



THE THIN GREEN LINE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

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OFFICERS REPORTS

President's Report

We Are Growing

The IRF international family of ranger associations continues to grow. Recently, the Spanish Ranger Association has announced its intentions to seek affiliation. The decision was approved unanimously in a special session at the association's annual meeting. Chile has also announced its decision to affiliate with IRF. In the Dominican Republic, the rangers have requested that IRF appoint a provisional representative, Luis Fermin, to manage communications with our Executive Council until such time as they can form a national association. Welcome to the ranger associations of Chile and Spain and congratulations to the Dominican Republic rangers.

Problems For Ivory Coast Colleagues

Please read the report from our Vice President, Juan Carlos Gambarotta. Our colleagues in the Ivory Coast are suffering through armed conflict in their country. An organized group that is seeking land is threatening rangers in the Bolivian association.. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who are in such dangerous situations.

2006 IRF Congress

The IRF's affiliated associations selected Loch Lomond, Scotland, as the host site for IRF's 2006 Congress. Loch Lomond was the site of the establishment of the International Ranger Federation. The International Ranger Federation (IRF) was founded in 1992 with a signed agreement between the Countryside Management Association, representing rangers in England and Wales; the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (SCRA); and the U.S. Association of National Park Rangers (ANPR). You can be sure that we will remember this historic event during the Congress. The International Ranger Federation Consultancy, our commercial arm, will host the event, with assistance from CMA and SCRA.

2003 IRF Congress

Please read elsewhere in this issue of the Thin Green Line news from the organizers of our Congress in Australia in the state of Victoria. This event is now only four months in the future. As always, the Congress will be a time to renew communication ties with old friends and to establish new ones with colleagues from around the world. Please make every effort to attend.

Fifth World Congress on National Parks

This important congress occurs every ten years and is scheduled for September 2003 in Durban, South Africa. IRF is working with the organizers of the section on training and capacity building to assure that rangers participate in those sessions regarding ranger training and professional standards. We are invited to a final planning session to be held next February in Costa Rica. For too long, rangers have been observers, not participants, when decisions were made about our profession. We hope that our intervention in this Congress will be the beginning of a new era of participation for us.

Closing Thoughts

When the affiliated associations selected Loch Lomond as the site for our next congress, I began to think about the future of IRF. There is no doubt that we are growing, not only in the number of affiliated associations, but also in the scope of our influence. The fact that we are invited to participate in the Costa Rica planning session regarding the events of the Fifth World Congress on National Parks is an example of this influence. The video of our South African congress has been shown on more than 200 television stations in the US and who knows how many more in other countries. Our participation in ranger training programs in Latin America, Europe and Africa is more proof of our growing influence. Our commercial arm, the International Ranger Federation Consultancy continues to receive requests for technical assistance. This is a very desirable situation.

Nevertheless, I see some problems on the horizon. The most serious is who is going to lead IRF. We received no nominations for the office of president. I am not going to run for re-election. I have been the Vice President or President for eight years. It is time for someone else to assume leadership responsibilities. We also did not receive any nominations for two of our continental representatives. Look, friends, we cannot operate an influential, important organization unless there are people willing to assume leadership positions and help our executive director, Gordon Miller, manage the Federation.

We are going to discuss and try to resolve this problem and others in Australia next March. In the meantime, each affiliated association ought to examine the level of its participation in the Federation and ask, "What have we done so that the IRF can continue being an organization of which we can be proud and in which we can have confidence that it will represent us adequately?"

It has been the greatest honor of my career to be your President. As I have said before, I consider all of you to be the real heroes of world conservation. I admire what you do and respect the sacrifices you make to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources of the world.

Rick Smith
President, IRF

Nota Del Presidente

Continuamos Creciendo

La familia internacional de asociaciones de guardaparques de la FIG sigue creciendo. Recientemente, la asociación de guardaparques españoles anunció su intención de buscar afiliación. La decisión fue aprobada en forma unánime en una sesión extraordinaria de la asociación. Los guardaparques de Chile también han anunciado su decisión de afiliarse. En la República Dominicana, los guardaparques han pedido que asignemos a Luis Fermin como su representante provisional para mantener comunicaciones con el consejo ejecutivo hasta que puedan organizarse en una asociación nacional. Bienvenidos a los guardaparques chilenos y españoles y felicitaciones a los guardaparques de la República Dominicana.

Problemas Para Algunos De Nuestros Colegas

Favor de leer el informe de nuestro Vicepresidente, Juan Carlos Gambarotta. Nuestros colegas en la Costa de Marfil están sufriendo de un conflicto armado en su país. Un grupo organizado que está buscando tierra está amenazando a los guardaparques de nuestra asociación afiliada en Bolivia. Nuestros pensamientos y rezas están con ellos que se encuentran en situaciones peligrosas.

El Congreso de 2006

Las asociaciones afiliadas de la FIG han seleccionado Loch Lomond, Escocia como el sitio anfitrión para nuestro próximo congreso en 2006. Loch Lomond es el sitio en donde se estableció la Federación. La Federación fue fundada en 1992 con un acuerdo firmado entre el Countryside Management Association (CMA), representado a los guardaparques de Inglaterra y Gales; the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (SCRA) o los guardaparques de Escocia; y the U.S. Association of National Park Rangers (ANPR) o los guardaparques de los EE.UU. Asegúrense que vamos a celebrar este evento histórico durante el Congreso. El International Ranger Federation Consultancy, nuestra sección comercial, se organizará al congreso, con el apoyo de CMA y SCRA.

Congreso de 2003

Por favor, lean en otra sección de la Línea Fina Verde las últimas noticias de los organizadores de nuestro congreso en el estado de Victoria, Australia. Hay solo 4 meses antes de este evento. Como siempre, el Congreso nos dará la oportunidad de reestablecer enlaces con viejos amigos y establecer nuevos con colegas de todo el mundo. Hagan lo posible para asistir, por favor.

El Quinto Congreso Mundial sobre Parques Nacionales

Se realiza este importante congreso cada diez años y el próximo se realizará en setiembre 2003 en Durban, Sudáfrica. La FIG está trabajando con los organizadores de la sección sobre capacitación y entrenamiento para asegurar que los guardaparque participamos en las sesiones relacionadas con entrenamiento de guardaparques y estándares profesionales. Estamos invitados a participar en la última sesión de planificación en febrero en Costa Rica. Por demasiado tiempo, los guardaparques han sido observadores, no participantes, cuando decisiones sobre nuestra profesión han sido hechas. Esperamos que nuestra intervención en este evento vaya a marcar el comienzo de una nueva época de participación para nosotros.

Pensamientos De Cerre

Cuando ustedes hicieron la decisión de escoger a Loch Lomond como el sitio del próximo congreso, me ponía a pensar sobre el futuro de la FIG. No hay duda que estamos creciendo, no solo en el número de asociaciones afiliadas, sino también en el rango de nuestra influencia. El hecho de ser invitado a participar en la planificación en Costa Rica sobre los eventos del Quinto Congreso Mundial sobre Parques Nacionales es un ejemplo de esta influencia. El video de los eventos de nuestro congreso en Sudáfrica ha sido montado en más de 200 emisoras de televisión aquí en los EE.UU y no se cuantas veces en otros lugares. Nuestra participación en programas de capacitación en América Latina, Europa, y África representa una prueba más de la creciente influencia de nuestra organización. Nuestra sección comercial, the International Ranger Federation Consultancy, continua recibiendo pedidos para asistencia técnica. Es una situación muy deseable.

Sin embargo, veo algunos problemas en el futuro. El más serio es el problema de ¿quiénes van a liderar la FIG? Recibimos de las asociaciones afiliadas ninguna nominación para la oficina de presidente. No me voy a presentar como candidato otra vez. He sido el Vicepresidente o el Presidente por 8 años. Es tiempo para que otra persona asuma la responsabilidad de ejercer las potestades de la oficina. Además, no había candidatos postulados como representantes de dos continentes. Amigos, no podemos operar como una organización de influencia e importancia sin que haya personas dispuestas a asumir posiciones en la jerarquía de la FIG y ayudar a nuestro director ejecutivo, Gordon Miller, en el manejo de la Federación.

Vamos a discutir y tratar de resolver este problema y otros en Australia en marzo del año que entra. Mientras tanto, cada asociación debe examinar el nivel de su participación en el manejo de la FIG y preguntarse, ¿Qué contribución hemos hecho para que la FIG siga siendo una organización en la cual podemos tener orgullo y en la cual podemos tener confianza que nos representará en una forma adecuada?

Para mí, ha sido el honor más importante de mi carrera ser su Presidente. Como lo he dicho antes, ustedes son los verdaderos héroes de la conservación internacional. Admiro lo que hace y respeto los sacrificios que hacen para proteger y preservar los recursos naturales y culturales del mundo.

Rick Smith
Presidente, FIG

Reporte del Vicepresidente

El mundo es ancho y muchas cosas diferentes están pasando en este momento.

Mientras algunos de nosotros continuamos trabajando normalmente, nuestros colegas de Costa de Marfil están teniendo problemas muy grandes.

Todo el mundo sufre con la guerra y los guardaparques, que se supone trabajan para el gobierno, pueden llegar a verlo caer o ver como el gobierno es amenazado, atacado y debilitado. Hubo el mismo problema en la República Democrática del Congo y podría seguir ahora, según nos llegan noticias a veces.

También sabemos que en Bolivia, "Los sin tierra" han destruido instalaciones y amenazado a los guardaparques del Parque nacional Carrasco.

La violencia nos rodea y ha crecido a un ritmo alarmante en los EE.UU.

¿Qué está pasando?

Frecuentemente pienso sobre eso y luego me pregunto ¿estamos errados?

No, no creo que sea errado intentar conservar lo mas posible a la riqueza biológica y cultural del pasado. Por eso debemos continuar.

Por otro lado, seguimos creciendo, al menos en términos de número de países afiliados. La República Dominicana, un país con un hermoso y completo sistema de áreas protegidas ya tiene su representante individual de la federación.

También Chile, un país que ya ha obtenido un reconocimiento por tener el mejor sistema de áreas protegidas de América Latina y España han pedido afiliación.

Estos tres nuevos países son muy bienvenidos.

Ahora, no me gustaría terminar esta nota sin pedirles un favor.

La federación no representará nada si sus miembros no votan, se expresan y participan. Manténganse en contacto.

Aquellos de ustedes que están trabajando en condiciones normales por favor piensen en sus colegas que están teniendo grandes problemas.

Aquellos que la están pasando mal piensen que estamos con ustedes.

Manténganse en contacto.

Hasta pronto.

Juan Carlos Gambarotta
Vicepresidente, FIG

Vice President's Report

The world is wide, and many different things are happening right now.

While some of us continue to work normally, our colleagues in Ivory Coast are facing very big problems.

During war everybody suffers, and rangers who are supposed to work for the government may see how that government is attacked and weakened.

We saw the same problem in The Democratic Republic of Congo very recently, where some problems continue.

We have friends in these countries, we met them at our last World Congress in Kruger National Park, so that "news" affect us ~~more~~ strongly now.

We also know that in Bolivia, some rural people whom is in search of land has destroyed some infrastructure and menaced rangers in Carrasco National Park.

Violence is surrounding us , and has grown at an alarming rate in the USA.

What is happening?

I frequently think of that. Then I say. Are we wrong?

No, I do not think its wrong to try to save as much natural and cultural richness as we can. So, we must continue.

On the other hand, we continue to grow , at least in number of countries.

The Dominican Republic, a country with a beautiful and complete system of protected areas, has its national representative now. Chile, a country that already received an award for having the best system of protected areas in Latin America, is asking for affiliation. So is Spain. These three countries are very welcome.

Now, I do not want to end this short note without asking for a favor.

The Federation will mean nothing if members are not active. Vote, express what you feel , keep in touch.

Those of you who are working in normal conditions enjoy your work, and think of your colleagues in trouble. Those of you who are suffering think that we are with you.

Keep in touch.

Juan Carlos Gambarotta
Vice President, IRF

Executive Director's Report

Associations

I have been involved with many existing, newly formed and forming ranger associations over the past few months:

- Spain and Chile - As noted above, membership applications from these associations are expected shortly.
- Slovenia - During a holiday in Slovenia in September, I was able to meet with Martin Solar (IRF representative). Martin informed me that a meeting to discuss the formation of an association should take place in the next few months. I will be invited to attend in order to assist with the process.
- Italy - Although the planned Ranger Festival in Rome was cancelled, I decided to take the opportunity of meeting members of one of our newest members. I visited rangers in a number of regional parks in and around Rome and was impressed by their dedication and particularly their community involvement. I am sure that the association has a lot to offer the Federation.
- Norway - I have recently returned from an historic meeting of all rangers in Norway (around 120). I was invited by the national agency and the Norwegian Rangers Association interim committee to address the meeting of rangers from three agencies. The result of the meeting was the reconstitution of the association to reflect all agencies ranger staff. I met with the head of the national agency and was delighted with the support that the agency is giving the fledgling association. Rangers in Norway often cover very large areas and may be the only staff person in an entire park, so their link to the wider international community of rangers is particularly important
- Portugal - I plan to attend a meeting of the Portuguese Rangers Association (APGVN) at the end of January.
- Other Countries - I am in dialogue with persons in Thailand and Malaysia with a view to encouraging new associations. I also hope to revive previous contacts with the Philippines and Indonesia.

Europarc (European Federation of National and Nature Parks)

I attended the annual conference of Europarc in Wales in October and on behalf of President Rick Smith, and signed a memorandum of understanding between our two organizations. This MOU will formalize the cooperation that already exists between IRF and Europarc and will ensure that a voice for rangers will continue in Europarc.

New Austrian National Park

I was invited to attend the official opening of the newly created Geseuse National Park in the Austrian Alps. I met the Austrian Minister of Environment and took the opportunity of stressing the importance of rangers in their parks. I also met with Barbara Mertin and other rangers and discussed progress in the Austrian Rangers Association.

Finances

Treasurer Colin Dilcock and I met recently to discuss and prepare a financial plan for the Federation. This will be discussed by the International Executive Committee in Australia. Meanwhile, I continue to seek funding both for the Federation and for delegates to the Fourth World Congress in Australia. I am discussing with UNESCO World Heritage and IUCN/WCPA the possibilities for funding some delegates from World Heritage Sites to Victoria. Members are advised to ensure registration as soon as possible, as the number of early bookings has exceeded previous congresses at this stage. Don't be disappointed!

World Parks Congress

I am in discussions with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas regarding the size and composition of the IRF delegation to this important event (see the President's notes above). I will be in touch with member associations shortly regarding nominations.

Website

Since the website came online in January, we have had over 21,000 hits - an average of over 500 per week. I will be updating the site in the next few weeks, so I need to be notified soon of any changes to email addresses, web sites and so forth. I am also planning to add links to RAMSAR (www.ramsar.org) and CITES (www.cites.org) on our website. In the interim, check these sites out as they have very useful information. Next year will be the International Day of Freshwater and RAMSAR has produced materials relating to World Wetlands Day on February 2, 2003 - see their site for details. One last note: Please remember that Karrimor, the website sponsor, offers 25% discounts on their equipment to our members.

Gordon Miller
Executive Director, IRF

IRF Consultancy (IRFC) Report

Work for the Countryside Council for Wales towards a 'Concordat for Countryside Management Services,' which places a special emphasis on rangers and wardens, has taken up most of the time of IRFC working directors Declan Keiley and Mike Marshall over the last eight weeks.

We have been contacting rangers and ranger employers to establish a set of core competencies that may provide the basis for setting standards for the period up to 2010. Examples of our survey forms and more information about the project [including a discussion board if you would like to comment] are on our web site at www.ranger-irfc.com - your advice and participation will always be welcome. Focus group meetings with rangers and other involved groups have been held at several venues and are proving to be a huge help in collecting and collating information. This contract has employed six 'associates' from our database of experienced colleagues.

Elsewhere, we look forward to new contracts in Europe and the Americas, working in partnership with Europarc Federation and Fauna and Flora International. We worked with Europarc in 2002 on the Junior Ranger Project, which has since been running in Germany, Slovenia, Poland and the Czech Republic. It's hoped that this program will operate again in 2003 and be extended to more countries. Consideration is also taking place for a possible presentation by Europarc and IRFC at the World Parks Conference in Durban in September 2003. Junior Ranger programs offer a very cost-effective way of introducing young people to the profession and of encouraging care and concern for our world environment.

IRFC Ltd will be organizing IRF's Fifth World Congress in Scotland in 2006 with assistance from Scottish Countryside Rangers Association [SCRA] and England's Countryside Management Association [CMA]. I will be attending preliminary meetings with SCRA, Scottish Natural Heritage and personnel from the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park in early December to establish early ideas and to begin to prepare information for presentation at the World Congress in Australia.

IRFC Ltd is also assisting CMA with the preparation, organization and running of its 2003 annual study conference.

The TOPAS [Training of Protected Area Staff] project is now entering its final year of European funding. The partner meeting in Germany in July looked at ways of continuing funding after July 2003. The next meeting in Italy in January will need to set some serious targets for funding. For more information, see www.topas.mtnforum.org.

IRFC needs your help - to circulate information about our activities, our skills, our expertise as rangers, to put us in contact with potential clients, to make us aware of potential contracts. IRFC Ltd is wholly owned by IRF, works entirely for the benefit of IRF and therefore for rangers worldwide.

Check us out, help us, contact us, make the working directors work by providing any thoughts, ideas, information that will take the development of your business forward in the very competitive world of environmental contract tendering.

[Further information about IRFC Ltd is on our web site (www.ranger-irfc.com) or can be obtained from Mike Marshall, who can be reached at marshall.i.r.f@btinternet.com]

Mike Marshall
IRFC Ltd.

IRF NEWS AND ACTIONS

IRF Elections

Unfortunately the response to the elections for both officers and the 2006 Congress was very poor. Only three votes had been received for the site of the next congress by the deadline. By two votes to one, Scotland was selected as the venue for the 2006 IRF World Congress. Since the deadline, several more votes have come in – all of which have been for Scotland.

With regard to the IRF elections, it is fair to say that the recent level of activity in South America has paid dividends, and an election for the post of South American representative is currently underway.

The following list shows the positions deemed elected, and also those which have yet to be filled.

Officers

President	No nomination
Vice President	Juan Carlos Gambarrotta (Uruguay)
Treasurer	Colin Dilcock (England)
Secretary	No nomination

Continental Representatives

North America	No nomination
Central America	No nomination
South America	Marcelo Segalerba (Uruguay) Marcelo Ochoa (Argentina)
Europe	Francisco Jose Semedo Correria (Portugal)
Africa	No nomination
Australia	No nomination

It is sad for the future of IRF that so few votes/nominations were cast. This is an organization for rangers, run by rangers. It needs the commitment and enthusiasm of its members to be successful in the future. We are entering a new phase in the development of IRF with the employment of Gordon Miller as executive director. It will be an exiting time for the IRF, with many new initiatives planned.

IRF has come a long way in a few years due to the hard work and dedication of a few volunteers. Therefore, I would urge anyone interested in any of the vacant posts above to contact me as soon as possible at clarks@waitrose.com

This is your chance to have your say in the role of rangers and countryside staff in the future. Please take the chance to help make things happen.

Sue Clark
Secretary, IRF

Study on Violence Against Rangers

The International Ranger Federation is very concerned about violence against rangers, which sometimes ends in injuries or death. While we have heard about a number of attacks on rangers from around the world, we believe that there are many others that we have not heard about.

Vice President Juan Carlos Gambarotta is collecting data on violence against rangers. He is interested only in the following forms:

- Physical violence
- Vandalism to a rangers' home
- Vandalism to equipment used by rangers in performance of their duties

Please send detailed information on all such cases that have happened in the past five years. The data will be presented at the IRF World Congress in Australia next year. All the people who have sent in data will be credited unless they want to remain anonymous. Your cooperation will help us show the world the existence of this problem and help stop it.

Send reports to: Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Castillos, 27.200, Uruguay, or email him at jgambaro@adinet.com.uy.

Juan Carlos Gambarotta
Vice President, IRF

La Federacion Internacional de Guardaparques esta preocupada por los actos de violencia que con frecuencia deben afrontar los guardaparques y que suele terminar con sus vidas. Si bien creemos que esto sucede en muchas partes, necesitamos contar con datos precisos, pues ello ayudara a denunciar el problema ante el mundo.

Es por ello que les pido que me envíen todos los datos, lo mas detallados posible, de que tengan conocimiento sucedidos en los ultimos cinco anos.

Para evitar confusiones solamente se tomara en cuenta los casos de

- violencia fisica contra el guardaparque
- atentado contra su vivienda y
- vandalismo contra los elementos que usa para desarrollar su trabajo.

Debe considerarse que a veces la violencia podra haber sido hecha durante las horas de descanso del guardaparque. Los datos seran utilizados durante nuestro proximo Congreso Mundial en Australia y serviran para enviarlos al proximo Congreso Mundial de Parques Nacionales. El nombre de los colaboradores aparecera en los resultados, a menos que no fuera deseado. Muchas gracias.

Su aporte podra servir para ayudar a paliar este grave problema.

Juan Carlos Gambarotta
Vicepresidente, FIG
jgambaro@adinet.com.uy

Fourth World Congress Update

Since all the current information about the congress is posted on the web, please go to the web page for a current update. The web site address is www.irf4thcongress.conf.au.

Andrew Nixon
Fourth World Congress Organizer

NEWS ABOUT IRF ASSOCIATIONS

Uruguay

Uruguay held its third national protected areas congress at the Academy of Sciences of the National University from November 19 to 22. It was organized by Vida Silvestre and endorsed by IRF, UNESCO and the Secretary of the Environment.

Thanks to the support of UNESCO, Stanley Arguedas Mora from the Latin American College of Protected Areas of Costa Rica could attend and give two very relevant presentations. UNESCO also funded the attendance of two people from Aves Argentinas, the most important ornithological NGO in that country. They talked about ways to help manage private protected areas of importance for birds. The presence of these specialists was welcomed by all attendees.

Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Asociacion De Guardaparques y Guias de Naturaleza

Argentina

Finalmente, lo logramos!!!, concretamos el 3er. Congreso Nacional, en el marco de una profunda crisis política, institucional y económica del país, bajo el lema Financiamiento = Inactividad, Mito o Verdad? Nos reunimos cerca de 100 Agentes de Conservación, de nuestro país, del vecino Uruguay y de Australia!

Deseamos destacar el esfuerzo de los colegas que llegaron hasta San Martín de los Andes, socios y no socios, y decirles a todos aquellos que deseaban participar pero no lo lograron (los numerosos correos dan testimonio de su frustración), que comiencen a prepararse para el año que viene.

Por cierto, es la mitad de los participantes a los congresos anteriores, pero, tiene menos mérito? Creemos que no.

Fortalecimos vínculos y concretamos: cursos; conferencias y talleres; el reencuentro de amigos y compañeros de promoción de la Escuela de Guardaparques; otros se conocieron en este evento; guardas y técnicos expusieron sus trabajos a los colegas, innumerables intercambios informales de experiencias, y también diversión.

No existe otro ámbito donde nos reunamos guardas de la APN, inspectores de flora y fauna, guardas provinciales, técnicos, estudiantes, brigadistas, administrativos y personal de servicio de los organismos que administran áreas naturales protegidas.

Pero no es sólo el ámbito, es el espacio donde nos reconocemos como Agentes de Conservación sin distinción, sin pseudojerarquías, pues todos somos importantes en nuestro desempeño diario.

Los socios nos reunimos en la Asamblea Anual, y tomamos decisiones que hacen al futuro de la Asociación, en ningún momento se planteó bajar los brazos, en cuatro años hemos crecido y nos hemos afianzado, nos espera el futuro...

We finally did it! More than 100 conservation personnel, including people from Uruguay and Australia, participated in the Third National Congress of the Argentine Ranger Association in the midst of a profound political, institutional and economic crisis in Argentina. The theme of the congress was "Lack of Financing Equals Inactivity: Truth or Myth?"

For all those who could not make the trip to San Martín de los Andes (and your letters to us showed your frustration), we say, start to get ready for next year's congress.

Due to the crisis, there were fewer than half the participants that we have had in previous congresses, but this did not subtract from the usefulness of this one. We strengthened professional ties, saw old friends, listened to speeches and participated in workshops, exchanged technical information and experiences, and had fun.

No other environment exists in which park rangers of APN (Argentina's managing agency) flora and fauna inspectors, technicians, students, firefighters, administrators and others can get together, without artificial hierarchies, and discuss our problems and recognize that the daily work we do is important.

The members of AGA met in our annual meeting and we made decisions regarding the future of the association. Never once did we discuss reducing our efforts. In four years, the association has grown and we have become more mature as an organization. The future awaits us.

Salvador Vellido, Asociacion de Guardaparques Argentinos

Norway

After three years as an interim organization, the Norwegian Ranger Association (Forum for Norsk Naturoppsyn - FNN) was finally established on November 9.

In cooperation with the three main agencies employing rangers in Norway, there was a historic three-day meeting of most of the professional rangers at Hell, a small place near Trondheim. Gordon Miller joined us for the last two days and gave an inspiring talk about international perspectives.

There are not a large number of professional rangers in Norway, but most of us (about 100 rangers) were present, and most joined FNN. A board of six members was elected - two from each of the main agencies.

The main activities of the association at the moment is to recruit more members (our colleagues not present at Hell), raising money, and getting a regular newsletter published. We are also discussing possible training courses in cooperation with our agencies. FNN is presently also trying to finance the participation of three delegates to the congress in Australia.

Group discussions on important principles at the Hell meeting was condensed down to a joint declaration from the rangers present: "The Hell Declaration." To avoid any unfortunate misunderstandings, we actually changed the English title to: "The Trondheim Declaration of 9th November 2002." The text follows:

We, the representatives of the professional Norwegian rangers, hereby declare our joint endorsement of the following principles:

- Nature is the very foundation for human life. Conservation of habitats and of diversity of species preserves nature for our descendants and creates areas of reference for research and development.
- Rangers have an important role in stimulation and guidance concerning outdoor activities, hunting and fishing.
- The simple outdoor life leads to increased awareness of the need for conservation of the environment. Outdoor life sustains and promotes health and culture. Children and adolescents are a specially important target for this work.

- The greatest threats to these valuable qualities are the increase in motorized outdoor activity and the fragmentation of the natural environment.
- Rangers have an important role in generating understanding and interest in these values, by recording, documenting, controlling and informing.
- In order to strengthen the work of Norwegian rangers it is necessary to have binding cooperative agreements, central and regional committees, meetings, mutual upgrading of competence, strengthening in the teaching of the duties of rangers, and, in the long term, - mutual promotion of our profession.
- Rangers form an important connecting link between local knowledge, research and administration.
- The work of rangers will meet new challenges such as exploitation and commercial use of national parks and protected areas. This will necessitate greater focus on inspection, management, regulation, guidance and information. This leads to the need for greater physical presence of rangers and for increased resources.

Carl Norberg, Chairman, Norwegian Ranger Association

Scotland

We are still working to influence the outcome of the new access legislation, currently going through our parliament. The new laws should be on the statute books sometime next summer/autumn. At present, despite assurances that rangers will be fundamental to the working of this legislation, we have no guarantees of new funding or personnel. In fact several services are currently losing staff and the current trend is to get ready for the new legislation by appointing other staff instead of rangers. We still have a lot of work to do if we are to get this right.

The second national park in Scotland has had its draft boundary set by the government to universal disapproval by conservation groups (including us). The park has had its boundaries determined by politics rather than ecology. Several of the most important areas are split in two by the southern boundary to make use of the existing county borders. We are part of several consortiums currently trying to change this.

Our next conference is in April, check our website for details.

I have moved. If you need to contact me, here's the relevant information: Craigtoun Park, St Andrews, Fife, Scotland, KY16 8NX; phone: 01334-473047, fax: 478647.

Tony Wilson, Chairperson, SCRA

South Africa/Africa

The GRAA, like so many other associations, has reached a very critical point in its existence - and that is the "now or never" phase. The association has been very active in the last couple of years and positioned itself as a role player in the conservation field. However, due to transformation processes in South Africa beyond the control of the GRAA, many of the active supporting members have had to either face the private sector and create a new life, be redeployed to other posts, or take up early retirement. This has brought about more strain on the few willing donkeys left in the GRAA Central Committee; if the Central Committee cannot pull a rabbit out of its hat, it will come to grinding halt. This concern will be very high on the GRAA list of priorities for 2003. Other actions:

- African Protected Area Initiative (APAI) - APAI is conceived as an Africa-wide and African led process aimed at addressing fundamental protected areas issues in Africa, including that of their very future. The program and activities of this initiative are aimed at enhancing the conservation of biodiversity and management of protected area systems. The Initiative was borne out of a meeting convened by IUCN in May 2000 as a side event to UNEP's Governing Council. Subsequently, two other consultations were held in Amman as side events to IUCN's World Conservation Congress II in October 2000. The Amman meetings resolved that a meeting of PA experts be convened as soon as funds became available to develop and chart the way forward for APAI. Through IUCN-EARO's efforts, some limited funds were raised to enable the meeting to take place in Nairobi, Kenya on July 22 - 24, 2002. Owing to the limited funding and the need for a manageable number of participants, only a small number of about 40 participants were invited. Arrie Schreiber was invited to attend this workshop in his capacity as chairperson of the GRAA. The GRAA is also a member of the IUCN. The workshop consisted of a series of core topics that involved and engaged all participants and promoted interaction among participants. After each presentation, the facilitator directed the panel discussions around important issues raised in the presentation. All workshop objectives were reached. Irrespective of the support structure, APAI will only work if it is African led, effectively responding to key issues, as reflected through a clear and relevant work plan, and has a buy in and support from key constituents. It was thoroughly realized that without adequate funding mechanisms, APAI will not work.
- Visit to Kenya Wildlife Services - During the GRAA annual general meeting, held at Golden Gate National Park in South Africa in February 2002, the GRAA representative in Kenya, Senior Warden Daniel Onsembe from Aberdare National Park, invited the GRAACC to visit Kenya and hold talks with members from the KWS higher echelons in order to speed up the establishment of a National Association in Kenya according to the memorandum of continental understanding that was agreed upon at the Third IRF Congress, hosted by the GRAA in Berg-en-dal Rest Camp in Kruger National Park in South Africa. Attendance at the APAI workshop provided the opportunity for such a meeting and subsequent to the APAI workshop the director of KWS, Mr. Joseph Kioko, was visited at their headquarters in Nairobi National Park on the 25 July 2002. The chairperson of the GRAA received a very positive response from the director, who was committed to the establishment of their association. He explained that they have actually elected a committee and that it was only a question of time. Their constitution was accepted and they were only waiting for their board for final approval. However, Kenya is about to enter into general elections and, being uniformed personnel, it might easily be mistaken for something else, if not carefully handled. It is the view of the director that they would rather slow the process down slightly until after the elections, but he was confident that their association would be in place soon, or at least before the end of the year. Following up on this meeting, Daniel introduced Arrie to most of the conservation staff in Nairobi National Park, where informal discussions were held in this regard. The following morning, a similar meeting was held at Aberdare National Park headquarters. All staff showed a great interest in the GRAA and many questions were asked and hopefully answered to everybody's satisfaction. These meetings were necessary and were felt to be highly successful.
- Game Rangers Specialist Services - In an effort to boost the capacity of the GRAA by providing a professional service with profits supporting GRAA core business, a commercial company, Game Rangers Specialist Services (GRSS) has been established and registered in South Africa as a proprietary limited company (1998/014493/07) liable for tax. All profits accrued from the activities of the GRSS are to be channeled to the Game Rangers Association of Africa for conservation projects in Africa. GRSS managed to negotiate a deal with the Ghana Wildlife Division to conduct a training needs assessment and a GRSS representative left for Ghana on November 15 for this purpose. The training will be aimed at field rangers and at developing training capacity in Ghana in this regard.

- Game Rangers Africa Benelux (GRAB) - A few years ago, the GRAA, in conjunction with an international auditing company, succeeded in establishing GRAB, which is a non-profit company in the Netherlands with the objective of raising funds for GRAA conservation projects. Arrie Schreiber has been invited to attend black tie dinner in Amsterdam as part of the fundraising. Now, apart from the fact that it will be VERY cold, coming from a sunny African summer, can you imagine an African ranger in a tuxedo?
- GRAA Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2003 - This event will take place in the first week in February 2003 and will be held in the Swadini Resort in the Eastern Escarpment of the Drakensberg Range in South Africa. Swadini is nestled in the third largest canyon in the world. The theme of the AGM will be "Wilderness Management in South Africa."

Arrie Schreiber, GRAA

Italy

IRF Executive Director Gordon Miller visited some parks in the Lazio Region in November. Sixty-six new park rangers are going to be assumed by the regional parks.

Guido Baldi, President, AIGAP

UPCOMING IRF AND MEMBER EVENTS AND TRAINING

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| 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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