

A Latin American Perspective on Wilderness

Article: Emily Wakild, "[Acts of Courage, Acts of Culture: The Wilderness Act in Latin America](https://doi.org/10.1093/envhis/emu071)," *Environmental History* 19.4 (2014) 10.1093/envhis/emu071

Class Discussion/Analytical Questions

- 1) Why does Wakild contend that the Wilderness Act went "largely unnoticed" in Latin America?
- 2) Describe Latin American motivations for creating national parks. How did Latin American governments utilize national parks to create and maintain domestic conservation policies? How effective were Latin American governments in accomplishing this?
- 3) What factors must Latin American governments take into account when managing national parks?
- 4) Think about the autonomy of indigenous peoples and their "rights to modern amenities." How can these rights be effectively met without infringing upon the rights of more recent immigrants inhabiting Latin American states?
- 5) Explain why people assume that conservation creates or maintains wild places. What implications ensue from this mindset?

Activities

1. Wilderness Areas as Case Studies

Discuss the reasons Wakild gives for the creation of Nahuel Huapi Park in Argentina and Manu National Park in Peru, paying particular attention to the important role individual people played. Afterwards, break the class into small groups and have each group research a national park in Latin America. Explain that each group has four tasks to complete:

Tasks

- 1) Research the ideas or plans that led to the formation of your national park.
- 2) Find out what role people played in both the creation and the maintenance of your national park. Do native peoples (or non-native peoples) currently inhabit your national park? What policies have been, or are being, enacted in regards to native habitation of your national park?
- 3) Create a presentation using PowerPoint, PowToon, or Prezi explaining your findings.

- 4) Be prepared to present your findings to the class.

2. Looking at Latin American Wilderness

Wakild discusses the great diversity that exists throughout Latin America. Break the class into four groups, assigning each group a different major Latin American ecoregion.

Groups:

- 1) The Amazon Rainforest
- 2) Patagonia
- 3) The Guiana Highlands
- 4) The Great Mexican Plateau

Explain that each group has five tasks to complete.

Tasks

- 1) Which countries are encompassed in your assigned area? Locate a map that demarcates the general boundaries of your area within greater Latin America. You may find that using two maps—one of greater Latin America with your region filled in, as well as one “zoomed-in” map to illustrate the specifics—works best.
- 2) Research your Latin American area in order to find out what type of geography, climate, flora, and fauna exist in your area. Be sure to gather pictorial representations of these aspects of your assigned region.
- 3) What types of pressures affect your area’s boundaries? Think about people, cities, factories, agribusiness, mining, oil, forestry, etc.
- 4) Create a digital presentation with your findings, being sure to showcase your map and pictures.
- 5) Present your findings to the class.