

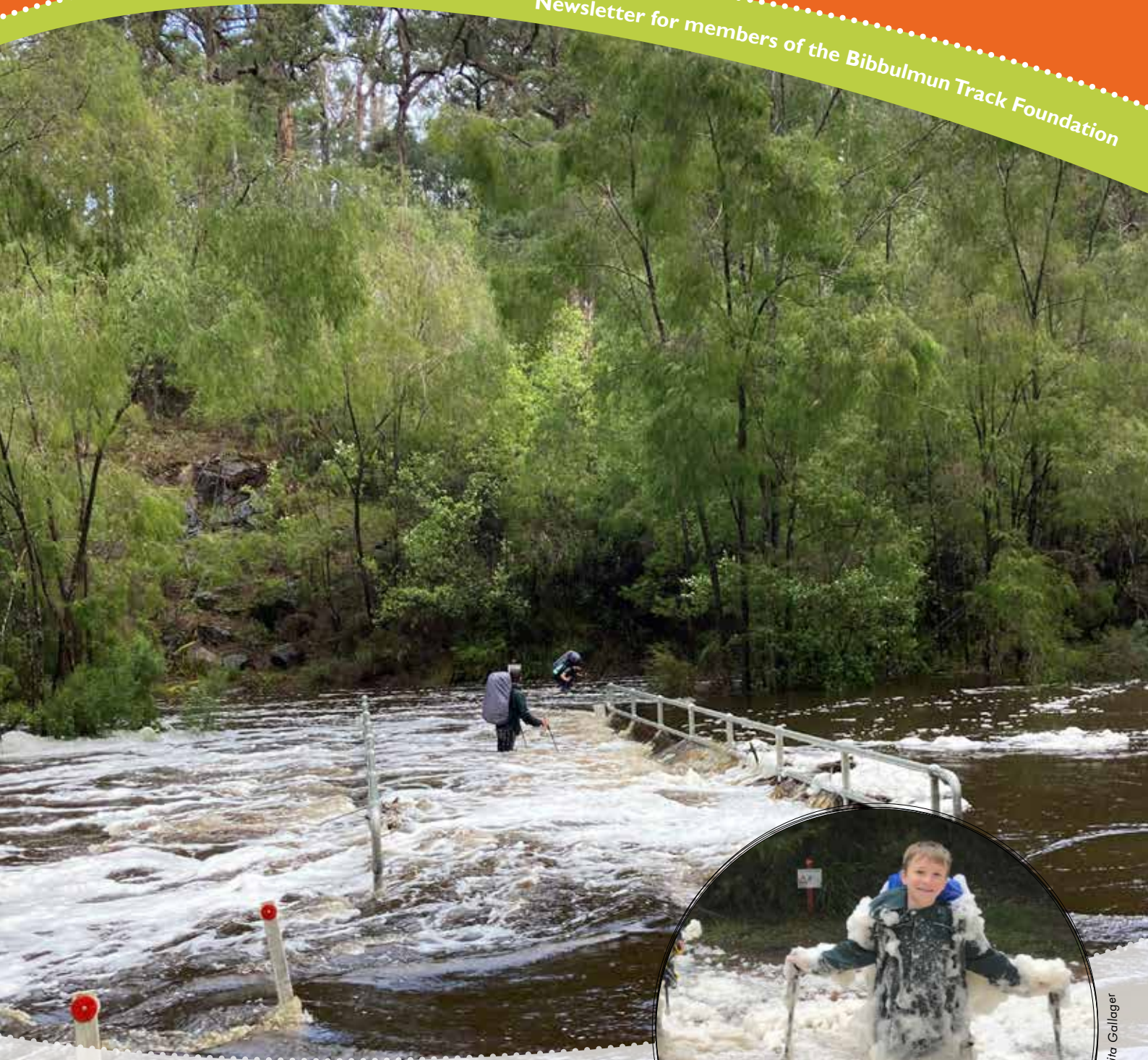
Bibbulmun

NEWS

AUG'21 - DEC'21
ISSUE #87
RRP \$8.00



Newsletter for members of the Bibbulmun Track Foundation



A very chilly and wet winter in WA's South West resulted in high river levels and inundated sections of Track.

These hikers crossed Sappers Bridge safely in July - however, we don't advise crossing rivers in these conditions so please always check Track conditions before leaving so you don't get caught out!



As we walked along the Track foam was falling off my son- he says "Look Mum my stuff is falling out!" Peita Gallagher

New Maintenance Manager Position

Coordination of the BTF's maintenance program has traditionally been part of the Volunteer Manager's role. However, over the past few years the type of maintenance being undertaken and the complexity of this role has increased significantly, leading to the creation of a dedicated Maintenance Manager position.

In addition to reducing the time taken to address reported issues on the Track, the Maintenance Manager will help to roll-out an improved training program for our volunteers.

This will include a revised maintenance handbook and support materials, more in-the-field training opportunities close to Perth and a buddy system to provide a helping hand to existing volunteers when required, or experience to those on the waiting list.

We hope the improved training will provide volunteers with the knowledge and skills to identify and remedy minor issues before they become major issues and more opportunities to connect with the Foundation and other volunteers throughout the year.

If you are a maintenance volunteer keep an eye out for an invitation to complete a survey to capture your thoughts and ideas. This will provide important feedback to our newly appointed Maintenance Manager, Sue Morley, about what we are currently doing well and what we could do better. You can find out more about Sue on page 9.

Notice to members – 2021 Annual General Meeting

The 2021 Foundation AGM will be held -

**On Thursday 28 October 2021,
5.00pm at 62 Aberdeen Street,
Northbridge.**

Agenda -

1. Apologies.
 2. Acceptance of 2020 AGM Minutes.
 3. Chairman's annual report.
 4. Executive Director's annual report.
 5. Treasurer's annual report.
 6. General business including -
- Appointment of auditor.

Members proposing to attend are asked to notify Ce by telephone on 9481 0551 or by email to admin@bibbulmuntrack.org.au.

Election of Board Members

Under rules 31 and 32, members are notified as follows -

- Three positions are declared open for re-election.
- Members are invited to nominate for election. A member's nomination must be in writing (form available from the BTF), signed by the member and be received by the Foundation before the close of nominations at 4.00pm Monday 27 September 2021.

- Should a poll be needed to elect a Board member it will be conducted during the AGM.
- The term of office of each person elected to fill those vacancies will be two years from, and including, the date on which he or she is elected.

The elections will be held because -

- The terms of John Holan, Bruce Manning and Mike Wood will expire. Three members are seeking re-election.

Linda Daniels
Executive Director
Bibbulmun Track Foundation

Volunteer Opportunities

If you have some time on your hands and are looking for ways to give back to the Track we would love to hear from you! We are seeking volunteers to help us in the following ways:

Maintenance report processing

We are looking for a special volunteer to help us process our Track and campsite maintenance reports. Ideally you would have some experience as a Bibbulmun Track maintenance volunteer, have a reasonable knowledge of the Track and be comfortable using Excel spreadsheets and email.

Marketing

Would you like to join our marketing and events volunteer team? If you love the Bibbulmun Track and are available at least one day per week we would like to hear from you.

Reasonable knowledge of the Track along with marketing, event co-ordination or communications skills are needed. To join our amazing team

on a variety of projects send an email to Ashley on marketing@bibbulmuntrack.org.au with your CV and details of your skills.

To enquire about the maintenance role please contact Helen on volunteer@bibbulmuntrack.org.au or 9481 0551 for more information.



FROM MY Desk

Welcome to the Spring edition of Bibbulmun News.

I'm writing this surrounded by packing boxes and the sound of construction as the Perth YHA building is renovated to provide transitional accommodation and support for homeless people in the Perth metropolitan area.

We had hoped to be at these premises for a lot longer than three years, but the YHA fell victim to Covid and put the building on the market, so we're on the move again.

After her delayed departure and then two weeks in isolation due to Covid, we are delighted to welcome new staff member Sue Morley to the team. After moving from Queensland to take up the new Maintenance Manager role, Sue spent her time in solitude familiarizing herself with the maintenance program, projects and people involved so it was time well spent. You can read more about her role on the opposite page.

The Recreation and Trails Unit report on page seven outlines the great progress being made on campsite upgrades and other projects including the new southern terminus, a new group campsite, and planning for new trails which will provide loop options from the Bibbulmun Track.

The decision to increase the capacity of popular campsites to cater for more walkers has been backed up by the latest Ausplay report which indicates a massive 493,000 increase in adult participation in bushwalking in Australia from 2019 to 2020. Walking, running and cycling also saw huge increases with outdoor recreation providing physical and mental health benefits.

We have been pleased to welcome many new members over the past year and remind all members to hang your member tag on your pack and encourage other Bibb Track walkers to join!

In the meantime, please hop online and complete our survey, details below, and pop into our new office for a chat. We'd love to see you!

Join us on



Linda Daniels
Executive Director

Member Survey

Take five and tell us what you think!

A strong membership base is vitally important to the Bibbulmun Track Foundation and we would like your thoughts on what we do well and what we could do better to encourage membership and retain our members over the long-term.

The short survey shouldn't take more than five minutes and is completely anonymous, so hop online and tell us what you think. You'll find the link at: <https://www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au/news/user-statistics-surveys/online-surveys/>

Thank you!
THANK YOU!
Thank you!

A sincere thank you to the following walkers who have generously made donations to the Foundation.

Chadwick Martin
Craig Colley
Daphne Bastow
Deborah Lehmann
Denise Hilsz
Didier Walks
Holly Thomas
Jennifer Douglas
Jenny Ashbolt
Julia Chapman
Justin Bell

Malcolm Kite
Margaret Ellis
Mary McNulty
Pam & Kevin
Adamson
Patsy Roche
Rainer Hammerer
Reggie McNeill
Robyn McWilliams
Zoe Agnew

Donations are tax deductible!

Through the National Trust, donations to the Foundation are deposited in a special account and assigned specifically to projects that enhance the Bibbulmun Track's environmental sustainability. The National Trust provides this service for free so you can be sure that 100% of your donation will go to Track projects.

Tax deductible donations can be made online, in person by cash or credit card, or by cheque which can be made out to the Bibbulmun Track Foundation with your name and address. We will then provide you with a receipt from the National Trust receipt book which indicates the donation is specifically for the Bibbulmun Track.

All donations, regardless of the amount, are gratefully received and all help to preserve our beautiful Bibbulmun Track.

We have moved!

Our new address is:

62 Aberdeen Street, Northbridge WA 6003

Next time you're in town pop in and check out our new digs.

YOUR Letters

Hello Ce and Graham,

I cannot thank you both enough, for all the help and patience you showed, not only to me, but to everyone in the group. I said it then and will say it again now-your blood is worth bottling, and you are both worth your weight in gold! I imagine all the Bibbulmun Guides to be of the same ilk, ensuring that the Track is in the best of hands.

I am not put off by my experience, only encouraged to do some more-maybe not an end to end-just yet, but who knows! Whilst I have only occasionally been doing some short walks around town since the weekend, I have still not lost my determination to do more walking on the Track. Best of Wishes to you both, and all the Guides and Volunteers. KerryG

Ed - Kerry was a participant in the Bibbulmun For Beginners walk in May.

Good morning,

I would like to say a few words regarding our recent hikes that my friend and I did.

So far we have done Dale Road to Beraking, Balingup and the Moon Walk. Some of them we did twice.

Not only did I enjoy every minute, albeit being challenging, but I am absolutely thrilled to have met the wonderful guides. These people go above and beyond to keep you safe and do it all with a positive attitude and smiles on their faces. Such a joy to be in their company. I am looking forward to many more hikes and meeting more people.

Warmest Regards,
Bayer Ottens

Hi Steve and Charmaine,

We would like to thank you both for an insightful adventure during the past week. Your dedication and professionalism were greatly appreciated by all the participants and you have spurred us on to complete the remaining sections of the Bibbulmun Track over the coming months/years. The changing natural terrain, the spectacular views and the colourful history make it an outstanding part of the world. Keep up the good work!

Best Wishes,

Kathy and Tony Morgan

Bibbulmun & Beyond Tour May 2021



Kevin Collins from Sydney at Donnelly River on the way to Albany. He has walked widely across the mainland and Tassie. How is the Track I asked. "Well, there is nothing quite like it in eastern Australia" he said. "The trail is great and the huts are amazing".

PHOTO CAPTION COMPETITION

Send us a caption! The mask is of our Events Manager, Steve Sertis, who was unable to join us in person on a staff and volunteer hike but was there in spirit!

The most popular caption will win a prize (judged by our office volunteers!)

Email to friends@bibbulmuntrack.org.au or by post.



Send us your caption!

Are You On The Right Track?

The number of vehicles accessing the Track and campsites is a growing concern. Gates and signage have limited impact and digital mapping has made the location of campsites easy to find.

Following on from our recent "Are you on the right Track" campaign to the trail bike and 4WD communities we have written to several Ministers to highlight the issue and ask that the recommendations made in the Back on Track, WA State Trail Bike Strategy released in 2008 be reviewed and implemented. These included licensing of trail bikes at point of sale. This will not only enable bikes to be identified but also raise funds to plan and build designated trails for trail bike riders.

Please help us by reporting inappropriate use of the Bibbulmun Track and other trails. The more we can show that this is an issue - the more pressure we can put on local and State government to provide facilities and trails for this user group.

You can read more about this campaign on our website Just search for the article "Where to go off road legally in WA".



TIP! DOWNLOAD THE FREE APP SNAP SEND SOLVE. IT'S A QUICK AND EASY WAY TO REPORT DUMPED RUBBISH, ABANDONED CARS, ILLEGAL VEHICLE ACCESS AND OTHER ISSUES TO DBCA, WATER CORP, SHIRES AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS AS APPROPRIATE.

Father's Day! Gifts for the World's Greatest Dads.

Sunday 5 September

Father's Day is a day to show love to the father in your life. There is bound to be something to suit every dad with a wide range of Bibbulmun Track gifts, maps and events.

Quality time with the kids on a Walking with Dad event.

Head to our website to book online (under Walk the Track / Events Calendar).

T-shirts, mugs and more from Redbubble

A variety of Bibbulmun Track products are available from the Redbubble website.

Choose the style and designs you like and order direct from Redbubble.com.

RockTape or number plate surround

Get your Bibbulmun Track branded RockTape! It is stretchy and great for stopping blisters and hot spots before they start, while our exclusive Bibbulmun Track branded number plate surrounds are a great way to show off your love for the Bibbulmun Track.

RRP starting from \$22.00

If you're not sure what Dad might enjoy, why not buy him a Bibbulmun Track Gift Voucher (any amount) and leave the choice to him!

View and order online at www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au.



Before you go...

CHECK THE LATEST TRACK CONDITIONS

Before heading out on to the Bibbulmun Track it is important that you check the current Track conditions and are aware of any changes that may impact on your journey. Refer to the Section by Section guide on www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au or contact the appropriate Parks and Wildlife Services District (see contact details opposite).

There may be maintenance or construction projects near or on the Track that result in temporary diversions or changes. These will not be marked on your maps. Diversions are usually marked with Waugal trail markers attached to yellow metal posts. If you encounter these when walking, follow these temporary markers, not your map. The diversion will eventually return you to the main trail.

Please remember the Bibbulmun Track is a walking track only. No wheeled vehicles, including trolleys, wheelbarrows, prams or bikes should be on the Track. Please help to preserve the Track and the environment by keeping to *boots only*.

Prescribed Burning Operations

Parks and Wildlife conducts a program of prescribed burning operations each year. Prescribed burning operations are undertaken for a variety of reasons, including property protection, fuel reduction and biodiversity management.

These burns are carefully planned but may cause some disruption to Track users. Where prescribed burning operations impact on the Track, temporary diversions will be put in place. Prescribed burning operations are dependent on appropriate weather conditions and for this reason dates of burns are not available in advance. For information regarding prescribed burns, please contact the District offices.

Groups on the Track

Groups of walkers with eight or more members that are staying overnight on the Track are requested to complete a Group Notification online at www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au/trip-planner/notice-of-intent-for-groups.

Car access to the Track

Walkers are reminded that vehicles can only access the Track at designated points. These are marked on the maps and guidebooks as red or green car symbols. Other roads that lead towards the Track might be restricted or have locked gates as they enter disease risk areas. Attempting to access the Track at non-designated points can spread disease or damage wildlife. Please use only the access points marked on the maps and guidebooks.

Parks and Wildlife Contacts:

Recreation and Trails Unit

recreationandtrails@dbca.wa.gov.au
Ph: (08) 9219 8265

District Offices

Perth Hills District (Mundaring and Dwellingup)

*Perth Hills District (Mundaring and Dwellingup)
Kalamunda to the Harvey-Quindanning Road
Map 1 & 2 and Guidebooks 1 & 2
Contact Rebecca Hamilton on (08) 9290 6100 or
mundaring@dbca.wa.gov.au*

Wellington District (Collie)

*The Harvey-Quindanning Road to Mumballup
(Donnybrook-Boyup Brook Rd)
Map 3 and Guidebook 3
Contact Nick Evans on (08) 9735 1988 or
wellington@dbca.wa.gov.au*

Blackwood District (Balingup)

*Blackwood District (Balingup)
Mumballup (Donnybrook-Boyup Brook Rd) to Willow Springs
(Gold Gully Rd)
Map 4 and Guidebook 4
Contact Andrew Sandri on (08) 9731 6232 or
blackwood@dbca.wa.gov.au*

Donnelly District (Pemberton and Northcliffe)

*Willow Springs (Gold Gully Rd) to Pingerup Rd
Map 5 and Guidebook 5
Contact John McKenzie on (08) 9776 1207 or
donnely.district@dbca.wa.gov.au*

Frankland District (Walpole)

*Pingerup Rd to Denmark River mouth
Map 6, 7 and 8 and Guidebooks 6, 7 and 8
Contact Julie Ewing on (08) 9840 0400 or
frankland.district@dbca.wa.gov.au*

Albany District (Denmark and Albany)

*Denmark River mouth to Albany
Map 8 and Guidebook 8
Contact Luke Coney on (08) 9842 4500 or albany@dbca.wa.gov.au*

LEAVE NO TRACE TIP: PACK IT IN - PACK IT OUT

- Carry a bag for your rubbish at all times.
- Minimise your use of canned foods.
- All wastes which cannot be burned should be carried out. Remember - foil, tin cans and glass do not burn and plastics and polystyrene foams produce noxious fumes when burnt!
- Don't bury waste at campsites - pack it out.



Stephen King

TRAILS COORDINATOR, RECREATION AND TRAILS UNIT

TEL: (08) 9219 8265
EMAIL: RECREATIONANDTRAILS@DBCA.WA.GOV.AU



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Recreation & Trails UNIT

Dear readers,

I hope you're managing to get out and enjoy the Track in between, or in spite of, some wild winter weather. I'm very pleased to report on another busy and productive period for the Bibbulmun Track and trails projects generally, and the trend is set to continue!

Good progress has been made on the campsite upgrade project in recent months. Shelter upgrade works have now been completed at the Gringer Creek, White Horse Hills, Yourdamung, Boarding House and Yabberup Campsites, leaving Harris Dam, Gregory Brook and Grimwade to go. The work represents some great functional improvements to the shelters as well as a general overhaul. Toilet upgrades or replacements and additional tent sites are also still to come at all eight sites.

Early planning is progressing for the new Monadnocks Group Campsite, with initial scoping meetings, desktop planning and site selection underway. Following a site visit in June, a short-list of two potential sites will be further explored and investigated.

Construction of the Southern Trail Terminus is well underway. Wet weather and other challenges have resulted in some delays, with completion expected by end of July.

A contract has been awarded for construction of the dual-use coastal trail in William Bay National Park. This



Yourdamung is one of the campsites now offering more shelter and seating for walkers.

trail will run close to the coastline between Elephant Rocks and Waterfall Beach, serving as the new Munda Biddi Trail alignment, but also providing a spectacular loop walk when combined with the existing Bibbulmun Track. The trail construction will be complex, with plans to use helicopter transport to bring in the trail surfacing material.

Planning for an expanded and enhanced trail network in the spectacular Valley of the Giants area is underway, with Common Ground Trails engaged to develop a concept plan. The concept plan will explore improvements to the Bibbulmun Track alignment, along with additional walk trails and mountain

bike trails. This project seeks to provide unique adventure experiences in this iconic environment, bolstering the great southern region's status as a trails' destination.

The new style Bibbulmun Track maps are now all finalised and printed and will come into circulation soon, together with new cardboard packaging for the map packs. This overhaul has been a long process, but future updates should be a comparatively straightforward exercise.

Congratulations again to the BTF staff and volunteers for all the work achieved over the last few months, including valuable input and contributions to the projects outlined above. The progress made on the Albany District erosion control was particularly impressive, given the physically demanding nature of the work and challenging logistics. The campsite field days have also continued to result in an excellent standard of maintenance and presentation of the shelters and nearby trail.

Stephen King
Trails Coordinator



Shelter upgrade works have been completed at White Horse Hills Campsite.

STAFF INTRO Meet the Team Behind the Scenes

Steve Sertis Events Manager and Lead Guide

I have been with the Foundation since 1997, when I joined as a member and maintenance volunteer. I wanted to get involved in the new Track after getting terribly lost on the old Bibbulmun Track.

From there I began leading walks and then came on staff in the office in 1999 as Events Manager and Lead Guide. I love walking and have done a few end-to-ends. I really get a kick out of sharing this passion with everyone. I am still a volunteer and look after Nerang Campsite.



Steve Sertis - Events Manager & Lead Guide

Helen Grimm Volunteer Manager

My experience of the Track started with day walks and multi-day excursions while at uni and I was a maintenance volunteer in the Donnelly District while working as a vet in Manjimup. I completed a continuous end-to-end in 2005 as Sunshine Nellie, which was a watershed experience in my life. More recently, I've been a wildlife researcher and a domestic engineer. My small people have been introduced to day-walks in the Perth Hills and will hopefully soon be happy to carry their own lunches!



Helen Grimm - Volunteer Manager

I have a long involvement in community music, playing with several different bands and orchestras over the years. This experience gives me the understanding of the motivation and challenges involved in being a volunteer.

I was blessed to be appointed as Volunteer Manager in 2018. I have loved getting to know all our wonderful volunteers and enjoyed getting back out on the Track on our maintenance Field Days.



Ashley Gibson - Marketing & Tourism Manager

Ashley Gibson Marketing & Tourism Manager

I have been walking the Track since 2009 and completed many extended walks. Hiking the Track and trails has become a family activity shared regularly with the four men, big and small, in my life.

I have worked in Zimbabwe, UK, and Australia in a variety of design, web development and marketing roles over the last 29 years.

In 2015 I joined the Foundation and was able to bring my passion for the Track and marketing together. Having grown up in the Zimbabwean bush I am drawn to the outdoors, connecting with nature and the land, centering my wellbeing and bringing calm to my otherwise busy life. Being able to work and volunteer for the Foundation allows me to share my love for the bush and exploring the Track.



Ce Kealley - Office Manager

Ce Kealley Office Manager

My first experience on the Track was an ambitious overnighter in 1999 that led to walking sections, and eventually completing a first end-to-end in 2004. Following this, my partner and I signed up to maintain a section of the Track. Soon after, I set off on a continuous end-to-end then we both signed up as volunteer guides, loving sharing our knowledge, and encouragement with novice hikers.

My work history was as a perioperative nurse, plus several management roles. I also undertook university studies, culminating with a Doctor of Nursing degree. Sadly, in 2015, my lovely Chris was diagnosed with brain cancer, so I took a redundancy while caring for him. Shortly after his passing I began volunteering in the office, was offered the Office Administrator role, then the Office Manager role. I thoroughly enjoy being part of such a fabulous team, being able to contribute to the Foundation and Track, and being able to apply my past experiences and skills to the myriad of tasks that are required in the office.

Katie Stevens Tourism and Marketing Assistant

On my return to Perth from an eight-month hike across the continental USA with my new husband, I jumped at the opportunity of working for the Bibbulmun Track Foundation.

I have a long history in outdoor retail, a passion for hiking and especially long-distance hiking, and have always loved the Bibbulmun Track. Like so many kids raised in Perth I spent numerous school camps on the Track, as well as family holidays.



Katie Stevens - Tourism & Marketing Assistant

I joined the Foundation in early 2019 primarily looking after the Walker Friendly Business Program and town promotion.

Currently, I am on extended maternity leave as I have just had a baby who has set us on a new type of journey.

Laura Wainwright Tourism and Marketing Assistant

I started as a marketing volunteer in July last year and was recruited to look after Katie's role while she's away caring for her new bub.

I am new to walking the Track, having completed my first overnighter only last year. Despite being attacked by a huntsman that came flying out of the Mount Cooke logbook and being chased down by wild pigs, I cannot wait to do more! Along with completing an end-to-end of course, on my hiking bucket-list is the Wainwright Coast to Coast.



Laura Wainwright - Tourism & Marketing Assistant

I really love working at the Foundation, applying my creativity to show everyone what an amazing section of the world we have here and nurturing relationships with the wonderful Walker Friendly Businesses we have along The Track. I find it both inspiring and humbling to be a part of this team and this community.

Sue Morley Maintenance Manager

What a privilege it is to be involved in the Bibbulmun Track and doing something I have always been passionate about! Originally born in SE Queensland, I've always been an adventurer with work taking me to urban, rural and remote areas of NT, SA, QLD and ACT. I have a background in mental health, alcohol and drugs, domestic violence, community development, and indigenous affairs, having established and managed various programs and projects at national and state levels, for government and the not-for-profit sectors. Whilst undertaking research in the NT, I studied Environmental Psychology as part of my degree and am particularly interested in the environmental experience for the hiker and sustainable practices, having hiked thousands of kilometres around the world. I am excited to return to the Bibbulmun Track.

Great to be a part of the Team!



Linda Daniels - Executive Director

Linda Daniels Executive Director

My interest in trails began in my teens when I left home to travel and spent the next eight years backpacking and working in the tourism industry.

On my third visit to Perth I finally settled down and after various roles in the non-profit and corporate sectors I joined the Foundation in 2003.

My role as ED led to my involvement in the broader trails industry contributing to the development of State trail strategies and the promotion of WA's trails through the Trails WA website and social media.

After 18 years I still love the variety of the work and people involved with maintaining and promoting the Bibbulmun Track and feel proud to have played a small part in the history of this great trail and the Foundation.



Sue Morley - Maintenance Manager



Getting into Gear

Use Your Head!

These frosty winter mornings create quite a dilemma for bushwalkers. My suggestion, to all those grappling with these conditions, is to use your head.

Inexperienced bushwalkers will naturally wear rather too much in such circumstances. Coaxing yourself out of your cosy sleeping bag in the early dawn will require not only the woolly thermals that nursed you through the chilly night but a number of insulating layers, followed by an impervious outer shell, head to foot, of pure Gore-Tex™.

Once you start walking you will find yourself stopping constantly to discard and stow layers. After a couple of similar experiences, you may discover

the real problem; those damn thermals are stacked at the bottom of the pile! Dealing with that will involve stripping down to the essentials, then restacking again. Remember it will still be cold, in the great outdoors, standing there in your undies, desperately trying to pull your trews back on with numb fingers and muddy boots. And spare a thought for your poor walking companion. No one should have to witness such things.

Conventional wisdom on the matter is to “be bold, start cold”. This, of course, suggests that it is better to dress moderately, tolerate some discomfort to start with, and hope that you will generate enough body heat from your early morning exertions to eventually warm up. This assumes that you will guess correctly how many layers you will need once you do, indeed, achieve equilibrium with your environment. Too bad if you guess poorly and lose a few extremities to the Track before doing so. Be assured that blue lips and chattering teeth should give you some warning before your toes finally disconnect, only to rattle about uncomfortably in your boots for the rest of the day.

My solution is somewhere between the two extremes. It involves using your head.

Scientists and other learned people say that about half of a person’s body temperature is vented to the environment through the head. I’m not sure if that’s true or not, but it does give a tantalising scientific basis to what I’m about to suggest. That is, simply, to put a beanie on. If it’s really cold, whack a neck warmer on as well. If you must, try some gloves.



All these items are light to carry and small to pack. But they punch well above their weight and size in terms of warming potential. Best of all, they are worn at the top of the stack, so it’s easy to slip them on and off without disturbing the rest of the ensemble, as your efforts on the Track wax and wane. No more will your walking companion need to whistle, nervously, thinking respectfully of the Queen as you adjust your comfort levels, and no more will you experience frost in susceptible areas. It’s a win/win.

Now, I look as silly as anyone wearing a beanie. I’m long and thin, and a beanie just makes me look like a javelin. Or a suction-cup dart. But I’m prepared to take that, and wear one on the Track. I can’t tolerate scarves either. They make me feel like a puppy on a choker chain for the very first time. They also take up valuable space inside a pack better reserved for dried peaches and loose-leaf tea. But a neck warmer’s heat-to-nuisance ratio is very favourable.

Give it a try. Use your head.

Derek Bracken

Tips for New Trekkers from a Former Non-Trekker

Tanya Gawthorne walked the Track last year. Here she offers some advice for those who haven’t trekked before:

It’s never too early to start preparing! You will have a more enjoyable and successful trek if you take time to get your gear, mind and body ready. Here are the main areas to cover:

- **Food** - it goes without saying that it’s a good idea to spend time figuring out what you like to eat, how you’ll cook while you’re trekking, how and whether to dehydrate your own food, how much food you will need, and what type of food you need to eat to support good health.
- **Physical** - expect to feel stiff and sore for the first week of your trek so physically prepare to reduce the risk of injury and make the transition to trek fitness less painful. The Bibbulmun Track is undulating and at times loose underfoot so make sure you train for endurance in ascending and descending as well as distance.
- **Muscles** take around eight days to acclimatise to the work and get stronger; once this happens, the soreness will reduce significantly, and the trekking will be more enjoyable.
- **Gear** - make sure you try out all your gear (equipment, clothing, bedding, and footwear) before you start.
- Over the first week, develop small routines that will streamline your packing, bed set up, cooking etc. This will make living on the Track a lot easier and less stressful.
- **Mental** - it’s a huge mental challenge to keep going when you are tired, cold, hungry, dirty and sore. It’s worth practicing mindfulness or other mental strategies for dealing with emotional and physical pain since, unless you are in a position where you need emergency help, you’ll have to walk out to the nearest road even if you decide to stop trekking before the next town.
- Vow not to give up until you’ve walked at least the first 8-10 days. These days on the Track will be the toughest.
- Within a week or so you will likely meet other trekkers who are in the same position as you, and that will feel strangely comforting. You’ll share fantasies about the first things you will do, eat and drink when you get to a town, laugh together about silly things that happen and

problem solve issues together—this will help to keep you motivated and keen to keep going.

Try to set aside enough time to do the whole Track even if you don’t think you’ll do it.

- Once people get past the challenge of the first week they’re often hooked and want to keep going. They get hooked by their increasing ability to meet challenges and different experiences on Track, the simple living, landscape, and definitely, by the enthusiasm of other trekkers they meet and walk with. This may be your experience too!
- Another aspect to consider is the challenge of getting trek fit which you’ll have to meet each time you set out. If you are planning to walk the Track in sections you’ll have to do this each and every time you start a section—it would be better to only start once so you only have to live through that pain once.
- Ask everyone you meet for tips, highlights and things to avoid.
- There is an enormous amount of experience and expertise on the Track and you’ll find people are happy to share. Even if you don’t have a problem, it’s worth asking for tips as you may be given something that becomes useful later on or that you would never have thought of doing.
- It’s a particularly good idea to ask trekkers going in the opposite direction what the condition of the Track ahead is like and for any advice.

Live for the day, accept the challenges and condition of your body and don’t compare yourself to anyone else. It sounds like a new-age poster but really is the best way to ensure you enjoy your time on the Track.

You can prepare all you like but you can’t control how well your body will respond to the challenges, whether you get injured, or what you see while you are walking. Ruminating over whether you will be able to complete your trek, how slow / weak / unskilled you are compared to others,



or what you will do if you get injured won’t help you trek well.

I started my end-to-end Bibbulmun trek in September 2020 and finished November 2020. It was a hard, exciting, exhausting and ultimately enjoyable experience. I am so glad that I did it and would encourage anyone with a glimmer of an idea to trek to give it a go—you won’t regret it!

Tanya Gawthorne

(Ed: The Bibbulmun Track Foundation offers a number of ways of assisting walkers to plan for an end-to-end walk on the Track, including a number of workshops and a trip planning advice service for members. Check our website on <https://www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au>)



Tanya Gawthorne

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Yes, they did it!

With the Western Australian borders opening (briefly) to the rest of the country, many from the Eastern States have taken the opportunity to realise their plans of hiking the Track.

Many more, including some from overseas who are anxiously waiting for international borders to open, are in the planning stages.

General Comments

Once in a lifetime travel plans were dashed by the Great Flu that swept the world. Did not think I would enjoy doing something like this. Was dead wrong. Loved it!!

Chad M, North Coogee

Wonderful life experience, only possible through the generous volunteers that maintain and look after this national treasure.

Local Legend, East Perth

Hiking 1000km of Nyoongar Country wilderness, through which the Track meanders, is an experience that just kept on giving.

Fishingod, Baldivis

It started out as a couple of day walks, then an overnighter, followed by a section before I realised I was totally addicted and that a sectional end-to-end was actually achievable.

Lesley & Nigel Howard, Lesmurdie

Do not go straight ahead on the top of Mount Cooke. Ha!

(Ed: See Highlights for explanation)

S Anderson, Broome

We were only going to do half but were enjoying it so much we carried on.

Paul M&T, Bull Creek

Fifteen end-to-ends. The Track has lost none of its lustre, beauty and day-to-day challenges it offers up.

Frank T, Rockingham

Met so many lovely people and experienced so many moments that make you pause and say how good is life?

Evan T, Kalamunda

Food/Supplies

Dehydrated is fine while out on the Track but it's amazing how good pub food can taste after four or five days of walking!

Maggie O, Fremantle

Ahhh the mystery boxes...loved them.

Rosie Miller, Mt Martha

Dim Sims plus two-minute noodles plus powdered soup = Dimswims.

Barman, Torrensville

The food surprises of the trip were the great little supermarket at Walpole and the divine Curry Laksa at Ravens Cafe in Denmark. Jason Roxburgh, Thames

Favorite Section

The Track from before Yourdamung to just south of Collie was an orchid goldmine.

Tick Magnet, Mt Hawthorn

Sunrise from Woolbales with mist below and great colours was particularly peaceful.

Sarah Watson, Katanning

It's all good for different reasons.

Bruce H, Inglewood

Highlights

The South Coast between Denmark and Albany with the Google Camera was amazing with magnificent blue skies to show off the beautiful Southern Ocean.

Barry B, Bunbury

I really enjoyed the walking the vast sections of jarrah forest and observing how the various trees and plants recover from past fires.

Paddy, South Fremantle

**Our CONGRATULATIONS to the following
59 walkers on completing an end-to-end!**

44 from WA, one from New Zealand and the rest from interstate.

40 people completed a continuous end-to-end and 19 a sectional.

Name	Track Name	Age	Date Started	Date Ended	Days on Track	Direction	From
Ian Kininmonth	<i>Tick Magnet</i>	55	17/09/20	15/11/20	60	N-S	Mt Hawthorn
Helen Studham		55	17/09/20	15/11/20	60	N-S	Mt Hawthorn
Chadwick Martin	<i>Chad M</i>	40	21/09/20	18/11/20	59	N-S	North Coogee
Maggie Orum	<i>MaggieO</i>	57	09/10/16	13/11/20	57	Sectional	Fremantle
Barry Bastow	<i>Barry B</i>	69	03/08/11	15/03/21	61	Sectional	Bunbury
Patrick Loudon	<i>Paddy</i>	58	09/12/20	11/03/21	44	Sectional	South Fremantle
Robert Holland	<i>Local Legend</i>	69	07/10/20	06/12/20	61	N-S	East Perth
Lynda Frewer	<i>Elle Hummingbird</i>	58	07/07/19	09/04/21	54	Sectional	Mt Lawley
Sally Keady		54	04/03/17	10/04/21	56	Sectional	Subiaco
Matt Keady		54	04/03/17	10/04/21	56	Sectional	Subiaco
John Henzell		58	26/01/21	05/04/21	62	S-N	Corinda
Alice Stubber	<i>The SMIK Girls</i>	50	03/01/00	09/03/17	63	Sectional	Bunbury
Graham Backhouse	<i>Fishingod</i>	55	09/03/21	21/04/21	42	S-N	Baldivis
Sally Wise		64	03/09/03	14/04/21	56	N-S	S Yunderup
Lesley & Nigel Howard		58/61	14/05/21	06/06/20	57	Sectional	Lesmurdie
Lindsay Vibert		64	13/07/11	18/05/21	56	Sectional	Wanneroo
Steven Anderson	<i>S.Anderson</i>	51	24/09/20	28/04/21	45	Sectional	Broome
Denise Hilsz	<i>D'Neez</i>	68	15/09/15	23/05/21	56	Sectional	Claremont
Alan Pitman	<i>D'Pits</i>	71	15/09/15	23/05/21	56	Sectional	Claremont
Martin Clothier		71	23/03/21	25/05/21	45	S-N	Waratah, NSW
Sue Gladman	<i>Clapmack2</i>	61	07/09/20	05/05/21	59	Sectional	Highgate
David & Krishna Hill	<i>The Hellsins</i>	66/67	26/02/18	17/05/21	59	Sectional	Fremantle
Graeme Jones		67	22/04/14	09/05/21	57	Sectional	Landsdale
Thirl & Paul Millachip	<i>Paul M&T</i>	59	25/03/21	22/05/21	58	S-N	Bull Creek
Peter & Sue Sanders		55	21/08/12	01/04/21	55	N-S	East Perth
Sarah Watson		34	14/03/21	21/05/21	66	S-N	Katanning
Hilly Salmon Krone		26	25/03/21	13/05/21	49	N-S	Wright, ACT
Alison Bunker		67	11/09/16	13/05/21	52	N-S	Mt Lawley
Phillip Malacari		57	23/03/21	14/05/21	52	N-S	Warnbro
Gary Williams		59	14/04/14	07/06/21	55	Sectional	Halls Head
Jill Summerfield	<i>Jilly's Trail</i>	64	09/04/21	27/05/21	47	N-S	N Yunderup
Rosie Miller		56	18/04/21	06/06/21	44	S-N	Mt Martha, Vic
Young Song Lee		48	28/04/21	13/06/21	46	S-N	Hallet Cove, SA
John Clifton		57	03/04/21	02/06/21	56	S-N	Woodlands
Phil O'Sofa		60	03/04/21	02/06/21	40	S-N	Coolangatta, Qld
Zac Declerk	<i>Captain Hook</i>	24	04/05/21	04/06/21	32	S-N	Mobray, Qld
Ben Arman	<i>Barman</i>	37	08/04/21	13/06/21	61	S-N	Torrensville, SA
Mark Lawson	<i>After Dark</i>	37	08/04/21	04/06/21	49	S-N	North Brighton, SA
John Lyons	<i>Johnwalksthe world</i>	56	20/04/21	07/06/21	44	S-N	West Pennant Hills, NSW
Peter & Megan Hamer	<i>U+me</i>	63/65	19/03/20	07/06/21	56	Sectional	Warwick
Rex Trow	<i>Rex T</i>	55	01/05/21	09/06/21	40	S-N	Kensington, Vic
Craig Jameieson		43	07/10/15	17/05/21	49	N-S	Scarborough
Frank Trybulec	<i>Frank T</i>	57	23/10/20	01/06/21	47	Sectional	Rockingham
Nelson Di Pardo	<i>Son of Neil</i>	25	18/08/20	29/09/20	43	N-S	Karrinyup
Mike Godding		49	11/04/21	29/05/21	45	S-N	Tapping



SMK Girls at the Southern Terminus



Do you have your End-to-End BADGE?
FREE when you register your first end-to-end!

Yes, they did it! (cont'd)



Name	Track Name	Age	Date Started	Date Ended	Days on Track	Direction	From
Mick Beckers	<i>Hotshot</i>	44	08/05/21	12/06/21	33	S-N	Bairnsdale, Vic
Ray Baker		68	27/04/21	12/06/21	46	S-N	Kedron, Qld
Simon Craddock	<i>Sam</i>	54	01/05/21	14/06/21	45	N-S	Southbank, Vic
Richard Curtis		57	30/04/21	13/06/21	45	S-N	Darlington
Peter Folley		48	02/05/21	10/06/21	39	S-N	West Leederville
Jenny Kikeros		N/A	03/08/12	11/05/17	58	Sectional	Augusta
Evan Telcik	<i>Evan T</i>	20	06/04/21	14/05/21	38	S-N	Kalamunda
Adam Larbalestier		28	10/04/21	16/06/21	61	N-S	Cottesloe
Bruce Hale	<i>Bruce H</i>	63	13/04/21	16/05/21	61	S-N	Inglewood
Ross Webster	<i>Mr Happy</i>	50	20/04/21	24/05/21	33	N-S	Chidlow
Kylie Webster	<i>Pinkwitch</i>	47	20/04/21	24/05/21	33	N-S	Chidlow
Jason Roxburgh		52	21/07/19	13/09/19	52	N-S	Thames, NZ
Jo Robinson	<i>Wizz Fizz</i>	26	23/06/21	30/04/21	53	S-N	Black Forest, SA
Allan Smith		66	10/04/21	15/06/21	66	N-S	Lesmurdie

Finding orchids, developing the mushroom selfie with my hiking buddies, arriving at any shelter and having a coffee.
Elle Hummingbird, Mt Lawley

Getting sandblasted in a gale on Mandalay Beach and then getting caught in a hailstorm as we arrived at the inundated Pingerup plains.
Matt Keady, Subiaco

Being air-lifted off Mount Cooke.
S Anderson, Broome

Sitting peacefully as dawn broke at virtually any hut is glorious.
The Hellsins, Fremantle

Walking the Track in a storm and seeing Mandalay Beach in all its fury.
Phillip Malacari, Warnbro

Watching the crazy situation of a Parry Beach storm surge, salmon chasing herring to beach themselves and blokes catching salmon with the hands in two feet of water and heaving them through the air onto the beach where young boys ran to pull them up the beach. Dogs chasing the salmon and the salmon chasing dogs. It was mayhem and a scene never to be forgotten.
John Clifton, Woodlands

Personal Reactions

Amazed at the diversity of the terrain and nature, the kind weather we had, great comradery amongst walkers, excellent facilities and helpful advice.
Local Legend, East Perth

The Track offers long periods of solitude to reflect and rebalance the mind, or the option of just walking and talking for hours.
Elle Hummingbird, Mt Lawley

The Police Air Wing are my heroes. I was glad to see them after I fell on Mount Cooke.
S Anderson, Broome

The toughest physical challenge of my life.
Clapmack2, Highgate

Between Albany and Balingup I walked with my friend Vaughn, who sadly passed away before we could complete a sectional end-to-end together. From Kalamunda to Balingup, I carried some of Vaughn's ashes with me. I guess you could say Vaughn posthumously completed a sectional end-to-end in his own unique way!
Graeme Jones, Landsdale

The Track is a fantastic place to really come to peace and gives you time to reflect on lots of things; there's plenty of time.
Gary Williams, Halls Head

The why is a mystery, and the outcome is magic.
Phil O'Sofa, Coolangatta

Wildlife

A kangaroo decided to rummage through my pack at one hut when I forgot to hang the pack on a hook.
Maggie O, Fremantle

I enjoyed spotting the wildlife, except for the Ornate Kangaroo Tick.
Paddy, South Fremantle

Waking to see two emus wandering around the clearing of Yourdamung hut at dawn.
The Hellsins, Fremantle

Roos, march flies, mosquitoes, feral piglets, snakes, spiders, feral cats, emus and crazy yoga-devotees (Giants).
Phil O'Sofa, Coolangatta

I could hear a shuffling noise and then in the bush appears a beautiful echidna.
Jenny Kikeros, Augusta

Comparisons with other Walks/ Countries

The Bibb Track is a gem.
Paddy, Sth Fremantle

Iconic, unique and equal of all.
D'Pits, Claremont

More physically challenging than walks of a similar distance that we have done in Europe due to the need to carry all supplies between the track towns.
The Hellsins, Fremantle

Definitely a world class hike.
Jilly's Trail, Nth Yunderup

SW region of WA is unique!
Phil O'Sofa, Coolangatta

Proper wilderness, compared to my times hiking in France.
Adam Larbalestier, Cottesloe

Ecologically the Bibbulmun is unlike anywhere I've ever walked, and also knowing the Nyoongar people have been walking these paths for thousands of years was a mind-bender too.
Jason Roxburgh, Thames

Your Best Equipment

My Crocs Swiftwater sandals that enabled me to hike from Balingup to Pemberton and later from Woolbales to Northcliffe with blistered feet.
Clapmack2, Highgate

Ponchos were better at keeping packs dry than wearing Gore-Tex jackets.
The Hellsins, Fremantle

Special mention for my boots and toe socks—no blisters or sore spots.
Richard Curtis, Darlington

Knitting needles + wool. Knitted four pairs of socks on the trail!
Jo Robinson, Black Forest

Worst Equipment

My feet.
Clapmack2, Highgate

Coins for washing machines—soon learnt to buy Mars Bars and use the change.
Sarah Watson, Katanning

Advice for Others

Should have gone to a Bibb Track info session which would have made the first section go a little smoother.
Chad M, North Coogee

Enjoy, it's a gift.
Sally Wise, Sth Yunderup

I started with just one night as a trial, got hooked, and did the rest eventually - so could you.
Gary Williams, Halls Head

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Vollie Corner - Schools

The future of the Track is in good hands, with several local schools getting their students involved in Track maintenance.

It is wonderful to see young people given the opportunity to access the Track experience- especially if it is new for them-and to be encouraged to give back through Track maintenance. Through the Foundation's *Newmont Eyes on the Ground Track Maintenance Program*, schools are allocated one of the maintenance sections to visit regularly.

For a school, the commitment requires the support of teachers and parents, coordination within the school, and, usually, willingness to give time outside school hours. We are very grateful for the efforts of the schools involved and look forward to more stories of young people getting a taste of the Track.

The longest contribution has been that of The Montessori School in Kingsley, in the northern suburbs of Perth. Ever since 2010, senior students have been looking after the section of

Track from North Bannister across Albany Highway and along the edge of the forest towards Boonerring Hill.

Teacher and group leader, Jaromir Kulir, describes their involvement:

"Our main obligation has been pruning the vegetation that encroaches onto the trail, checking the Track markings, making sure that the shelter and the campsite are in order and clearing the litter that, sadly, steadily accumulates at North Bannister Roadhouse. However, the maintenance is only a part of the experience. Just being there, with the people who we may know very well but who are now a bit different- far from the daily routine, in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by the bush, and, during overnight stays, dreamlike sky that has now far more stars than we ever before counted."

The young students at the Spirit of Play Community School, located right on the Track in Denmark, contribute to the care of the Track during their Walkabout Program. While learning outside the classroom about natural and cultural history, the students are involved in clearing the Track, weeding and planting. They have

been looking after their section, from Ocean Beach Road to the Denmark River mouth, since 2017. Teacher and Track maintenance coordinator, Olly Watkins, says, *"the kids love to see what they can find along the Track and notice the difference during the different Noongar Seasons"*.

Carey Baptist College in Harrisdale have made a flying start to their involvement with Track maintenance. They were already involved in landcare, with participants in their Year 10 *Cross-over Program* contributing to restoration work east of Albany as part of the Gondwana Link Program. In February this year, they signed up to help look after a remote section of the Track east of Peaceful Bay, including Boat Harbour Campsite.

The school has established a *Bibb Track Club* for middle-school students, and the Year 9 students are given the opportunity to join a Track maintenance trip. After their first outing at the end of May, teacher and coordinator Jules Birt reported that "students braved the elements as they hiked, trimmed, pruned and laughed their way up and down dunes and wild beaches".

A further two schools have signed up to be involved but haven't yet made a group visit to the Track. They are the Bush Ranger Cadet group at Newton Moore SHS in Bunbury (the section just south of Collie, through to Mungilup Road); and Mazonod College in Lesmurdie (the section just north of Palings Road in Donnelly District, including Boarding House campsite).

You can read more about the contribution from some of these schools on our website at www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au/news/



Helen Grimm

Helen Grimm
Volunteer Manager

Volunteer Profile

Val Cocker was one of the earliest members of the Foundation, joining in October 1998. Even before then, she was involved in the development of the Track. She has worked for more than twenty years as a Maintenance Volunteer and is now taking up a well-deserved retirement. The Foundation would like to express their profound thanks for her magnificent effort over the years. These are her memories:

My journey with the Bibbulmun Track began in the very early days when I helped John Hughes in the realignment stage. (Ed: John was involved in surveying and marking about 250km of the new Track). John worked in conjunction with Jesse Brampton and CALM, as it was called then.

John and I spent many hours walking through the bush marking trees with tape, sometimes going over, and redoing our work if it was deemed not suitable for the Track placement. I have John to thank for developing my love of the bush and bushwalking.

I then continued the realignment with Tom Kenneally who worked with CALM. Tom always took his billy and at lunchtime always made tea. Tom is very tall; I am quite short. He would

stride off with his compass and, as I put tape around the trees in places where the bush was very dense, I often lost sight of him and had call out to ask him to slow down and wait for me.

One afternoon we had an adventure at Bell Brook. He had to look at the bridge crossing and, in the meantime, it started raining very heavily. I couldn't get back up the hill as it had become very slippery, so in true Tom fashion he took out his billy and made billy tea so I could reenergise. By the time we got home it was after dark.

In 1998 when the northern section of the Track was opened, I was contacted by Gwen Plunkett and asked if I would like to volunteer to do maintenance work, which I readily agreed to. I was given Asquith Road to Coalfields Highway, three sections in all.

I was helped by many volunteers over the years, one of whom was my sister Denise. She was petrified by snakes and of course one morning, one slid across the path in front of her. She jumped up and down screaming "s**t, s**t, s**t!" The poor snake would have been frightened to death and she couldn't move forwards nor backwards. It took me 30 minutes to finally move her.



Val Cocker

Another time Denise and I were with two others when we stopped for morning tea. They sat on a log and soon realised it was a home for bull ants. Pants were quickly dropped but all was okay, no bites.

Later I gave up two of my sections to concentrate on the one section from Asquith Road to Caversham Road, which I have looked after for many years. Sadly, I now feel it's time to give this section over to others to work on.

I still look forward to walking and just enjoying the bush. I hope to remain a volunteer for a while longer to maybe assist others in this area.

Thank you all.

Val Cocker

NATIONAL 17-23 MAY 2021
VOLUNTEER
RECOGNISE. RECONNECT.
REIMAGINE. **WEEK**

On 22 May we enjoyed catching up with around 80 Bibbulmun Track volunteers at the historic Mundaring Weir Hotel. The red theme and open fires added to the lively atmosphere as everyone enjoyed the delicious afternoon tea.

The National Volunteer Week event was supported by Lotterywest through Volunteering WA and we thank them for the opportunity to recognise the valuable contribution of our volunteers.

lotterywest
supported

volunteeringWA



BTF staff and board members recognised the various roles



From L to R: Linda Daniels, Helen Grimm, Ce Kealley, Tristy Fairfield (Boma) and Ashley Gibson

Denmark students explore the forest near Giants Campsite on a multiday expedition



Students from The Montessori School with rubbish collected from the Track near North Bannister Roadhouse

The Track maintenance program has been extremely busy during the first half of the year. By the time of writing, 75% of all sections and campsites had been visited by their allocated volunteers. Vacant spots in the volunteer list were all filled; we are very lucky to have a waiting list of enthusiastic walkers wanting to give back to the Track.

Field Days have been held in four of the six DBCA Districts traversed by the Track. Sectional volunteers gathered at Mt Cooke Campsite in March (Perth Hills District), Arcadia Campsite in April (Wellington), Torbay Campsite (Albany) and Woolbales Campsite (Frankland). Field Days are social events and a great opportunity to do some intensive maintenance—it's a great feeling leaving the campsite looking fresh and tidy. The final events for the year are at Lake Maringup Campsite (Donnelly District)

and Blackwood Campsite (Blackwood).

The Support Volunteers have started winter with various campaigns. First for attention was the track section around Sandpatch Campsite. In two campaigns in April and May, materials were helicoptered to 14 locations; then nearly 280 log water bars and over 50 steps were installed. Long sections of conveyor belting were lifted, re-laid, and fixed with new steel staples on mounded soil. This should provide another 10-15 years durability of the stabilized surface.

Another team visited the River Road Bridge near Pemberton in early May to refresh the timber preservative chemicals and tighten nuts on the many steel tie-rods.

Planning of future campaigns continues with the focus on track stabilisation and realignments.

Helen Grimm
Volunteer Manager

Newmont

The Eyes on the Ground maintenance program is generously supported by our premier partner, Newmont Boddington Gold.



Young volunteer helping at Arcadia Campsite

Touching up the Woolbales shelter sign



SV Alex Williams clearing the Track near Woolbales



Timber preservation treatment at River Road Bridge



Oiling Torbay shelter

The town of Balingup was awarded a bronze medal in the 2021 GWN7 Top Tourism Town Awards Small Town category and has always been a favourite of Bibbulmun Track walkers. It sits at the northern entrance of the Blackwood River Valley, close to the halfway point of the Track and is a 2-3-hour drive southwest of Perth. The Track around Balingup passes through a diversity of scenery with jarrah and marri forest interspersed with fruit orchards, boutique vineyards and lush farmland.

Balingup offers fresh produce, a classic country pub soon to reopen, charming antique stores and some of the State's most exhilarating mountain biking and walking trails. The changing seasons mean that you can experience misty mornings in winter, refreshingly cool summernights, a blaze of colour through the deciduous trees in autumn and beautiful wildflower displays in spring. Winding roads crisscross rolling green hills and stands of ancient jarrah, marri and karri forest lie just to the south, with ribbon of the Blackwood River tying the stunning patchwork together.

Balingup is home to around 550 people and is famous for its quirky scarecrows and warm country hospitality. There is a wide range of walker friendly accommodation, fascinating street art and a year-round program of events including the Balingup Medieval Carnivale, the Balingup Small Farm Field Day and Telling Tales in Balingup children's literacy festival.



Balingup's Golden Valley Tree Park

Balingup's cafés and tearooms serve up delicious and tasty treats. Be sure to arrive in time for lunch of a hearty pie at the Olde Shed Café, or if it's breakfast you're after, start your day at the Mushroom at 61 Café. Both cafés offer take-home evening meals packaged and ready to reheat. Nearby, Blackwood Daily Grind is worth a visit for great coffee and fruit smoothies.

Balingup General Store is open seven days a week from 6am to 6pm and has a range of fresh local groceries, fruit and veg, general walker supplies and a bottle shop.

Grab a selfie with one of Balingup's quirky scarecrows, then stroll along the main street exploring boutique shops including the Tinderbox with its range of hand-made essential oils and aromatherapy products, Balingup's Goldsmith for exquisite handmade jewellery, the Village Pedlars for hand crafted artisan products or pick up a bottle of port from Balingup Fruit Winery.

Balingup Posthouse is a favourite accommodation spot for walkers, or for more luxury, select one of the many self-contained cottages close to town. Most accommodation providers offer Bibbulmun Track pick-up and drop-offs to and from town.

A must-see spot in Balingup is the magnificent 60-hectare Golden Valley Tree Park, WA's largest arboretum, which has been voted one of the five top spots in Australia to see autumn colours. It's World Collection boasts

an outstanding array of majestic oaks, corks, pears and other deciduous trees, and the Australian Collection houses a huge variety of fungi in winter

Balingup Visitor Centre is located on the main street and is open seven days a week from 10am to 3pm, offering a variety of useful and interesting books, maps and guidebooks, handmade and local gifts and snacks, chocolates, dehydrated food and other walker supplies. The staff have a huge amount of local knowledge of the area. The Bibbulmun Track register is located there and the centre is happy to hold walker parcels for collection. The vacant block adjoining the Visitor Centre is a safe space for short stay parking.

Fact file:

Balingup Visitor Centre is open 10am – 3pm seven days a week.

balinguptourism@westnet.com.au
www.balinguptourism.com.au
(08) 9764 1818

Please support our Walker Friendly Businesses in Balingup

Southampton Homestead
0412 229 564

Time Travel Tours & Transport
0417 099 268



Walkers at the Balingup Townsite



BTF members Ian Kininmonth and Helen Studham are walkers, cyclists, wildflower enthusiasts and in particular orchid lovers. They walked the Bibbulmun Track end-to-end in spring 2020 and this is their story, as recounted by Ian:

"Let's walk the Bibbulmun." I blurted this out to Helen in a state of panic, as just seconds earlier she had uttered two words I had learnt to fear—"I'm bored". This was followed by seven further words that engendered even more fear—"I think that you should get a job". I was completely bewildered as we had agreed to take a 12 month sabbatical from working and just days before, in late August, completed a 25 day ride of the Munda Biddi Trail, at 1,060 kilometres, one of the longest off road bike trails in the world. We had hoped that the West Australian border would be open, making the rest of Australia our proverbial oyster, but 2020 would show itself to be predictably unpredictable.

As I uttered the words, I saw them move through the air, matrix-like, in slow motion. I was by now terrified. What had been said could not be unsaid. Helen looked up from her book at me with the look that implied I had grown

an extra head. Not good. At this point I knew that I could either cut my losses with "Actually forget it, it's a stupid idea" and run away, or go all in with key points that would summarise the business case. Desperately not wanting to go back to work I went with the second option.

"We've got all the gear that we need, we're fit, we have time and if we leave soon, we'll be able to miss the heat". Pretty good summary I thought to myself, with just four key points. But obviously the knockout point wasn't there—Helen's expression hadn't changed.

I babbled on. "Plus, we'll see heaps of wildflowers." Detecting a slight softening in her look I went in with the killer blow. "And orchids". At the word "orchids" Helen's demeanour changed completely and she looked at me with the look and slow nodding of her head that said, "Business case approved." Nailed it!

Over a long weekend, a couple of years before, we had travelled the Midwest of WA armed with Bob Liddelov's book, A Guide to Native Orchids of South West Western Australia, where we found and photographed over 40 different orchid species. Bob's book had mud maps showing where and when we could find various orchids. It cross referenced almost 250 identification photographs and other information. Excitedly I did some research and found that there were about 400 orchid species in the southwest of Western Australia, one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. Unfortunately, Bob's book didn't have a lot of sites near the Bibbulmun Track and was a bit too heavy to take as a reference. We would just have to make do.

We set off from Kalamunda mid-September at the peak of the orchid flowering



Ian & Helen half-way!

season. Our quest to identify and photograph as many species of orchid as we could had begun. In the process we met many people who were also interested in orchids and even enrolled one of our shelter buddies, Bob, who had a better eye than us, and set off earlier each day to mark out new orchids species as he saw them. Orchid-eye Bob would mark a big arrow in the dirt whenever he saw a new species. More often than not he would also mark out others which he thought just looked nice—and there were a lot of those. The arrows made it easy for us but created confusion for some walkers. We met one guy who told us; "I keep looking to where those arrows are pointing and wondering, is it pointing to that dead log or that rock?" He was completely baffled until we educated him.

By mid-November, when we finished our hike, we had survived ticks, mosquitoes, March flies, snakes, fickle wind and rain to identify and photograph 60 different orchid species along the 1,000km length of the Track. We found some notable hotspots where we discovered clusters of orchid species new to us, including Mt Cooke to Mt Wells (9 species), the Harris River flats through to Yourdamung and the reserve on the east side of Collie (19), Grimwade to Balingup (4), Northcliffe to Mt Pingerup (9) and Peaceful Bay to Denmark (4).

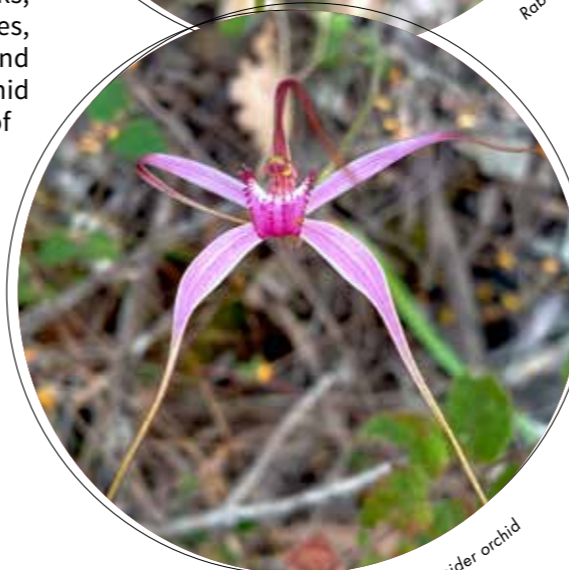
Rest days in Track towns along the way were spent poring over the Visitor Centre resource books trying to match our photos and debating what we had seen and trying to decide if we each had a new favourite. My overall favourites were the Swamp Beard orchid and the Forest Mantis Spider orchid, while Helen's were the Rabbit orchid and the Pink Spider orchid. While September to November is probably the peak season, there are orchids flowering in most other months. For those with little knowledge about orchids, the DBCA Bush Book Orchids of the South West is a great starting point, along with Bob's book and the laminated flora and fauna identification sheets in the shelters.

Happy orchid hunting!

Ian Kininmonth & Helen Studham



Rabbit Orchid



Pink spider orchid

This photo of maintenance volunteer Mark Davidson inspired a few entries including:

"Hallelujah to getting the weight off my feet!" - Nareen Burnell

"(I proposed and)she said yes!" - Evelyn Coral

"It's an impressive landing and here come the judges' scores. 9.7/9.6/9.8. My word, this will be another Gold for Mark Davidson." - Stu Knox

"I'll reboot, then back on the Track!" - Elise Marciano

And the Winner Caption is...

"Oooh I should have left the wine home!" - Pam Chitty

A prize is in the post Pam!



Dehydrate and lose weight!

The Foundation has two Ezidri Food Dehydrators available for hire to members.

A food dehydrator is an appliance that removes moisture from food to aid in its preservation. A food dehydrator uses heat and air flow to reduce the water content of foods. The water content of food is usually very high, typically 80% to 95% for fruits and vegetables and 50% to 75% for meats.

Removing moisture from food restrains bacteria from growing and spoiling food. Further, removing moisture from food dramatically reduces the weight of the food. Dehydration is therefore an excellent way to prepare foods for carrying when bushwalking.

The dehydrators each come with an instruction and recipe book, five trays, one mesh sheet and four solid sheets for liquids such as yoghurt and tomato paste.

For more info call the Foundation or visit bibbulmuntrack.org.au/trip-planner/equipment-hire/ to download a hire form. For more information on dehydrators visit Ezidri at eziconcepts.com.au

Dehydrators are available to members only. Hire fee is \$40 per week for a maximum period of two weeks.



Notice board

FOR SALE

DEHYDRATED VEGETARIAN MEALS

I over-prepared on a recently completed end-to-end walk and have approximately 15-18 dehydrated vegetarian meals plus soups and condiments that are bagged and ready to go.

Contact: David
(08) 9319 2534
E: davidcurtis01@hotmail.com

HIKING EQUIPMENT (USED)

Aarn Pack including front balance pockets - \$50

Tarptent 2 - \$50

Power Monkey battery - \$20

Shroom battery - \$5 or free if you buy the Power Monkey

Knife - \$5

Maps and Guidebooks - \$10

Life Straw - \$5

Gas cannister 100g Pro Fuel - \$5

Compass - free with anything else you buy

Pillow Exped, inflatable - \$5

or you can have the whole lot for \$120

Contact: Bruce
0429 042 854
Email: brucealechale@gmail.com

LOST

HIKING POLES

Lost last July (2020) about 10 Km north of Balingup.

Contact: Mike
0427 677 670
Email: L4male@gmail.com

TYVEK TENT GROUND SHEET

Tyvek is widely used as a groundsheet for protecting the bottom of your tent. It is breathable, waterproof but very tough.

Sold per metre off a 2.7m wide roll.

61g per square metre, white.

\$20 per metre for BTF members.

\$25 per metre for non-members.

For more information about this product see the notice on our website.

Contact: Steve
(08) 9481 0551
E: events@bibbulmuntrack.org.au

WANTED

AARN PACK

55 Litre or larger with a long back and medium hip belt.

Contact: Gordon
0467 628 236
Email: robtom@iinet.net.au

Want to advertise on our notice board?

Free for members – just log into your profile on the Bibbulmun Track website. Click the Notice Board & Classified tab under the News tab.

Non-members, please phone or email us to arrange your adverts.

Cost is \$5 for 3 months.

All items will be deleted from the website after three months if not renewed.

Phone (08) 9481 0551 or
email friends@bibbulmuntrack.org.au

Prize WINNERS!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF OUR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP PRIZE DRAW

March

Jenny Ashbolt received a Bibb Track Headsox.

April

Greg Barber received a waterproof phone case.

May

Greg Cotterill received an accessory case.

June

Jane Lodge received Bibb Track Rocktape.

Unless otherwise stated all the prizes were donated by Sea to Summit and we thank them for their generous support.



HAVE YOU CHANGED ADDRESS?

Help us save time and postage and update your details. Hop onto our website, log in and update your details under My Account. You can also upload a pic of yourself!

Not sure how?
Visit our Website Help page under Contact Us at
www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au

Otherwise call us and we will update your profile for you.

Favourite Short Walk PEMBERTON WINE & DINE

Map 5 - Difficulty: Easy

Distance: 13km one way | **Time:** half day or more

Starting point: If you are travelling with more than one car, leave one in town at the Visitors Centre and use the other to drop off, or use one of the Walker Friendly Businesses in the area for a Track transfer service.

Follow the Bibbulmun Track downhill and after 2.5km arrive at the Big Brook Arboretum, which was planted in the 1930s to see how trees from around the world thrived in our climate and soils.

Continue on the Track to the scenic bitumen path alongside Big Brook Dam. Once you reach the dam wall, cross it and turn right onto the sealed road (Tramway Trail). Walk on to Hidden River Estate, around 1km from the dam. You will need to give yourself 1.5-2 hours from the starting point to make it to a lunch booking at the winery.

To rejoin the Bibbulmun Track without walking back to Big Brook Dam, take the following short-cut across Lefroy Brook but note that the creek crossing may be impassable in winter when the dam wall is overflowing.

At the bottom of the winery driveway, turn left and walk for 50m, to the Mullinea Road corner; ask the restaurant staff to point you in the right direction. Turn right down the dirt track at the no through road sign.

Cross the brook; you may wish to pack a small towel, and walk up the hill to a T-junction with the Rainbow Trail. This is the biggest hill on the whole trail but made a little easier if you are giggling all the way! At the intersection you should see the roadside Walkers Ahead sign. Turn left onto the Rainbow Trail and follow



Lefroy Crossing

it for about 450m until you reach the Bibbulmun Track crossing and take the Track. From here the walk into town is beautiful, mainly downhill, with stunning vantage points to view the Lefroy Brook. You come out near the trout hatchery and the Pemberton Caravan Park then wind around to the Pemberton Pool before returning to your car. The section from the winery is usually less than 90min.

For a longer option from the winery, you can return to Big Brook Dam and continue on the Bibbulmun Track all the way into town.

Track Tucker - Beef and Vegetable Stew

The following recipe is for my usual first-night-out meal, where the excitement of being out on the Bibbulmun Track overwhelms my concerns at carrying the little extra weight of a real potato and carrot. I have made it with fresh beef, frozen the night before and wrapped in newspaper, but that can be a little too much like living life on the edge for some, hence the dried beef used in this version.

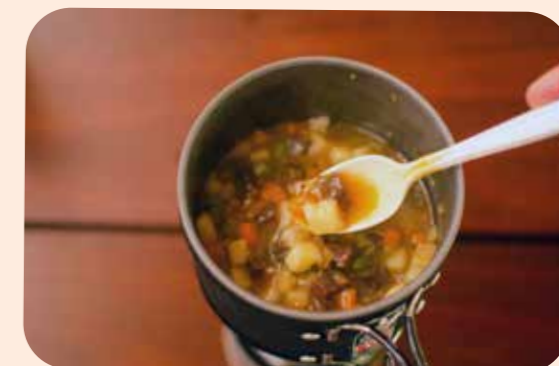
~ Derek Bracken

Ingredients (for one serve):

500ml water	handful of dehydrated peas
1 medium potato	1 packet French onion soup
1 medium carrot	50g beef biltong or jerky (unflavoured is preferred)

Method:

1. Boil the water.
2. Meanwhile, wash and dice (5-7mm dice) the potato and carrot.
3. Dice the biltong or jerky.
4. Once boiling, add the diced vegetables, the peas and the biltong or jerky.
5. Simmer for 5 minutes then add the French onion soup.
6. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for a further 5-7 minutes or until the vegetables are just tender.
7. Cover and let stand for a further 10 minutes.
8. Best enjoyed with your boots off and feet up...
9. Cool slightly, crumble and dehydrate until dry to the touch.



Upcoming Events

L-plates Pub Plod

Are you a first timer, or do you just occasionally dabble in bushwalking? This is a great way to learn about what the Track has to offer you. The walk (approx. 12km with some hills) takes you through mixed jarrah forest with views over the Mundaring Weir to a Bibbulmun Track campsite. Your guides will be on hand to talk to you about walking the Bibbulmun Track and share with you their personal experiences. We finish near the walkers' favourite local haunt, the Mundaring Weir Hotel. An all-round fun day and great introduction.

When: Sunday 15 August
8:30am to 2:30pm
Rating: Beginners
Cost: \$25 members

Walking with Mum/ Dad weekends

These events are designed to be enjoyed by parents and kids (8-13yrs) alike. Together you will enjoy two walks through the magnificent jarrah forest and camp overnight at a Bibbulmun Track campsite. Here you will learn bush and camping skills from our experienced guides and perhaps enjoy some marshmallows roasted over the fire. These events are guaranteed to be fun, fun, fun with long lasting memories for you all. The perfect opportunity to get outdoors with your kids.

Includes guides, map, planning info, equipment hire and transport. BYO food.

Walk with Mum: 28 & 29 August
Walk with Dad: 31 Oct to Sun 1 Nov
Rating: Beginners
Cost: \$240 members
(for 1 adult & 1 child)



Walking with Dad Weekend

Bibbulmun Trek for Beginners

The perfect introduction to overnight bushwalking on a relatively easy section of the Bibbulmun Track. Not a beginner? Try the Balingup Adventure.

We walk approximately 8km each day and camp at a typical Bibbulmun Track campsite. Our experienced and friendly guides will teach you all you need to know about walking and camping and give you the confidence you need to venture out on your own.

Includes planning night, trip preparation manual, map, guides and equipment hire. BYO food. Own transport to walk start 1¼hr from Perth.

When: 4 & 5 September
Rating: Beginners
Cost: \$155 members

Wildflower Wander

Enjoy the beauty of the spring flowers as you spend three days hiking in one of the most scenic sections of the Bibbulmun Track. Starting from Mundaring you will be amazed at the scenery each day has to offer – the mysterious boulders, the expansive views and the misty mornings. A great event for sectional End-to-Enders trying to fill in the blanks.

Includes planning night, trip preparation manual, map, guides, transport and equipment hire. BYO food.

When: Saturday 25 to 27 September
(long-weekend)
Rating: Intermediate
Cost: \$185 (early bird price)

Bibbulmun Blossoms

Come and learn about the many wildflowers in bloom on this 8km guided walk near Kalamunda. Our guides will assist you to identify the flora along the way. A copy of Wildflowers of the Northern Bibbulmun Track and Jarrah Forests is included. A good level of fitness is required and experience of walking on rough and rocky trails.

When: Sun 10 Oct - 8:30am to 1:30pm
Rating: Intermediate
Cost: \$50 members



Bibbulmun Blossoms

Bibbulmun Birds

Encounter the birds of the jarrah forest on a 16km walk in the hills with Viv Read, amateur ornithologist, volunteer and experienced bushwalker from Birdlife WA. Includes Common Birds of the South West Forests bush book.

Don't forget your binoculars!

When: Sun 17 Oct - 8:00am to 2:30pm
Rating: Beginners
Cost: \$35 members

Get Lost With Steve

Do you really know how to use a compass? Steve will guide you through a series of practical and theoretical exercises on and near the Track in Mundaring. Get Lost with Steve and you will have fun learning and perfecting basic map reading and compass skills. For the next level up in navigation, see the Get Found with Steve.

When: Sun 31 Oct - 8am to 5:00pm
Where: Near Mundaring Weir
Rating: Beginners
Cost: \$85 members

More events and all bookings are available online at:
www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au



Getting Lost with Steve

The Nyoongar Seasons

There are six seasons in the Noongar annual cycle each corresponding to changes in the landscape and while not tied to fixed dates on the calendar are loosely tied to two-monthly periods.

Djilba Season of conception

First spring: Aug-September

Mixture of wet days with increasing number of clear, cold nights and pleasant warm days.

In August we move into the season of Djilba, a transitional time of the year, with some very cold and clear days combining with warmer, rainy, windy days mixing with the occasional sunny day or two.

This is the start of the massive flowering explosion that happens in the southwest, starting with the yellow flowering plants such as acacias.

Traditionally the main food sources included many of the land-based grazing animals such as the yongar, the waitj or emu and the Koomal or possum.

As the days start to warm up, we start to see and hear the first of the new-born with their proud parent out and about providing them food, guiding them through foraging tasks and protecting their family units from much bigger animals, including people.

The woodland birds will still be nest bound, hence the swooping protective behavior of the Koolbardi or magpies starts to ramp up as does that of the djidi djidi or willy wagtails and the chuck-a-lucks or wattle birds.

Kambarang Season of birth

Second spring: Oct-November

Longer dry periods.

As the days become warmer, we move into Kambarang, defined by longer dry periods and a definite warming trend.

Flowers abound—look out for banksias and many other smaller delicate flowering plants including the kangaroo paw and orchids. During this time the balgas will start to flower, especially if they've been burnt in the past year or closely shaved. One of the most striking displays of flowers to be seen during this season will be the Mooja, or Australian Christmas Tree (Nuytsia). The bright orange-yellow flowers serve to signal that heat is on its way.



Motorbike Frog. Credit: Guy Spouge

Social Sunday walks

Free for members. See booking conditions online.

WALK RATINGS: BEGINNERS INTERMEDIATE EXPERIENCED

DATE	DETAILS	RATING
5 Sept 2021 @ 9:00am	16.2km return walk from North Bannister to the Serpentine River via the Gringer Creek Campsite	
5 Sept 2021 @ 9:00am	11km return. Lights Beach carpark to William Bay Campsite	
12 Sept 2021 @ 8:30am	23.5km return walk from Perth Hills National Parks Centre to Helena Campsite (Fit & experienced walkers only!)	
19 Sept 2021 @ 9:00am	16.3km return walk from Sullivan Rock to Monadnocks Campsite	
3 Oct 2021 @ 10:00am	7km return walk from Conspicuous Beach to Rame Head Campsite return near Walpole	
10 Oct 2021 @ 8:30am	18.4km return walk from Dale Road to Beraking Campsite. (Fit and experienced walkers only!)	
17 Oct 2021 @ 9:00am	16km Mt Cooke circuit walk via Mt Cooke Campsite	
7 Nov 2021 @ 4:00pm	6.4km return sunset walk from Camel Farm to Hewett's Hill Campsite	

Bookings for each walk will open one month prior to each walk.

Book online, or contact the BTF office for a booking form. Bookings cannot be made over the phone.



Track Trivia

there were four walkers trying to get to sleep. No maps, no guidebooks, just one GPS and an incompetent leader.

On the other hand, I have camped with schools and thoroughly enjoyed the experience—not least because they usually have excess real food that they offer hungry end-to-enders! My favourite memory is being asked to talk about the Track to a group of Year 10s around the campfire. I asked them what they thought could be done to improve the Track. After much thought the following idea was broached: Perspex® panels in the roof of the dunny so you could see what you were doing. Further comment would be superfluous.

Wow, “déjà-vu all over again”, as Yogi Berra was believed to have said. Once again the BTF office staff and volunteers begin their nomadic life as they have to pack up and leave their stronghold in Wellington Street. Well, we had a bit more than three years there. New premises are currently being sought and many people have made suggestions. The new Track shelter at Helena was considered but rejected as being too far away from the nearest source of good coffee, without which the office cannot function in the mornings. The Ritz Carlton Suite was a popular choice, especially as it boasts a separate powder room for guests but was felt to lack the more down to earth feel that bushwalking engenders. However the spirit of the Foundation

will endure and the problems, like many earlier ones, will be overcome. To quote Yogi again, “when you come to a fork in the trail, take it.”

So there it is. The Track is as good if not better than ever and has proved a godsend to many people over the last couple of years. May it continue for many more. I’ll leave you some pictures that I think epitomise the spirit of the Bibbulmun Track!

Happy Walking, WWJ



Peaceful forest



Happy hikers

Gorgeous coastline

REFLECTIONS FROM THE REGISTERS

REGISTER ARTWORK:



Last day on the Track - this is how I feel!
Jo 08/10/2020

MUTTON BIRD:

Bibbulmun Track you’ve been hot, cold, wet, dry, spectacular, boring, painful, healing, serene, noisy, light and dark but most of all, amazing. As I walk into Albany tomorrow there is nothing in the world that I would rather have been doing for these last seven weeks than walking along you and living this experience.
A. 06/06/2017

This marks my last night on the Track for what has been an amazing journey. It felt surreal. A part of me wants to go on and another part of me craves the comforts of Albany...

Until next time, thanks for the memories!
Tim SOBO 05/08 2019

Last night on the Track for me before finishing my end-to-end in Albany. The Bibbulmun is certainly a Track of many contrasts, inflicting pain as well as moments of awe and beauty. I’m not sure how I feel about finishing. I will be glad for the luxuries that regular living brings but missing the Track at the same time. It is amazing to know that you can live and thrive with the limited and basic equipment that fits into a backpack. My thanks to the many volunteers, DPaW and others who contributed to making this a world class hike.
Matt Higgs 06/08/2018

BROOKTON:

Isn’t this natural world beautiful? Oh, the joys of feeling, observing, hearing, tasting and smelling the elements is bliss. Nature never ceases to amaze me. Once you learn to love, respect and conquer fear you can do anything.

Great walking to you all.
Dezza 17/06/2017

Track tip 1:

Always treat the water in case it contains back terriers.

Safe travels.

Mia 07/10/2019

Ed: Is this something to do with advising people not to take their dogs on the Track?

Track tip 2:

Never, ever, confuse your tube of toothpaste with a tube of Deep Heat!

Shaggy 20/09/2020

HELENA:

Nine people here last night but tonight just little old me. I guess coming to check out the new place on a Sunday night has its advantages. I’m sitting by the fire, the sun went down over yonder an hour or so ago and so will I fairly soon. I thought to myself a bit earlier “I can’t believe this is all free” and remembered the hours and hours of hard work that went into the rebuilding of this place. I’m happy to do my small part by being a member of the BTF, best membership I have ever had.

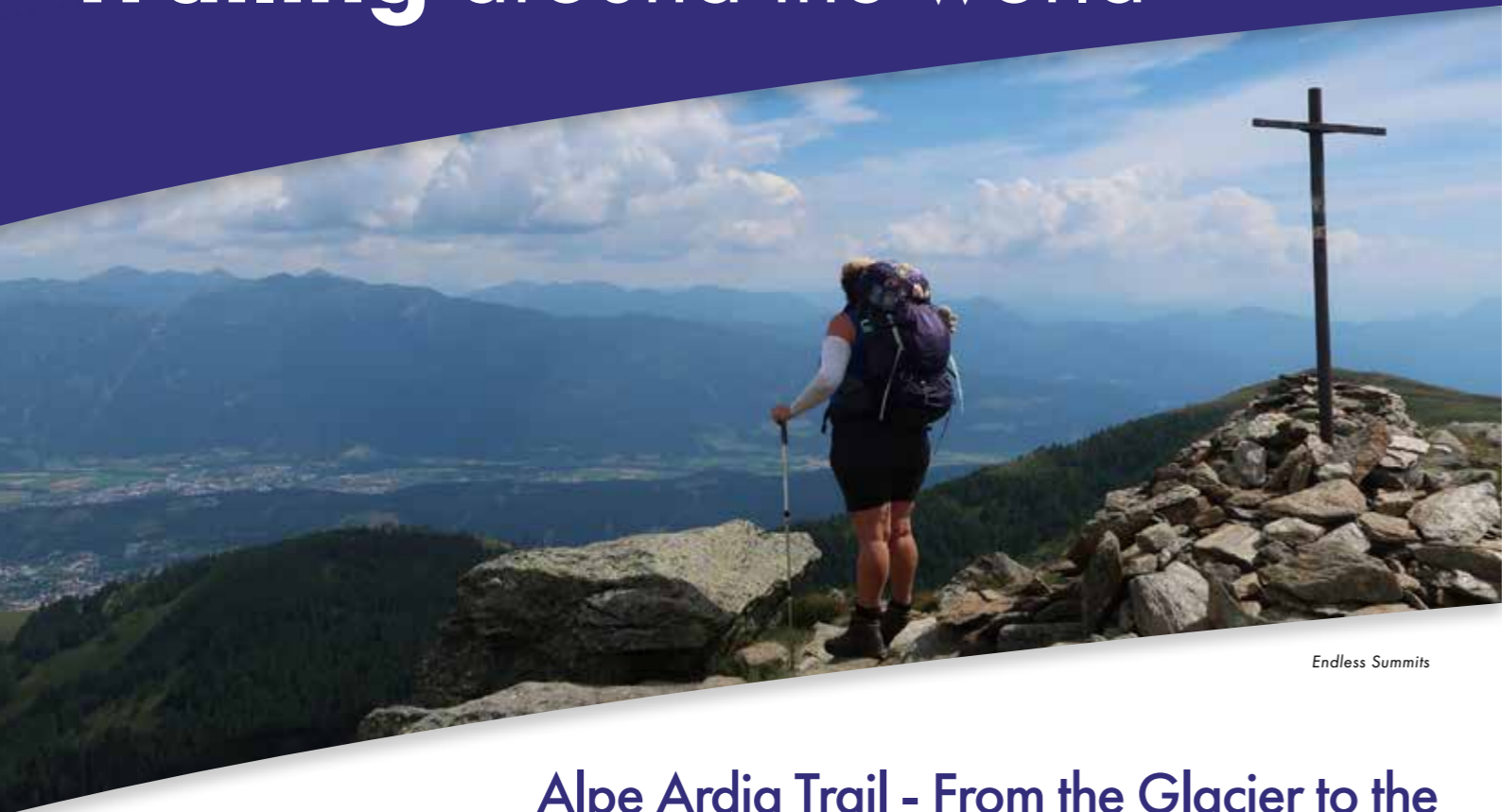
With love,
Corey 14/07/2019

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Blackwood Campsite by Mark Pybus (The Life of Py)

Trailing around the world



Endless Summits

Alpe Ardia Trail - From the Glacier to the Sea - Hiking the Garden of Eden

Michelle and Mark Ryan, aka Walking Two by Two, walked the beautiful 750km Alpe Ardia Trail which passes through Austria, Slovenia and Italy. The following is Michelle's account of their adventure:

This beautiful trail passes through three countries and takes you from the foot of Austria's highest mountain, Mount Grossglockner, across glaciers, through mountain ranges, along valleys and past rivers and lakes, ending at the harbour town of Trieste Italy on the Adriatic Sea.

Developed in 2012, the Alpe Ardia is designed to be a pleasure trail and named Hiking the Garden of Eden, to represent the stunning landscape on the southern side of the Alps.

Our first morning was exciting as we travelled up to the base of Mt. Grossglockner, with the walk beginning from the Pasterze Glacier. We started at around 2,396 metres and had a 1,267-metre descent following the glacier and passing glacial lakes.

We took our time and rested whenever there was a comfortable place to sit and just soak in the surroundings. It was breathtaking days walk, and, although hard work on our knees, it was worth it.

The first day really woke up our bodies! The trail through Austria took us over mountain passes, traversing the ridgelines, down valleys, through fields and in and out of villages. We would leave a town in the morning and often see deer in the paddocks having

their morning feed. It reminded me of the kangaroos at home having their morning feed as we wandered past.

Afternoons found us descending to a village for the night, then ascending every morning, sometimes over 2,000 metres. On a few nights we stayed high in the mountains in what is called a hutte. These reminded us of staying in the Albergues through Spain, France, and Italy where there would be many other hikers sitting around the big tables sharing meals and stories. Waking up in the hutte was wonderful as the morning mountain mist outside rolled through, giving a very dramatic impression.

We met many other hikers, though none of them were walking the whole trail, just walking a week or two then coming back the next season for more. Most



Start of the Alpe to Ardia

were astounded that we were walking the whole length in one go but when you travel all the way from Australia you are going to go the whole way!

Some sections through the mountains were challenging as you could climb for a good 10kms or more with many switchbacks. We spent a good part of the day over the 2000 metre level, and, after the fifth summit, I just stopped counting. Europe at the time was experiencing a warmer than normal summer and the humidity was very high. We found that every day at around 3pm the storms would roll in fast and very furious and, although scary, it also added to the sense of excitement.

Hiking through the low cloud in the mountain had its challenges as at times it was like pea soup, and we found it difficult to see each other. The wonderful side of hiking through the cloud was the atmospheric scenes it gave. One day I just stood watching as Mark walked across the ridgeline between mountains with the cloud rolling up one side and circling around in a swirling motion while the other side was clear with vision all the way down to the valley floor. Magic!

There was history to be found all along this trail, which for us is one of the appealing aspects of travelling to other countries. Moll Valley with its mystical, silent feeling and its conical hill has been used as a ceremonial site



More Waterfalls

for over 6,000 years and has one of the oldest sacrificial altars in the area. A temple was erected by the Romans in the name of the God Hercules. The Barbarossaschlucht Gorge with art installations dotted along the trail told the legendary story of how the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and his brave soldiers stayed the night in the gorge and were chased out by the devil.

Walking into medieval towns like Gmund was like stepping back through

time with their ancient buildings and the layout of the churches and town centre in the middle and streets stretching out like a cobweb.

We couldn't help but forget that we were in the modern era and not back in the past. When we left Austria and headed across the border to Slovenia it became obvious just how pretty Slovenia is. Everything was very neat, and the mountain passes became less and smaller as we headed through more valleys. In Austria the forests were mostly pine, but here it is a mix of trees. Maybe because we were not reaching the heights of Austria, and maybe because the soil and rocks looked very different, it was obvious we were in a new country. There is a definite dividing line of the Julian Alps that makes the difference.

Kranjska Gora in Slovenia is a lively and beautiful ski resort town and was full of summer holiday makers, most wearing hiking gear, showing it to be a great hub for hiking.

This area has a lot of history from World War One and when we crossed the mountain pass and headed into the Tivolavski National Park we came across many monuments, including a small Russian chapel built by the Russian prisoners in memory of 200 soldiers and prisoners killed in a tragic avalanche in 1916.

The scenery was awe inspiring. I really loved the look of the Julian Alps. They are so rugged and dramatic yet pretty at the same time. The water in the mountain streams is crystal-clear, rushing over the chalk-like stones, teasing you by inviting you in, but the water is so cold!

The Pagan Girl is a naturally formed face in the rock on the side of the mountain. Legend has it that she prophesied the death of the legendary chamois buck, Zlatorog and as punishment was turned into stone. It was quite impressive and for a while when walking over the pass I felt her eyes were watching us.

We spent some time exploring the open-air museum. This is the remains of an extensive third-line defence called the lines d'armata. There are trenches and tunnels everywhere. Walking in them gave me a weird feeling, knowing that many fought, lived, and died here over four years. This is the first time I have walked through trenches. You see them in the movies but when you



Mist



Endless Climbs

are in one it's quite sad to picture what it must have been like for the soldiers.

The official end of the trail is in Muggia on the Adriatic coast of Italy but, sadly, the last section takes you away from the coast and further inland, crossing back and forth between Italy and Slovenia. Once we arrived in Trieste, we decided that, due to the overwhelming heat, we would not walk the last day inland and instead took a ferry ride along the coast to Muggia for a swim in the Adriatic, a perfect way to end the walk.

Michelle & Mark Ryan

For more information, photos, and a video visit Walking Two by Two's blog page - <https://walkingtwobytwo.com>



Pagan Girl



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