

ACKMA AGM WEEKEND 4 to 8 MAY 2017

PROPOSED PROGRAM for the CAVE GUIDES' GATHERING AND ACKMA AGM TE ANAU, FIORDLAND, NEW ZEALAND

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The event will be based in Te Anau and will focus on sharing experiences in Fiordland National Park which includes both karst, caves and bush settings.

Fiordland is known as the "Mountains of Water" and rainfall in most of the areas to be visited is between 1.5 and 3.5m annually. In the heart of the park rainfall exceeds 7m annually. In May temperatures will be range between zero and 12 degrees.

Therefore all participants will need to be prepared for this climate. The areas to be visited is relatively remote and access to all sites is weather dependent so the program may be subject to change.

The activities will also require a level of fitness above that required for normal show caves visitation as all caves in the program, (apart from the Glowworm Caves and Clifden Caves) are, by ACKMA conference standards, remote. Access will require walking off track, often uphill, and some stream or river crossing may be required so participants will need to bring suitable clothing and equipment.

Within the program there are options for varied fitness levels (some trips while being off track are relatively flat) other will require good levels of fitness with extended periods of uphill walking. We therefore ask that trip descriptions are carefully considered and that you chose activities within your capability. As part of the overall risk management for the event we reserve the right to limit/amend options if there is any doubt to a participant's suitability to safely undertake the excursion.

Some trips will also be limited by permit restrictions, so pending demand we may switch options/dates around to provide maximum access within the rules. We are working with the Department of Conservation (DOC) to maximize the opportunity within the date ranges of the event.

While Te Anau has a wide variety of accommodation available we are hoping to negotiate special rates with one of the major accommodation providers which has everything from tent sites, shared dorms, individual rooms to the newest motel suites in Te Anau. We will provide further details in the next journal, the main point being that accommodation shouldn't be a problem in May.

There will be a combination of included and own cost meals during the program. Te Anau has numerous restaurants, catering for everyone.

Wednesday 3 May 2017

1800hrs - Welcome to Te Anau (informal BBQ dinner) arrivals are welcome throughout the day and pending numbers we may offer a coach connection ex Queenstown.

Thursday 4th May 2017

A WALK IN THE PARK

Following a group introduction to Fiordland (Te Waihi Pounamu) South West New Zealand World Heritage Area transport will depart for the following interpretative walk options. These walk are all on formed tracks and offer a range of different experiences. A local guide will accompany each

group and during the walk there will be sessions on interpretation techniques and "guiding" principles. Each location offers something very different and will ensure we can keep group size appropriate to the locations.

Hollyford Valley – This option will be aimed at the guides, with a strong focus on the importance and value of developing thematic interpretation. This will be a relatively flat walk in the iconic Hollyford Valley alongside the Hollyford River. A key theme of this walk is Maori and early European history associated with the area. The trip will include a drive of approx. 1.25 hours into the Hollyford with approx. 4 to 5 hours on the track. This is the most remote walk to choose from and offers something very special walking under the peaks of the Dividing Ranges. Overall 8 hours return trip ex Te Anau.

Kepler Track – This option is aimed at those wanting a more leisurely walking experience with a link to conservation partnerships and a detailed look at predator control. A flat walk option close to Te Anau incorporating beautiful bush, river and wetlands landscape. You will walk to the shores of Lake Manapouri and Motu Rau Hut. During the walk you will hear about the Kepler Bird Song project (extensive network of pest management) and also learn about 'Kids Restore the Kepler' an Air New Zealand funded partnership with DOC providing local education programs with a conservation theme. This trip will be approximately 6 hours' duration return ex Te Anau and includes an easy walk of approximately 2 hours each way with some sightseeing on-route to the track.

Key Summit – This is a great opportunity for those that are physically fit and want to capture some world class scenery through their lenses. A taste of the iconic Routeburn Track. This walk climbs steeply from the Milford Road at the "The Divide" to an alpine area high above the roadway. In clear weather this location provides 360 degree views of all the high peaks of Fiordland. Suitable for those who are not allergic to hills. A good walking track but it is a steep climb and descent so a good level of fitness is required. Approximately 3 hours of steep track walking required.

Evening arrangements informal - meal at own expense

Friday 5 May 2017

CAVING

A full day program South of Te Anau into the Waiiau Valley to visit Clifden and St Peters Caves. Proposed two groups that will switch morning and afternoon programs. Pending overall numbers.

Clifden Caves – A roadside cave which has been subject to unrestricted visitation for over 100 years and is today managed by DOC under a Conservation Stewardship Area. Easy Caving (some water?) On site inspection of historic and recent graffiti with the visit an opportunity to discuss on site current best practice re restoration/clean up options.

St Peters Caves - A small river cave system with excellent Glowworm viewing and remarkably interesting formations in its upper sections. This trip is a relatively flat walk of 3km on farm land and through bush from the carpark on unformed

tracks. It also requires a crossing of the mighty Waiau River (Jet Boat).

The trip and caves are not technically difficult but do require a good level of fitness and being prepared to get footwear wet. This cave was only discovered in 1989 and is off the beaten track and due to access in quite good condition.

Evening arrangements informal - meal at own expense

Saturday 6 May 2017

Depart by boat for the Te Anau Glowworm Caves. Introduction to the operation, a cave tour will be completed.

ACKMA AGM and lunch on site at Cavern House.

Return to Te Anau and visit Bird Park and Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre.

Session on Aurora Caves and overview of other significant remote karst sites.

Evening - Group Dinner

Sunday 7 May 2017

AGM Field Trip – Aurora Caves

This is a full expedition trip into the extensive caves system above the Glowworm Caves. There is in excess of 6km of passage ranging from dry to full river passages. The Cave is not technically difficult however access to the caves is only gained after a steep climb through the bush. The cave's entrance is a key highlight of any trip into Aurora and worth a visit in itself. This cave can only be visited by permit as the entire system falls within the Murchison Specially Protected Area which is closed to public to preserve the last natural habitat of the "Takahe" flightless bird. With the co-operation of the Department of Conservation we have arranged permits to enable simultaneous staggered visits to the site. Three options will be offered to cater for different capabilities and speed however all are off the beaten track.

Option 1 - a more leisurely trip with a slower paced walk up the hill to view karst and visit the main entrance area of the caves only (possibly to Twin Falls).

Option 2 – Main Entrance to "Big Room" and return – a mainly dry route alongside the river initially and then away from the water to the divide, heading to largest cavern within the caves.

Option 3 - Main Entrance to "Sewer System" and return - a slightly more challenging and physical route from the Divide and further down into the caves system with just enough water to test your sense of humour.

While none of the routes is technically difficult, they all begin with a steep uphill walk followed by a descent into the caves. Inside the caves the route is over variable terrain with obstacles that can safely be free climbed but both cave options require agility and flexibility. Cave temperature is approximately 10 degrees.

Alternative program Coach and Cruise to Milford Sound.

If weather conditions or demand exceeds what we can achieve in one day then we may run an Aurora trip also on the Saturday afternoon (day prior).

Evening arrangements informal - meal at own expense (some will no doubt want to soak in a bath.....

Monday 8 May 2017

Mt Luxmore Alpine Karst Area

Walking both ways – Requires extremely good level of fitness hiking up Mt Luxmore from Lake level on the excellent formed track (Kepler Track). This is a climb of approx. 600m. Will be an early start and the walk normally takes 3 to 3.5hrs. From carpark to Luxmore hut is 14kms, with 8kms of that being a steady uphill climb. Once on top there is a number of caving options. Excellent views from the tops looking down over Lake Te Anau and Manapouri.

Lunch at Luxmore Hut (a DOC Great Walks Hut with 60 beds) toilets etc available.

Luxmore Cave – Easy - has marked route from hut so has had heavy visitation over the years.

Luckless Cave – Moderate, not as well known so much less visitation and damage.

Both these caves are 15 minutes' walk from the hut on a formed track. They are both relatively small rift caves with good to excellent formations.

The return walk downhill walk can be quite tiring with a steady descent. It can be broken by getting taxi back from Broad Bay (saves 6km flat walk)

The walk each way option is approximately a 10 hour day including caving and lunch on the tops.

Fly up Walk down

Take a 5 minute scenic helicopter from the lakefront to the Helipad at Luxmore Hut. This will be an addition cost of approx. \$80 per person one way. Once on the top caving options as described previous. Flying will also enable off track exploration (in the alpine basin) to view other caves entrances and possibly visit a more sporting and rarely visited Steadfast Cave.

Walk back down as described above.

Fly up, Fly down

Caving as described above with a full day on the tops. Flying both ways total of approx. \$160 return for heli flights.

Evening - final survivors' dinner provided.

Tuesday 9 May 2017

Depart Te Anau or undertake post AGM visits to Milford Sound or Doubtful Sound (own cost) but good rates available.