



kakadu[®]
NATIONAL PARK

Notice to Overnight Bushwalkers Changes to Walking Routes on Jim Jim Creek

We would like to provide advice on a recent change to the bushwalking route in the Jim Jim area of Kakadu National Park.

Recently, sites in the Jim Jim area have been officially registered under the Northern Territory Sacred Sites Act and access to these areas is now restricted for cultural reasons with no access to visitors.

Following Jim Jim Creek upstream from Jim Jim Falls (approximately 3 kms) there is a body of water called *Igomdjut* Billabong and some nearby rock shelters. The area can now only be visited by male custodians of the relevant clan groups in the region. *Gullinj* the flying fox man created the *Igomdjut* waterhole and the *Rainbow Serpent* now resides in this long waterway, making it a *djang andjamum* (sacred and dangerous) place. Further upstream is an area known to walkers as the 'Monolith' – this is also a sacred site area where access is restricted.¹

'These are very important sacred sites. I want bushwalkers to respect country and listen to traditional owners. Sorry, your walking track has changed. You can't go to the 'Monoliths' anymore. This is a djang andajamun site, it's sacred and dangerous.'

Djok clan traditional owner

Traditional owners would like you to know the stories of the region as these stories might help you appreciate the cultural landscape that you are walking through. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) advises that *'the Jim Jim/Twin Falls precinct presents a particularly complicated convergence of many Creation Ancestors² with a resultant hub of many meanings and sacred topography which interconnect ecological and resource zones, as well as linguistic and social boundaries.'* (Revisiting Yamitj Gunred AAPA 2018)

The most powerful and prominent figure is the Rainbow Serpent (*Almudj* in Kundjeyhmi language) who has left an ongoing spiritual essence and energy or *djang* at these places. Other creation ancestors include *Yamitj* the long-horned grasshopper and the *Angindjek* yam women who carried water yams and found places to plant them with their digging sticks. *Gundarmen* the frill-necked lizard from the north and *Bukbuk* the pheasant coucal from the south argued and this disagreement resulted in other site features and meanings being left in the area. There are also malevolent and dangerous characters including *Namorrordo*, a feared soul taker and *Algaihgo*, a dangerous fire carrying woman who lives in the escarpment country above Jim Jim Falls. All of these creation ancestors, and many others, interacted with each other to shape the world into its current form.

We ask that you respect the wishes of traditional owners and continue walking on country following an alternative route that bypasses the billabong which will bring you back to the creek further upstream. Please see attached map. We hope you will find lovely camping spots upstream and that your walk continues to be pleasant and enjoyable.

It is the responsibility of Bininj to manage these places appropriately to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and visitors, and to ensure the health of their country and culture through the maintenance of their knowledge systems. Please use the alternative route as determined by Bininj.

Enjoy your time, take your time and be safe and return home with good memories.

¹ These (and other) sacred sites are registered and protected under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act. There are offence provisions in that act which relate to any unauthorised entry to or works on a sacred site (for further information see <https://www.aapant.org.au>).

² From the Bininj perspective, the creation ancestors or *Nayuhyunggi* shaped the current world, left rules for the behaviour and survival of people and remain active and potent in numerous sacred places today.