



International Rafting Federation

Secretary General's Report - Congress 2017 October, Miyoshi City, Japan

It's been a mixed two years since the last Congress in Indonesia.

The first year was extremely productive with many operations being streamlined and professionalised so as to bring the IRF up to a more professional level. The following year seems to have moved sluggishly as the list of issues seemed to grow and the assistance to resolve them seemed to dwindle.

Bigger, busier, massive amounts of work

The IRF has become a very big and busy organisation putting a massive demand on our resources and time. Generally we are dealing with the organisation of three World Rafting Champs and two Euro Rafting Champs all at the same time. But it is essential to monitor and guide these projects carefully if we are to ensure that these events are run to the standard expected of our members. Added to that are all the other time consuming, day to day tasks – and this takes up all of my time, in fact, it takes up more time than I am scheduled to put in!

Besides the bigger projects we are also seeing a growing demand as the IRF's international prominence grows and more people wish to affiliate with us through training their guides or running rafting events or promoting their rafting companies or conserving their rivers.

This work load has me beyond my threshold. Many do not understand the amount of work that this Secretary General job entails, the sheer variety and intensity. If I'm not getting around to do something it is because I do not have the time to do it, not that I do not want to do it.

New projects/ proposals/ ideas

Due to my time already being full, new projects need volunteers to get them started and sometimes to maintain them. It is no use people making proposals or coming up with ideas if they are not also proposing how these are to be carried out, or volunteer to actually carry them out themselves as I do not have the time. One or two people have offered to take on specific projects, often their own ideas, and that works well!

While dealing with all of the above it is evident that there is too much complaining from some of our members and participants, and not enough contribution to resolve the issues. Solutions to problems are always a far better way of fixing something than just complaining.

Keeping the IRF moving forward

It is important that everyone realizes that the success of the IRF in reaching our stated objectives and mission, revolves entirely around our ability to produce, facilitate, promote, and organize the activities that are mentioned in our Bylaws. To be successful, these activities require significant contributions of staff time and labour. Therefore it is to be expected that as the IRF continues to grow and mature into a respected, professional organization, our major expenses will be centred on salary compensation for the persons who are providing their time, labour and skills. This is normal in the sport industry.

Member federations wasting our time

The IRF functions on the time put in by various people. This is how it moves forward and how it ensures all the various objectives are achieved. There are times when certain members waste various IRF officials time, time that should be spent on these more important objectives. There are some federations who do not follow the IRF Race Rules or Bylaws or think they are above them, and so continually need checking on and correcting and monitoring.

I ask that Federations focus on the following:

1. Follow IRF Bylaws and Race Rules so that the IRF does not need to continually check on and correct and monitor your activities which we must oversee. All federation officials should become familiar with these documents so that they do not waste our time which could be spent on more deserving and productive issues.
2. Not make demands of the IRF Sec Gen during the year which could be resolved by doing your own home work.
3. Respond to the Secretary General's requests timeously and in the detail requested so as to not create more work for the Secretary General.
4. If they are presenting proposals they are to please present them according to our Bylaws as well as neatly and substantiate it with detail and/ or supporting documents.
5. Try not to see problems only from your own angle – we are an international federation.

A harder line will be taken in the future in situations like these.

Thanks

Eric Boudreau has worked tirelessly as Head of the Judges Com over the last few years, putting in enormous amounts of his free time. When he started with it there was very little structure or proper processes in place. He has striven to improve the standard of Judges, as well as judging, and drawn up manuals like the Judges Handbook. He has put in place processes to assist everyone from organisers, to judges, to race directors. He strives towards standardising judging so that it is the same no matter what country or event. Above all, he continually works towards improving the judging at our top event, the World Rafting Champs.

Thanks must also go to Christel Bekkers who gives of her time freely to manage our Euro accounts. And to Sean Clarke who has volunteered to take on our Instagram and Twitter and help elsewhere with our Media & Marketing.

Thanks to all the others who actually do contribute to the functioning of the IRF – you know who you are!

Thanks

Sue Liell-Cock
(Secretary General)