



## **GUARDAPARQUE**

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**Guardaparque** is a publication prepared and issued by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), an organisation of non-governmental and governmental ranger organisations from around the world. **Guardaparque** carries reports on emergency service and law enforcement incidents, on protection of parks and the natural and cultural resources within them, on programs to educate visitors and communities on the values of parks and protected areas, and on the people who are responsible for all these activities. If you have a submission for **Guardaparque**, please send it to the editor, Bill Halainen, at [Bill\\_Halainen@nps.gov](mailto:Bill_Halainen@nps.gov).

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### **EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

#### **Korea – Taean Coast National Park Rangers Respond To Major Tanker Oil Spill**

On the morning of December 7, 2007, the Hong Kong registered tanker *Hebei Spirit* was struck by the crane barge Samsung No. 1 while the tanker was anchored off the Taean coast of the Yellow Sea. As a result of the accident, 12,547 tons of crude oil were released into the sea from the ship's tanks. The oil contamination was largely confined to the sea and coast of Chungchongnam-Do Province, which includes Taean Coast National Park. However, over the period of several weeks, oil contamination started to spread further south over the shoreline and islands. Two national parks, Byeonsan Peninsular National Park and Dadohae National Park [a marine national park], which are located along the western coast of Korea, were also contaminated by tarballs. Taean Coast National Park was directly impacted by the oil spill and it's believed that the park's ecosystem has been seriously impaired. Strong periodic winds and the fast tidal current of the Yellow Sea create a dynamic environment for material exchange between the sea and coastal areas, which worsened the oil pollution in the national park.

Rangers and volunteers were engaged in emergency oil response operations after the spill. Rangers from other national parks came to Taean to add their help in cleaning up the coast. But, most of all, it was an emotional zenith to see more than one million volunteers from all over the country join in giving a helping hand to the national park and local people.

Along with the clean-up activities, a task force was established by the Korea National Park Service to conduct a comprehensive ecosystem impact assessment. The task force team consists of rangers, experts and researchers from national parks and other research institutes. Since last December, the task force team has conducted research in more than 20 fields of study about fauna, flora, landscapes, geological features and visitor services in the sea and coastal area.

Even though urgent clean-up activities have been completed, it is possible that significant oil pollution is continuing on the islands and coastline of the national park, which may cause long-term environmental impacts to the ecosystem of Taean Coast National Park. Rangers will periodically monitor coast and marine area for any abnormal ecological conditions.

[Source: Gyu Sung Lee, Sun Kyung Jung, Hyun Ju Go, Korea National Park Service, Republic of Korea, sent by Guy Sung Lee, IRF's Asia representative]

### **United States – Appalachian National Scenic Trail Convicted Murderer Shoots Two, Dies In Jail After Arrest**

A once-notorious Virginia man died in jail on May 10th, a day after he was charged with shooting and wounding two campers on the Appalachian Trail, not far from the isolated area where he killed two hikers in 1981. The trail is administered by the U.S. National Park Service. Randall Lee Smith, 54, was hospitalised with multiple injuries after crashing a pickup that he'd stolen from one of the victims during a police chase. Smith was jailed on Friday, May 9th, after being discharged from a hospital in Roanoke. He faced several felony charges, including attempted capital murder. Although it appears that he didn't commit suicide, he'd earlier told officers that he was ready to die. An autopsy will be performed to determine the cause of death.

The shootings brought back memories of the spring 1981 discovery of two bodies in shallow graves near Pearisburg, Virginia, a town near the Appalachian Trail, about 270 miles southwest of Washington. Susan Ramsay and Robert Mountford Jr., 27-year-old social workers from Ellsworth, Maine, had been hiking and camping on the popular trail. Ramsey was stabbed more than a dozen times in the back. Mountford was shot three times in the head. Smith was captured about two weeks later in a wooded area of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, by a dozen police officers and FBI agents. He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and spent 14 years in prison.

By all accounts, Smith had led a quiet, if at times impoverished, life since his release in 1996, and was off probation. In early March, Smith left home with his dog and headed into the woods. The Appalachian Trail was directly behind his house. On Tuesday, May 6th, Smith befriended two campers on the trail, spending about three hours talking and sharing a meal around a campfire with Scott Johnston, 37, and Sean Farmer, 33, both from Virginia. Around 8pm, Smith "just got up from his chair around the fire and said, 'I gotta go,'" Hamlin said, recounting what the victims had told investigators. "Then he stood up and starting popping them [with a gun]. It was like firecrackers. Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop." Johnston was shot in the back and neck; Farmer, in the face and chest. Both are currently doing well in the hospital. Smith was captured driving Johnston's pickup.

[Source: National Park Service *Morning Report*, Thursday, May 15, 2008]

## **SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

### **Worldwide Animal Populations Down A Third Since 1970**

Populations of animal, bird and fish species have dropped by almost a third since 1970, conservationists have warned. The Living Planet Index, which tracks the fortunes of more than 1,400 species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, reveals that numbers have declined by 27% in 35 years to 2005. Particularly badly hit are marine species, including the swordfish, which plummeted by 28% in ten years between 1995 and 2005, while ocean birds have seen numbers fall by 30% since the mid 1990s.

The report by the World Wildlife Federation was issued just before this month's UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which is looking at ways to stop biodiversity loss by 2010. The report said it is "very unlikely" that governments will meet the 2010 target, even though trends are levelling off somewhat.

Colin Butfield, head of campaigns at WWF-UK, said "Biodiversity underpins the health of the planet and has a direct impact on all our lives so it is alarming that despite an increased awareness of environmental issues we continue to see a downward trend."

[Source: *Press Association*, Friday, May 16th, via Roger Cole, Countryside Management Association]

## **PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS**

### **Brazil – Amazon Region Protected Areas Environment Minister Pledges Support To Protected Areas Initiatives**

According to the newspaper *Folha de Sao Paulo*, the new Brazilian Minister of Environment, Carlos Minc, has announced that he intends to strengthen the Amazon Region Protected Areas Program (ARPA) and raise more than 150 million Euros from non-governmental organisations and from the international community. The Brazilian newspaper also reported that Minc defended the expansion of protected areas in Brazil and the systems in place to defend them, such as the work of rangers in the Amazon. The minister also said that he intends to support ARPA. "The expectation is to obtain, in the short term, more than 150 million Euros financing from NGOs and from the international community to the creation and consolidation of protected areas in the Amazon," said Minc.

For WWF Brazil, the fact that Minc has mentioned ARPA, the biggest tropical forest protection program, demonstrates that the new minister has great sensibility to the importance of protected areas in the Amazon and that he is worried about the maintenance of biodiversity and the earth's climate. WWF Brazil also believes that one of the main challenges of the new minister will be to obtain greater prestige for environmental matters within the federal government's political agenda. The idea is for the new team to be able to develop integrated policies with other ministries, along with the Ministry for the Environment's own agenda.

One of WWF Brazil's worries, though, is that the transition period might delay a series of ongoing measures or of those about to be implemented. WWF Brazil also believes in the continuity of actions toward sustainable production of food and energy, inhibiting illegal and predatory practices.

Within the political arena, Carlos Minc is considered to be a keen negotiator. He was one of the founders of the Brazilian Green Party (Partido Verde) and in 2006 was elected, this time as a member of Worker's Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores), for his sixth term at the Rio de Janeiro State House of Representatives. In 2007, he was nominated State Secretary for the Environment and his main objective was to double state level protected areas within Rio de Janeiro.

[Source: Marcelo Segalerba, IRF's representative in Brazil]

### **United States – Tejon Ranch Protected Area California Acquires 240,000-Acre Ranch As Conservation Area**

A vast mountainous was preserved earlier this month in what conservationists say is the largest, most ecologically crucial acquisition of public land in state history. The deal saves from development more than 240,000 acres of the Tejon Ranch, a ruggedly diverse stretch of grassland, forest and oak woodland just north of Los Angeles. The 375 square mile expanse of open land combines desert, mountain and valley habitat, a multi-layered wildlife corridor that is home to a wide variety of birds and animals, including the endangered California condor and the kit fox.

The plan is to reroute a 37 mile segment of the Pacific Crest Trail that now meanders through the Mojave Desert so that it goes through the ranch. It would open vast tracts of wilderness to the public and create a natural corridor that would give wildlife room to migrate and adapt in the event environmental changes caused by global warming disrupt their current habitat. "It is one of the great conservation achievements in California history," said Joel Reynolds, an attorney for the Natural Resources Defence Council, one of a coalition of conservation groups, including the Sierra Club and Audubon California that spent the past two years negotiating the deal. "It has been the

number one conservation priority because it is the largest private landholding in the state. It is an opportunity for us to conserve contiguous land on a scale that is unprecedented."

The agreement is for the owner, Tejon Ranch Company, to place 178,000 acres under a series of conservation easements that will be phased in over time. The easements will preserve the land in perpetuity as open space, but allow existing buildings and historic uses, like cattle grazing and moviemaking, to continue. Gravel mining and oil and gas extraction activities also will be allowed within existing areas and defined expansion areas, according to the agreement. Conservation easements will be available for a price still to be determined on 62,000 more acres over the next two years, according to the deal. Reynolds said state bond money is available for that acquisition. In the end, 90 percent of the Tejon Ranch property will be preserved for public recreation and, in the future, the creation of a state park. In return, the owner will be allowed to develop 10 percent of the land, including high end ridge-side homes, a 23,000 unit development in Los Angeles County, and expansion of a commercial-industrial centre.

It is the only place in California where four distinct ecological regions, the Sierra Nevada, the Mojave Desert, the San Joaquin Valley and the Coastal Range, come together. It supports the last remaining stretch of native grassland in the southern San Joaquin Valley, most of which is now covered by crops.

Ancient blue oak woodlands, conifer forests and Joshua trees exist on the land, as well as wetlands, brilliant fields of wildflowers and a host of endangered and threatened lizards, squirrels, beetles and salamanders. Of the birds, including the golden eagle, the California condor is the most significant species for which the Tejon Ranch provides habitat.

[Source: *The San Francisco Chronicle*, Thursday, May 8, 2008]

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Prepared and published by the International Ranger Federation as a service to rangers around the world. Submissions should be sent to Bill Halainen at [Bill\\_Halainen@nps.gov](mailto:Bill_Halainen@nps.gov).

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