

Volunteer Profile



As a teenager I was involved in a group called Stirling Range Adventure Camp. Every year a group of 40 young people would head to the Stirling Ranges for a week of some of the most challenging bushwalking (and general suffering!) a teen could endure. The wet, the cold, the exhaustion the sheer exhilaration of it all captivated me. I was hooked on all things 'outside'. I remember when a career guidance counsellor asked me at school what I wanted to do when I left school; all I wanted was to be a "ranger at the Stirls".

After high school I worked with the WA Tourism commission. This was great for me, as our visitor centre (the old Holiday WA shop in Hay Street) was just down the road from Mountain Designs and the Bibbulmun Track Foundation. I would spend many a lunch hour spending my few dollars on outdoor gear and hearing amazing stories from some of these 'legends' like Mike Wood (the Foundation's founding chair) and Roland Tyson (who went on to co-found Sea to Summit).

Mike helped me when I needed mannequins with climbing gear and outdoor clothing for our Holiday WA display window and Roland took me to Statham's quarry in the hills and explained how to actually use a rock-climbing harness. It was these guys who convinced me to head off to Nepal by myself and spend time wandering the Annapurna Range in the Himalaya.

In the early 90's I found myself in Sydney studying a degree in Theology and minor in youth work. Sydney opened me up to the joys of wandering in the Blue Mountains. My hiking addiction was being fed! I returned to Perth to marry my long-term sweetheart Christine and then head off on a one-year long adventure honeymoon which included the Overland Track in Tasmania. A lifelong obsession with walks in that state has never subsided, with South Coast and Port Davey tracks coming up this January.

In the mid 90's I started a decade working in the northern suburbs of Perth as a youth minister, introducing the youth and the trainee leaders to my passion for all things 'outside'. We had leaders' retreats paddling the Blackwood and of course many days spent wandering the stunning Bibbulmun Track.

Through a series of subsequent employers, I had the privilege of leading paddling trips, mountain biking and hiking trips. One memorable trip was taking four very at-risk young people from Greens Pool to Mandalay Beach, with a canoe section down the Frankland River in the middle. It's the hardest thing I think I've ever done – not the walking part!

Throughout the past couple of decades, aside from having the privilege of dovetailing my outdoor passion with my employment, I've maintained a pretty healthy list of private expeditions – sea kayaking in Tasmania, the Whitsundays and the Dampier Archipelago (Murujuga); as well as classic hikes like the Larapinta, Jatbula, Mt Anne Circuit, winter hikes in the Victorian Alps and the Pine Valley region of Tasmania and a great few weeks on the Walkers Haute Route in the French/Swiss Alps – to name just a few.

"The best one?" friends often ask. The best is coming home to WA, knowing we have a world-class long-distance trail here in our stunning southwest. Better still, I have become a Foundation member and a Track maintenance volunteer in the Northcliffe area... my 'own' piece of the Bibbulmun!

I never did become a park ranger, but I got close. I now work for DBCA as the Chaplain/Wellbeing support to the rangers and staff in Parks and Wildlife, as well as all other staff in the authorities under the DBCA banner.

Scott Vawser

