



THE THIN GREEN LINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

April – June, 2009

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OFFICERS REPORTS

Vice President's Report

Dear IRF Friends:

Last month I had an unexpected call from Brendan O'Shea, a ranger we met last year in Killarney National Park in Ireland.

Brendan called at a good time, shortly after I had returned from the remembrance celebration for Rick Gale, past president of the US Association of National Park Rangers, and a signatory at the founding of the International Ranger Federation (see ANPR report below). After I told Brendan of the ceremony, of how I will personally miss Rick's warm bear hugs and his guidance and support on IRF issues, Brendan started telling me his own stories.

"I was there at Loch Lomond, when IRF was formed," he said. "I wasn't on the agenda, but I gave a presentation on Killarney, about 30 slides. I was nervous; this was the first presentation I'd ever given."

Brendan went on to say that after listening to others speak of their work as he had done, the big thing he took away was this: "You know, those parks in Alaska, in parts of America and Africa? Where I am, the work I do, is as important as those exotic parks. It made me realize what I'm doing here in Killarney is as important as the work rangers do in those parks we see on TV."

Our friend Rick Gale would have been grinning to hear Brendan's message.

Many thanks from IRF to Bill Halainen, editor of the **The Thin Green Line**, who represented the International Ranger Federation at the remembrance celebration and shared with all attending good stories of Rick's commitment to IRF and to rangers of the world.

Brendan was also at the first World Ranger Congress in Poland. What he gained from that first IRF organising meeting at Loch Lomond and from the first congress is something more rangers need to experience.



Brendan O'Shea, Irish Rangers Association

I ask every member association who receives this newsletter to ensure that your rangers *also* receive **The Thin Green Line** and know about our next gathering in Bolivia. Every ranger deserves an opportunity to meet colleagues like Brendan.

Sixth World Ranger Congress

As announced in the special edition of **The Thin Green Line** last month, we have a new web site: worldrangercongress.org. Confirmed registrations for the congress are now at 97, with additional confirmed sponsorships for unregistered delegates.

IMPORTANT: Early registration has been extended to May 31st. The PayPal system is still not operational because our Congress organiser has been out sick. We wish him a speedy recovery. If you register before May 31st we will honour the early registration rate and will contact you when PayPal is ready to take your payment.

Correction on the dates given in the last report: The opening dinner will be Sunday, November 1st, and the closing dinner will be on Saturday, November 7th, with travel home on Sunday, November 8th. My apologies for listing the wrong date for the closing dinner.

The congress will include one day for IRF business, where we discuss and vote on resolutions, motions, and our new International Executive Committee. Secretary Elaine Thomas has details in her article below.

EUROPARC Conference

IRF shares a memorandum of understanding with EUROPARC and representatives of IRF will be attending the EUROPARC conference this year, which takes place in Sweden from September 9th to September 13th. The overall conference theme in 2009 is "100 years of national parks in Europe - a shared inheritance; a common future" which marks 100 years since the first nine national parks in Europe were established in Sweden in 1909. For additional information: europarc.org. If you want to receive the EUROPARC e-newsletter, send your email to: office@europarc.org.

Best wishes,

Deanne Adams
Vice President
IRFdeanne@aol.com

Editor's Report

Friends and Colleagues:

I will be stepping down as editor of this newsletter at year's end, specifically, December 31, 2009.

It's been 17 years since several of us sat together in a pub in Balloch at the south end of Loch Lomond and worked out the basics for an international organisation, including a newsletter for regular communications. In those early years before the internet made communications much easier that meant writing the newsletter, then printing and mailing it all over the world, a tedious and expensive task. Although international email and web pages have greatly improved this process, we now face a different challenge, getting members to contribute.

Looking over the past few years' issues, I find that there have been a number of regular contributors, particularly among the officers and continental representatives, but that we still have several big holes in the newsletter. The first is that we are often pretty thin on news about IRF itself – budget, membership, decision-making, programs and projects; the second is that only about a quarter of our member associations, at most, have contributed anything to the newsletter over those 17 years – the great majority have sent nothing at all.

While this has been disheartening, we've managed to round up enough news – particularly, as noted above, through the efforts of several officers and almost all the continental representatives – to put out issues which give a pretty good picture of what's going on in the federation. Still, each issue requires repeated reminders and continually revised deadlines in order to roundup submissions.

I've been at this for nearly two decades now and the effort to get each issue out is getting a bit wearisome. So it's time for someone else to step up and take over.

A member of the US Association of National Park Rangers and a career National Park Service ranger, Dana Dierkes, has expressed tentative interest in taking over the newsletter, with me assisting her in the transition. Her willingness to do this depends to an extent on your willingness to take a few minutes to prepare and send in submissions. Four are required annually for each member association, but in reality one or two will work.

That's hardly a difficult task. Yes, it's a challenge for many of you to write in English, which is an unfortunate necessity for many reasons. But we do not need more than a paragraph or two from each of you. *It is time for all member associations to step up and take responsibility as full members of this international organisation and send in reports on a regular basis.*

Meanwhile, I will continue to put out monthly issues of **Guardaparque**, which was created as a supplement to this newsletter to provide news on rangers and their work around the world.

The work of IRF will only get more important as years go by and pressures continue to grow on parks and protected areas and the species and cultural assets we protect. Let's all work together to make sure that IRF remains a vital player in the international arena.

Bill Halainen

Editor

Bill_Halainen@nps.gov

Secretary's Report

As you all know, the Sixth IRF World Congress is to be held in Bolivia in November this year and that can only mean one thing. Yes, you guessed it – the World Congress membership meeting, the IRF's equivalent to an annual general meeting. During this meeting, we will elect new international officers (president, vice president, secretary and treasurer) and regional representatives, and will also propose and vote on motions to guide the work of IRF for the coming three years, amongst other things.

Call For Nominations

Nominations are now being sought for the positions of president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. We are also seeking one regional representative for each of the seven regions (Africa, Europe, North America, Central America, South America, Australia and Asia) covered by member associations.

The call for nominations to these positions has been sent to all member associations – if you have not received one please let me know (via the email address below). An election committee, chaired by Reeta Hyttinen of Finland, has been established to assist with the nomination process and to oversee the elections at the Congress.

Nominations need to be received by me and the Election Chair (reeta.hyttinen@metsa.fi), **no later than August 31, 2009**. If you have any questions, please contact either Reeta or me.

Registering To Vote In The Elections

As mentioned above, the election of international officers and regional representatives shall take place at the World Congress during the World Congress membership meeting, which will be held on the final day. Each member association has one vote each for each of the international officers and one vote for the regional representative for their region. The vote is to be cast by the nominated delegate of the member association.

We will be contacting each association shortly for the name of their nominated delegate, so will need the latest contact information from every member association. If your association contact information has changed, please send new name and email to me and to Bill Halainen, editor of **The Thin Green Line**. Alternatively, the association delegate nomination form can be found on the IRF website – www.int-ranger.net – and must be submitted by **September 23, 2009**.

Motions

The World Congress membership meeting is also an opportunity to propose changes to the IRF statutes and standing rules, and to suggest issues the IRF could be addressing or actions that IRF could be taking to further the professional standing of rangers. The IRF statutes require that any motions be submitted to the secretary three months prior to the membership meeting. If you would like to submit a motion, please email it to me by the **August 9, 2009**. (Please note – all motions require a proposer and a seconder).

Member Reports

IRF is a federation of member associations founded on the belief that we can help each other by sharing our experiences and knowledge. World Congresses are one way to do this; member reports are another. Member reports contain information on the number of rangers in the association, the current contacts for the association, and a summary of issues for rangers in that association. Member reports are submitted prior to the World Congress membership meeting and posted on the IRF website. To make it easy for you to prepare your report a form has been created which can be downloaded from the website – please send your completed report to me no later than **September 23, 2009**. We haven't had much success with members sharing their information in the past – let's change this with the 2009 reports.

Here's a summary of the above for your ready reference:

TASK	DEADLINE	RESPOND TO/ QUESTIONS TO	FORM TO BE COMPLETED
Respond to 'call for nominations'	31 st August 2009	irfsec@yahoo.com.au reeta.hyttinen@metsa.fi	Call for nominations
Register to vote in the elections	23 rd September	irfsec@yahoo.com.au	Association delegate nomination form

Propose a motion	9 th August 2009	irfsec@yahoo.com.au	
Submit member report	???	irfsec@yahoo.com.au	Member report

To paraphrase John F. Kennedy, the past President of the United States: “Ask not what the IRF can do for you; ask what you can do for the IRF.”

For further information, visit the IRF webpage int-ranger.net. To download the relevant forms go to either the ‘How to join’, ‘Congress’, or ‘About us’ section of the website.

Elaine Thomas
Secretary
irfsec@yahoo.com.au

Australia Regional Representative

Time flies when you’re having fun, or so the saying goes. Half the year has almost gone and it’s time for another report. The following information is from Queensland...

Vale Mal Langston

It is with sadness that I report the passing of one of the true characters of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Malcolm Langston. Mal was a well-liked, colourful character of quick wit and was deeply loyal to his family, workmates, and friends. His commitment to the management of the Kenilworth parks and forest complex was unquestioned. He served with Forestry and Parks for over 40 years and will be sadly missed. His other great passions in life were his family and fishing. Our deepest sympathy goes to his loving wife Tina and family.

Neil Parker, chairman of the Queensland Rangers Association (QRA), on behalf of QRA, will be providing a \$1000 grant to Mal’s family within the next few days from the QRA Family Support Fund. Mal was a member of the QRA and is fondly remembered by many QRA members as someone very passionate about the areas he managed.

QRA Conference 2009

The 2009 QRA conference was held from March 16th to March 19th at Byfield on the Capricorn Coast near Rockhampton, which is located on the Tropic of Capricorn on the Australian East Coast. Each year, QRA holds its annual conferencing at a different part of the state and this year it is being hosted by staff from the Capricornia Regions.

Byfield is home to some beautiful beaches and great costal vegetation communities and many of the conference visitors enjoyed a trip to Five Rocks and Nine Mile beaches and also an inspection of the state forest areas prior to the commencement of the conference to look at management issues relating to fire, recreational vehicle usage (four wheel drive vehicles), and camping associated with a recreational area located very close to high population areas.

The conference theme, ‘Communicating with Communities,’ brought together an assortment of presenters who provided a very interesting dialog of ideas and information which will assist rangers with carrying out their duties with more confidence and knowledge.

The usual trade display session, was again present which highlighted the many products from different companies, which are used in day-to-day management of EPA estate.

The Queensland Rangers Association wishes to acknowledge all the companies who took their time to attend and present their tools of trade to the rangers present and recognise that they are an important part of the conference and provide financial support to assist in covering the conference expenses.

IRF Conference 2009

The following letter was written by QRA chairman Neil Parker following a competition run by the QRA to choose a representative to attend the 2009 World Congress. The representative's expenses will be part funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Queensland.

"I would first like to thank you all for your outstanding applications and to assure you that there was very little difference between all the applications received, which I believe indicates the professionalism of our Queensland rangers. We had seven people apply to represent the QRA and the EPA at the IRF conference in Bolivia. Unfortunately, there can only be one successful applicant and while this was not an easy task for the committee to decide between applicants it is with great pleasure that I announce that the winner is Andy Dutton. A merit list consisting of all applicants has been generated and the QRA will be working hard to secure further funding to help those on the merit list attend the conference.

"I would urge all applicants who are planning on attending the conference to make contact with Mike Joyce or Paul Lawless-Pyne and register their intentions and while at this time we are unable to assist financially we are hopeful that assistance could be forthcoming if we are able to secure further funding.

"I want to again personally thank each of you for putting in such a great effort on your applications. It was very heartening to see so many applicants with such desires to attend the conference. The other committee members would also like to say thank you for your effort and the opportunity to assess such a great range of rangers."

Regards,
Paul Lawless-Pyne
Australian/Oceania Rep
paul.lawlesspyne@epa.qld.gov.au

NEWS FROM NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Peru

Peruvian Ranger Association

We have a new member, the Peruvian Ranger Association. The president is Ignacio Sánchez, and he can be reached at agp_peru@hotmail.com. Welcome to IRF! We look forward to hearing from and working with you in the future.

New South Wales/Australia

Protected Area Workers Association

With the Sixth World Ranger Congress just six months away, minds are turning rapidly to Bolivia. PAWA is providing full sponsorship for a delegate from the Associação dos Povos Indígenas Tiriyo, Kaxuyana, Txikuyana (APITIKATXI) of northeastern Brazil. The modest delegation of PAWA members who will also be attending looks forward to seeing you all at the Congress and hearing your stories, whether through presenting a paper or around the dinner table.

Based on experiences by PAWA members in the Victorian firefighting effort and our experiences in our home state of New South Wales, PAWA has prepared a submission to the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. The Royal Commission was established in February to investigate the causes and responses to the bushfires which swept through Victoria in late January/early February this year.

For more information on the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, please go to royalcommission.vic.gov.au. The submission made by PAWA can be found at pawansw.org/newsnevents

Tegan Burton
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Portugal

Portuguese Rangers Association

Past president Gordon Miller picked up this item from the Portuguese Rangers Association (APGVN) website about an accord with Brazil and translated it for this issue:

The Portuguese Association of Guards and Vigilantes of Nature (APNGV) signed [an agreement] with the Team of Conservation of the Amazônia (ACT Brazil), a partnership that has, as its objective, the support, recognition and the value of the profession in the two countries. The agreement will allow the exchange of experiences between both parties, which already possess an agenda of work in favour of the [protectors] of the nature. "The agreement reaffirms the necessity and the implicit commitment of the institutions for the reinforcement of environmental protection from the support to the field staff," guarantees Marcelo Segalerba, specialist in protecting areas and coordinator of ACT Brazil.

APGVN's web site can be found at vigilantesnatureza.paginas.sapo.pt/

United States

Association of National Park Rangers

Death of Rick Gale

As many of you may already know, ANPR and the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) lost one of its stellar leaders. Rick Gale, retired chief of fire operations for the NPS and a long-time member and past president of ANPR, died unexpectedly of a heart attack at his home on March 27th.

Rick was a strong supporter of international collaboration, communication and cooperation among rangers. When a meeting was called to discuss the creation of an international organization during the SCRA annual general meeting at Loch Lomond in Scotland in 1991, Rick immediately arranged to have an ANPR representative attend, with a message of full support for such an organisation. Rick then flew to England in 1992 to participate as one of the three signatories to the IRF charter at a ceremony at Peak District National Park in England.

Rick didn't limit his support of IRF to a signature on a document. He worked to support IRF in its formative years in many ways and was a key player in arranging for a critical loan from ANPR to IRF to help fund the first Congress in Zakopane, Poland.

Rick was a legend in the NPS. He was a leader in establishing standards for rangers throughout the country, a visionary in the establishment of the emergency management system known as ICS (Incident Command System), and one of the country's most skilled and capable wildland fire managers. His contributions to the ranger and firefighting professions were recognized at a ceremony at the White House in 1994 when U.S. President Bill Clinton personally conferred on him the first-ever career Harry Yount award, named for our country's first park ranger.

Rick was indispensable in supporting the ranger profession, in advancing ANPR, and in helping to create the IRF. We will all greatly miss him.

ANPR Ranger Rendezvous

Our annual gathering of the association will take place at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, from December 6th to December 10th. Information regarding the rendezvous will be posted on our website at anpr.org. As always, we invite and encourage our international ranger friends to join us.

Travel well.

Tony Sisto

ANPR International Affairs

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MEMBER DIRECTORY

The following is for quick reference only and does not include the names of individual ranger associations. Where more than one name is listed for a given nation, it is because there's more than one ranger association in that country. For a complete list, please contact Elaine Thomas, IRF secretary, at the address below. If you find any error, please contact Bill_Halainen@nps.gov.

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Footnotes

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Footnotes

*	IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas	**	The World Conservation Union
#	Fauna and Flora International	##	Int. Center for Protected Landscapes
+	Royal Society for the Preservation of Birds	++	Great Apes Survival Project (UNEP)