Park Rangers of the 21st Century

MINDFACTORY, 3. MAY 2022
What will we do

- Discussion on our self-image
- Discussion on what unites us
- A brief history of the ranger profession
- Glimpse into heritage interpretation
- A coffee break ;-)  
- A short exercise outside
- Seven thinking steps to a better image
- And what if we only do law enforcement?
About the Swiss Rangers (and me)
Griffin Ranger GmbH
ihre Fachleute für Rangerdienste, Umweltbildung, Natur und Wildtiere
Our departments

- Ranger Services
- Academy
- Consulting
- Wildlife
Park Ranger

What my friends think I do
What tourists think I do
What my grandparents think I do
What the seasonals think I do
What I think I do
What I really do
Who Is A Ranger?

The IRF defines a Ranger as the person involved in the **practical protection and preservation** of all aspects of wild areas, historical and cultural sites. Rangers **provide recreational opportunities and interpretation of sites** while providing links between local communities, protected areas and area administration.
Rangers: What unites us

Repression
Survey
Law
Enforcement

Prevention
Education
Interpretation
PR
• Who are you?
• Where are you?
• Your challenge as ranger?
The history of the rangers

- Harry Yount (1837-1924)
- Hired as the world's first ranger in Yellowstone National Park in 1880
- Yellowstone founded in 1872, making it the oldest NP in the world!
- Resigned after only 14 months because one ranger alone was not enough.
- 1886 US Army took over the Ranger Service
His attitude

«There are indications that Yount had a difference of opinion with park superintendent Norris, who wanted him to spend more of his time building roads for the convenience of tourists, while Yount preferred to concentrate on protecting the wildlife.»

*From Wikipedia*
I do not think that any one man, and designated as a gamekeeper, can prove effective purposes, but a small and reliable police force of men, employed when needed, during good behavior, is what is really the most practicable way of seeing that the game is protected from slaughter, the forests from careless use of fire, and the enforcement of all the other laws, rules, and regulations for the protection and improvement of the park.
1872: Yellowstone National Park
1914: Swiss National Park
1909: Sarek National Park (SE)
Structures and associations

1966: Countryside Management Association (UK)
1970: Game Ranger Association of Afrika (GRAA)
1992: International Ranger Federation (IRF)
1995: Bundesverband Naturwacht e.V. (Germany)
2008: Swiss Rangers
2012: Ranger Federation of Asia
2017: European Ranger Federation (ERF)
Rangers: What unites us

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[Images of rhinos, a crowd, a landscape, and a castle]
1916: US National Park Service
Freeman Tilden (1883-1980)

“You have only to attend some of the worse performances in interpretation to wish heartily that there were some teachable principles, and perhaps some schools for interpreters.”

Heritage interpretation is “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”

Tilden’s two concepts of interpretation

“Interpretation is the revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact.”

“Interpretation should capitalize mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit.”

Tilden’s six principles of interpretation

“Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.”

Tilden’s six principles of interpretation

“Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. […]”

Tilden’s six principles of interpretation

“Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.”

Tilden’s six principles of interpretation

“The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.”

“Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.”

Tilden’s six principles of interpretation

“Interpretation addressed to children [...] will require a separate program.”

Interpret Europe: Certification course for interpretive guides (CIG)
Interpret Europe

European Association for Heritage Interpretation

- Founded as an association in 2010
- More than 550 members in 44 countries

We believe that to learn from our heritage is essential for a shared future in Europe.
The interpretive triangle

Phenomenon

Interpreter

Participants
The interpretive triangle

- We offer paths to deeper meaning
- We turn phenomena into experiences
- We provoke resonance and participation
- We foster stewardship for all heritage
The interpretive triangle

Phenomenon

Interpreter  Participants
The interpretive triangle

Phenomenon

Interpreter

Participants
Asking open-ended questions

- focus question (answer requires direct contact with the phenomenon); e.g. **What does this pine needle smell like??**
- transfer question (which asks for connections into the participants' world); e.g. **Where have you seen this moss before?**
- process question (seeking to find out how something could happen); e.g. **What will this forest look like in 100 years?**
- evaluation question (which needs to elicit an opinion); e.g. **Should we continue to manage these forests?**
The interpretive triangle

Phenomenon

Interpreter  Participants
Stepping Stones
What to do?

- Intervention
- Tactics
- Rules of engagement
- Legal basis
- Code of Conduct
- Own attitude/experiences
The Seven Thinking Steps for Rangers
1. Offer yourself!
1. Offer yourself!

- Wear uniform and name badge
- Don't go too fast
- Give a friendly impression
2. Approach people!
2. Approach people!

- Take the first step
- Explain something that excites you
- Small talk is valuable too
3. Create a relationship!
3. Create a relationship!

- Take an interest in your vis-à-vis
- Search for common ground
- Use the interpretation triangle
4. Raise your profile!

Zürcher Unterländer

NEERACH

Neue Rangerinnen auf Patrouille im Neeracherried

Seit Anfang Juni sind im Neeracherried Rahel Isenschmid und Alice Wassmer als Rangerinnen unterwegs. Dabei beaufsichtigen sie, dass niemand die geltenden Regeln verletzt.

Cyprian Schnizl. 16.06.2017

Den Feldstecher haben die beiden neuen Rangerinnen Rahel Isenschmid (links) und Alice Wassmer nicht nur für Vogelbeobachtungen dabei, sondern auch, um Verstöße gegen die Regeln zu entdecken. Bild: Leo Wyden
4. Raise your profile!

- **Be in the media**
- **Ensure a good internet and social media presence**
- **Speak regularly with multipliers**
5. Be an expert!
5. Be an expert!!

- Know better something of everything than everything of something
- If you don't know something, you know where to look.
- If you don't know anything, then deflect ;-)

6. Give the conversations value!
6. Give the conversations value!

• Talking is the most important task of the ranger
• Expect a commitment to this task from your boss
• Count the talks
7. Go the extra mile!
7. Go the extra mile!

- Run ranger talks and offer guided tours
- Be creative and have a sense of humour
- Be proud to be a ranger!
More of that?

- Become a member of your national association
- Participation in trainings and congresses
- 10 to 14 October, ERC Albania
- 5. bis 9. Juni 2023, WRC on the Azores
- [www.griffin.swiss](http://www.griffin.swiss)
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