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# Park Ranger Training Course

Hotel Iguana, la Descubierta

Dominican Republic

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# Final Report

## PARK RANGER TRAINING COURSE

Hotel Iguana, la Descubierta  
Dominican Republic

September 29–October 3, 2003

*Submitted by:*

International Resources Group (IRG)

*In collaboration with:*

USAID



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# 1 BACKGROUND

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The third in a series of park ranger training courses was held in the Hotel Iguana in the village of La Descubierta, Dominican Republic, from September 29 to October 3, 2003. Twenty-two park rangers and three forest rangers attended the course. The facilitation team was composed of Juan Carlos Gambarotta, director of the Wildlife Refuge Laguna de Castillos, Uruguay, Adam Paredes, director of the Scientific Reserve Loma de Guaconejo, Dominican Republic, and Rick Smith, a U.S. consultant.

The facilitators proposed that the following goals and objectives serve as the basis for the training course. The Secretariat concurred with the proposal.

At the end of the course, the participants should be able to:

- ◆ Recognize the importance of protected areas and place the Dominican system within the international conservation movement;
- ◆ Understand the role of the Natural Resources and Environment Secretariat within the Dominican governmental structure and in the management of the country's protected areas;
- ◆ Explain the roles and responsibilities of a park ranger in the Dominican Republic;
- ◆ Recognize a park ranger's legal responsibilities;
- ◆ Understand the basic principles of pre-planning for emergencies and other nonroutine incidents;
- ◆ Plan and implement a patrol program;
- ◆ Apply certain field skills;
- ◆ Recognize the importance of local communities in protected area management;
- ◆ Understand the importance of environmental interpretation in protected area management and apply a few basic skills in this area.

In addition to the previously agreed-on goals and objectives, the Secretariat and IRG requested that the facilitation team include information on the Biosphere Reserve System, because such a Reserve, Jaragua-Bahoruco-Lago Enriquillo, has been recently created in the Southwest of the country.

To accomplish the goals and objectives, the facilitation team programmed the following course schedule:

**Programa para el Curso de Capacitacion para Guardaparques de la Republica Dominicana**

**Martes**

<b>0830-0930</b>	Bienvenida de la Sub-Secretaría, introducción de facilitadores, ejercicio de rompe-hielo: Sub-Secretario, Pedro Arias, Adam Paredes
<b>0930-1000</b>	Roles y responsabilidades de la Secretaría, sus actores principales: Pedro Arias
<b>1000-1015</b>	Refrigerio
<b>1015-1115</b>	Las áreas protegidas internacionales y su importancia: Rick Smith
<b>1115-1300</b>	Interpretación ambiental: Juan Carlos Gambarotta
<b>1300-1400</b>	Almuerzo
<b>1400-1500</b>	Trabajo en grupos sobre interpretación ambiental: Juan Carlos Gambarotta
<b>1500-1515</b>	Descanso
<b>1515-1645</b>	Roles y responsabilidades de un guardaparque, su imagen internacional: Rick Smith, Juan Carlos Gambarotta
<b>1645-1730</b>	Trabajo en grupos—Roles y responsabilidades de un guardaparque en el contexto nacional: Equipo Facilitador
<b>1730-1800</b>	Presentaciones individuales—¿Porqué soy un guardaparque? Rick Smith
<b>2000</b>	Vídeo: Las áreas protegidas Dominicanas

**Miércoles**

<b>0830-1000</b>	Reserva de la Biosfera: Pedro Arias
<b>1000-1015</b>	Refrigerio
<b>1015-1100</b>	Reserva de la Biosfera: Pedro Arias
<b>1100-1200</b>	¿Porqué el manejo de las áreas protegidas? Juan Carlos Gambarotta
<b>1200-1300</b>	Manejo de emergencias y otros incidentes especiales: Rick Smith

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- 1300-1400** Almuerzo
- 1400-1630** Interpretación ambiental en práctica: Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Rick Smith, Adam Paredes
- 2000** Diapositivas—Los Sistemas Naturales de Uruguay: Juan Carlos Gambarotta

**Jueves**

- 0830-0900** Informe del V Congreso Mundial de Parques: Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Rick Smith
- 0900-1000** Características de la fauna de la isla: Matilde Mota
- 1000-1015** Refrigerio
- 1015-1115** Características de la flora de la isla: Omar Paino
- 1115-1300** Explicación del sistema Dominicano de áreas protegidas y su potencial ecoturístico: José Manuel Mateo
- 1300-1400** Almuerzo
- 1400-1500** Conocimiento de la Ley 64-00 y los procesos legales: Pedro Arias
- 1500-1515** Descanso
- 1515-1630** Ley sectorial y sus alcances: Pedro Arias
- 1630-1730** Trabajo en grupos—Práctica de interpretación ambiental: Juan Carlos Gambarotta
- 2000** Diapositivas—El sistema de parques nacionales estadounidenses: Rick Smith

**Viernes**

- 0830-0930** Planificación y ejecución de patrullas: Juan Carlos Gambarotta
- 0930-1030** Confección de informes de patrulla: Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Rick Smith
- 1030-1045** Refrigerio
- 1045-1115** Procedimientos y confección de actas Juan Carlos Gambarotta
- 1115-1300** Manejo y control de incendios: Luis Fermín
- 1300-1400** Almuerzo
- 1400-1500** Manejo y control de incendios: Luis Fermín

- 1500-1515 Descanso
- 1515-1530 Evaluación del curso: Los guardaparques y guardabosques
- 1530 Ceremonia de clausura, entrega de diplomas: Bill Kaschak y Alfredo Martínez, Priscilia Peña

## 1.1 Participants

No	Participants	Protected Area
1	Ignacio Enrique Feliz	Jaragua
2	Eliécer Feliz Feliz	Jaragua
3	Rodolfo Antonio Echevarria	Jaragua
4	Doro Feliz Ramirez	Jaragua
5	Wilson Bartolo Mendez Pérez	Bahoruco
6	Carlos Fernelis Pérez Terrero	Bahoruco
7	Consel Jovino Ledesma Perdomo	Bahoruco
8	Enmanuel Peña Mendez	Bahoruco
9	Ramón Benítez Benítez	Lago Enriquillo
10	Oneximo Bolívar Mendez	Lago Enriquillo
11	Eligio Cuevas Medina	Enriquillo
12	Leonardo Reyes	Enriquillo
13	Anderson A. Cuevas	Enriquillo
14	Melvin Bartolo Cuevas	Lago Enriquillo
15	Miguel Medina Mendez	Sierra de Neyba
16	Rubén Darío Casanova	Sierra de Neyba
17	Tomas D'oleo Cedano	Sierra de Neyba
18	Melido Montero	Sierra de Neyba
19	Ezequiel de los Santos	José del Carmen Ramírez
20	Francisco Vicente de León	José del Carmen Ramírez
21	Kennedy Abreu Galván	José del Carmen Ramírez
22	Sixto Sánchez	José del Carmen Ramírez
23	Emilio Fernández	Forest Ranger
24	Prado Piña	Forest Ranger
25	Roger Díaz	Forest Ranger

The facilitators were very satisfied with the results of the practical and participative exercises scheduled throughout the workshop. The team tried to provide a practical component for each of the main topics covered in the training. The goal was, through these exercises, to convince the participants that each of them had very important contributions to make. The facilitators tried to build the self-esteem and initiative of the participants, qualities that are

important for today's park and forest rangers who exercise many responsibilities beyond those of simple protection and control. The team also provided opportunities for the rangers to work in small teams so that they could become familiar with this modern method of achieving protected area goals and objectives. This should improve operations in their assigned ranger stations when they return to them.

It was very useful to have forest rangers as participants in the course. All the participants remarked that the work of these two branches of the Secretariat will be important in the operations within the recently created Biosphere Reserve. The facilitation team believes that the training course laid the groundwork for future interdepartmental cooperation at the field level.

In all the course discussions concerning the Biosphere Reserve, the facilitation team and the other instructors emphasized the importance of establishing and maintaining effective relations with the communities within the buffer and transition zones. These communities must be included in the planning and decision-making processes. The participants prepared a list of stakeholders that they thought should be included in these processes. The goal of this exercise was to emphasize the important role that park and forest rangers will play in the future management of the Biosphere Reserve, especially because the rangers will have the most constant and intimate contact with reserve neighbors.

To make the greatest use of available time and make the participants' experience richer, the facilitation team offered evening programs that were not obligatory. These programs included a video of the biodiversity of the Dominican Republic, a slide program showing some of the natural resources of Uruguay, and another slide program featuring photos of several U.S. national parks. That almost all of the participants attended these programs is evidence of the value of scheduling them and of the ranger's interest in increasing their knowledge of protected area issues.

The lead facilitator wishes to express his appreciation to the other instructors and facilitation team members for their contributions to the workshop. Each one had his or her form of encouraging group participation during the course. The course simply would not have been as successful without their participation. The lead facilitator wishes to make special mention of the participation of Adam Paredeses in the course. His contributions were creative and helped maintain participant interest throughout the course. He also acted as the course moderator, introducing the instructor staff and keeping the course on schedule. The other two members of the facilitation team consider Adam to be an essential member of the team.

As in the other ranger training courses in which the lead facilitator has participated, the contributions of Juan Carlos Gambarotta were essential in assuring the success of the course. His passion for environmental interpretation was contagious and helped the rangers to recognize it as one of their responsibilities in the modern conservation world. He also brings a kind of credibility to the course that the lead facilitator does not. He is a protected area employee in a Spanish-speaking country and confronts many of the same problems that the Dominican rangers do. The lead facilitator is very grateful that Juan Carlos participated in the workshop.

## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

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As a follow up to this training course for park and forest rangers, the facilitation team recommends that the Secretariat provide another course that features information on the typical flora and fauna of each protected area. A professional ranger must know this information.

In subsequent courses, it will be absolutely necessary that an attorney or solicitor from the Secretariat be available to help the rangers understand their legal responsibilities. The scheduled attorney failed to appear for this course. As in previous courses, the rangers had many questions regarding their law enforcement responsibilities. Due to the serious problems that can occur in the field of law enforcement, the facilitation team once again recommends that the Secretariat develop a training course that deals with the application of law 64-00 in the protected areas and the rangers' responsibilities in law enforcement. This topic deserves more than the few hours that were scheduled during this course.

The participants expressed a lot of enthusiasm for environmental interpretation, a new topic for many of them. The facilitation team believes that such interpretation will improve visitor and local community services and will help to keep the rangers motivated.



# 3 ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

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The facilitation team recommends that an entrance sign be installed along the main highway that indicates the entrance of Lago Enriqueillo National Park. This sign should explain that the park is a unit of the Biosphere Reserve. The team also suggests that the sign indicating the presence of the Las Caritas petroglyphs be redesigned and relocated to a place where it is visible to passing vehicles. Because the park and its petroglyphs are contained within the Biosphere Reserve, the team recommends that these signs receive high priority in the Secretariat's sign program.

The trail at the park entrance passes by many interesting geological features and crosses the habitat of a significant variety of birds and reptiles. The facilitation team believes that some kind of visitor interpretation is necessary here. If available resources do not permit a guided tour by one of the park's rangers, the team recommends that signs be placed along the trail to help visitors understand what they are seeing and to increase their understanding of the value of the resources the park/reserve contains. This interpretation would serve the large percentage of park visitors who do not make the trip to Cabrito Island and visit the park's visitor and information center.

The team knows that the Sub-Secretariat is trying to acquire new uniforms for the rangers. The team wishes to underscore the urgency of solving the uniform question, as armed rangers in the park without uniforms, such as we saw in the park, can easily confuse park visitors.



# 4 CONCLUSION

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The facilitation team wants to mention the enthusiasm and interest showed by the rangers throughout this training course. Participants often arrived before the scheduled time to ask instructors questions or to discuss issues informally with their colleagues. They paid close attention to what was being discussed. It was a pleasure to work with them, and the facilitation team is grateful for their active participation during the four days of the workshop.



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