

AUGUST BULLETIN

INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

P.O. BOX 37 · STIRLING, FX8 25L · SCOTLAND

FIRST WORLD RANGER CONGRESS

At 6:30 on the evening of Sunday, May 21, 1995, Gordon Miller, chairman of the International Ranger Federation, officially opened the First World Ranger Congress with the raising of IRF's flag - the green, blue and white ying-yang symbol, representing the balance of the world's waters, lands and mountains - outside the Kasprowy Hotel in Zakopane, Poland, to the thunderous applause of 135 delegates from ranger organizations from 35 nations around the world.

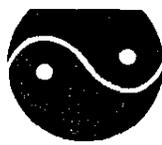
That triumphant moment symbolized both an end and a beginning - the end of the three intense years of planning and organizing that followed the signing of the original IRF charter in July, 1992; the beginning of a true world community of park and protected area rangers. It was a watershed moment in the history of the ranger profession.

The flag raising was followed by an evening "potlach" - a traditional friendship meal - that set the tone for the week. Food and drink which delegates had brought from their home countries was spread out over several long tables and shared among all. The sharing was accompanied by conversation, as people got to know each other and began talking about their homes, their jobs, their problems and successes.

A hallmark of the congress would be these many small gatherings with constantly changing mixes of delegates from different nations - each unique in the ideas and anecdotes discussed, the lessons learned, the friendships made. Although there were occasional language problems, delegates were almost always able to figure out a way to communicate - generally in English, sometimes in Spanish or French or another language, occasionally through gestures and illustrations. Several things were quickly apparent - that rangers will always find a way to communicate, that ranger work is so similar worldwide that much is readily understandable despite language problems, and that Linnaeus' use of Latin to describe plants and animals makes a great deal of sense in field trips with multi-lingual groups.

The congress itself had themes for each day that reflected principal concerns of the delegates. On Monday, it was the federation and its purposes, then some of the issues and problems in protected areas; on Tuesday, resource management; on Wednesday, human resources; on Thursday, the means for balancing conflicts, particularly through interpretation and education; on Friday, IRF's future.

The approach to each theme was similar - a presentation or two on the subject, followed by workshops and discussions. The topics addressed in these sessions illustrated the diversity of issues that rangers must address; among them, providing environmental education, dealing with native or aboriginal peoples resident within parks, managing parks on the urban fringe, controlling poaching and other resource depredations, establishing ranger training programs, and integrating research into resource management. Delegates were continually intrigued to find so many commonalities in issues faced by rangers wherever they lived and worked. Discussions revealed solutions found in one country that might resolve problems in another, and served to foster the already high degree of interchanges among delegates. The text of the presentations and of the recommendations which emerged from many of the subsequent discussions will appear in full in the congress proceedings, which are to be published later this year.



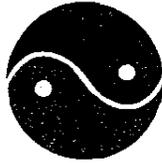
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Zakopane Declaration

We, the delegates here assembled in Zakopane, Poland, at the first International Ranger Federation Congress, representing rangers from 35 nations on 6 continents, do hereby declare our commitment to the following principles:

- * That, as principal guardians of the world's premier natural and cultural protected areas, we are uniquely positioned and qualified to monitor their health, assess their problems and extrapolate current trends into probable futures;
- * That, unless circumstances change, these natural and cultural areas under our charge will in many cases continue to slowly but inexorably decline;
- * That the rangers charged with protecting these areas play a distinctive role in identifying problems associated with this decline and proposing practical solutions to them;
- * That these rangers also have a fundamental role in explaining the importance of natural and cultural resources to the public, thereby awakening in them the essential desire and interest in conserving them for future generations;
- * That these rangers are involved in complex and highly important tasks in preservation of natural and cultural resources, but lack recognition of the importance of these tasks from the governments that employ them;
- * That the majority of these rangers live in very difficult conditions, lack adequate institutional support and resources, receive meagre salaries and take significant personal and professional risks to protect these invaluable sites, which constitute core elements of the world's natural and cultural heritage;
- * That they all too often sacrifice their lives in their commitment to protection of this heritage;
- * And that, for all these reasons, we are firmly committed to seeking greater recognition and attention to their work, to their well-being and to the critical status of the heritage that they protect and defend, and will exert ourselves in a concerted effort to resolve these problems, enlisting in this the support of the people and governments of this earth.

Zakopane, Poland 26th May 1995



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P.O. BOX 37 · STIRLING, FX8 2SL · SCOTLAND

Dear *Michael*.

World Ranger Congress - Zakopane, Poland

I am writing to thank you for your valuable contribution to the success of the First Congress. The enthusiasm and commitment of participants throughout the week were the single most important contributions to making the Congress such a memorable occasion.

I am enclosing a delegate address list, as promised, together with a copy of the Zakopane Declaration. I would be grateful if you have copies of any speakers or workshop notes that could be used in the Congress Report. We hope to have the Report completed in the next 3-4 months when we will mail it to all delegates. Colin Dilcock is compiling a 35mm slide pack of the Congress to sell - if you have any that you would like to contribute for copying and inclusion, please send them to Colin.

An Action Plan has been prepared to address the numerous issues raised at the Congress and is outlined in the IRF Bulletin enclosed with this letter - if you are interested in contributing to one of the groups, please let me know.

It was a great pleasure to meet you at Zakopane and I hope to see you again at the next Congress if not before. You will always be welcome in the Peak National Park, U.K.

Best wishes

Gordon Miller
Chairman

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March 1994



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Dear Colleague:

Greetings to you, friends and colleagues in parks and protected areas throughout the world, from the member associations of the International Ranger Federation (IRF). This is the first of a series of letters which we will be sending to you in our efforts to spread the word about the federation and to inform rangers in all lands about the first international ranger gathering, which will take place in Zakopane, Poland, in May of 1995. Since some of you may not yet have heard of IRF, however, it seems in order to begin with a brief history of the federation.

The federation was born when several members of England's Association of Countryside Rangers (ACR) began laying the groundwork for such an organization with their friends in the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (SCRA) in the late 80s and early 90s. During a SCRA meeting near Loch Lomond in 1991, representatives from ACR, SCRA and the Association of National Park Rangers (ANPR) from the U.S. met and discussed the framework for IRF. A series of letters and faxes followed which culminated in an international accord which the presidents of the three associations signed at a meeting in Peak District National Park in England in July of 1992. Since that time, the IRF, under the chairmanship of England's Gordon Miller, has been working to bring other national ranger associations into IRF and planning the Zakopane conference. The statement of purpose found in the accord outlines the goals and intents of the federation:

"The ranger associations of the undersigned nations recognize that international unity is critical to the protection of the world's increasingly threatened and inter-linked natural and cultural resources. We have accordingly agreed to unite in an International Ranger Federation (IRF) in order to:

- * further the professional standards of rangers throughout the world;
- * advance the aims of IUCN's World Conservation Strategy in all our common efforts;
- * share knowledge and resources;
- * establish global communications among ranger organizations;
- * foster professional exchanges among rangers;
- * provide each other with advice and guidance on travel contacts in parks in our respective nations;
- * arrange and conduct regular international meetings; and
- * undertake joint activities to directly support each other's operations where necessary and feasible.

Membership as an affiliate association in IRF is open to all national associations of rangers or wardens who perform the services associated with ranger work, including protection and preservation of wild lands and their resident flora and fauna, protection and preservation of historical and cultural heritages, provision of recreational opportunities in natural settings, interpretation of natural, historical and cultural themes, and administration of public lands.

All member associations have an equal voice in IRF activities. Associations seeking membership must be endorsed by an association already affiliated with IRF. Provisional, non-voting membership in the IRF is also open to individual rangers from countries who do not yet have national ranger associations until such associations can be established.

Since the signing of the accord in 1992, several other ranger organizations have joined IRF, bringing the total number of member organizations to nine:

- * The Game Rangers Association of Africa
- * Northern Ireland Countryside Staff Association
- * Irish National Park Rangers Association
- * Associazione Ligure Agenti Di Vigilanza Ambientale (Italian Ranger Association)
- * Associaçao Portuguesa De Guardas E Vigilantes Da Natureza (Portugese Ranger Association)
- * La Asociacion de Gaurdaparques del Paraguay (Ranger Association of Paraguay)

We have also received firm inquiries from and/or granted individual memberships to rangers in Finland, Kenya, Iceland, Denmark, Mexico and Costa Rica.

We have also begun arrangements for the first IRF World Congress, which will be held at the Hotel Kasprový in Zakopane, Poland, from Sunday, May 21, 1995, to Saturday, May 27, 1995. The Kasprový is a 600-bed hotel with a large conference hall. If the number of attendees exceeds 150, as seems probable, rooms will cost \$35 U.S. for a single, \$34 U.S. for a double, plus \$25 per day for full board. We are in the process at present of seeking sponsors to help provide funding to cover travel and room and board costs for rangers who could use some financial assistance. The agenda for the meeting includes guest speakers; full day sessions on resource management, human management and balancing conflicts between the two; a raft trip in Pieniny National Park; and a banquet and dance. Additional and more detailed information will appear in coming issues of this newsletter.

If you have not yet formed a national, state, or territorial ranger association, we encourage you to do so, and stand ready to provide you with assistance. Please contact any of the people listed on the attached directory for further information on the International Ranger Federation and on how your association can become a member.

See you in Zakopane!

Upcoming Ranger Association Events Worldwide

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| April 11 - 15 | "Beyond the Urban Fringe", annual conference, Scottish Countryside Ranger Association, Aviemore, Cairngorms, Scotland. |
| September 12 - 16 | 28th Annual Conference of Countryside Management Association (formerly Association of Countryside Rangers), Winchester, England. |
| September 26 - 30 | "Green Tourism", European Ranger Seminar, Losehill Hall, Peak National Park, England. |
| October 16 - 21 | Ranger Rendezvous XVIII, annual meeting, Association of National Park Rangers, Tamarron Resort, Durango, Colorado, USA. |

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| May 21 - 27 | First World Conference, International Ranger Federation, Hotel Kasprový, Zakopane, Poland. |
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If you have an event you would like to list, please write Bill Halainen, 640 North Harrison Street, Arlington, VA 22205 USA.