



INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

DECLARATION OF SAN JOSÉ

We, the delegates here assembled in San José, Costa Rica, at the Second International Ranger Federation Congress, representing rangers from 41 nations on six continents, do hereby declare our commitment to the following principles regarding the practice and application of sustainable development in the world's parks and protected areas:

- ☉ That the world's parks and protected areas represent the last vestiges of our common natural and cultural heritage, and, as such, are unique, invaluable and irreplaceable;
- ☉ That, as principal guardians of these areas, we are uniquely positioned and qualified to implement, evaluate and advise on the effectiveness of sustainable development;
- ☉ That sustainable development - that is, the practice of satisfying the needs of the present without compromising the legacy of the future - can be an effective tool, if properly utilized, for simultaneously protecting the world's natural and cultural heritage and accommodating the needs of indigenous and other peoples living in and around parks and protected areas;
- ☉ That sustainable development also provides an effective tool for increasing public support for parks and protected areas, critical to the future protection of these often fragile areas;
- ☉ That it is nonetheless of paramount importance to assure that the integrity of parks and protected areas are not compromised by improper application of sustainable practices, as these areas represent a tiny and diminishing fraction of the world's natural and cultural heritage;
- ☉ That the practice of sustainable development should not negatively affect biodiversity and ecological integrity of parks and protected areas, nor be applied to wilderness or highly protected areas, nor compromise the mission and purpose of any park or protected area or portion thereof;
- ☉ That the practice of sustainable development should not be employed as a subterfuge to open parks and protected areas to special interests, private or public, which seek to capitalize on their resources for financial, political or other advantages not in the public interest;
- ☉ That the practice of sustainable development should not be employed as a means for replacing rangers and other park professionals, who have the requisite conservation ethic and work in the public interest to protect the public's heritage, with private entities, who lack a similar ethic and mandate;
- ☉ That there should be no further loss of protected lands, whether through the improper application of sustainable practices or other causes, as they represent the barest minimum appropriate to the preservation of the world's imperiled natural and cultural diversity; and
- ☉ That, rather, a concerted effort should be made to expand the number, size and variety of parks and protected lands, to strengthen and expand the ranger profession, to protect natural and cultural resources, and to foster a conservation ethic worldwide.