



THE THIN GREEN LINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

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NEWS ABOUT IRF

President's Report

Bolivian Rangers Join IRF

Since our last newsletter, I received the formal application form from the Bolivian rangers requesting affiliation with IRF. The US Association of National Park Rangers endorsed the application, and the Bolivian association became a formal affiliate of IRF in December of last year. The association's name is the Bolivian Association of Conservation Agents. There are currently 136 members. The first president of the association is Carola Vaca Slazar whom many of you met while in South Africa. Please join me in extending a most cordial welcome to our Bolivian colleagues to the international family of rangers. The association can be contacted through Carola's e-mail address, v.salazar@infonet.com.bo

ANPR Celebrates 25th Anniversary

I had the pleasure of attending the US Association of National Park Ranger's 25th anniversary meeting, held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. IRF Executive Director Gordon Miller attended and extended IRF's congratulation to the 300 members in attendance. Barbara Mertins of the Austrian Ranger Association and Elaine Thomas, of the Victorian Ranger Association, also attended. Elaine made a presentation to the meeting on IRF's 4th World Congress, scheduled for March 21-28, 2003, in Wilsons Promontory National Park, Australia. Congratulations to ANPR for 25 years of service to US rangers.

Argentine Ranger Association Hosts 2nd National Congress

Vice President Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Uruguay, attended the 2nd National Congress of the Argentine Ranger Association. It is remarkable that AGA was able to successfully host this congress given the extremely difficult economic situation through which Argentina is passing. I commend our Argentine colleagues for continuing to make the preservation and protection of the nation's protected areas a high priority. See VP Gambarotta's report for further details.

Guatemalan Rangers Meet for First Time

Our Central American Continental Representative, Ronald Mora, attended the first-ever national meeting of Guatemalan park rangers. Among other issues on the meeting agenda was that of a possible request to affiliate with IRF.

Possible IUCN-IRF Cooperation During the 2003 World Parks Congress

In February 2002, Executive Director Gordon Miller met in Gland, Switzerland, with representatives of the organizing committee for the 2003 World Parks Congress. We had two items we wished to discuss with IUCN officials. The first was our list of universal ranger competencies that the delegates at the 2000 IRF Kruger Congress had approved. We had sent these competencies to IUCN, asking that they be used as a basis for some of the activities related to capacity building scheduled for the Congress. Peter Shadie, the principal organizer of the Congress, suggested that we contact Julia Carabias of Mexico, the person chairing the capacity building section of the program, to state our willingness to organize and deliver a workshop on our competencies. I have contacted Carabias to her know of our interest in doing such a workshop. Miller and Shadie also discussed another IRF issue. I had received a letter from the President of the US Association of National Park Rangers (ANPR) asking that IRF use its influence to place the issue of "protecting the protectors" on the 2003 Durban program. This request came from ANPR members who were increasingly concerned about the number of rangers who were losing their lives in the line of duty. Shadie asked for suggestions on how the topic could be addressed during the Congress. I have referred his question to ANPR for their further recommendations. This kind of positive response to our requests shows that IRF is increasingly respected by leaders in the international conservation movement. We are making progress.

Request for Proposals

The Executive Committee is accepting proposals from associations that would like to host the 5th World Congress of the International Ranger Federation. The deadline for submitting proposals is June 15, 2002. Please send the proposals to me at rsmith0921@aol.com. The proposal should include a possible site for the congress, evidence of experience in organizing and hosting conferences, the names of the principal members of the organizing committee, and other information that would assist the committee in making a decision. The association to which the congress is awarded should be prepared to come to the Australian Congress next March to make a presentation on the site and plans developed thus far.

Closing Thoughts

In February, I accepted a consulting assignment in the Dominican Republic. The purpose of the trip was to suggest to the funding agency a training program that would be targeted at two groups: the directors of the Dominican Republic's protected areas and the rangers who work within these areas. While it is not unusual for countries to want to train their protected area directors, it is somewhat less common to select park rangers to receive special training. I am encouraged that the Dominican Republic has recognized the training needs of its rangers and decided to do something about it.

Rangers are often at the bottom of the food chain when any training proposals are made. And yet, it is the rangers who must implement the decisions made by agency administrators and policy makers. The world of conservation is rapidly changing. We must adopt new strategies and employ new tactics if we are to successfully protect and preserve the resources contained within our protected areas against new threats. We cannot expect our rangers to understand these new strategies and employ these new techniques if we do not improve their knowledge, skills and abilities and provide them with the necessary equipment so that they can do what we want them to. Let's hope other countries will follow the DR's lead. It is time we closed the gap between what we want our rangers to do and what they know how to do.

Nota Del Presidente

Los Guardaparques Bolivianos se unen a la FIG

Desde la aparición del último boletín he recibido de los guardaparques de Bolivia el formulario de petición de ingreso a la FIG. La Asociación de Guardaparques Nacionales de Estados Unidos respaldó la afiliación, con lo que la asociación boliviana se afilió formalmente a la FIG en diciembre del año pasado. Su nombre es "Asociación Boliviana de Agentes de Conservación". Actualmente tiene 136 miembros. El primer Presidente de esta Asociación es Ana Carola Vaca Salazar , a quien muchos de ustedes conocieron en Sudáfrica. Por favor únanse a mi en extenderle la mas cordial bienvenida a nuestros colegas de Bolivia al pasar a formar parte de la familia internacional de guardaparques . La Asociación puede ser contactada a través del correo electrónico de Carola : v.salazar@infonet.com.bo

La Asociación de Guardaparques Nacionales de EE.UU cumple su 25°- aniversario.

Tuve el placer de asistir a la reunión del 25°- aniversario de la Asociación de Guardaparques Nacionales de EE.UU, hecha en Jackson Hole, Wyoming. El Director Ejecutivo de la FIG, Gordon Miller, asistió y extendió en nombre de la FIG la felicitación a los 300 miembros presentes. También asistieron Barbara Mertins, de la Asociación de Guardaparques de Austria y Elaine Thomas de la Asociación de Guardaparques de Victoria . Elaine hizo una presentación del Cuarto Congreso Mundial de la FIG previsto entre el 21 y el 28 de marzo de 2000, en el Parque Nacional Wilsons Promontory, Australia. Felicitaciones a la Asociación de Guardaparques Nacionales de EE.UU por sus 25 años de servicio a los guardaparques de aquel país.

La Asociación de Guardaparques Argentinos celebró su segundo congreso.

El Vice-Presidente de la FIG, Juan Carlos Gambarotta de Uruguay asistió al segundo Congreso Nacional de la Asociación de Guardaparques Argentinos. Es un hecho remarcable que la AGA fue capaz de llevar adelante este congreso dadas las extremas dificultades económicas por las que está pasando Argentina . Confío en que los colegas de Argentina continuarán dando alta prioridad a la protección y preservación de las áreas protegidas de la nación. Vean el reporte del Vice-Presidente Gambarotta para mas detalles.

Los Guardaparques de Guatemala se reúnen por Primera Vez.

Ronald Mora, nuestro representante de América Central, asistió a la Primera Reunión Nacional de Guardaparques de Guatemala. Entre los temas de la agenda estuvo el posible pedido de afiliación a la FIG.

Posible Cooperación entre UICN y FIG durante el Congreso Mundial de Parques Nacionales.

En febrero de 2002, Gordon Miller, nuestro Director Ejecutivo, se reunió en Gland, Suiza, con representantes del comité organizador del Congreso Mundial de Parques Nacionales de 2003. Había dos puntos que queríamos discutir con los representantes de la UICN. El primero fue nuestra lista de competencias universales aprobada por los guardaparques presentes en nuestro congreso en Kruger en 2000. Enviamos la información a la UICN pidiendo que fueran usados como base para algunas de las actividades relacionadas al Desarrollo de la Capacidad ya planeadas para el Congreso. Peter Shadie, el principal organizador del Congreso, sugirió que contactáramos a Julia Carabias de México, la persona encargada de liderar la sección de Desarrollo de la Capacidad del programa, para que tengamos la responsabilidad de organizar y liderar un taller sobre nuestras competencias. Ya contacté a Carabias para comentarle sobre nuestro interés en que se realice ese taller. Miller y Shadie también discutieron otro tema de la FIG. He recibido una carta del Presidente de la Asociación de Guardaparques Nacionales de EE.UU, pidiendo que la FIG usara su influencia para poner el tema de "Protegiendo a los Protectores" en el programa de Durban 2003. El pedido provino de los miembros de tal Asociación, quienes están cada vez más preocupados por la cantidad de guardaparques que están perdiendo sus vidas mientras se encuentran en servicio. Shadie pidió sugerencias sobre como podría encararse el tema durante el congreso. Yo he enviado su respuesta a la Asociación de Guardaparques de EE.UU para que puedan hacer nuevas sugerencias. Este tipo de respuesta positiva a nuestros pedidos demuestra que la FIG está siendo reconocida en forma creciente por los líderes del movimiento conservacionista internacional. ¡Estamos progresando!

Pedido para Propuestas

El consejo ejecutivo está aceptando propuestas desde aquellas asociaciones que quieran actuar como anfitriones del 5° Congreso Mundial de la Federación Internacional de Guardaparques. El fin de plazo para someter las propuestas es el 15 de Junio 2002. Por favor, sometan las propuestas a mi correo electrónico rsmith0921@aol.com. Cada propuesta debe incluir detalles sobre un potencial sitio para el congreso, evidencia de tener experiencia en la organización y desarrollo de reuniones complejas, los nombres de los miembros principales del comité organizador y cualquier otra información que le ayude al comité en hacer la decisión final. La asociación escogida debe estar presente durante el congreso en Australia en Marzo de 2003 para hacer una presentación sobre el sitio y sus planes.

Pensamientos de Cierre

En Febrero acepté una consultoría en la República Dominicana. El propósito del viaje fue sugerir a la agencia financiadora un programa de entrenamiento que pudiera dirigirse a dos grupos distintos: Los Directores de las áreas protegidas de la República Dominicana y los Guardaparques que trabajan en ellas. Mientras no es inusual que un país quiera capacitar a los directores de las áreas protegidas, es en cierta forma menos común el seleccionar a los guardaparques para que reciban formación especial. Creo que la República Dominicana ha reconocido la necesidad de entrenar a sus Guardaparques y está decidida a hacer algo al respecto.

Los Guardaparques están con frecuencia en lo “mas bajo de la cadena trófica” cuando se hace alguna propuesta de entrenamiento, y sin embargo son los guardaparques quienes deben implementar las decisiones hechas por los administradores y otros decidores. El mundo de la conservación está cambiando rápidamente. Debemos adoptar nuevas estrategias y emplear nuevas tácticas si pretendemos llegar a proteger de las nuevas amenazas a los recursos naturales contenidos dentro de las áreas protegidas. No podemos esperar que nuestros guardaparques entiendan esas nuevas estrategias y empleen esas nuevas técnicas, si no se mejoran sus conocimientos y habilidades y si no se los provee del necesario equipo para que puedan hacer lo que se requiere de ellos. Esperemos que otros países sigan el ejemplo de la república Dominicana. Ya es tiempo de que vayamos cerrando la brecha existente entre lo que queremos que hagan los guardaparques y lo que ellos pueden hacer.

Executive Director’s Report

Membership

Since the start of my contract in early September, I have been involved in a number of activities, including a priority effort to build capacity through encouraging new members. I have been following up on early correspondence with prospective members by mailing information packets. The response to date has been slow, but there have been some follow-up email contacts that have been more encouraging. I still need assistance from members of IRF associations, particularly in making new contacts. Updating membership records is a constant requirement, and I am concerned at the lack of response on occasion from members. I’m attempting to resolve this problem.

Member Association and Related Meetings

I have also traveled a number of meetings of member associations, although costs have limited the number it has been possible to attend. These meetings have proved invaluable in raising the profile of IRF and encouraging more member involvement. Costs of attending meetings are a concern that will have to be addressed in the future - what the priority should be and whether or not other officers should attend. Meetings attended include the following:

- September 3 - 6, 2001: Joint UK Ranger Associations - This was the first joint meeting between the Countryside Management Association (England and Wales), the Scottish Countryside Rangers Association, the Northern Island Countryside Staff Association, and the Rangers Association of Ireland. It was hosted by CMA and held in Myerscough, Lancashire, England. The Austrian Rangers Association was also represented.
- September 13 - 16, 2001: German Rangers Association (Bundesverband Naturwacht) - Met with association members at the 10th anniversary of the Brandenburg Ranger Service and addressed the conference on the behalf of IRF.
- October 3 - 7, 2001: Europarc Conference - Met with the Europarc Council during their meeting in Hohe Tauern National Park in Austria and discussed a draft agreement between IRF and Europarc with Director Eva Pomgratz. The draft will be discussed at a forthcoming council meeting. As usual, the conference provided an opportunity for a great deal of networking on behalf of IRF. Declan Keiley also attended, representing IRF Consultancy.
- October 8 - 9, 2001: Austrian Rangers Association - Met with committee members of the Austrian Ranger Association and gave a presentation on IRF at the first meeting of rangers from all over Austria in Kalkalpen National Park.
- October 29 - November 2, 2001: Association of National Park Rangers (U.S.) - Attended the 25th anniversary Rendezvous of ANPR in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Met with ANPR board members and their international committee, and spent valuable time with IRF President Rick Smith, discussing his priorities for my work.

- November, 2001 - Met with Imre Sarvas and Dr. Geza Temesi, head of the Hungarian Ranger Services, in Budapest, Hungary, at the end of the month. Both were at the Third Congress in Kruger. Dr. Temesi expressed misgivings about a Hungarian Rangers Association and raised the trade union issue as a threat. I assured him that we were not a federation of ranger trade unions and encouraged the development of a ranger association as an asset to him in raising standards in Hungarian protected areas. Rangers in Hungary are to meet this year to discuss the matter further.
- January 5, 2002 - Met again with President Rick Smith, this time in Boise, Idaho, to discuss work issues.
- February 8, 2002: IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas - Met with protected area program head David Sheppard and Peter Shadie to discuss the role of IRF in the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, in 2003. I also discussed progress on the implementation of the agreement between IRF and IUCN and how we could improve networking. While there, I visited World Wildlife Federation headquarters to meet Nigel Dudley and discuss possible collaboration between WWF and the IRF Consultancy.
- March, 2002: California State Park Rangers Association - I met with CSPRA rangers at their annual meeting in San Diego, California.

Other meetings during the period included four sessions with the IRF Consultancy at Braughing in Hertfordshire in England.

World Interpretation Conference

I have been involved in promoting the upcoming world conference on interpretation, which will be held in Elsinore, Denmark, in September. The conference, entitled "Interpretation As A Tool In Promoting Sustainable Development," is being co-sponsored by IRF, the Danish Ministry of the Environment and Heritage Interpretation International. I've been finding prospective case study presenters and discussing sponsorship for delegates from developing nations with representatives from the Danish government. A change of government in Denmark has reduced the possibility of delegate sponsorship, other than those from Eastern or Central Europe. An application is being considered by the government at present.

Projects

I am also working on a number of projects:

- Charitable Status - In order to make fundraising opportunities easier, I am investigating the possibility of obtaining status for IRF as a charitable organization. Meanwhile, Bill Wade in the United States is pursuing incorporation of IRF under U.S. tax rules. In both cases, changes to our statutes will be necessary, following full consultation with members.
- Rules - I am preparing a set of standing rules for IRF in consultation with David Zellor of the Game Rangers Association of Africa. The potential change to charitable status will likely mean that some changes to our rules will be needed.
- Web Site - I was able to negotiate a deal with Karrimor, whereby this U.K. mountain and outdoor equipment manufacturer will support an IRF web site set-up and costs for the next three years. That web site is at long last available! You can find it on the web at <http://www.int-ranger.net>.
- Leaflet - Supplies of the old IRF leaflet are very low. I will be drafting a new one shortly for review and comment. This will give us a chance to update the leaflet.
- Member Packet - Material for an information packet to prospective members is available and being constantly updated. I have revised the IRF statement of purpose, and am now revising the application form.

IRF Office

The National Park Centre in Edale has offered IRF rent free office space. The only cost to the federation is for telephone rental. I plan to move part of my home office to this facility shortly. There's the distinct possibility that IRF will be offered the chance to rent an office for the long terms once the centre is renovated.

Conclusion

Membership growth will continue to be a priority along with a number of issues that were raised at the congress in Kruger. Several of these require further debate. Improving our networking ability both within and outside of IRF will be the focus of my attention. Fundraising is a continuing problem, and I will be looking at options in the future. While the funding of my positions does not continue beyond this month, I will continue to devote the same time to this position.

Gordon Miller
Executive Director

NEWS ABOUT IRF ASSOCIATIONS

Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (Scotland)

Those of you who read "The Thin Green Line" regularly may remember that rangers in Scotland face a period of upheaval, with the advent of two major new pieces of legislation, the "Land Reform and Access to the Countryside Bill" and the creation of new national parks. We have recently discovered that, within the access bill, there is a proposal to change the funding structure of those rangers employed by local governments.

At present, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is the governments environmental agency in Scotland, and as such funds up to 50% of the costs of rangers. This is designed to provide consistency in the provision of ranger staff across Scotland in terms of their work output, training and development, despite all working for different employers. The new bill, as it stands, intends to fund local government rangers directly from the Scottish Executive as part of their general funding to local government. Whilst on paper this would lead to more money for each ranger service, we have serious concerns about what it will lead to on the ground.

First, there's no guarantee that the money will be spent on rangers. It will just be part of the general funding package; from previous experience, other expenditures, such as hospitals, schools, housing, etc., have a stronger call on the money. It may never reach us. The SNH funding is accountable - if we don't spend it on what we say we were going to, we don't get the money. At the least this is what we are trying to get the new package changed to.

Second, this money is related to the provision of public access to the countryside, through footpaths and a general right to roam on uncultivated land. Whilst this is part of the broad remit of most rangers, we do much more than that. There is a whole area of work relating to education, interpretation and conservation management that is at present funded - and, indeed, required - by SNH. Does the new funding package mean we have to drop all this work? If so, who picks it up?

Third, the SNH funding delivers a coherent approach to the provision of ranger staff in Scotland. We all at least partially work for them and are expected to deliver their job plan. The new structure will fragment ranger employers into at least two groups and remove the overseers role played by SNH. We fear that this will lead to a piecemeal approach to the provision of rangers across the country and lead to confusion for the public and landowners as to our role.

At the moment we are trying to raise awareness about this problem in the Scottish Parliament, and either retain the current system or make the new one accountable. We have until parliament's summer recess to change their minds.

Tony Wilson, Fife Ranger Service, Scotland

Guatemalan Ranger Association (Guatemala)

Ronald Mora traveled to Guatemala at President Smith's request to attend the first national meeting of park rangers in that country. (Rangers in Guatemala are known as guardarecursos or resource guards). His activities there were coordinated with Guatemalan officials. What follows is a translation of the report that he submitted:

Activities were previously coordinated with Mr. Victor Hugo Villatoro, who asked Mr. Francisco de León (in charge of The Protected Areas National Commission) to stay with me. On Monday, March 4, we arrived in Guatemala City and met with Francisco León. We traveled to Quetzaltenango, the site of the meeting, and met with José Castillo, chief of the Altiplano Occidental Section.

The meeting opened on Tuesday; attending were the executive secretary of CONAP (this is the agency that manages the protected area system) Helvetas, representatives of the resource guards, and representatives of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. Fifty three rangers attended the meeting. They were elected by the staff of all the protected areas of the country. Participants opened the meeting by discussing the profile of the Guardarrecurso from different points of view: legal, institutional, job assignments.

On Wednesday, I presented the participants with information about the IRF - the organization's history, its goals and objectives, its legal structure, its achievements, projects underdevelopment, how to secure membership and the benefits of membership.

On Thursday, participants established the Association of Guardarrecursores of Guatemala (AGGUA) and elected members to its board:

- President : César A. Flores López - CECON Monterrico
- Vice-president : Ramiro Linares Chacón - FUNDAECO Cerro San Gil
- Secretary: Edmundo de Jesús Pinto - CONAP Petén
- Treasurer: Gaudencio Israel Bitzil - CECON Petén
- Darío López Poob - CONAP Petén
- Fermín Ayala - INAB Lachua
- Miguel A. Vásquez - IDEA Petén
- Isauro Bolaños - CONAP Rio Dulce
- Isabel Najera - Defensores de la Sierra de Minas.

The new association has to be inscribed into the National Registration of Associations and will be supported by the Center of Legal, Environmental and Social Support and by Helvetas.

Participants adopted the following “Declaration of Salcaja 2002:”

The representatives of Guardarecursos of the Guatemalan System of Protected Areas to the Honorable Congress of the Republic of Guatemala, to the Government and to the national and international public opinion say:

Considering that the guardarecurso, among his activities and responsibilities in protected areas, is obligated to provide permanent control and protection, monitor resources, maintain the area’s infrastructure, control wildfires, do research, provide environmental education, provide visitor services, maintain contact with local people, investigate crimes, and work day and night;

Considering that protected areas are vitally important for conserving species and providing tourist attractions that generate income for the country;

Considering that the natural richness of the country depends on the care of protected areas and that the guardarecurso is the primary steward, conserver, and administrator of this heritage;

Considering that the guardarecurso provides beneficial public service that is not widely appreciated or recognized and that his job is made more difficult by problems in the national legal system;

Considering that the guardarecurso works with scant technical, financial, or institutional support from government agencies and that he is not considered a member of the nation’s civil service;

We, the guardarecursos, say:

All of us who work in the Protected Area System of Guatemala are aware of the necessity to preserve and protect the nation’s natural and cultural heritage. In fact, we often sacrifice our lives in our commitment to this protection. We pledge to continue working with the care and responsibility that characterizes us;

We therefore ask:

First: That the guardarecurso be recognized and supported by governmental authorities and that he be included in the nation’s civil service.

Second: That all guardarecursos be included in the nation’s budget, that they receive an adequate salary and that they have job security.

Third: That the guardarecurso be recognized as a public servant who is dedicated specifically to the protection of the natural resources of the country, and that he be given the opportunity to improve his job performance and advance in his career through an effective training program

Fourth: That authorities assist us in legally establish a national Association of Guardarecursos and that we be given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process regarding protected areas and wildlife.

Fifth: That the Ministry of Environment take the necessary steps to provide each area with the necessary equipment.

Sixth: That a national guardarecurso training academy be established to which all would have access.

Seventh: That the honorable Congress of Guatemala legally declare March 6th of every year the Day of the Guardarecurso.

Document published the 7th of March 2002, in the Village of Santa Rita, Municipality of Salcajá, Department of Quetzaltenango, Republic of Guatemala.

Ronald Mora

La actividad se coordinó previamente con el señor Víctor Hugo Villatoro, el cual trasladó la gestión de mi atención al señor Francisco de León, Encargado Nacional de Áreas Silvestres de la Comisión Nacional de Áreas Protegidas. (CONAP).

4 de marzo, llegada a Ciudad Guatemala, reunión con Francisco de León. Traslado a Quetzaltenango y reunión con el Licenciado José Castillo Jefe del Sector Altiplano Occidental.

5 de marzo, Inauguración de la actividad con la participación del Secretario Ejecutivo del CONAP, representantes de Helvetas y el Corredor Biológico Mesoamericano. El encuentro contó con la participación de 53 guardarrecursos representantes, que fueron elegidos por todo el personal de sus áreas silvestres de todo el país. Los temas iniciales de discusión giraron en torno a la figura del guardarrecurso, desde el punto de vista jurídico, institucional y laboral.

6 de marzo, presentación de la FIG: Ronald Mora: Antecedentes, objetivos, constitución, logros, proyectos en desarrollo, beneficios, membresía.

7 de marzo, elección de Junta Directiva de la Asociación de Guardarecursos de Guatemala que se identificara con las siglas AGGUA.

- Presidente: Cesar A. Flores López - CECON Monterrico.
- Vicepresidente: Ramiro Linares Chacón - FUNDAECO Cerro San Gil
- Secretario: Edmundo de Jesús Pinto Arias - CONAP Petén
- Tesorero: Gaudencio Israel Bitzil -CECON Peten
- Vocal I: Darío López Poob - CONAP Peten
- Vocal II: Fermín Ayala -INAB Lachua
- Vocal III: Miguel A. Vásquez - IDEA Peten
- Vocal IV: Isauro A. Bolaños - CONAP Río Dulce
- Vocal V: Isabel Najera - Defensores Sierra de las Minas.

Ahora solo resta la inscripción en el Registro Nacional de Asociaciones, lo cual será apoyado por: El Centro de Apoyo Legal Ambiental y Social. (CALAS) y HELVETAS.

“Pronunciamento, Salcaja 2002”

Los representantes de los guardarrecursos del sistema Guatemalteco de áreas protegidas, al honorable Congreso de la República de Guatemala, organismo ejecutivo y a la opinión pública nacional e internacional, expone:

Considerando: Que el Guardarecurso dentro de sus actividades y responsabilidades está obligado a desempeñar sus actividades dentro del Área Protegida como: control y vigilancia permanente, monitoreos del área, mantenimiento de infraestructuras, control de incendios, investigación, educación ambiental, servicios de turnos diurnos y nocturnos, atención al público, actividades sociales y denuncias.

Considerando: Que las Areas protegidas son de vital importancia para conservar a las especies y que también son un atractivo turístico que generan divisas para el país.

Considerando: Que del cuidado de las Areas Protegidas depende la riqueza natural del país y que el Guardarecursos es el principal responsable de cuidar, conservar y administrar ese patrimonio.

Considerando: Que el Guarda Recurso es un servidor de gran beneficio social al cual en la mayoría de los casos no se aprecia ni se reconoce, y que la vulnerabilidad por la debilidad del Sistema Jurídico Nacional no contribuye a desempeñar mejor su trabajo.

Considerando: Que el Guardarecursos hace su trabajo de manera silenciosa con escaso apoyo técnico ni financiero así como una condición de desamparo y falta de respaldo legal de parte de las entidades del estado, aclarar que la ley del Servicio Civil no lo reconoce.

Nosotros los guardarecursos exponemos:

Que todos los Guardarecursos de las Areas Protegidas del Sistema Guatemalteco de Areas Protegidas de Guatemala estamos conscientes de la necesidad de salvaguardar el patrimonio natural y cultural de la nación. Y que con frecuencia sacrificamos nuestras vidas en el compromiso de proteger este patrimonio.

Nos comprometemos a seguir trabajando con todo esmero y responsabilidad que nos caracteriza. Por tanto solicitamos:

Primero: Que los Guardarecursos tengamos un trato especial y que seamos reconocidos y respaldados por todas las autoridades del país y que seamos incluidos en la ley del Servicio Civil.

Segundo: Que todo Guardarecursos sea presupuestado y que goce de estabilidad laboral con una remuneración salarial adecuada. Y justa de acuerdo a sus atribuciones.

Tercero: Que se reconozca al Guardarecursos como un servidor Público dedicado específicamente a la protección de los recursos naturales del país y se le facilite la oportunidad de superarse por medio de un eficiente programa de capacitación para cumplir mejor con nuestro trabajo.

Cuarto: Que se nos facilite los tramites para formar una Asociación de Guardarecursos a nivel nacional debidamente constituida y legal. Y posteriormente se nos de participación en la toma de decisiones relacionadas a las Areas Protegidas y la Vida Silvestre.

Quinto: Que el Ministerio de Ambiente haga gestiones para dotar de equipo básico a las Areas dependiendo de su situación y necesidad.

Sexto: Que se pueda crear una escuela para formación de Guardarecursos a nivel nacional a la que todos tengan más acceso.

Septimo: Que el honorable Congreso de la República de Guatemala, declare el día Nacional del Guardarecurso el 6 de marzo de cada año y apoyado por las autoridades judiciales.

Dado en la aldea Santa Rita Municipio de Salcajá del Departamento de Quetzaltenango a los 7 días del mes de marzo.

Ronald Mora

UPCOMING IRF AND MEMBER ASSOCIATION EVENTS AND TRAINING

- April 25 - 26, 2002 “New Educational Directions For Countryside Staff,” Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (SCRA) Annual General Meeting and Training Conference, The New Lanark Mill Hotel, New Lanark, Scotland.
- June 12, 2002 “Storytelling Techniques,” SCRA Training Course, Balloch Country Park, Lochlomondside, Scotland.
- July, 2002 “Site Structures and Responsibilities,” SCRA Training Course, Battleby Centre, Perth. Date to be announced.
- July 23 - 24, 2002 “Project Management for Countryside Staff,” SCRA Training Course, Chatelherault Country Park, Hamilton, Scotland.
- July 31, 2002 10th anniversary of the founding of International Ranger Federation, which took place at Loosehill Hall, Peak District National Park, England.
- September 9 - 10, 2002 “Fire Management Planning,” SCRA Training Course, Strathclyde Country Park, Motherwell, Scotland.
- September 9 - 13, 2002 “Interpretation As A Tool In Promoting Sustainable Development,” Elsinore, Denmark. Cosponsored by IRF, the Danish Ministry of the Environment and Heritage Interpretation International. For more information, go to their web site (www.interpretation2002.dk) or email the organization at conf2002@friluftsraadet.dk.
- September 16, 2002 “An Introduction To Freshwater Plants,” SCRA Training Course, Camperdown Country Park, Dundee and Trottick Ponds LNR, Scotland.
- September 17 - 18, 2002 “River Search and Rescue,” SCRA Training Course, Strathclyde Country Park, Motherwell, Scotland.
- October 24, 2002 “Geology and Interpretation,” SCRA Training Course, Grampian, Scotland.
- November 13, 2002 “Developing Business Partnerships,” SCRA Training Course, The Stable Court Yard, Pollock Country Park, Glasgow, Scotland.
- March 21 - 28, 2003 IRF Fourth World Congress, Wilson’s Promontory National Park, Victoria, Australia. Hosted by the Victorian Rangers Association. For more information, go to the Congress web site at <http://www.asnevents.net.au/rangers/>
- September 8 - 18, 2003 World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa. For details, go to the Congress web site at <http://wcpa.iucn.org/wpc/wpc.html>

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