



THE THIN GREEN LINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

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OFFICERS REPORTS

President's Report

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

For the first time since the Fourth IRF Congress, held in Wilson's Prom in March 2003, this is the first quarter wherein we have not learnt of a ranger being killed or badly injured in the line of duty. Let us trust, hope and pray that this situation will continue.

I would like to again ask member associations and individual rangers to contribute towards Daniel Kurday's requirements. Daniel, a ranger in Araucarias Park in Chile, was left quadriplegic after being shot while attempting to arrest poachers in his park.

The IRF is in continual contact with the IUCN WCPA Tsunami Protected Area Coordinator, Dr Robbie Robinson, in working towards rebuilding lives and livelihoods in the tsunami-ravaged South East Asia protected areas. There is so much to do, but we have been extremely frustrated by political intervention. Even so, the IRF and rangers will become involved in capacity building in certain parks, as well as in establishing twinning programs in the region.

Both IRF and IRFC were represented at the SBSTTA 10 (subsidiary body on scientific, technical and technological advice) meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bangkok this past February, with a view to cementing not only relationships but also possible funded projects. The outcomes of this and the previous WCC of November 2004 are enormous and we will be working towards consolidating the gains made.

As stated in an earlier newsletter, the first Iberoamerican Congress of Rangers will be held in Chile from September 26 - 30, 2005. Latin America has been showing the way forward with regard to numerous initiatives and we congratulate our southern colleagues for this.

The World Wilderness Congress takes place in Anchorage, Alaska, from September 30 - October 6, 2005. Our vice president, Juan Carlos Gambarotta, will be giving a presentation, and will lead whatever ranger delegation can be built at the congress.

The Fifth Conference on Protected Areas in East Asia takes place in Hong Kong from June 21 – 25, 2005. There is no IRF delegation known at this time, but, as with the Iberoamerican congress and the WWC, I would make a special and urgent appeal to all rangers to try to raise their own funding and get to attend these meetings. As we showed at the World Parks Congress, rangers can and do make a difference, but you have to be there. All of these are important forums wherein the issues affecting rangers and protected areas need to be addressed by those who know the realities on the ground.

For those who have not yet booked your place for IRF 2006 World Congress to be held in Stirling, Scotland in June 2006, wake up or the opportunity will pass you by. Book by the end June and save some money. Details of the congress are available on the website.

And please take special care in developing and caring for our young rangers.

Until next time, warm regards,

David Zeller, President

Vice President's Report

Dear Colleagues:

The Organization of the Iberoamerican Congress of Rangers is well advanced. Chile is a country which has a very good system of protected areas and we hope that some colleagues from other parts of the world will be interested in going to the congress in Santiago next September.

It is well known that Spanish is spoken or understood in all countries of Latin America, with the only exceptions being Guyana, Suriname, French Guyana, and Belize. Brazilians speak Portuguese, a language very related to Spanish, and that is a very nice fact for this upcoming congress because all representatives from the region, plus Portugal and Spain, will be able to communicate fluently in their first language. All of us for whom English is a second or third language well know that English is a barrier that is difficult to overcome for most rangers in Latin America and that much information is missed while making the effort to pay attention. So this promises to be a very attractive congress for rangers from Mexico to Argentina and Iberic Peninsula. I am the representative from IRF on the organizing committee.

In the middle of March, Poland became a member of IRF, which was very good news. Poland hosted the first International Ranger Federation Congress in the town of Zakopane. For those of us who were there, it was a sweet time, a time of beginning. So we are very glad that, following so many impediments and so much effort, the country where the IRF flag was first raised is now a member of our great and ever-increasing family.

Now for some bad news. After more than a year and a half from its declaration and press releases, the Dependant's Fund is not yet functioning. The fund was announced at the World Parks Congress in South Africa, and is to be managed jointly by IRF and IUCN. Some money was donated, but conversations on how to manage it have stopped and no widow or other dependant has yet benefited from it. And some rangers continue to die, while others are injured and must deal with their handicaps for the rest of their lives.

I believe that the best is often an enemy of the good, and it seems to me that IRF is trying to get involved in too many things. I wish we could perform everything for the benefit of all rangers of the world, but perhaps we are losing time and should focus on something we can manage. Only wisdom will make us know the difference.

Till next time.

Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Vice President

Past President's Report

Former President Rick Smith traveled to the Dominican Republic in early March to assist in the preparation of the draft plan for the implementation of the Dominican Republic's first biosphere reserve. The core area of this reserve consists of three of the country's most beautiful national parks, Jaragua, Lago Enriquillo, and Sierra de Bahoruco. The plan calls for decentralized management of the reserve outside of the core areas, which will remain the responsibility of the country's protected area agency. Since this is the country's only biosphere reserve, the power sharing at the local level will be a new experience for many, including those in the protected area agency.

El ex-presidente de la FIG, Rick Smith, viajó a la República Dominicana en marzo para ayudar en la preparación del borrador del plan para la implementación de la nueva Reserva de la Biósfera de la República. Las áreas núcleo de la Reserva son tres de los parques nacionales dominicanos más hermosos: Jaragua, Lago Enriquillo, y Sierra de Bahoruco. El plan estipula un manejo descentralizado fuera de las áreas núcleo, las cuales quedarán bajo la responsabilidad de la Subsecretaría de Áreas Protegidas. Puesto que esta Reserva es la primera en la historia del país, el concepto de apoderamiento al nivel local será una nueva experiencia para muchas personas, incluso para los empleados de Áreas Protegidas.

Rick Smith
Past President

Continental Representative for North America

Most of the activity in North America for the past few months has revolved around preparations for the fifth World Congress. Email updates on registration and Congress news have been sent to North American rangers. Those messages have generated new interest and additional names of potential delegates. Associations in North America will next be working on ways to generate funds for sponsorships of Latin American delegates to the Congress. Any North American rangers who could help with this effort are asked to contact Deanne Adams at anthonyandadams@aol.com.

Rangers are responding to Tony Wilson's request for stories of how past Congresses have impacted them. Two examples – the first from Jeff Ohlfs, a ranger at Joshua Tree National Park, California, has attended all four Congresses, the second from Rick Smith, retired ranger and park manager in the United States and past president of ANPR.

"I find the biggest benefit from the IRF Congresses is developing friendships with rangers from all over the world," says Ohlfs. "Some of these have developed into life long acquaintances that go beyond the work place. We know each other's families and events that transpire in their daily lives. Work-wise, it's these personal friendships that lead to exchanging of workplace ideas when you really need help with a special project. It's the friendships that give people (or for their co-workers & friends) contacts when traveling in each other's countries.

"Another thought is my friendship with Daniel Onsembe of Kenya. In two out of the three Congresses I have given him my (bulletproof) vest," adds Ohlfs. "I receive a new one every five years. Being a warden in Kenya is a dangerous job and they do not have the luxury of obtaining their own vests. It may be five years old but it's better than not having one."

"During our 1st Congress in Zakopane, I met Juan Carlos Gambarotta, a wildlife refuge manager from Uruguay," says Smith. "I renewed his acquaintance during the Congresses in San Jose, Costa Rica and Kruger National Park in South Africa. I was impressed by his knowledge of conservation issues and his leadership abilities, especially among his Latin American ranger colleagues.

“In late 2000, I was hired by a US-based consulting firm to go to the Dominican Republic to assess what the training needs for that country's park rangers were. I returned to the US and submitted my report. The consulting company then hired me to do a series of training courses in the Dominican Republic for Dominican park and forest rangers. When the company's contracting people asked me who I wanted them to hire to assist me, without hesitation I told them that I wanted Juan Carlos. We have subsequently done six training sessions in the Dominican Republic, training approximately 150 park and forest rangers. Juan Carlos has carried the load of teaching most of the very technical topics. These training session have proved to be very popular, not only with the participants, but also with their supervisors who have commented on performance improvement that they have observed among the course graduates.

A relationship begun at IRF Congresses, therefore, has improved the conservation efforts of a country whose rangers had never been involved in activities of the Federation. Significantly, Dominican park rangers have now formed their own association and are requesting affiliation with IRF. The IRF goal of promoting the transfer of information from countries in which conservation is publicly well supported to countries where conservation does not enjoy the same level of support is alive and well.”

In other North American news, the California State Park Rangers Association (CSPRA) has a new executive director, Laura Svendsgaard, who may be reached at executivemanager@cspra.com or at the office telephone: 800-749-8749.

Past executive director Gordon Miller visited California in April and presented a program to US National Park Service staff at the regional office in Oakland. He spoke of the needs of rangers around the world, and used his recent trip to the Congo to illustrate what IRF can do and is working towards. His program generated a lot of questions and interest in what the audience could do to support the work of IRF.

Deanne Adams
North American Continent Representative

Editor's Report

The deadlines for the next four issues of *The Thin Green Line* appear below. If you can plan on getting your reports to me by those dates, that will be a great help.

Issue	Submission Due Date	Publication Date
July	Friday, July 1, 2005	Sunday, July 17, 2005
October	Friday, October 7, 2005	Sunday, October 30, 2005
January	Friday, December 16, 2005	Sunday, January 7, 2006
April	Friday, April 7, 2006	Sunday, April 23, 2006

Bill Halainen, Editor

NEWS FROM NATIONS AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Northern Ireland

On April 21st, the Northern Ireland Countryside Service Association (NICSA) will be having a meeting to discuss the pre- or post-congress tour that we hope to organize for 2006. I am organizing the Northern Ireland tour, the Rangers Association of Ireland (Republic) are also to have a meeting regarding tours some time in April.

I have received approval from our equivalent of English Nature (Environment and Heritage Service) for visits to their sites and also a number of other site managers so we can provide a varied tour. I hope to produce some kind of itinerary by the end of May.

NICSA's annual general meeting (AGM) and annual get-together took place in March in Belfast. The Belfast Hills and the Bog Meadows were the sites visited. Jenny Fuller, who was our chairman for a number of years, attended her last meeting before going off to live in Dublin.

I will be attending the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association's AGM this year.

Ken Moore
NICSA International Representative

Norway

The Norwegian Ranger Association held a big meeting at Hell (!) in central Norway from February 16th to February 18th. This was the second main gathering since our association was established in 2002.

The meeting was sponsored by our three main ranger agencies, and staff from those agencies also participating in the meeting. Around 120 rangers attended – a the large majority of all professional rangers in Norway. Representatives from our sister ranger associations in the other Nordic countries was also invited, and we had guests from Iceland, Finland and Denmark. Sweden was sadly missing.

The main themes of the meeting were:

- Outdoor life recreation – good ranger practice.
- Sustainable business development and protected areas – the role of the ranger
- Safety aspects and ranger work.

In between sessions of the official program, the board members of the Norwegian Ranger Association met with our Nordic colleagues to discuss future cooperation between our national ranger associations. At the end of the gathering, the sitting board was reelected for another term.

Carl Norberg
Chair, Norwegian Ranger Association

Uruguay

Delegates of the Association of Rangers of Uruguay had a meeting with officials of DINAMA (the national environment agency) concerning the creation of the National Corp of Rangers. The National System of Protected Areas was created by an act in February, 2000, and the last point of the act mentions the creation of a Corps of Environment Guards, which should be created by another act. Since then, nothing has happened, despite the efforts of our association. Meanwhile, the regulation of the law creating the system recognized that those environment guards should have ranger backgrounds. We began the conversation with DINAMA to assure that a short text containing the most important points to create the Corp of Rangers will be sent to the parliament now, and that it will be followed by more complete regulations when this organization is approved.

Franchesco Lavecchia, President, and
Juan Carlos Gambarotta
Asociacion de Guardaparques del Uruguay

Czech Republic

The Czech Ranger Association (CRA) has held its first ever public relations seminar for its members. This PR seminar was completely paid for by the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic. Forty professional and volunteer rangers, divided into two groups, participated in the seminar. The main topic was "crisis communication in the field." Josef Valenta, professor from the philosophy faculty at Charles University in Prague, gave a very sophisticated presentation. The second lecturer, a senior editor of county newspapers, explained the rules for good relations with the media and offered guidance on providing useful photos to the media, writing press releases, etc. Information about this seminar was presented to the ministry and to newspapers.

The seminar was very successful and will be given again. Topics will include crisis communication, relevant laws, writing special releases, and first aid and safety in the field.

A general assembly and meeting of rangers was held in Sedmihorky in Cesky raj PLA in April. The main topic was mass action in public affairs, and the special lecturer was Svetlana Havelkova from Czech Inspection of Environment.

Contact with Naryn Preserve in Kyrgysia was made last fall. Rangers from Kyrgysia need help with agro/eco-programs and rangers training. One complication will be language, because only Russian is possible.

Michal Skalka
Czech Ranger Association

Italy

A first-ever national meeting on wildlife law enforcement was held in Italy in March. The meeting, organized by the Province of Genova, was a great success. About 300 provincial wildlife law enforcement officers, state forestry corps agents, and national and regional park rangers traveled to Genova to hear speeches on issues concerning wildlife management techniques and legal problems in enforcing hunting regulations.

The conference covered the following topics, with national and foreign guest speakers:

- Use of DNA in wildlife forensics.
- Predation of livestock by wild predators or feral dogs.
- Immobilization of wild game by veterinarians.
- Enforcement of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna) regulations.
- The battle against smuggling of wild birds from East Europe and bird trapping and poaching in Italy.
- Law enforcement and poaching of wild ungulates.
- Federal wildlife law enforcement in the USA.
- Wildlife law enforcement in France (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage).
- Cooperation in Quebec (Canada) among police forces in wildlife matter.

Augusto Atturo
Associazione Ligure Agenti di Vigilanza Ambientale

Scotland

By the time you read this, your international representatives should all have copies of the booking information and forms for the IRF's Fifth World Congress, to be held from the June 14th to June 21st in 2006 at Stirling University here in Scotland. The plan is to send each representative a supply, which can then be distributed to interested parties within each country. This information will also be available in a PDF format from the Congress website, along with other information about accommodation, travel, pre congress tours, job shadowing, etc. The address is www.ranger-irfc.com/scotcover.

At the moment, we are working with the IRFC and our sister associations in England, Wales and Ireland to finish the program.

There will be opportunities for delegates to enjoy pre- and post-congress tours and participate in work shadowing. These will be available both in Scotland and in the other countries of the British Isles.

There is also a call for papers, in the form of presentations and posters, on the website. Anyone who wants to submit an abstract for a paper should follow the procedure highlighted there.

With regard to the other work SCRA carries out, we have just participated in the National Access Festival, held to launch the country's new access laws. These became active on February 9th this year and a campaign to promote them to the public has been underway since then. Rangers are, and will continue to be, at the forefront of promoting this and making sure the mechanisms work on the ground.

Linked to this, we are in the process of revitalizing our national training program to reflect the changing role of the ranger. Our national training conference is to be held at Ballachulish from April 25th to the 27th this year, the topic being how to promote the new access laws.

The conference will also host a celebratory dinner, held as part of our 30th anniversary year. This will be the 30th conference we have run since the association was set up at the first one in 1974. We hope to have many of the old faces who have contributed to the success of SCRA over the years in attendance.

Our aim is to develop SCRA over the next few years by employing a new development officer to help raise our profile, coordinate our efforts and raise money for projects. The plan is currently being finalized and we hope to set it up next year. This follows on from our appointment of an administrative assistant, which has been a great success and improved our efficiency enormously.

Tony Wilson, Chair
Scottish Countryside Rangers Association

Portugal

The Associacao Portuguesa de Guardas e Vigilantes da Natureza held the Seventh Conference on "Climate Change and the Environment" this spring. The conference findings were as follows:

- Rangers are on the front lines of the effort to preserve and protect nature and have the privilege to try to sensitize people to the issues surrounding this problem.
- Rangers must be environmental educators who provide people with new attitudes and new ways of thinking about conservation. They must also work to change people's behavior in regard to nature.

- Rangers must promote public awareness of the value of oak forests--from environmental, ecological, social , and economic points of view--and the ranger's role in their preservation.
- As environmental educators, rangers must explain the environmental consequences of human activity such as deforestation, fires, intensive grazing and agriculture and seek to reverse the impacts of such activities.
- As a way to reduce the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, we must encourage compatible uses and activities that promote conservation.
- It is important to preserve specific habitats that serve as bio-indicators of climate change. Such habitats include dunes, cliffs, natural forests, and wetlands.
- We should attempt to avoid expanding human settlements or economic activities in areas subject to natural disasters.
- We need to change the existing view of our environment – something that might be considered a predatory view – into a sustainable development model. Such a model might include strategies such as the use of alternative energy sources--photovoltaic, passive or thermal solar, wind, biomass conversion, bio-combustible, geothermal, wave energy. Some of these strategies, however, have potentially negative effects on the environment and need further analysis.
- Agenda 21 seeks to promote sustainable development as a way to enhance standards of living for the current generation without compromising future development.
- Rangers could play the role of mediators to resolve problems related to sustainable development.
- Rangers play a significant role in promoting the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.
- We need to eliminate the duplication of effort among different conservation agencies.
- Climate change is a historical recurring phenomenon with glacial periods interspersed with warmer periods. Some uncertainty still exists whether the current warming trend is another such normal variation or if greenhouse gases have produced a change that is irreversible.

United States

The U.S. Association of National Park Rangers held its annual “Ranger Rendezvous” in Rapid City, South Dakota, last fall. It was held near several National Park Service sites, including Mount Rushmore and Badlands National Parks. At Mount Rushmore, ranger Alden Miller spoke to the park rangers gathered in this land of the Oglala Sioux and other indigenous American Indian tribes. His words can be seen as analogous to world rangers. Some excerpts from his speech, “One Lodge of Many Voices”:

“It is humbling to speak to people united as you are, bound together as one tribe, if you will. No matter what we do, we share a desire in our souls to breathe life into something that will revisit our nation in a good way, to have a piece of our future that bears our hand, a vision of tomorrow with our name on it.

“Because of a great many persons of vision — from our brothers and sisters who serve in harm’s way, to those who serve in the rest of the spectrum of the cause for peace (for blessed also are the nurturers and negotiators), to those of you who serve in these sanctuaries of the human spirit — many such places in the tapestry of our shared, cultural heritage remain indelibly carved in us as well, especially now.

“Two hundred years ago, a phrase borrowed from the Oneida, a Native American Indian tribe on the verge of extinction, found its way into our language, and translated into Latin, onto our money. ‘One lodge of many voices’ became ‘E Pluribus Unum’ or ‘Out of Many, One.’

“As I look out on this one tribe, this one lodge of many voices and no matter what our job, the keepers of our heritage and our future, I know that stand, we will.”

At the Rendezvous, past IRF President Rick Smith also reflected in a speech on the state of our association. Some of his comments may be relevant to other ranger associations, either now or in the future:

“If I read the current situation correctly, the ANPR that we built is no longer as relevant as it once was to the current generation of interpretive, resources management and protection rangers, and based on recent actions on the part of the NPS leadership, they don't think it is very relevant either. Rendezvous attendees are getting older and grayer. Our membership numbers have decreased. Interest in our activities seems to be declining. . .

“So, it would be easy to give up on ANPR, claim that it is past its prime, and either stop participating or concentrate entirely on ANPR's enviable social activities. That would be a huge mistake, I think, and here's why: ANPR is needed more now than almost at any other time in its 27-year history. But to be relevant and vibrant, it must be willing to change, and maybe to make changes larger than a few little ones on the margin.

“Let’s think first on an international level. [Several members of ANPR] had the great fortune of attending the Fifth World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, as representatives of the International Ranger Federation. Where did they come from and how did they get involved in the International Ranger Federation? You got it – through ANPR. This is one of the reasons I say that ANPR is needed more than ever. We owe it to the thousands of rangers in other countries who work under conditions we wouldn't tolerate for a nanosecond. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder with them while they struggle to obtain what we take for granted – decent salaries, good benefits, ample equipment, modern supervision and training, public support and a good-guy image. We need to tell the rangers in Bolivia that we are proud of them when they successfully demanded, for the very first time, that they be included in the planning and decision-making processes of the agency for which they work. ANPR should be at the forefront of the international ranger movement. That alone is reason enough to stay involved in this association.”

I would suggest that Rick’s comments could be applied to many world ranger associations. And yet, many new organizations, not unlike ANPR, are also by necessity fully focused on firming up their memberships, seeking support from governments and other NGOs, and trying to tackle some of the huge problems in ranger support and park management they find in their particular areas. IRF provides an important conduit for sharing experiences, seeking answers, and providing overall comfort in an important and difficult task. If the ranger Associations in any of these countries either fail or fail to materialize, the job becomes so much harder.

Work for your organization. Make it speak in support of rangers and our work.

Tony Sisto, International Representative
Association of National Park Rangers

England and Wales

The Countryside Management Association (CMA) and Losehill Hall Training Centre in the Peak District National Park have forged closer working relationships. CMA will be providing corporate membership benefits and leaflet mailing facilities to Losehill Hall; in return, Losehill Hall will offer a discount to CMA members on certain qualifying training courses (e.g. basic and advanced ranger training courses) and will also promote CMA to those attending their training courses. This year, in addition to these practical arrangements, CMA will be hosting two key events at Losehill Hall – the Corporate Members Seminar in April and the CMA Annual Seminar and Annual General Meeting in September.

The latter will take place at Losehill Hall on Thursday, September 29th, and Friday, September 30th. The seminar theme will be "Integrated Land Management." The guideline price is £100, for which members receive all their meals and overnight accommodation at Losehill Hall. A field visit is planned for the second day which will be relevant to the seminar theme. Members will also have the option of extending their visit into the weekend and bringing partners. CMA would welcome any overseas rangers who happen to be visiting the UK at this time. Contact Roger Cole at thecolefamily@btinternet.com.

Roger Cole
Countryside Management Association

IRF NEWS

EUROPARC Federation Offering Junior Ranger Grants

The EUROPARC Federation is inviting applications for funding to those parks and protected areas in Europe that are starting Junior Ranger programs for the first time in 2005. This follows a successful Junior Ranger initiative started over two years ago in which the International Ranger Federation has been an active partner with the Bavarian State Ministry for Environment, Health and Consumer Protection, which is supporting the program financially. Successful applicants will receive a grant of €1,500 (1,500 Euros) from the EUROPARC Federation.

In August, the EUROPARC Junior Ranger network will be holding the Third International EUROPARC Junior Ranger Camp, which will be hosted by the Bavarian Forest National Park in Germany. Participation will be open to those protected areas that ran their own Junior Ranger programs in 2005. Expressions of interest to take part in this event are welcome, with possible funding for two junior rangers and one ranger from each successful project.

For further information on either, please contact:

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