

Colin Spiller – Trek Leader



Colin Spiller was working full time for the Environment Agency before he joined a Raleigh expedition for years and the timing was right. He joined as a Project Manager in Costa Rica.

It was an appropriate time financially and personally. I've wished to participate on a Raleigh expedition for years and the timing was right. As far as other organisations were concerned, I only considered Raleigh based on friends' experiences and through Raleigh's reputation. I wouldn't have taken 4 months off unpaid unless I was taking part in a Raleigh expedition. My usual 3 weeks away in the hills each year suffice!

With my other Project Managers, we were responsible for the safety and organisation of each phase. Focusing on the development of the group and individuals alike was crucial but it was necessary to ensure the team were making the key decisions whilst offering advice.

As lead trek PM I enjoyed the physical activities, such as river crossings and found it gratifying to take the lead on these areas as they required experience and knowledge in order to judge potentially risky situations.

I would say I've developed my ability to trust others' judgements and as important to stick to my own convictions and decisions without being easily swayed.

For Colin, the highlights of the Raleigh experience was the generosity of the people in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the support of the other PM's and venturers as well as laughter and friendship. When asked to describe a day in the life of the expedition, Colin wrote:

“Awake 3am, make porridge and coffee, pack, brief the group, head off at 5am, walk, plod, walk, walk some more, encourage, encourage, encourage, fall about laughing, be a shoulder to cry on, be a mentor, be a friend, walk some more. STOP and admire the views which you just won't see anywhere else by any other means. Fight the pain and the need to complain, reach your destination, be overwhelmed by the generosity of the people of Costa Rica as you sleep on yet another persons porch and use their kitchen, shower, etc, talk through the day with some of the greatest people you'll ever meet, fall asleep tired but blissed out...wake up to another great sunrise, repeat for 250kms.”

The biggest challenges for me was the language (Los siento, me espaniol non bueno !) but I have grown stronger mentally, my confidence has grown and I now feel I have an even greater appreciation of the world. To sum up my Raleigh experience?... Where do I sign up for the next one?! It is everything I wanted and more.