



INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION NEWSLETTER

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IRF News

IRF Executive Council

Ballots have been received from member associations regarding the composition of IRF's executive council. The results are as follows:

President	Gordon Miller, United Kingdom
Vice President	Rick Smith, Association of National Park Rangers, United States
Secretary	Sue Clark, Countryside Management Association, United Kingdom
Treasurer	Mike Marshall, Countryside Management Association, United Kingdom
Australasia	Kristen Appel, Australian Ranger Association, Australia
Africa	John Forrest, Game Rangers Association of Africa, South Africa
South America	Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Asociacion De Guardaparques y Guias de Naturaleza, Uruguay
Central America	Ronald Mora, Costa Rica Rangers Association, Costa Rica
North America	Yvette Ruan, Association of National Park Rangers, United States
Europe	Vlado Vancura, Slovak Rangers Association, Slovakia
Asia	Pending

President Gordon Miller has sent along the following note to his new fellow council members and to those who were not elected:

"Congratulations to those who were elected; to those who were unsuccessful, I would like to extend my thanks for offering your services and hope that we can use your talents in the future. It's a healthy sign for IRF that we can have so many wishing to be so active in its development.

"The next few years will require a lot of work to fulfill our early promises and aspirations, and there will be an increasing need for continental groups of activists. We owe a debt to departing council members and officers. I hope that we can all follow their devotion to the cause.

"I would also like to pay tribute to the retiring Secretary, Bob Reid. Bob was one of the founders of the Federation, and has consistently supported the concept of a worldwide ranger family. Although he has returned to the role of Chairman of the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association, I am sure that he will continue to be active in international affairs. Our warmest thanks to you, Bob."

Third World Congress

IRF's Third World Congress will be held September 10-16, 2000, at Berg en Dal Camp in Kruger National Park. Merle Whyte of Mpumalanga Promotions, the organization that contracted with the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA) to run the event, has provided us with an update on developments:

- The main theme of the Congress will be "The Role of the Ranger Beyond 2000." The emphasis will be on the development of effective strategies to ensure that ranger expertise and knowledge is transmitted to decision-makers in business, governments and communities so that rangers become a force for change in the 21st century. The congress will be structured to allow maximum participation by and interaction between delegates through plenary and breakaway sessions. There will also be a limited number of poster presentations.
- As noted previously, the four sub themes of the congress will be to enhance and support the role and status of rangers in the continent of Africa; to raise awareness of IRF, particularly in Africa; to encourage the sharing of expertise from all parts of the world to combat threats to wildlife; and to raise awareness of the problems of wildlife management and improve the ability of rangers to provide solutions to these problems.
- The venue for the workshop will be Berg-en-dal Rest Camp in Kruger NP. The park's roughly 4.8 million acres are in Mpumalanga Province. The park is well known for its vast biological diversity, with 336 species of trees, 147 of mammals, 507 of birds, 114 of reptiles, 49 of fish, and 34 of amphibians. Berg-en-dal is located 12 kilometers from the Malelane entrance gate and has 68 three-bed cottages, 23 six-bed cottages, two guest houses, and 70 camping sites.
- There will be a one-day, mid-congress field trip which will expose participants to management issues of Kruger NP, including game capture, vegetation monitoring, application of fire as a management technique, and anti-poaching techniques. Morning and evening game drives will be undertaken before and after the daily congress sessions. Registration includes two drives per participant. Optional three-day, pre-congress excursions can be arranged at additional cost to Mpumalanga, KwaZulu/Natal, and Cape Provinces. Groups will be small and will be accompanied by local experts.
- Should the demand be sufficient, a program will be arranged for family or friends accompanying delegates. Possibilities include game drives, day visits to interesting cultural and historic sites, and spectacular scenic drives in the vicinity of the park.
- A call for papers has been issued for 20-minute oral presentations during plenary sessions and 10-minute presentations of assembled poster materials during poster sessions. Papers should focus on one of the four congress sub themes noted above. The steering committee will select papers on the basis of relevance to the congress themes. Abstracts of 500 words or less should be submitted to the Congress secretariat by April 1, 1999. These will be included in a file provided to delegates at registration.
- The registration fee for the congress will include transportation from and to Johannesburg International Airport, shared accommodations, meals, congress materials, and the mid-congress field excursion. The fee will be approximately \$600 (U.S.) per delegate; the exact amount will be announced later. A limited number of scholarships will be available. Delegates who will need financial assistance to participate should contact the Congress secretariat as soon as possible. Mpumalanga Promotions will be able to assist with reservations, information and other arrangements for any delegates who may wish to extend their stays in Africa.

- GRAA recently established GRASS (Game Ranger Association Specialist Services) as a commercial "arm" to assist with funding their association. The first commercial venture to be launched by GRASS consists of safaris in Kruger NP led by full-time game rangers - GRAA members who are subcontracted for the duration of the safari. These safaris can be arranged for any length between three and six days, and are individually planned. Clients can request specialization in a specific field; if, for example, they are interested in birds, a ranger who is a bird specialist will be their guide. Other options include elephant or photo safaris. The safaris entail game drives in an open vehicle, early morning and evening walks, bush braai (barbecues), and in-depth information on management of natural areas.
- A brochure on the Congress will be printed in August and distributed in September. GRAA would like interested delegates to contact them by the end of November.

For more information, contact Merle via Internet (merle@mpu.co.za) or by fax (27-13-7355047).

Second World Congress

Work continues on the proceedings from the Second World Congress in Costa Rica. It has taken a considerable amount of time to get all the documents in the same format, type up rough notes, and translate some presentations from Spanish to English or from English to Spanish. The target for publication is November or December.

Officer Activities

President Gordon Miller met with representatives from the Johann Jacobs Foundation at Losehill Hall in Peak District National Park in the U.K. in mid-July. Also attending were Francisco Correia and Maria Cunha from Associacao Portuguesa de Guardas e Vigilantes da Natureza, the Portuguese ranger association. The foundation is funding a project in Europe entitled "Promoting Environmental Literacy through Youth and Ranger Training," which Gordon will be supervising on behalf of IRF. One of the first activities will be a professionally done survey of rangers in Europe to determine training, qualifications, and related skills and abilities. The project will bring in \$4,500 to IRF over the next two years - not a lot, but every little bit helps.

Vice President Rick Smith will be traveling to Mexico on behalf of IRF on October 25th. He will give a speech to the participants at the first training course for Latin American rangers pertaining to law enforcement. He will be speaking on the general topic of the status of world conservation.

Australasian Representative Kristen Appel will be attending Heritage Interpretation International's Fifth World Congress in Sydney, Australia, on behalf of IRF.

News About IRF Associations

Australian Ranger Association (Australia)

Membership in ARA is now at 300 and still growing. Many are from a Victoria-based ranger association, which has affiliated with ARA. The addition of a new representative from the state of Queensland means that ARA now has reps from all state and territorial (including federal) conservation agencies. The annual general meeting will be in September in Victoria (see calendar).

ARA is in the process of setting up a ranger host program register and a rangerhood 'bin' which can assist our less fortunate brother and sister rangers in other countries.

President Kristen Appel visited New Zealand in May to promote the IRF and close links between New Zealand rangers and ARA.

David Rush

Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (Scotland)

A planned visit by members of the Icelandic ranger service is currently being organized for September. Six Icelandic rangers will be coming here to help cement links between our two associations, and to see if they can learn anything new from our methods. We will also be doing a bit of socializing and sightseeing.

A Costa Rican who is hoping to do some work in Scotland has approached us, with the aim of putting him in touch with potential employers. So far we have spread the word around Scotland and are still awaiting a result. If anyone else is looking for similar help we will try our best but cannot guarantee success.

One of our main projects at the moment is our contribution to the setting up of a Scottish special needs forum, aimed at promoting access for all in Scotland's countryside. SCRA has been at the forefront of equal access for many years; with the recent changes in our laws promoting such access, we have been approached to help set up a working group. The forum is funded by British Telecom and Scottish Natural Heritage, with input from several organizations with expertise in this field.

Bill Halainen and Gordon Miller were recently given honorary life memberships in SCRA for their part in setting up the IRF. Congratulations to them, but they may find it hard to get that free whisky they were rashly promised.

Finally a reminder that our annual conference is on from November 4th to the 6th at the Buchanan Arms Hotel in Drymen. The topic is "Rangers the New Millennium", and will focus on how our work may change in the next few years. If you're interested in details, contact Tony at SCRA's e-mail address.

Tony Wilson

Association of National Park Rangers (United States)

ANPR has received expressions of interest in affiliating with IRF from Cuba, Argentina, Mexico and Ecuador. Members of ANPR's international committee are providing our colleagues in these countries with the necessary information on affiliation.

Organizers of the Costa Rican Congress are struggling with the address list for the participants of the congress. Please send updated addresses, including phone, fax and e-mail information to Rick Smith via Internet at rsmith0921@aol.com, or by fax at 505-867-4175, or to his home address at 2 Roadrunner Trail, Placitas, NM 87043, USA.

The completed list will be included as a supplement to the proceedings, which should be published near the end of 1998.

Rick Smith

California State Park Rangers Association (United States)

CSPRA's board is looking at ways in which California rangers could help other ranger groups around the world. They are presently looking at the possibility of donating surplus uniforms and other items, and would be interested in suggestions from other member associations on what might be needed or how this might be done. A partnership with another country is one of the options that they'd like to consider.

Contact Mike via Internet at lynch@psyber.com.

Mike Lynch

Countryside Management Association (England)

CMA is in the process of formalizing its entry requirements. In order to assure that this is also in line with what our employers want, CMA has arranged a seminar for employers to discuss how their needs can be incorporated into the new membership category. The objective is to have employers use the criteria to write job descriptions, develop staff appraisals, and understand exactly what it is that we do out in the field.

Training is still a high priority for CMA, and the association ran a number of very successful training events this past spring. Among the subjects examined were applications of law for rangers, visitor safety, and wetland management.

CMA continues its links with GRAA in South Africa. I attended the annual general meeting (AGM) with Colin Dilcock and Gordon Miller, and again found it interesting that the only difference between our two association's AGM is accent. The same issues are talked about in the same way. This again highlights the importance of IRF.

Information on the professional membership category in CMA can be obtained from me or from IRF Treasurer Mike Marshall.

Declan Keiley

Game Rangers Association of Africa (South Africa)

John Forrest has made some observations about GRAA and IRF in his "Chairman's Comments" in the most recent edition of GRAA's newsletter ("The Cleft Stick") that are worth sharing with other member associations. Excerpts follows:

"As the GRAA grows and administration necessarily becomes more complex and difficult, some form of 'bureaucratic' system becomes necessary. It is the degree of this bureaucracy that we must be careful about. Too often many of us have seen bureaucracies out of control, where the tail wags the dog, where reality has long been forgotten, as has the gift of individuality and delegation of responsibility (as long as it is not abused).

"Game Rangers should, I believe, be spiritually an integral part of that wilderness and environment that they have committed themselves to conserve. It should be entrenched in their souls. [They should not be deflected by anything outside that commitment], including the vagaries and opportunistic solutions of politicians, the de-motivating, destructive cancer of excessive bureaucracy, [and] the high-jacking by senior officers who should know better of the greatest gift rangers have – the knowledge, the ability, the perception, and hopefully, the will, to make on the ground decisions regarding problems that they should be best equipped to handle. If they allow their opinions and this vast reservoir of knowledge that so many of them have accumulated over so many years, irreplaceable knowledge, to be ignored or by-passed for whatever reason, if they allow those ethics, those ideals that so many of their compatriots in Africa have died for to be compromised, if they allow all these, and the rest, these issues that run deep into the tragedy of conservation in Africa to be an acceptable part of what they are about, then they have no right to be called a Game Ranger or to be a member of this organization. And, if they cannot, at least, meet those levels of expertise that are expected of them, then of necessity they must sacrifice their responsibilities to others.

"The GRAA and the IRF (International Ranger Federation) exist to sustain and promote those very values, principles, ethics and ideals that are often so lacking in conservation throughout the world, including Africa. And just as importantly they exist to ensure that the ranger, through undisputed knowledge and expertise is capable of exercising his/her rightful role and influence in conservation in Africa and internationally. This 'right' does not come free. It must be earned. This is what we are about."

John Forrest

Upcoming Events

- September 3-5, 1998 Annual General Meeting, Australian Ranger Association, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
- October 15, 1998 Vice President Rick Smith speaking at Latin American ranger law enforcement training class, Mexico.
- November 4-6, 1998 Annual Conference, Scottish Countryside Ranger Association, Buchanan Arms Hotel, Drymen, Scotland.
- November 11-15, 1998 Annual Meeting, Naturvardarna, Sweden.
- December 8-12, 1998 22nd Ranger Rendezvous, U.S. Association of National Park Rangers, Tucson, Arizona, USA.
- September 10-16, 2000 IRF Third World Congress, Kruger NP, Republic of South Africa.

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