



THE THIN GREEN LINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

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OFFICERS REPORTS

President's Report

I attended the 7th Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) held in the Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from February 9 – 20, 2004.

With the successes of the World Parks Congress (WPC), it is important that the IRF message be taken to all international forums. The CBD is particularly important in that, unlike the outcomes of WPC, signatory governments are bound by the articles of the convention.

Unfortunately, only parties (governments) to the CBD are allowed to participate in a COP, while non-governmental organizations (NGO's) such as the IRF are only allowed as observers. However, I went with total faith that we could make a difference. The WPC was an excellent lead up to the CBD, as I could rely on the friendships forged at WPC, both amongst politicians and other NGO's.

The CBD is the first global agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and is a binding agreement developed and first signed at the 1992 Rio summit. The convention has three stated objectives, which are;

- the conservation of biological diversity,
- the sustainable use of its components and
- the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding.

Further, the CBD is to meet the target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, as agreed to by governments at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). A COP is held every second year and there are currently 188 signatory nations to the convention (the USA being the most notable fugitive from the CBD).

All my notes and papers which I posted to myself from Malaysia have as yet not arrived, so I present my thoughts on CBD from memory.

Other NGO's were very well prepared, having following CBD proceedings since its beginning in 1992. At the 9th Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 9) meeting held in Montreal last November, eight of the leading international NGO's (BirdLife International, Conservation International, Fauna and Flora International, Greenpeace, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society, WWF and the World Resources Institute) formed a consortium to lend their support to the efforts of governments, in-country NGO's and local communities to meet the target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. Seven of these NGOs issued a joint commitment of resources, technical and other support to help governments implement key actions on protected areas.

The keynote address in the opening plenary was given by Dr David Suzuki (David Suzuki Foundation), in which he pointed out that the CBD is more about people than animals, as it is the very products of biodiversity – such as air, water, fire and soil – that humans need for survival.

Most delegations to the CBD had more than ten people – Australia had 11, the UK 22, South Africa 26, and Greenpeace 51 (the largest delegation). Although not a signatory and only an observer, the USA had a delegation of 28. The IRF had one delegate, me.

As there were 24 issues on the agenda, I chose to focus my one-man efforts on the protected area issues (Articles 8a – 8e), which were identified as a priority for the COP. IRF commitment to and concern with protected areas is closely aligned to those of the other major NGO's, and my IRF specific contribution was in the form of two interventions, namely; “Protecting the Protector and Capacity Building” and the concept of a “Green Helmet Brigade”.

The COP was split into two working groups and the agenda split between these in order to better move through the very full agenda. Although only an observer, during Working Group I's first plenary, I was recognized by the chair and was able to make an intervention on behalf of the IRF. Although this was not taken up in the text of the CBD as I was not a “party,” I received a lot of positive comments and support from many delegates as well as NGO observers. A lot of time was also spent in “working the corridors” and a lot of strong and kind support was received from many quarters, but particularly from Fauna & Flora International and UNESCO World Heritage Centre, who signed into the IRF interventions put to the COP.

The protected area issue often turned into heated debate, with more rather than less bracketed text (text on which consensus could not be reached) each day. With a set time-frame for delivery of a consensus text to the plenary for adoption, this often meant late night, and even through the night, work.

It was at 3:30 a.m. one such morning that I was recognized by the chair and able to put the IRF intervention to the parties for inclusion in the text on protected areas. The full text of that intervention appears at the end of this newsletter as an attachment.

After a number of minor amendments, the following IRF contribution was taken up under Goal 1.4 (1.4.7) in the text and approved and adopted by the Plenary at 16:32 on 18 February 2004:

“Ensure that protected areas are effectively managed or supervised through staff that are well-trained and skilled, properly and appropriately equipped, and supported, to carry out their fundamental role in the management and conservation of protected areas.”

Despite all the other gains, this achievement alone made it all worthwhile.

The concept of a “Green Helmet Brigade” was not taken up in the text, but many parties met with me subsequently and expressed support for the idea. With knowledge gained at COP7 and improved lobbying, this concept should pass into the CBD text at the next COP. The IRF will be at SBSTTA10 to further push this issue, and I will be talking to Tony Sisto and Tim Snow on the way forward with this issue.

I was also able to contribute in other small ways towards the text, especially in the contact group sessions

Although COP7 was a failure with regards the protection of marine biodiversity, in general, the COP7 CBD was a success in that parties (governments) to the CBD have signed into creating comprehensive, ecologically-representative and effectively managed national and regional systems of protected terrestrial areas by 2010 and of protected marine areas by 2012. For the first time parties have agreed to concrete and specific targets, timetables and activities to achieve this ambitious goal. To achieve this goal, the delegates agreed to the following commitments:

- By 2006, establish national-level, measurable and time-bound targets for protected areas.
- By 2008, secure sufficient financial resources to meet the costs to effectively implement and manage national and regional systems of protected areas.
- By 2010, put in place a comprehensive system for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on whether protected areas are being managed effectively, and for assessing key trends in the status of biological diversity and protected areas at individual sites and across national systems of protected areas.

The CBD has evolved a comprehensive Programme of Work (PoW) which is now moving fully into a phase of implementation. The PoW includes the establishment of a roster of experts for assistance in implementing the PoW on protected areas and to draw on experts from this roster to assist in the implementation of the programme of work.

Further, the PoW includes the target of developing and implementing comprehensive capacity building programmes by 2010. Further, the PoW includes the evaluation and reporting on protected areas management effectiveness.

Given the above, the IRF and IRFC have a large window of opportunity to become a meaningful role-player – in working partnerships with appropriate organizations and institutions such as the IUCN WCPA, in meeting IRF goals, and in simultaneously making a meaningful contribution to the sustainable conservation of the planet's biodiversity.

It is vital that we cement ties with community based conservation initiatives. On this issue we look forward to the membership of Ranger associations from community based conservation initiatives in the Philippines and Papua New Guinea in the very near future. I met with Victorino Saway of the Philippines during COP7, and he says that his Rangers cannot wait to become part of the international Ranger family, and wear the IRF badge.

Although the IRF has been involved in youth issues for a long time, this aspect has moved into the international spotlight and the IRF is seen as a leading role-player. Cassie Wright has been appointed as the IRF lead on youth issues, and I urge all of you to please pass on to Cassie any and all information, help and advice on youth issues that you can.

The IRF must now look to cementing our partnerships with other like-minded organizations and to establishing new partnerships. In particular, we need to refine our role as a major support to the IUCN and WCPA in ensuring the implementation of the PoW of the CBD and in furthering the outcomes of the IUCN WPC.

David Zeller, President

PS: The above piece has a number of acronyms. If you really want to get lost amongst acronyms, go to the CBD. It is a whole new language.

PPS: Go to www.biodiv.org and download the full Protected Area text, in document UNEP/CBD/COP/7/L.32. It is worth reading. This document is also available in Spanish and French.

Vice President's Report

It has been a long time since you received last issue of [The Thin Green Line](#). I am very sorry for that.

Everyone who has been involved in NGO's or any other form of association knows well that one of the things that may fail to appear continuously is the newsletter, and this is the first time this has happened to our IRF in 12 years.

Bill Halainen decided to stop being the editor of our newsletter some months ago, but something happened, so he has decided to continue for some more time. This decision is invaluable for us, because without [The Thin Green Line](#), no matter how hard people work, we are almost blind.

Yes, friends, the 21st Century has reached even the most isolated corners of parks, and being so, the ranger, a person who is still seen by some people as someone who has "nothing else to do" than roaming the field, has difficulty in finding time – time to be with family, time to enjoy the very same nature he/she is protecting, and time to share with other colleagues.

Please fight that dull consequence of this century, and take some time to write a paragraph to be included in this newsletter.

The International Ranger Federation has grown a lot in the last twelve months. We are becoming involved in more and more things and more and more institutions are becoming aware of us.

Our colleagues in Portugal have been having a bad time this year. I believe that nothing can be worse for the morale of a corps of rangers than listening to conversations and reading in the newspaper that the government wants to erase your organization. The IRF do not want to interfere in the official affairs of any country, but at the same time we were born to maintain a strong link among the rangers of the world. We therefore sent an official letter from IRF to the president of Portugal, with copies to the two ministers involved in conservation, and apparently this has helped them understand that the management of protected areas is something which requires not only a uniform, but knowledge and dedication to nature.

And talking about dedication, once again a ranger has been assassinated while defending his park (see the news section below). The Dependents Fund was created and will be managed between IRF and IUCN – what we need now is money to make it work. We need to find ways to make it grow. Next visitor season, which will come with the southern hemisphere's summer, I myself will ask for donations for this fund at the entrance of my park – the "ombu forest".

Well, colleagues – keep in touch!

Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Vice President

Editor's Report

I have again taken over as editor of [The Thin Green Line](#), and will remain in the position as long as needed. Tony Sisto, also of the U.S. Association of National Park Rangers, has volunteered to help, and we will be working together to assure that the newsletter comes out on schedule.

The schedule printed in the January issue has been revised and appears 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
November	Friday, October 29	Sunday, November 14
January	Friday, December 10	Sunday, January 2
April	Friday, April 8	Sunday, April 24
July	Friday, July 1	Sunday, July 17

Bill Halainen, Editor

Australasia Continental Representative

The ARF held a very successful Annual General Meeting at Cattai National Park west of Sydney in the first week in May this year. Representatives from just about every Australian state and territory were present, including some new members from indigenous land protectorates. New office bearers were appointed to most key executive positions and the usual excellent presentations on protected area management issues took place. These included:

- The Cumberland Plain World Heritage listing
- Hazard reduction burning in urban interface areas
- Indigenous burning practices at Uluru Kata Tjuta NP
- Remote area firefighting
- Problem species management (feral deer and fox management)
- Utilizing the incident control system for non-emergency situations

We also had a guest speaker from the Australian National Marine Unit (Customs Patrol Officers) in regards to how they can provide assistance in marine protected area management and a visiting game ranger from Kruger National Park gave a presentation on overcoming the difficulties currently facing that park. The usual tour of another persons "patch" (Cattai and Scheyville NP's) took place with the rangers from more remote parks amazed at the "people pressure" (visitation) these areas are subject too. I believe all came away re-charged, uplifted and with more contacts and places to visit sometime in the future.

Chris Artiemiew
Australia

North American Continental Representative

In July and August 2004, ANPR members Deanne Adams, Tony Sisto (ANPR liaison to IRF) and Vaughn Baker (Rocky Mountain NP) hosted an international group of rangers who are all involved with IRF. The group spent three weeks in Alaska, visiting parks and meeting park rangers across the state. The other rangers in the group: Gordon Miller, IRF Executive Director; Elaine Thomas, President, Victoria Rangers Association (also co-chair of the organizing committee for IRF's Fourth World Congress in Australia), and Mick Keenan, both from Wilson's Promontory NP, Australia; and Carol Huston, Pentlands Regional Park, Edinburgh, Scotland (organizing committee for IRF's Fifth Congress in Scotland).

Alaska's highest visitation occurs during the short summer season of late May to early September. Despite the intense summer season, staff at all the parks found time to talk about issues and creative ways they are coping with challenges. Denali NP is faced with the increasing pressures of tourism, which is leading to overbooking park capacity and bringing political pressure to the park. Staff are working more with the tourism community to look at the variety of experiences in Alaskan parks and to begin directing more tours to parks like Wrangell –St. Elias, with incredible mountains for viewing and climbing and wild rivers to raft or kayak and view wildlife. At Wrangell-St. Elias, the park continues building relationships with Native Alaskans, finding ways to consult on issues and learning how to recruit local community members to work in the park.

Building stronger partnerships with businesses and nonprofit organizations was a common theme for all the parks. At Kenai Fjords NP, they have been hiring park interpreters with funds from a contract with a tour boat operator who provides daily tours with a park interpreter on board for the eight-hour tour. Their marketing surveys show customers are well-satisfied with the service and they attribute their good sales to the success of marketing with a ranger service. Perhaps the best measure of success is that there is now interest from other businesses in having the same type of contract.

The role of IRF in pulling together rangers from around the world was reinforced in the reactions of all park staff. Being able to share professional experiences, combined with the shared camaraderie of meeting others working for similar goals, led to professional and social enrichment for the Alaska hosts and the IRF visitors.

Deanne Adams
United States

NEWS FROM NATIONS AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Argentina

Marcelo Ochoa, who is also South American Continental Representative for IRF, sent this report on developments the Argentine Ranger Association. An English translation follows this version:

La Asociación de Guardaparques Argentinos (AGA) con financiamiento del Banco Mundial, en cooperación con el Instituto Claes Olrog (ICO) dictó dos cursos destinados a Pueblos Originarios. Los mismos trataron sobre "Técnicas de Bajo Impacto" y fueron destinados a las Comunidades Mapuches en el Parque Nacional Lanín, provincia de Neuquén y Comunidad Colla Tinkunaku Paraje San Andres, Reserva de Biosfera de las Yungas, en la provincia de Salta, ambos de la Argentina.

La propuesta se basó en la capacitación de integrantes de comunidades indígenas en acciones vinculadas a la conservación de los recursos naturales y de su propia integridad en el desarrollo de sus actividades cotidianas.

Ambos cursos fueron dictados y coordinados por Marcelo L .Ochoa, y con la colaboración de Daniel Paz Barreto y María Sol Mut Coll, todos ellos Guardaparques e integrantes del AGA. El tiempo de duración de cada curso fue de tres días, con clases teóricas y prácticas. Se realizó una salida a campo en la cual se brindó material, equipamiento, comida y transporte. Al finalizar el curso, se entregó certificado de participación del curso, y se prevee la posibilidad de continuar con actividades.

Es la primera vez que se vinculan comunidades indígenas, institutos de formación y asociaciones profesionales, con el objetivo común de conservar espacios sujetos a uso de los recursos naturales. Para mas información comunicarse con Marcelo Ochoa, Representante Sudamericano a mochoa@apn.gov.ar

The Argentine Ranger Association, with the financing of the World Bank in cooperation with the Claes Olrog Institute (ICO, Argentina's ranger training institute) offered two courses for people in original settlements inside Argentine protected areas.. The classes dealt with "Techniques of Low Impact" and were directed at the Mapuche communities (The Mapuche are indigenous people in Argentina) in Lanín National Park, province of Neuquén, and in the Biosphere Reserve of the Yungas, in the province of Salta.

The purpose was to train members of these indigenous communities in low impact actions related to the conservation of natural resources and the incorporation of these actions in the daily lives of the people.

Both courses were taught and coordinated by Marcelo Ochoa and with the collaboration of Daniel Paz Barreto and María Sol Mut Coll, all of us rangers and members of AGA. Each courses lasted three days, with theoretical and practical classes. There was also field work in which the participants were provided with equipment, materials, food and transportation. At the end of the course, the participants were given certificates of participation and there was talk of the possibility of continuing with additional activities.

It's the first time that indigenous communities, professional training institutes and our professional association worked together with the common objective of conserving space for natural resources. For more information contact Marcelo Ochoa, South American Representative at mochoa@apn.gov.ar.

Australia

Kelly Briese, a ranger in Queensland, had written to [The Thin Green Line](#) with an update on the Queensland Ranger Association:

The current activity being generated by the Queensland Rangers Association (QRA) has reached a high point in the history of the organization, seeing more members registered than ever before. In February this year, the QRA launched the [Ranger Rambler](#), a publication for rangers by rangers. This has proven a very successful format for rangers to gain information about current issues and most importantly, to have their say. The next edition of the [Ranger Rambler](#) is due out in November.

A 'Ranger Forum' has been implemented to give the opportunity for staff around the state to meet with the higher management of our employer, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The first of these was held earlier this year. It is expected that this will occur on a regular basis.

Lake Tinaroo in North Queensland was the host of a successful QRA conference in May this year. A great networking opportunity presented itself here. Attendees were able to attend sessions with guest speakers discussing fire management, indigenous issues, remote areas and other management concerns.

A new email discussion group has been introduced for members of the QRA. Topics causing a lot of discussion on the chat-line recently include the definition of the ranger role, opportunities for advancement, ranger housing issues (should rangers have to pay market rent to live 'on park') and the agencies transfer database.

Overwhelming response from QRA members indicates that we are achieving our axiom: 'Rangers helping Rangers'.

Bolivia

Carola Vaca, president of the Bolivian Ranger Association, has sent along this letter about a very significant meeting that they have had with the director of their National Protected Area Service. Her note follows. Below it is an English version, translated by past president Rick Smith:

Queridos amigos todos:

Como muchos ya sabían la semana pasada nos reunimos con el Ing. Jhonn Gómez, Director Ejecutivo del Servicio Nacional de Areas Protegidas para tratar temas de interés de los Guardaparques de Bolivia.

Fue muy positivo tratar estos temas ya que todos los Guardaparques esperaban con mucha expectativa que una vez que el SERNAP muestre cierta estabilidad en su gestión y después de muchos cambios en la Dirección Nacional sería muy estimulante poder entablar una buena comunicación y plantear lo que el Cuerpo Nacional de Protección tenía como inquietud desde hace mucho tiempo.

En el proceso de cambios que en la Unidad Central se están dando han sido incorporadas estas inquietudes y hay mucha voluntad del Ing. Gómez, Director del SERNAP y de la Gpque. Carola Vaca, Presidente de la Asociación de Guardaparques de trabajar de una forma muy participativa, desde luego con la participación representativa de los Guardaparques del sistema.

Entorno a ese contexto se han hecho unos adelantos en el inicio de un trabajo participativo, para todos les hago llegar el resumen de esta reunión como muestra de un acercamiento totalmente positivo y saludable para todo el sistema, ruego hacer llegar a los Guardaparques en todas las áreas, difundir para todo aquel guardaparque que sabemos en este momento está en el campo y solo ustedes saben como hacerle llegar la información.

También esperamos todo el aporte de cada uno de los que forman parte de esta gran familia de guardaparques y nos ayuden con sus ideas para mejorar nuestra participación y sean testigos del éste proceso.

Saludos, Carola

Dear Friends:

As many of you already know, we recently met with Jhonn Gómez, the Executive Director of the National Protected Area Service (SERNAP), in order to discuss issues that are important to Bolivian park rangers.

This was a very important meeting because Bolivian rangers expect that once SERNAP demonstrates some administrative stability after the many changes that have occurred, it will be critical to establish good communications between the rangers and SERNAP and to discuss matters that have been troubling the National Ranger Protection Corps for a long time.

Because of the interest of Director Gómez and the President of the Ranger Association, Carola Vaca, the two entities will work together to deal with these concerns, always with the full participation of the rangers of the Association.

Translators note: Carola's original message attached a summary of the meeting that circulated to all the members of her association. She called the meeting between Gómez and her totally "healthy and positive" and asked those receiving the summary to pass it on to other rangers. She ended her note to the *Thin Green Line* by saying:

We also expect the support of everyone who belongs to the international family of rangers. Be a witness to this internal process and help us with your ideas so that we can improve our ability to participate in the family.

Regards, Carola

Chile

IRF Vice President Juan Carlos Gambarotta has sent this report on developments in the Chilean Corps of Rangers: Angel Lazo, our contact with the Chilean Corps of Rangers, tells us that The National Council of Rangers had a three day meeting in a protected area, during which they debated about the need to clarify job competencies, the need for a manual on all ranger duties, and the need to design a new uniform. The National Council of Rangers will have elections soon; those elected will hold their positions for two years.

England

Roger Cole, vice chair for the Countryside Management Association, has provided this update:

CMA represents professionals actively involved in the management of countryside and urban green space in England and Wales. Membership numbers have been slowly increasing over the past year and now stand at approximately 600. However, the Association still feels this represents less than 10% of the membership potential and has therefore been engaged in a “recruiting drive”. This drive has been primarily aimed at encouraging existing members to “Recruit-a-Friend,” as it is felt that word of mouth is the best approach in gaining new members. We are also aiming the recruitment campaign at students in those colleges and universities which train graduates in the disciplines relevant to our profession.

The Association’s quarterly magazine, Ranger is now printed in full color and each edition contains 20 pages with a production run of over 1,000 copies. The cost of production of Ranger magazine is covered from its advertising revenue. The Association also produces Members’ News – a quarterly newsletter (soon to become an “e” newsletter) which contains up-to-date information on training; study days and events; consultation responses and other topical news items.

Since introducing its “accredited member” category, over 100 members have signed-up for this “professional” membership category and the associated Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme. The CPD scheme is available to any member, whether in urban or rural locations; out in the field or behind a desk; whether working in management, academia, or administration; whether working full-time, part-time or voluntarily. CPD is probably something that most of our members are doing anyway – keeping themselves up-to-date in ways relevant to their job roles.

However, by achieving accreditation and then recording these activities via the CPD scheme in a visible way, they are demonstrating to the world-at-large that they are determined to advance their career aspirations. To be able to demonstrate this in a personal profile will undoubtedly help to show employers, both current and/or future, their determination as individuals and as members of CMA, to be at the forefront of their chosen profession.

Two recent government initiatives are likely to have an impact on the day-to-day management of open spaces in England and Wales. The first is the Countryside Rights of Way Act which is aimed at opening-up large areas of countryside for unrestricted public recreational access. The second is a reorganization of service delivery by government-funded organizations such as The Countryside Agency, English Nature, and the Department of Food and Rural Affairs. Both of these programs will affect rangers and others involved in recreational land management and CMA will be lobbying hard for the provision of adequate on-the-ground resources for both schemes.

CMA members are working closely with their colleagues in the Scottish Countryside Rangers Association in helping with the organization of the Fifth IRF Congress to be held in Scotland in 2006. Pre and post congress tours of parks in England and Wales will form part of the congress program.

CMA members are always pleased to see any visiting colleagues from parks around the world and to show them something of our work in parks in England and Wales. If any visiting ranger wishes to take advantage of this opportunity, he/she should contact Colin Dilcock, CMA's international adviser (cdilock@supanet.com).

United States

Tony Sisto, coordinator of international affairs for the Association of National Park Rangers, sends this update on his organization:

The Association of National Park Rangers holds its annual 'Ranger Rendezvous' on November 15 – 19, 2004, in Rapid City, South Dakota. This is near the national park sites of Badlands, Mount Rushmore, and Jewel Cave. This is the 27th annual meeting of the association. If you find yourself in the United States in November, you are invited to join us. More information can be found at our website, www.anpr.org.

This year, ANPR sent to each of the 388 U.S. park sites complimentary copies of a special edition of **The Thin Green Line** that was published for IRF to use at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa last September. This issue – published with the support of IRF, ANPR, and others – documents the variety of ranger jobs in countries throughout the world, the range of challenges facing the stewards of those protected areas, and the work of IRF.

ANPR was pleased to be part of the IRF delegation to this fifth World Park Congress, joining IRF representatives from 40 countries in the two-week session. We also sent each U.S. park site a complimentary copy of the National Park and Protected Areas International Bulletin, edited and published quarterly by Stewart Bonney from England. ANPR thanks Stewart for his work as editor and publisher of the special Africa edition of **The Thin Green Line**, and for providing copies of the *Bulletin* for distribution. More information about the bulletin can be found at <http://www.nationalparkinternationalbulletin.com/>.

We hope to see everyone in Scotland in 2006 for the Fifth IRF Ranger Congress! Slainte!

NEWS ABOUT RANGERS

Rangers At Risk

Rangers around the world continue to risk their lives in an effort to protect the last of the world's natural and cultural heritage.

Juan Carlos Gambarotta has learned that the new ranger station recently constructed at Puerto Peninsula Provincial Park in the northern province of Misiones in Argentina was burned down before it could even be used. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Not so in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Tim Snow from GRAA has also forwarded a note from JP Jobogo Mirinidi (also see his letter below) from Virunga NP about the murder of a ranger there: "I am sorry to announce you the sad news, one more ranger, named Ruvuzo, was assassinated yesterday in the Virunga park by the rebels. He was among our brave rangers who escorted the IRF delegation, (most recently) during the (IRF) visit in DRC. There were two of them guarding the entrance gate of the Kabaraza station. Mr. Bisimwa was seriously injured and is at the hospital."

Condolences from the entire world ranger community to Mr. Ruvuzo's family.

LETTERS AND EMAIL

Thank You To IRF From DRC

It was a pleasure for me to receive a delegation of IRF members in the Virunga Park. The delegation was led by Gordon Miller the IRF executive director and three other delegates: Elaine Thomas from Australia, Mike from Australia and Linda from Ireland.

The delegation came through Uganda and started their visit in Bwindi National park where they were hosted by my colleague John Makombo. During their stay in the eastern region of the DRC, the delegates met with many people, among them influential political leaders, parks managers and field staff. Gordon took the opportunity to express his feelings on behalf of all rangers across the world at the work done by the Congolese rangers during a difficult period of political crisis. Several times he was invited to talk to rangers in their patrol posts which he visited.

The next day the guests went to May ay Moto to pay their respects at the monument erected in memory of 23 rangers killed carrying out their duties. This monument was inaugurated by the late Zairean president Mobutu and the Belgian King Baudouin in 1970.

The following day they visited the mountain gorillas, an exciting trip with a young gorilla trying to jump on the shoulders of our guests as he likes joking. Just for your information, 3 days ago a newborn was announced in Bukima and the park management decided to name him "Boniface Kwibesha" the name of the brave ranger assassinated two weeks ago.

The next day the delegation visited Lulimbi sector managed by Jobogo Mirindi and it was a wonderful visit. They spent a night in tents near to 13 buffalos habituated to human presence and they ended their visit in the fishing village where they visited a herd of elephants and migratory birds along the Lake Edward. On their way back, they paid their respects again at the exact place where Boniface Kwibesha was killed and visited the widows. Seven of them were present and received a gift of one piece of cloth each from IRF delegates.

The delegation was handed over from Jobogo (Virunga warden) to John Bosco Nuwe (Q.Elisabeth Warden) before they crossed the Ugandan border. Four points were raised by Gordon on behalf of IRF:

1. To increase awareness of the international community regarding the neutral status of Congolese rangers during the conflict.
2. To develop strong support to DRC in order to help the management of their unique reserves.
3. To recognise the courage of the rangers and create a fund to help widows who lost their partners during their duties.
4. To suggest that the international community creates a green helmet or guards sans frontieres brigade to intervene to protect the protectors of the environment in the countries in conflicts.

All the ICCN staff salute the courage of these delegates who have visited them in the field and have touched with their fingers the real problems faced by rangers in D.R. Congo

Thank you

JP Jobogo Mirindi
Virunga National Park
D.R.C

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IRF COP7 CBD Plenary Intervention

Mr. Chairman: The International Ranger Federation, which represents Rangers in 48 countries around the world and growing, is grateful for the opportunity to address this auspicious gathering.

The International Ranger Federation fully supports the Joint Statement and Commitment put before this COP by the coalition of NGO's, and the Intervention of today by the same coalition of NGO's.

Mr. Chairman: There are two issues which we wish to bring to the attention of this COP.

Firstly, but for a reference by Ghana, the documentation and discussions thus far have failed to recognize the role of the Protectors of Protected Areas – the Rangers – who will be responsible for executing these grand programmes at field level. It is the Ranger (Protected Area Manager, Park Warden, Field Ranger, Forest Guard, Guarda le Parques, Vigilantes de Natura) who is at the coal-face of conservation, in area integrity, community relations, alien species control, monitoring, environmental interpretation, and much more. Many Rangers come from Indigenous or Local Communities.

And Rangers continue to die and be killed while carrying out their duties.

The vital and intrinsic role of the Ranger was recognized in Durban, and we would ask this COP to do the same – in ensuring that Rangers are properly capacitated, equipped and supported.

Further, an issue which was highlighted during the World Parks Congress, and which is contained in Recommendation 5.15 of the outcomes of that congress, is of critical importance to this Conference with respect to Protected Areas and the Conservation of Biodiversity.

This issue is the urgent call for an internationally sanctioned rapid response unit, with recognized legal and neutral status, for intervention in Protected Areas which are under immediate and dire threat as a result of crisis – whether as a result of disasters, or regional or civil conflict.

Any convention or Programme of Work, no matter how comprehensive and strong, will come to naught in the face of a break down of governance. Examples of this are myriad and need no elaboration here. We have all seen Decades and Dollars of good, sound conservation practice being wiped out in a matter of months or even days, in Protected Areas in countries in conflict, sometimes with an irreversible loss of biodiversity.

We urge this Conference of Parties in their deliberations to look to the creation and operation of an internationally sanctioned rapid response unit for intervention in Protected Areas in conflict.
In closing;

- We join the call for a strong, ambitious, Programme of Work.
- We applaud those Parties who's Governments have already stood up and committed themselves to cooperation with Civil Society, and to implementing a Programme of Work.
- We salute the Indigenous and Mobile indigenous communities who practiced sustainable utilization long before techno-man even thought up the term, and who have shared their land with the rest of the world, albeit without prior consent.
- We pray for the youth of today, for with them lies the future of all that will be determined at this and other such meetings.

We the Protectors of the Protected Areas, assure all Parties, communities and NGO's of our fullest cooperation and total dedication towards the Conservation of Biodiversity.

Thank you.