

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Daniel Renison
Project title	Native forests, wildlife and water in Central Argentina: fostering public ecological understanding and forest restoration in Argentina
RSG reference	51.10.08
Reporting period	December 2008 – April 2010
Amount of grant	£12,000
Your email address	darenison@yahoo.com.ar
Date of this report	April 19 2010

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Promote young scientists by performing applied restoration ecology studies			x	PhD student Florencia Soterias studied the usefulness of inculcating micorrhiza to the roots of the native tree <i>Polylepis australis</i> and is evaluating over a period of 3 years the survival and growth of inoculated and control seedlings planted in burnt areas. Graduate student Tatiana Valfre determined the best germination protocols for the native tree <i>Sebastiania commersoniana</i> which has a very good potential to be used as a native alternative as ornamental and fences.
Train volunteers in forest restoration practices by organizing hands-on work			x	We worked mainly in two restoration areas the high mountains and three areas in the low mountains. For this we organised 14 volunteer groups of six to 35 people which worked 1 to 5 days in planting of native tree species, collection of seeds, transplanting vegetation to erosion gullies and thus attempting to reduce soil erosion, fixing and building wire fences to exclude livestock, fixing trails, cutting non-native trees and weeds and building a second greenhouse for the project.
Contribute to explain to public and government why we need to restore our native forests			x	We gave over 25 conferences, produced and replicated educational material like booklets, 500 copies of DVDs with local documentaries, signposts for two trails and a newly created nature reserve. We also organized a forest workshop with scientists, public and government participation, and gave three restoration ecology courses. Members of our team were also very active collaborating in writing, explaining and lobbying for a forest conservation and restoration act which will soon be voted for at a provincial level – we hope favourably. Our activities and conferences were

				published or broadcasted in radio and TV on numerous occasions.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

Fires affected one of our restoration areas and we had to rebuild and repair newly built fences. The fire burnt the hut where we stayed with volunteers so all the planting had to be done using tents. Also, 2009 was a year with severe droughts and we had to buy two water tanks to store and transport water for planting the seedlings.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

(1) We worked with volunteers and five restoration areas which were improved by these activities. Also after 12 years of functioning of our project – mainly financed by RSGs – besides contributing to 15 restoration areas in which I have personally been involved, has stimulated several other initiatives:

- Pablo Friedlander and Jerónimo Segura from the locality of Los Molles since 2008 are leading a similar project to ours. This project was inspired by our restoration area in Los Gigantes and is run in a similar manner with volunteers.
- Daniela Marina, an attendant to a Restoration Ecology course in 2007, decided to do a PhD study contributing to the restoration of invaded areas of Southern Córdoba – in part inspired by the course and the restoration example in Los Gigantes.
- Julio Dominguez has since 2007 started a similar project in the mountains of northern Argentina – centred in a school and with a large environmental education component (the present booster RSG helped to finance a small part of this project – mainly travel and fencing material).
- Romina Torres, Carla Coutiers, Irene Lett and Paula Marcora in 2007 started several nice environmental education projects working in reforestation with school children. They have all been my students at the university and are currently doing their PhDs under my supervision.
- Marcos Landi, who did his graduation thesis with funds from a previous RSG, is now seeking funds to start a big reforestation project in the locality of Tanti and has participated as a professor in several reforestation and restoration courses.

All the involved people keep in touch and announce the volunteer activities in a coordinated mail system. I am thus proud that restoration work in central Argentina is increasing and multiplying.

(2) Team members were often invited to give conferences, courses and called upon by the media – we took advantage of this, and gave over 25 conferences, mainly in schools but also at the University, to the general public and on one occasion to government officials. We were out on numerous occasions on TV and radio programmes, and in three major newspaper articles. Team member Ricardo Suarez has also been very active collaborating in writing, explaining and lobbying for the implementation of the local forest conservation and restoration act which will soon be voted for at a provincial level – we hope favourably. Additionally, Ricardo organized a Regional Forest and Water Workshop was held in Río Ceballos from 17th – 19th September 2010. Around 150 scientists, public and government officials attended. Our environmental education activities also included the design by Pamela Chialva of educational signposts for two trails (Los Gigantes and Cuesta Blanca) which we are now in the process

setting them up at the trail (Los Gigantes) or at an earlier stage of carving and painting the signposts (Cuesta Blanca). We also paid for several signposts in the newly created river nature reserve in Cuesta Blanca. Additionally, Ricardo Suarez gave a reforestation course in Río Ceballos (16 hours and 40 students), and I gave four restoration ecology courses in Los Molles (16 hours, 15 students), Los Gigantes (16 hours, 15 students), Córdoba city (70 hours, 18 students) and in Bariloche city (40 hours, 38 students).

(3) Studies financed by past RSGs 1 and 2 are now being accepted and published in scientific journals; to date nine national and international articles have been accepted or published. The present RSG has financed two more studies in restoration ecology performed by young scientists.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

My motto is to think globally and act locally, most of our RSG project volunteers, conferences, educational work and lobbying is performed locally, the only exception is volunteers from other areas of the world who come to help – but they pay for their traveling expenses themselves and usually also help in other projects or come to the area for other motives. Local communities benefit directly from the recreation opportunities in our forest restoration areas, increased water quality and reduced soil erosion with its adverse consequences in economic productivity and human health, we hope with more restoration projects in the area and the new forest conservation and restoration act these benefits will increase with time.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, for the rest of my life! I will soon ask for a Booster RSG to help keep the increasing trend in forest restoration activities in Central Argentina.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

So far 9 scientific publications, at least 5 more will be coming. Also in brochures, DVDs, radio and TV programmes when opportunities exist and by continuing to do activities with volunteers.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

I had asked to spend the RSG over a period of 2 years because this would help to better plan activities however for several reasons all team members were very motivated to perform all activities and we finished all activities sooner (17 months – December 2008 to April 2010).

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Local exchange rate: £1 = \$arg 0.20425. Please find detailed item per item expenditure list in file Renison detail expenses 2009.xls, I also have kept all individual receipts which may be requested.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
1. For research work.	£1485.00	£1331.92	£153.08	
2. For hands-on restoration work with volunteers.	£1990.00	£2208.44	-£218.44	We had to re-build burnt fences
3. Environmental education and lobbying.	£6635.00	£7124.93	-£489.93	Big unforeseen opportunity to lobby for a local forest conservation and restoration act
4. General expenses.	£1890.00	£1339.91	£550.09	
TOTAL	£12000.00	12005.21		

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

Further promote other people to start restoration projects and a public appreciation for forest conservation and restoration. This could be achieved by helping out the NGO local conservation movements.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

We published nine scientific articles where the RSGs are gratefully acknowledged. The RSG logo was published in replicated educational material (over 500 booklets and 500 copies of DVDs with local documentaries, 150 copies of CD of the forest workshop with scientists). Also, during three of the four restoration ecology courses I gave students an exercise where they had to visit the RSG web page, download forms and fill in the forms.

11. Any other comments?

The three RSGs I have received were extremely useful for the restoration activities I have pursued in the last years and I love the simplicity of the RSG procedures, many thanks!