



GUARDAPARQUE

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Guardaparque is a bi-weekly publication prepared and issued by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), an organization of about 60 non-governmental and governmental ranger organizations from around the world. **Guardaparque** carries reports on emergency service and law enforcement incidents, reports on protection of parks and the natural and cultural resources within them, reports on programs to educate visitors and communities on the values of parks and protected areas, and reports on the people who are responsible for all these activities. **Guardaparque** contains information from rangers in the field on operations conducted in the field. From time to time, it also reports on political issues affecting those operations. It is supplemented by a quarterly newsletter, **The Thin Green Line**, which focuses on IRF activities. If you have a submission for **Guardaparque**, please send it to the editor, Bill Halainen, at Bill_Halainen@nps.gov.

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

New Zealand – Tongariro National Park Eruption Of Mount Ruapehu Leads To Closures, Evacuations

Mount Ruapehu erupted without warning on the evening of September 25th. Shortly thereafter, police and rangers from the Department of Conservation mounted an operation to rescue a hurt climber from a shelter about 700 meters from the volcano's crater. Police said a rock had smashed through the roof of the shelter, breaking a man's leg and pinning him down. His companion was able to walk for help. Three snow-grooming machines were used to carry a rescue team of eight up the mountain about 11 p.m.

The eruption generated a 2.8-magnitude volcanic quake, and pilots flying in the area reported an ash column of about 5000 meters. Multiple lahars (mudflows of volcanic fragments on the flanks of a volcano) were generated in several catchment areas, including Whakapapa ski-field. It was described as a "blue-sky" eruption, coming without warning, and went "from nothing to full-on in about a minute." It was similar to eruptions in 1969 and 1975, but smaller than those in 1995 and 1996.

Most ski lodges on the mountain, full of people because of the school holidays, were evacuated. Many ended up at the Chateau hotel, where the main lounge filled with people wearing ski suits and carrying tired children. At the same time the ski lodges were evacuated, police closed all roads around the mountain as well as the main trunk rail line as part of an action plan developed for the big lahar on March 18th, when one side of the crater lake collapsed. All roads reopened about 11:15 p.m. One lahar swept down the Far West run on Whakapapa ski-field. A snow groomer saw the lahar go past and "got a helluva fright."

[Source: *Stuff.co.nz*]

**United States – Biscayne National Park
Ocean Area Closed Following Brawl**

On the afternoon of Sunday, September 2nd, rangers received a report of a fight in progress at a sand bar at Sands Cut in this ocean-based park, which is off the southeast coast of Florida. Upon arrival, they found four injured people in a boat who'd been assaulted by more than 15 people from another boat. The four were bleeding from injuries caused by broken bottles being tossed into their boat and from being punched and kicked by their assailants. The four victims were part of a larger group of boaters who were consuming alcohol and partying in the waist-deep waters of the sand bar. Rangers were able to extricate them only after tying a line to their boat and pulling them out of the cluster of vessels.

It quickly became evident that the many vessels in the area would have to be moved in order for emergency personnel to restore order, secure the crime scene, and render emergency first aid. The rangers were assisted by Florida Fish and Wildlife and Miami Dade County officers. Following consultation with the rangers and assisting officers, the park's chief ranger decided to close the area. Although there were between 400 and 500 boats and thousands of people in the immediate area, it was cleared within about 45 minutes.

Sands Cut, located approximately 10 miles from the mainland, has for many years been a favourite spot for weekend boaters. In recent years, though, there's been a tremendous increase in visitation, use and incidents, ranging from fights and other assaults to drug use and public intoxication. This increase has occurred despite targeted law enforcement patrols. The sheer number of individuals and boats at the sand bar make it extremely difficult to patrol and control the area. In order to more effectively manage the area, the superintendent recently implemented a change in the compendium limiting the number of vessels rafted together to five vessels and establishing a minimum distance of 100 feet between each group of boats.

[Source: *National Park Service Morning Report*, United States]

**United States – North Cascades National Park
Missing Hiker Found After Being Lost For Six Days**

A missing hiker from Seattle was found on Friday, September 21st, after surviving on wild berries and stream water for six days. Mary Wingfield, 31, left Seattle last weekend to do some solo hiking in the area east of Darrington, two-and-a-half hours northeast of Seattle.

Authorities were notified of her absence when she did not arrive at work Monday morning. Her vehicle was found Wednesday in Diablo, another hour northeast of Darrington. Wingfield said that road closures altered her original destination. She hiked the Stetattle Creek trail near Diablo Dam Sunday, but became disoriented and spent the next five days trying to get back to her car while surviving the elements without overnight or cold weather gear. Wingfield said that she found shelter under trees and slept on fallen leaves and needles while covering herself with bark and branches. She was able to build a fire the first two nights, which helped her deal with the low evening temperatures and some rain. Wingfield left several clues along the creek that helped direct searchers, including several handwritten notes and a grocery card. She made an effort to be visible and was located by helicopter searchers at 2:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon, five miles from the trailhead.

A helicopter flew Wingfield to Diablo, where she was treated for minor cuts, bruises, and exhaustion, then released. Approximately 40 searchers, four helicopters, and five dog teams were involved in the search over the three-day period from Wednesday through Friday. Searchers, half of whom were volunteers, were from Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish Counties, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the National Park Service.

[Source: *National Park Service Morning Report*, United States]

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Democratic Republic of Congo – Virunga National Park New Clashes Again Imperil Rare Gorillas

Efforts to track endangered mountain gorillas in the Democratic Republic Congo have been stalled by renewed fighting in the country's volatile east. Since fighting erupted last month between the army and forces loyal to cashiered general Laurent Nkunda, rangers' efforts to track the rare species have been paralysed, said a spokeswoman for Wildlife Direct.

So far, rangers have managed to find 18 of the 75 gorillas being tracked in Virunga National Park, a major tourist attraction, where poaching is endemic, she said. "One half of the gorilla sector is under control of the army and the other half is under the renegade troops. Rangers are being blocked and cannot access both areas which is very annoying," she said. Local and foreign militias as well as Congolese soldiers, poachers and illegal miners regularly cross this area of the Virunga National Park, one of Africa's largest and a UNESCO world heritage site. Sometimes they occupy parts of it.

The mountain gorillas are a major tourist attraction in the Virunga National Park, but poaching of wildlife there is endemic. Only about 700 critically endangered mountain gorillas remain in the wild, all of them living in the mountains of Rwanda, Uganda and the eastern DRC. Nkunda's rebels and other armed groups are accused of poaching there and encroaching on their habitats.

[Source: *Agence France-Presse*]

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Uganda – Queen Elizabeth National Park Basongora Pastoralists Evicted From Park

The controversial eviction of Basongora pastoralists from Queen Elizabeth National Park began on Saturday, September 22nd. This followed a cabinet decision to allocate 30,000 acres of government land in Kasese to the herdsmen. The agriculture minister, Eng Hillary Onek, who heads the inter-ministerial committee handling the relocation, directed that all pastoralists leave the park within two weeks.

The first batch of 70 families will soon move to Mubuku Prison land as a holding ground for all the pastoralists. A total of 8,000 people with 10,000 head of cattle are to be evicted. Any cultivators who settled in the park illegally in the last three years will also have to leave. Those who have been there for the last 20 or 30 years with evidence that they have been there for a minimum of 10 years will be fitted in, though. The government land will be given to the Basongora to own and use communally. The Basongora, numbering about 650, migrated to Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1999. They returned in March last year with about 8,500 head of cattle after being evicted by the Congolese authorities for encroaching on a game park. They settled in the northern part of Queen Elizabeth National Park, one of the country's most popular tourist destinations. The number of pastoralists and their cattle is said to have more than tripled since March 2006, as others claiming to be Basongora joined them from Kamwenge, Nakasongola, Luweero and Nakaseke districts.

After a series of consultative meetings, President Yoweri Museveni appointed an inter-ministerial committee to resolve the matter. When authorities attempted to evict the herdsmen in June, the Basongora fiercely resisted and the operation was halted. Twelve of the rangers involved in the eviction exercise were arrested and charged with attempted murder.

[Source: *Kampala New Vision*]

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

United States – Central High School National Historic Site New Visitor Centre Dedicated On 50th Anniversary Of School Desegregation

Half a century after nine courageous black teenagers attempted to enter the previously all white Central High School, nearly 2,000 visitors, many of them former Central High School students themselves, braved oppressive summer heat and humidity to attend the dedication of Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site's new visitor centre. Little Rock Central High School was designated a National Historic Site by Congress on November 6, 1998, becoming one of 392 units in the U.S. National Park System.

The school is recognized for the role it played in the desegregation of public schools, and the admission of the "Little Rock Nine" was the most prominent national example of the implementation of the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling (*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*) that said that 'separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.' The new visitor centre, now open to the public, provides approximately 3,000 square feet of exhibit space to interpret the many stories related to the 1957 desegregation crisis, the civil rights movement, and contemporary issues related to civil and human rights. The centres many powerful visual images, firsthand accounts from the "Little Rock Nine" and others, historic documents, and stimulating interactive exhibits offer the visitor an opportunity to experience the quest for equality on an intimate level.

[Source: *InsideNPS*, United States]

CONSERVATION

United Kingdom Rangers Actively Involved With 21st World Scout Jamboree

The end of July saw the start of the 21st World Scout Jamboree in Essex, England. This year is the 100th anniversary of the Scout Association and 40,000 scouts and guides from over 180 countries arrived in the UK for 12 days of activities with the theme of "One World; One Promise."

In addition to a wide range of adventurous and challenging activities, each participant spent one day undertaking a community service task. In this respect, Roger Cole from the Countryside Management Association (and a long-serving scout leader) was part of the Jamboree organizing team arranging practical projects with the help of various park rangers throughout the county of Essex and neighbouring districts.

Lakes and seashores, country and regional parks, nature reserves and areas of outstanding natural beauty, community woodlands and national forests, bird sanctuaries and wildlife trusts all benefited from this influx of youthful enthusiasm. Wildlife conservation, habitat management, community planting, site maintenance tasks, litter and rubbish clear-ups were just some of the jobs tackled by the 14 to 18-year-old scouts and guides. A total of over a quarter of a million hours of community work was delivered by these scouts and guides during the Jamboree.

[Source: Roger Cole, Countryside Management Association, United Kingdom]

Prepared and published by the International Ranger Federation as a service to rangers around the world. Submissions should be sent to Bill Halainen at Bill_Halainen@nps.gov .