

## **Roger Whysall's contribution to the Iceland Conservation Volunteers**

Roger Whysall, born in 1945, from Nottingham, first came to Iceland in 1993 when he joined a Highland trek. Roger returned in 2005 as a member of the Iceland Conservation Volunteers programme (ICV), organised by the Environmental Agency of Iceland (Umhverfisstofnun).

Roger began leading trail teams in summer 2006 and since then he has led hundreds of volunteers in every corner of Iceland. Over the past 15 years, he has worked in hundreds of projects in 35 different protected areas, including several remote locations such as Hornstrandir, Mývatn, Ásbyrgi, Lónsöræfi, Laki, Landmannalaugar and Kerlingarfjöll.

During these years, Roger has been in contact with many experienced local rangers and managers and has gained tremendous knowledge on protected areas around Iceland. He refined his trail work skills and managed to share them with the other members of the ICV programme thanks to his exceptional ability in leading and coaching groups of young people, acquired during his previous work as a teacher in the United Kingdom. In recent years he has organised camps and projects in the Snæfellsjökull National Park.

For ten years, Roger and the ICV coordinators visited the Hólar University College and held a 3-days practical trail building course for the students, where participants could earn the Park Ranger certificate in Iceland. Roger and the ICV coordinator also visited several natural areas in Lebanon and collaborated with the Lebanese Conservation Volunteers in organising trail work and conservation projects there.

Since 2012, Roger is working very closely with the ICV coordinators and is helping them to improve the programme in every aspect. He also joins with the organisation of the training programme and is training many of new volunteers' groups. Roger also takes part in organising the ICV volunteer leaders training, which is usually held in the Lake District National Park.

In the past few years Roger has created material related to trail work techniques which he collected it into a Trail Work Handbook for the ICV programme. The handbook is now available online on the Environmental Agency's website and it is the result of 15 years' experience in protected areas management in Iceland.

The purpose of the handbook is to help ICV leaders and trail teams (and anyone else working in this field) in finding the best solution for trail building and maintenance in Icelandic natural and remote environments. We believe this handbook is an invaluable resource that will help both the ICV programme and others working in the field of trail building and maintenance and protect the Icelandic nature.

We would like to thank Roger Whysall so much for his commitment, his professionalism, his energy and the joy he brings to the ICV programme. We look forward to working together again in the volunteer seasons to come!

René Biasone and Julie Kermarec, ICV coordinators,

Reykjavík, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020

