



THE THIN GREEN LINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

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OFFICERS REPORTS

President's Report

Dear Friends and Colleagues

There is an old Chinese curse which says 'may you live in interesting times'. These days of collapsing markets and global economic woes are certainly interesting and in some cases extremely worrying times. Whenever there are financial cut backs in government spending, it becomes increasingly difficult to fight for proper funding and resources for our work in protecting our precious natural and cultural environments.

Those of us who work in the world's developing countries are all too aware of the continual shortage of funds within our countries' economies and the heavy reliance on foreign donor funding and NGO contributions, a situation made worse by the diminishing buying power of once stable major currencies. A worldwide recession places yet further pressure on available resources. Even those rangers working in the richest countries are beginning to see budgets cut back as the harsh economic realities begin to bite.

But even within this dark a picture there is much to raise hope and reason to continue to reach forward. There is now at last an international approach developing to the problems which beset the DRC and we can begin to pray that the rangers who have given their blood in the name of conserving the mountain gorillas have not done so in vain. In America, the new Obama administration appears to have adopted a lesson from history in replicating Franklin Roosevelt and using spending on national park infrastructure to stimulate economic growth. Tucked away in his budget proposals is a plan to spend \$1.8 billion on "repairs and development".

Obviously there is much to concern us around the world, as we still hear almost weekly of colleagues undergoing extreme hardship, exposure to danger and even loss of life. Four rangers were killed and one missing presumed killed in Garamba National Park in northern DRC when LRA rebels attacked a ranger station on January 2nd. Sadly, many family members of rangers were also killed or wounded in the attack. Our thoughts are also with our ranger colleagues in Victoria, Australia, who have had to contend with the worst wildfires in Australian history, which killed over 200 people. By all accounts, the Victorian rangers are all safe, but many lost family members or had homes or vehicles burnt. The heroism of the rangers battling these infernos will largely go unnoticed and unrecorded but we recognize their courageous efforts, and salute them.

There are other, less dramatic but also important signs that we are continuing to advance the cause of rangers and the places we work. Through the generosity of their employing organizations, a small number of rangers, including several members of the IEC, were able to attend the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona to lobby the cause of rangers around the world. A memorandum of understanding was signed with the IUCN to further the work of the Thin Green Line Foundation in protecting the protectors and looking after the families of rangers killed on duty. The IRF/WCPA Young Conservationist Award was announced at a joint ceremony during the congress – congratulations to this year's winner, Edwin Sabuhoro of Rwanda, who works towards successfully turning poachers into rangers. Also thanks to Mark Stone, IRF ambassador, who presented the award on our behalf, and Parks Victoria for funding the IRF contribution to this award. The IRF and the Thin Green Line Foundation also held a side event and a press conference during the congress. By ensuring IRF representation in key workshops and by networking with key organizations and individuals, we were able to ensure that the ranger voice was heard throughout the decision-making process. The IRF will be applying to the IUCN for full membership to enable us to fully participate in the international decision making process which affects rangers around the world.

But there are also things that give us reason to take heart. Our love of the world's special places is very much shared with our fellow human beings; together we can work to ensure that even in times of financial difficulty they are not forgotten

Warm regards,

David Zeller, President
irfpresident@soft.co.za

Vice President's Report

Dear IRF friends and colleagues:

We have a new member association in the IRF family – Asociación de Guardaparques de Perú was voted into the IRF in January. The Suriname Ranger Association has also applied and should be officially a member this month.

The rangers of Victoria, Australia, are on our minds this month as photos of bush fires are shared and we learn that hundreds of human and wildlife homes are destroyed. Ranger Barry Batchelor of Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service reports that at least five Victorian rangers have lost their homes. He directs us to this web site for more information on wildlife impacts: <http://www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au>

In October 2008, Australia lost one of the local National Parks and Wildlife Service' (NPWS) most experienced and senior firefighters. Bryce Laut was killed during efforts to contain a wildfire in Kumbatine National Park, New South Wales.

In January, Bolivia lost a ranger and a friend to rangers when Daniel Socaza died in a traffic accident. As the head of the Protection of the Reserve for Wildlife Manuripi in Cobija, Pando Department (Protección de la Reserva de Vida Silvestre Manuripi en la ciudad de Cobija, Departamento de Pando), Daniel Socaza was an advocate for rangers and will be missed.

Please keep these rangers and their families in your thoughts this year.

Sixth World Ranger Congress 2009

BOLIVIA IS ON! Yes, we know the information has been slow in getting out. We have a lot of good news to share from the organizers now and you will be getting regular updates. The opening dinner will be on Sunday, November 1, 2009, and the closing dinner will be on Friday, with travel home on Saturday, November 7. Here are some other particulars:

- Web site – The test opening of the web page and the registration showed us the areas that needed to be improved. Some of the links did not work properly and the English translations needed additional work. The updated web page and registration links will be available by March 8th. The new deadline for the early registration rate is April 15th. The page is <http://www.guardaparque.org/>

- PayPal service – Just last week, the organizers (EVENTUS) were able to get a contract with a PayPals provider, a new service within Bolivia. PayPals is a commercial online service that is used by thousands of merchants around the world as a way for customers to pay for products and services. The Scotland Congress organizers used PayPals. The PayPals option will not be available until March 23rd, so that gives you time to set up your own PayPals account if you don't have one yet. I encourage you to set up an account now (www.paypals.com), then you will be ready to use it to register.
- Bolivian agency support – The Bolivian park agency, SERNAP, has renewed its commitment to this Congress in several critical ways. They have committed to sending 50 Bolivian rangers to the Congress and are supporting the involvement of the ranger association (ABOLAC) by rotating ABOLAC officers through the organizer office, each working one week every month until the start of the Congress. The Ministry of the Environment is very interested in showcasing this Congress and is expected to provide additional support. Bolivian elections are in December and the current administration sees this Congress as a way to show their support of rangers and the environment. This strong support from the Bolivian government is good news, as we are faced with the global economic crisis. Other good news is that we already have commitments for groups of rangers coming from Portugal, France, and Brazil in addition to individual rangers across the globe.
- Volunteers for the Congress – We need help in the areas noted below. If you can donate a couple hours every week, please send me an email (irfdeanne@aol.com) and let me know what you can do for any of these.
 - ✓ *Communications* – good writers who are fluent in writing English and Spanish. They would work with the Congress organizers to write regular updates for email to delegates and potential delegates, would write updates for the web pages, and reports to the IEC.
 - ✓ *Sponsorship coordination* – work with the Congress organizers to gather information on what ranger associations are conducting fundraising activities, which are sponsoring rangers. Share that information so there is a coordinated response to rangers asking for assistance. Assist with identifying potential sponsoring agencies and share that information. Identify key individuals who can help with sponsorship grant applications.
 - ✓ *Program development* – We have a good program committee now, but need one or two more members from Europe, North America, Africa, or Asia.

Thanks to editor Bill Halainen for postponing this issue of **The Thin Green Line** so we could get updated information on Bolivia into this issue.

IRF Elections

We are looking for a small group of members to serve on the election committee. The committee helps to recruit nominations for election of officers and regional representations, works with the secretary on the election process at the Congress, and runs the election nomination and voting during the IRF session at the Congress. If you are interested in serving on the election committee please send me an email (irfdeanne@aol.com).

Best wishes,

Deanne Adams, Vice President
IRFdeanne@aol.com

Editor's Report

Just a brief note this issue to draw your attention to two regular sections to **The Thin Green Line** – the calendar of upcoming events and the member directory.

The calendar is open to any and all upcoming events of importance to rangers. Please feel free to send anything you think important – training sessions, annual meetings, workshops, congresses, etc. Also please be sure to take a minute to look at it each issue.

The member directory has proven quite difficult to keep current. Representatives sometimes change without notice, and frequently move to new email addresses without notification. We continue to prepare on **The Thin Green Line** as a Word/PDF document and email it around the world to assure that you know that it's out and get a copy, but it's a challenge when there are six or eight undeliverables each issue for the above reasons. Please take a look at the list and send along any needed corrections.

Bill Halainen
Editor
Bill_Halainen@nps.gov

World Congress Organizing Committee

Registrations are now open for the Sixth World Ranger Congress, which will be held from November 1st to November 7th in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

Registering before April 15th will allow you to take advantage of the early discount, ensuring your place at this significant event, and it will also provide great support for the organizers. Go to www.guardaparque.org for more information.

The call for abstracts will be announced on the website by March 8th. All information will be in both English and Spanish, the official languages of the congress. Not only will we be inviting abstracts from those who are planning to participate in person at the congress, there will also be an opportunity for those who are unable to attend to submit abstracts for poster presentations. As always, presentations will need to address the themes of the congress, and the deadline for abstracts will also be April 15th.

The congress program is shaping up very well. It is intentionally focused on operations, considering topics such as the current and future work of rangers, climate change and what this means for protected area management, building linkages between ranger associations across the world, and setting directions for the IRF of the future.

We look forward to bringing you this exciting event and hope to see you all there.

Tegan Burton (for the Congress Program Committee)
reefer@netspace.net.au

European Regional Representative

All in all, last year was an active year for IRF in Europe:

- Both the Slovak and Hungarian Ranger Associations organized international ranger seminars.
- The Danish Ranger Association invited colleagues from the Nordic-Baltic countries to a nature interpretation seminar last October.
- As IRF's European representative, I was invited to a workshop in Germany in June, together with representatives from international and national organizations from the conservation and training sectors.
- In November, the Forum for European Nature Management organized a conference in Lyon in France under the title "Jobs for nature." Roger Cole from the ranger association in England and I were invited to talk about the ranger network and the role of Rangers in Europe.

My impression is that after these last two meetings IRF seems to be even more recognized as an important partner among European organizations who work with nature conservation and management. I am certain that one reason for this can also be that we have a very good ambassador in Carol Ritchie, the new director of Europarc Federation and a former ranger, SCRA member and national park manager from Scotland.

Slovakia

Nearly 70 professional and volunteer rangers from six countries (Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, Rumania, Norway and Russia) met when the Slovak Ranger Associations invited colleagues from Europe to a gathering on the occasion of their tenth anniversary in PLA Polana from June 4th to June 7th.

The main topics of the seminar were the ten year celebration and a discussion about current problems of rangers, exchange of knowhow, and joining cooperatively with national rangers associations in Europe. The following topics were identified by participants as needing further attention:

- The increasing need for ranger meetings and information about exchanges within Europe and around the world.
- The significance of unified methodical systems and management of rangers work and definition of European standards for rangers work.
- The continuing education of rangers and improvement of language skills, including communication techniques and technical facilities.
- A search for sources and the possibility of financing to increase the number of rangers because of the increasing number of visitors to protected areas.
- The need for education of young rangers and improvement of the image of protected areas among inhabitants, owners, visitors and the wider public, with a focus on their active integration in practical management measures.

Hungary

The second European Ranger Seminar of IRF was held in Kiskunsag and Danube-Drava National Parks from September 14th to September 20th. A total of 68 rangers from 14 countries took part in the seminar (Austria, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland and Serbia). It was the first time rangers from France, Ireland and Serbia took part in and IRF seminar/conference, and it now looks like there are going to be national associations in both France and Serbia as a follow-up after the seminar in Hungary.



Rangers from 14 countries gathered in Hungary for IRF's second European Ranger Seminar.

It was concluded that the Hungarian Nature Conservation Ranger Service, with its diverse activities and ranger functions, presents a good example for all nature conservation ranger federations and services in other countries, since it is considered to be one of the most well-organized and unified in Europe, with a legal basis that serves also as a good example in this field.

The seminar closed with the announcement that the next European seminar would be held in Russia in 2010.

Denmark

The Danish Ranger Association held the first Nordic-Baltic Nature Interpretation seminar/course at Odsherred Nature School from October 8th to October 10th. Participants from Lithuania, Germany, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Denmark took part and presented “best practices” from each country. The focus was on the aim of nature interpretation as well as pedagogic methods, different target groups, etc. On the last day, the focus was on how we can integrate climate and climate challenges into nature interpretation. Another topic at the seminar was the establishment of a “Nordic-Baltic Forum for Nature Interpretation.” Arne Bondo Andersen is the contact person for the forum.

The next Nordic-Baltic seminar will take place in Norway late next summer. The seminar will take place in Jotunheimen NP and focus will be set on nature interpretation in national parks.

Rigmor Solem
Rigmor.Solem@DIRNAT.NO

Africa Regional Representative Report

The following is a synopsis of some of the main developments and news snippets from the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA) since the last edition of on **The Thin Green Line**:

GRAA Protected Area Management System (PAMS) And Related Management Effectiveness Projects

The use of PAMS in the Selous-Niassa Wildlife Protection Corridor Project is continuing and is focusing on improving the effectiveness of the anti-poaching components of the trans-boundary project. Since the memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed with WWF Tanzania, a local university (Ardhi University) has also indicated its support and willingness to work with us on starting an invasive alien species control program in Tanzania. We are working on project proposals to source funding for our work in the fields of management effectiveness assurance and in invasive alien species management.

The motion related to the need for management effectiveness assessments and for management systems (such as PAMS), which was tabled at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2008 in Barcelona, was adopted with the vote count of 321 in favor, 3 against and 12 abstentions. During the year, we made various presentations on PAMS in South Africa and in Tanzania. It was favorably received almost everywhere, but some cited budgetary constraints as precluding them from implementing it presently. However, we hope to start implementing it for another Tanzanian-based client in February. PAMS became an important part of a new module, titled “Ensuring Effective Management”, which was presented to students of the Southern African Wildlife College for the first time last November.

We also visited the Western Cape of South Africa during January, where we benchmarked our nature-based tourism certification standard at Klipbokkop. We now require endorsement of the standard from government and any other key role players and agencies, after which we'll start marketing and promoting it for wider application.

African Representation Issues

Rob Markham resigned from his position on the coast of Kenya to go back to South Africa. The GRAA therefore needs to find a new representative for that country.

Peter Chadwick has been co-opted as the GRAA's official representative for Africa's marine protected areas (MPAs) and spokesperson for marine conservation issues since the last Africa Committee meeting.

The GRAA would like to congratulate and encourage Sean Willmore on the sterling work he continues to do with his Thin Green Line Foundation! His tireless efforts are a help and an inspiration to many rangers, and others, throughout Africa.

GRAA Annual General Meeting

The GRAA will be holding its annual general meeting at Shamvura in the Caprivi Strip, Namibia, from February 15th to February 20th. For more information on this meeting visit www.gameranger.org or contact the GRAA Secretary, Don Yunnied, on yunnied@telkomsa.net.

Wayne Derek Lotter
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Australia/Oceania Regional Representative

Another year gone and it is now almost March. Happy New Year to all and I hope that those of us who had the opportunity to spend Christmas relaxing with friends and family had a great time. The authors of each section appear in parentheses.

Protected Area Workers Association (PAWA) Of NSW (Tegan Burton)

Firstly, I would like to remember Bryce Laut, NPWS fire management officer, who lost his life on October 26th while involved in firefighting operations in Kumbatine National Park. Bryce was one of NPWS' most enthusiastic and senior firefighters, showing courage and commitment which earned him the admiration and respect of all. His colleagues say that Bryce understood the risks that many parks people face on a daily basis and accepted these as part and parcel of managing fire. He was passionate about furthering environmental conservation and educating colleagues, managers and the public about fire, the value of the environment, and the importance of protecting our world. Those who knew Bryce were very much richer for the experience.

PAWA has seen a very busy few months, particularly working in conjunction with ACT Brasil and APITIKATXI on the "Equip the Amazon" project. In September, PAWA members spent three weeks in Macapa, Brazil, providing an opportunity to make the first delivery of donated field equipment to the indigenous rangers of APITIKATXI. The equipment included GPS units, digital cameras, an EeePC laptop, head torches and batteries, multi-tools and compasses.

At the same time, ACT Brasil provided the indigenous rangers with backpacks containing, amongst other things, rope, a tarpaulin, compass, fishing kit and lighter. This equipment is steadily building on the arsenal of essential tools being provided to support individual rangers in the community.

During the visit, the Australian visitors also had a first-hand taste of the action-packed and comprehensive 20-day training the rangers of northeastern Brazil are undertaking. A compilation of video and stills depicting the major themes of the training and the experiences of participants is available from www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTnLv04wltg

ACT Suriname reports that a similar training program for indigenous rangers was run over 14 days in Suriname in October. Fourteen members of the Kwamalasamutu, Sipaliwini and Apetina communities were trained by Surinamese government rangers in Coesewijne Reserve. This will hopefully be the first of many ranger training programs to be run in Suriname.

In other areas, significant effort has gone in to raising the profile of the association, and thus protected area workers, with the development of an association brochure and stickers, promotion through t-shirts, and ongoing website enhancement - take a look at www.pawansw.org

New South Wales Protected Area Management (Tegan Burton)

The New South Wales (NSW) government is currently undertaking public consultation for an aboriginal land management framework as part of a broader program of strengthening aboriginal connections to country.

Aboriginal communities are being invited to contribute views on access to and use of public land, opportunities for being involved in public land management, and perspectives on government services for aboriginal landowners. A discussion paper looking at these five major themes is available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nswcultureheritage/almf.htm:

- Acknowledging aboriginal connection to country
- Improving aboriginal access to public lands
- Increased aboriginal participation in the management of public lands
- Developing economic opportunities from the sustainable use of land; and
- Learning and working for country,

Something which may be of interest to those striving to build meaningful and effective protected area networks is the NSW terrestrial reserve establishment plan, giving a clear direction for building a CAR (comprehensive, adequate and representative) reserve system in NSW. The state continues to maintain a commitment to 'developing a world class protected area network', with a foundation in 'a secure and professionally managed public reserve system, complemented by conservation efforts on private and other public lands.' Importantly, the ministerially-endorsed establishment plan provides clear statements on conservation goals and objectives and outlines priorities for land acquisition over the next ten years.

The NSW government recently released the report of its tourism and national parks taskforce. In doing so, the minister for the environment confirmed that protecting parks and reserves and their conservation values remains a priority, and that providing a range of interesting and innovative ways for people to experience them helps us promote conservation and tap into the growing global market for ecotourism. Opportunity or threat? Time will tell, and the work of rangers will be crucial either way. The full report is available from www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parks/tourismtaskforce.htm

Developments In Victoria (Peter Cleary)

The Victorian Ranger Association committee has ratified that \$5 of each members' annual fee for 2009 will be donated to the Thin Green Line Foundation. We believe the support which TGL offers and facilitates to rangers and their families throughout the world, is important in preserving and promoting protection of natural and cultural assets. In this small way, Victorian Rangers can assist their brethren and show that their efforts are well appreciated.

Developments In Queensland (Paul Lawless-Pyne)

The Queensland Rangers Association (QRA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have signed a historic memorandum of understanding which will see the relationship between the two groups strengthened even further. The MOU spells out what each group will provide and how staff that are active in the association can benefit the workplace. Professional organizations such as the QRA have an important role to play within the EPA and this MOU allows for a more transparent business approach. While the agency has been very supportive of the QRA over the last five to six years thanks to people such as executive director Alan Feely, the MOU allows this relationship and understanding to filter across the entire agency. One small extract from the MOU reads as follows; "Staff are to be encouraged to take on a role of responsibility within the QRA to help them develop as effective staff members of the agency. Roles should be documented in individuals performance agreements and learning plan, so due recognition of the benefits of these roles can be recognized by management of each individual." Well done to those QRA executive who worked over the period to get the MOU accepted by the EPA.

The 2009 QRA conference is being held from March 16th to 19th at Byfield on the Capricorn Coast near Rockhampton, which is located on the Tropic of Capricorn on the Australian East Coast. Each year the 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 has some ideal areas for staff to visit during the organized field trips that will be held on March 16th. The conference theme is 'Communicating with Communities' and is looking at how we communicate with each other and how we communicate with the general public and other government agencies. During the conference, we will have a group of experts in their chosen field discussing issues that we feel are important to all rangers and are seen as part of their everyday working life. These experts will speak for 10 to 15 minutes, then discussions on the subject will be open to the audience with the speakers interacting with them.

This process will be controlled by a moderator who will ensure the discussion stays within the subject fields. The conference aims to produce a conference accord so we can track actual outcomes from these sessions through to actual conclusions. As usual we will have a trade display session, which will highlight many products from different companies, which are used in day to day management of EPA estate. These companies are an important part of the conference as they provide financial support to the QRA to cover costs for running the conference. On behalf of the QRA conference organizing committee, I would like to extend an invitation to any rangers, from interstate or overseas, who may be holidaying in Queensland to attend and enjoy some great hospitality, story telling and general ranger camaraderie. If you're interested in attending, could you please contact me by email paul.lawlesspyne@epa.qld.gov.au .

Paul Lawless-Pyne
Australian/Oceania Rep
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NEWS FROM NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Finland Finnish Ranger Association

The Finnish Ranger Association has new contact information. Aarno Tervonen is the chairman/president and can be reached at aarno.tervonen@metsa.fi. The secretary for the association is Reeta Hyttinen, who can be contacted at reeta.hyttinen@metsa.fi . The association has made a new start and has been reorganized.

Reeta Huttinen
Reeta.hyttinen@metsa.fi

Slovak Republic Slovak Ranger Association

The association met last November and elected a new president, Zdeno Pochop. His email address is zpo chop@gmail.com .

Juraj Svajda
juraj.svajda@gmail.com

England and Wales Countryside Management Association

Unfortunately, the 2008 CMA Conference scheduled for October had to be cancelled due to low numbers of delegates. This highlights a more serious problem for CMA – that of falling membership numbers and a general lack of support. The CMA plans to address this issue during the coming year as we focus on the best way forward for our association.

As previously reported in this newsletter, there are now a number of organizations in the UK, each representing different factions of the profession. Whilst it is understandable that each organization feels its role is to represent their common-interest group of members, this fragmentation of the profession has resulted in a "dilution effect" such that the voice of our industry becomes weaker. The downside to this is that government and NGO's are unsure which organization to listen to and the danger is that they listen to none. Also, and at a more fundamental level, several of the smaller organizations may find it difficult to survive.



Left to right: Roger Cole (CMA England/ Wales), Gilles Landrieu (ATEN France), and Rigmor Solem (IRF Europe/Norway) at the "Jobs for Nature" Congress in Lyon, France.

On a more positive note, CMA made a presentation to the pan-European "Jobs for Nature" Congress in France in November. There seemed to be genuine interest from French ranger colleagues to form a national ranger association and then make an application to join the IRF. France has been absent from IRF for far too long.

Roger Cole
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Scotland Scottish Countryside Rangers Association

The SCRA annual conference was held at Gartmore House in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park last November. This was the first time we have held a joint event with some of the major ranger employers in Scotland. SCRA was joined by the two Scottish National Parks, the Forestry Commission, the National Trust for Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in running the event. Rangers from all over Scotland, working for a diverse set of agencies, came together for three days of talks, events and sharing good practice. It was the best-attended conference we have run for a number of years and we hope to make it a biannual event, with a smaller one day course in the alternate years.

We were particularly pleased to be joined by the Scottish Environment Minister, Mike Russell, who participated in a question and answer session with delegates. This centered on the coming changes to the way local government rangers are to be funded after the first of April this year. Previously, we were funded by SNH as part of a three-year rolling contact. This April, the money will be sent to local authorities as part of their general allocation of money from the Scottish government, but with no ring fencing, which means they can spend it as they see fit. It also removes the nationally applicable contract all ranger employers signed with SNH. This could lead to a dilution of the rangers' role and differences in their remit from one area to another. To try to stop this, SCRA, SNH and the major ranger employers have been working on a development plan, which includes a set of standards for the role of the ranger – the basic task list we would expect a ranger to fulfill. This will be presented to employers and the government soon with the hope it becomes the standard by which they define a ranger in Scotland.

In other areas, we are planning the next leg of our exchange program with Iceland; three of our members are currently looking at doing the exchange this summer. We hope to choose one of them soon. We are also about to set up a youth volunteer trip to Iceland this July. School children from Glenrothes in Fife are working with the ranger service there on a number of conservation tasks, species management, tree planting, footpath construction, etc. This program will end as the schools break for the summer and the young volunteers will be taken for a week's conservation work in Iceland.

Tony Wilson

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United States Association of National Park Rangers

ANPR Ranger Rendezvous

The annual Ranger Rendezvous -- held this year in Santa Fe, New Mexico -- was well represented by IRF board members, including vice president Deanne Adams, past president and executive director Gordon Miller, past president Rick Smith, and North American representative Meg Weesner. I hosted a workshop with these IRF board members for rendezvous attendees. Topics included reports and updates on the following topics:

- The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) meeting in Barcelona;
- The Young Conservationist Award
- The Thin Green Line Foundation
- An update on the World Ranger Congress in Bolivia this year

Further information on these topics can be found in the last issue of on **The Thin Green Line**, as well as in further articles in this issue.

In other actions at the Rendezvous, IRF member associations will be pleased to know that Bill Halainen, the editor of on **The Thin Green Line** and a long-term supporter and behind-the-scenes worker for the IRF, was presented the ANPR President's Award for his longtime outstanding service to ANPR. He was taken by surprise, but managed nonetheless to pull off a gracious acceptance speech. Congratulations to Bill!

President Barack Obama Brings In New Environmental Team

Many people in the environmental community are eager to work with President Obama and the new administration on energy, endangered species, global warming, parks, and other important environmental issues. The new Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar from Colorado (who oversees the National Park Service), has already taken steps to reverse decisions made in the ending days of the Bush administration that allowed drilling to take place on lands adjacent to some national parks in the Southwest. He has also asked for a review of last-minute rules of the Bush administration that were seen to weaken protections for endangered species.

A new director will be appointed for the U.S. National Park Service in the near future. This person will need to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. In the meantime, the NPS deputy director, Dan Wenk, will be acting as director. He was a keynote speaker at our Ranger Rendezvous in New Mexico in December.

ANPR looks forward to working with the new secretary and the NPS director in sharing with them the hundreds of years of field experience of our members for the betterment of all parks.

Travel well,

Tony Sisto
ANPR International Affairs
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NEWS FROM RANGERS

Nicaragua Noticias De Nicaragua

El programa comunitario de Tortugas marinas en el Corredor Biológico Paso del Istmo, Rivas, Nicaragua, inició a finales del 2007 con la selección de 6 guardaparques de las comunidades aledañas al Refugio de Vida Silvestre La Flor por la ONG, Paso Pacífico. Estos 6 comunitarios sin experiencia en las funciones de un guardaparque pero con el ímpetu de poder contribuir en la conservación de los recursos naturales de su comunidad iniciaron su entrenamiento sobre el guardaparque moderno dirigido por uno de los directivos de la organización Paso Pacífico y guardaparque retirado del Servicio de Parques de los Estados Unidos, Señor Rick Smith. También algunos guardaparques gubernamentales y miembros del ejército nicaragüense participaron

Después de un año de desempeño, estos 6 guardaparques se auto-evaluaron en 10 características, obteniendo resultados satisfactorios en una escala de 1 al 10. La mayoría con un promedio de 8.5. Este proceso permitió establecer confianza sobre sus habilidades aprendidas y reforzar su autoestima. Así mismo, permitió a Paso Pacífico poder conocer sobre las fortalezas, debilidades y oportunidades que un proceso evaluativo auténtico puede generar para lograr mayor cohesión, trabajo de equipo, así como, mayor entereza para lograr los retos en la conservación de las tortugas marinas y la biodiversidad.

En la opinión del Rick Smith, este tipo de auto-evaluación no ha sido empleado en muchos lugares en América Latina y puede ofrecer a los supervisores una herramienta más en el proceso de producir trabajo de alta calidad y mejorar las habilidades, destrezas, y conocimientos de sus guardaparques, las dos funciones más importantes de cualquier supervisor en un área protegida.

Nicaragua News From Nicaragua

The program to protect sea turtles in the biological corridor. Paso de Istmo, in Rivas, Nicaragua, began in 2007 with the hiring of 6 community-based rangers from the communities near the La Flor Wildlife Refuge by the NGO, Paso Pacífico. These 6 local community members had no experience in being a ranger but with a desire to contribute to the conservation of the natural resources of their communities, they began their training in the functions of a modern park ranger. This training course was presented by Rick Smith, one of Paso Pacífico's board members and a retired park ranger from the United States Park Service.. Government rangers and members of the Nicaraguan army also participated in the course.

At the end of the first year of work, Paso Pacífico asked the rangers to evaluate themselves on 10 characteristics on a scale of 1-10. The average evaluation was 8.5. The evaluation process allowed the rangers to gain more confidence in the skills they had learned and to reinforce their self-esteem. At the same time, Paso Pacífico was able to see the strengths and weaknesses and opportunities that an authentic evaluation process could generate for better teamwork and cohesion to meet the challenges of conserving sea turtles and biodiversity.

In Rick Smith's opinion, this type of self evaluation has not been employed in many Latin American areas and its application would give supervisors one more tool in the process of producing high quality work and improving the knowledge, skills and abilities of their rangers, the two most important functions of any protected area supervisor.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

March 16 – March 19

“Communicating with Communities,” Queensland Ranger Association Conference, Byfield, Queensland, Australia.
<http://www.queenslandranger.org/members/conference/current/conference.html>

May 17 – May 22

“English Language for Environmentalists: A Specialized International English Language Course for Environmental Professionals,” Losehill Hall, Peak District National Park, Castleton, Derbyshire, UK. For more information or to reserve a place, please telephone Sue Field at 44-1433-622472 or send an email to training.losehill@peakdistrict.gov.uk. More details can also be found at www.losehilltraining.org.uk

July 31

World Ranger Day.

December 7 – December 10

Ranger Rendezvous XXXII, Wyndham Hotel, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA. The 32nd annual gathering of the members of the U.S. Association of National Park Rangers will focus on the country’s historical parks, principally its many battlefields. <http://www.anpr.org/anprrr.htm>

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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*	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)