

## The International Ranger Federation: Uniting Rangers to Protect the World's Treasures

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The International Ranger Federation (IRF) links more than 60 ranger associations representing countries and states around the world. Started in 1992 by a small group of rangers, the IRF supports field-level staff at parks and protected areas by fostering professional development, organizing training sessions, developing standards, supporting rangers in danger, and hosting World Ranger Congresses every three years. The IRF encourages countries to form their own ranger associations, and then to become part of the world community of rangers by affiliating with the IRF.

What is a ranger?

- A guardian of protected areas;
- A custodian of cultural sites and stories;
- A defender of wildlife; and
- A teacher and interpreter connecting people with special places and inspiring environmental sustainability.

Rangers provide “frontline” protection and, in doing so, often face a variety of risks, including the following:

- The bullet of a wildlife poacher;
- Attacks from the animals they are trying to protect;
- Natural disasters, including wildfire and flood;
- Crime against park visitors or park facilities; and
- Search and rescue operations under extreme weather conditions or in dangerous locations.

Ranger training is a way to build for the future—for environmental protection, for community well-being, and for ranger safety. The IRF works with like-minded organizations to provide training, including the PAMS Foundation (Africa), Equipe de Conservação da Amazônia (Brazil), and EUROPARC Federation (Europe). Training develops skills in eight key areas:

1. Ecology and conservation, to monitor changes in the landscape and take appropriate conservation action;

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2. Resource protection, to enforce existing laws and regulations appropriately and safely;
3. Interpretation, education, and information, to communicate effectively to a wide range of people using a wide range of methods;
4. Building relationships with communities and other stakeholders, to show political, social, and cultural sensitivity and involve communities in managing protected areas;
5. Technology and infrastructure maintenance, to maintain and safely utilize infrastructure and equipment;
6. Emergency response, to respond safely to incidents such as vehicle accidents, lost or injured visitors, wildfire, and environmental disasters;
7. Project management and operational planning, to manage budgets and projects, including preparation, monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing; and
8. Workplace communication and relations, to operate effectively as a member of a team.

Want to get involved?

- Visit the IRF website and learn about our many projects and partners.
- Set up a ranger association and join the IRF. The IRF and its partner association, the Thin Green Line Foundation, can assist.
- Help prevent ranger deaths. Assist the IRF to “protect the protector” by joining forums to share information on lessons learned about training, legislation, and avoiding violence to rangers.
- Ensure the rangers you employ are well-supported, well-equipped, and well-trained.
- Participate in the development of training standards.

To find out more, you can visit [www.internationalrangers.org](http://www.internationalrangers.org), or send an email to [irfmailings@gmail.com](mailto:irfmailings@gmail.com).

The future of our ecosystem services and our heritage depends on park rangers . . . they are the backbone of park management. They are on the ground. They work on the frontline with scientists, visitors, and members of local communities.

— *Kenton Miller, IUCN*

Well trained rangers are critical to healthy ecosystems and healthy communities.

— *Deanne Adams, IRF president, 2009–2012*