

Join the squadron flying north to Alaska in June

By Dave McElroy

We will depart from British Columbia's Okanagan Valley on or about June 6 and return there a couple of weeks later. Some aircraft may wish to join us at Kelowna or Vernon for the departure - but individual aircraft will of course be free to join anywhere along the route - and of course to leave the squadron at any stage of the proposed route.

We have roughed out a very tentative itinerary. At this stage it is totally flexible; it can and will be adjusted to conform to the wishes of participating pilots. Highlights of this iteration suggest: 4,400 nm – 30 hours at 150 knots or 40 hours at 110 knots.

This route takes us north from the Okanagan Valley to Inuvik on the Mackenzie and then on to Tuktoyaktuk on the Arctic Ocean - with intermediate stops at Prince George, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake and Dawson City. From Tuk we will head west to Wales, Alaska on the Bering Sea - via Old Crow, Fairbanks and Nome.

From Nome we will head southeast to Anchorage, Yakutat, Sitka, Prince Rupert, Boundary Bay and then home. Likely stopping for a couple days fishing at Yakutat or Seward, AK.

We are planning a total two weeks away, which would average 2-3 hours flying per day. However from a practical standpoint this means we'll be sightseeing and adventuring some days and flying 5-6 hours on others.

I have flown a Comanche to Alaska on two different occasions, and I have also flown it around the world. I can report that an Alaskan flying holiday is as grand as anything one can see anywhere else on the planet. Phenomenal mountain ranges – up close and personal with fabulous glaciers - unbelievably vast, un-populated plateaus and valleys - the arctic tundra (complete with herds of reindeer if we're lucky) - the Arctic Ocean - the Bering Sea - Alaskan fishing - sightseeing in the Canadian and Alaskan wildernesses - flying the length of the Alaskan panhandle and the Coast of British Columbia.

Most people never have the opportunity to see 1/100th of these spectacular scenes in their lifetimes.

I will have one fellow pilot with me in my RV6; others will want to include passengers in their aircraft to enable cost-sharing. Once I hear from interested pilots I can assist you in estimating costs.

For example, fuel cost in my RV averages \$60/hour, so 30 hours will cost about \$1,800 shared between two of us (Fuel will of course cost more in the north).

All interested souls please contact me at earliest convenience so we can start making plans.

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