Carol Siegel, MLS, CIP
Associate Director
CS/egk
CC: Bruce Braun