



INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

ZAKOPANE DECLARATION

We, the delegates here assembled in Zakopane, Poland, at the first International Ranger Federation Congress, representing rangers from 35 nations on six 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 and essential 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 meager 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 wellbeing, 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 effort the support of the people and governments of this earth.

Zakopane, Poland May 26 1995