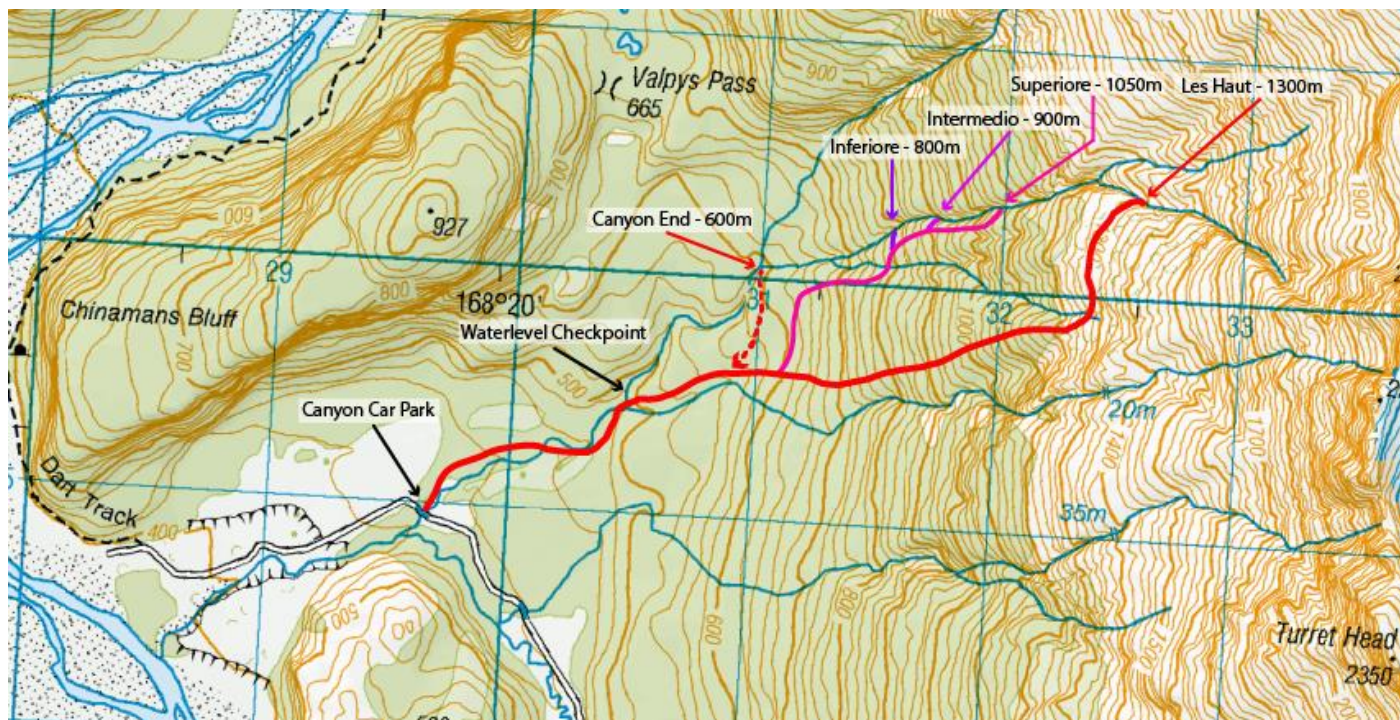




THE GENERAL

v5a3VI ★★☆☆



Location

Dart Valley

Character

Deep, steep, continuous, slotted alpine canyon. A potential classic of NZ.

Map

CA10 - Lake Williamson

Approach by Car

Drive to the last ford before the end of the Dart Valley road (see map above). Park in grassy flats off to the side of the road, either side of the creek. ~30mins from Glenorchy. From Paradise onwards the road is gravel and you must cross several fords. The road and fords are suitable for a 2WD car in normal weather conditions. There is a DOC toilet at the end of the Dart Valley road (5mins beyond Canyon Car Park).

Approach on Foot

From the car park, follow the creek, initially on the left (walking upstream), crossing over to the right bank after about 15/ 20mins. Follow the right bank to the junction with Captain Chaos. The water level checkpoint is just upstream of the junction.

Les Haut: (the top):

Climb the hill between the Captain and the General. Follow the ridge line close to the Captain. Stick to the ridge that divides the Captain and General catchments and keep climbing. Once above the tree line make your way over a scree slope/ creek and up through tussock grass to the south branch of The General.

Inferiore, Intermedio or Superiore:

If you plan on entering the Canyon at one of the lower entry points, climb the hill between the Captain and the General. Follow the ridge line close to the Captain. Make your way over towards the General creek somewhere around the 600m contour. There are two tributary creeks to cross (only one shown on topo). It is best to cross both these at the 800m contour.

Rock

Extremely solid and compact Schist.

Water

Medium flow. In normal conditions there are no significant water hazards. Due to the narrow and inescapable nature of the canyon, high water would pose a serious problem.

Catchment

3.0 sq km

Anchors

No natural anchors, no threaded anchors, no dodgy 'expedition' bolts. Bolted anchors, mostly single with a few double's in select locations (such as the 'slot of doom' hanging belays).

Gear

2x 60m ropes would get you through. However, consideration should be given to the hanging belays in the 'slot of doom' sequence.

Route Description

The canyon can be split into four sections. The only section you can walk into is Les Haut. The other sections all require abseil entry. Therefore, exiting is not possible at any of the 'section junctions' unless an escape rope is placed prior to entry.

Les Haut (the top):

Enter the creek at the 1300m contour. After a short boulder scramble the canyon proper begins. This section of canyon is fairly open with wide boulder filled corridors and towering canyon walls. After the R4 waterfall the North and South Branches of the creek merge, significantly increasing flow. At R6 be aware of sharp edges that may cause rope damage. A deviation anchor may be required at some stage to mitigate this hazard.

Superiore:

Between the R9 and R10 waterfalls it is possible to enter the canyon from a natural anchor (tree) on a bench on canyon left (CL) 30m above the canyon floor (at the 1050m contour). Be aware of a high potential for rockfall in this area. Here, the canyon begins to narrow with the waterfalls coming in quick succession. R17 is a double drop with tricky overhangs on both waterfalls. The down-climb (DC) after R20 is very narrow and may pose a hazard in high water conditions.

Intermedio:

After the R21 down-climbs (before R22) it is possible to enter the canyon via a double bolted anchor on the rim, 25m above the canyon floor. The anchor (at the 900m contour) is not easy to locate. Allow extra time to find this anchor if using this as your entry point. The "Grass Cliff" after R22 (marked on the topo) was used as an emergency escape point during the first descent, but it is very sketchy, with high consequence's in the event of a fall, it is not recommended. The 'Slot of Doom' is the crux of the canyon. There is a deviation on Canyon Left (CL) on the R23 drop (~10m below the anchor) that may assist the first person down to reach the R24 anchor (double bolts). The R25 anchor (double bolts) is located just over the small ledge (loose rock). Both R24 and R25 are hanging belays with limited space (two people max!). Teams should take this into account prior to entering the Slot of Doom to ensure smooth transition through this sequence. A hand line anchor is used to access the R26 anchors. From the bottom of the Slot of Doom waterfall

through to R29 the canyon is very narrow and would pose a significant hazard in high water conditions.

Inferiore:

Between the R29 and R30 waterfalls it is possible to enter the canyon from a natural anchor (tree) on the rim on canyon left (CL) 40m above the canyon floor (at the 800m contour). R31 is a double drop with a high potential for rope jam in a pinch after the first pool. It is the authors opinion that an additional anchor should be installed sometime in the future to split this into two abseils. After the R35 downclimbs the canyon opens out and escape is possible at several locations prior to entering the 'V Slot' (after R39). R37 has a nasty overhang and probably deserves a deviation to avoid this. R39 also has a nasty over hang but has a deviation on Canyon Left (CL) ~5m below the anchor. R40 has an undercut wall at the base of the falls that could pose a hazard in high water conditions. After R42 the canyon again widens out offering potential escapes. R43 and R44 both have undercut walls at the base of the falls that could pose a hazard in high water conditions.

Once you reach the end of the Canyon at 620m the choice is yours. bashing through the bush back to the entry trail is a bit shit. Boulder bashing down the creek is also a bit shit.

Time(s)

Les Haut:

Vehicle park to start of canyon	4hrs
Canyon descent	10hrs
Return to vehicle	2hrs
Total	16hrs

Superiore:

Vehicle park to start of canyon	3hrs
Canyon descent	8hrs
Return to vehicle	2hrs
Total	13hrs

Intermedio:

Vehicle park to start of canyon	2.5hrs
Canyon descent	7hrs
Return to vehicle	2hrs
Total	11.5hrs

Inferiore:

Vehicle park to start of canyon	2hrs
Canyon descent	4hrs
Return to vehicle	2hrs
Total	8hrs

Flash Flood Danger

Very, very narrow in places, long stretches of no escape. Not somewhere I'd want to be in a storm.

Escapes

This canyon is graded VI for commitment for a reason! No escape in the upper sections, like... nothing. The 'grass cliff' offers an emergency escape (not recommended). First 'easy' escape is the 'escape crack'. After the 'v slot' there are multiple options for escape.

Notes

At time of writing, majority of pools are gavel filled. However, between Jan 2016 and Feb 2018 these pools do seem to be getting deeper, giving hope that one day the gravel may clear enough to offer more opportunities for jumps.

First descent(s):

Les Haut section: Greg Tilden, Canyoning Bob, Matt Belcher and Joe Bugden (Feb 2018)

Superiore section: Greg Tilden, Luis Goncalves and Joe Bugden (Mar 2016)

Intermedio section: Greg Tilden, Joe Bugden (Jan 2016)

Intermedio section (including Slot of Doom): Greg Tilden, Daniel Clearwater, Riki Brown, Toine Houtenbos and Joe Bugden (Jan 2016)

Inferiore section: Greg Tilden, Kaden Anderson, Joe Bugden (Jan 2016)

Fun to effort ratio: Lots of effort, but lots of fun too

Access issues: Big hill to climb

Commercial Canyon: N/A

Remarks: N/A

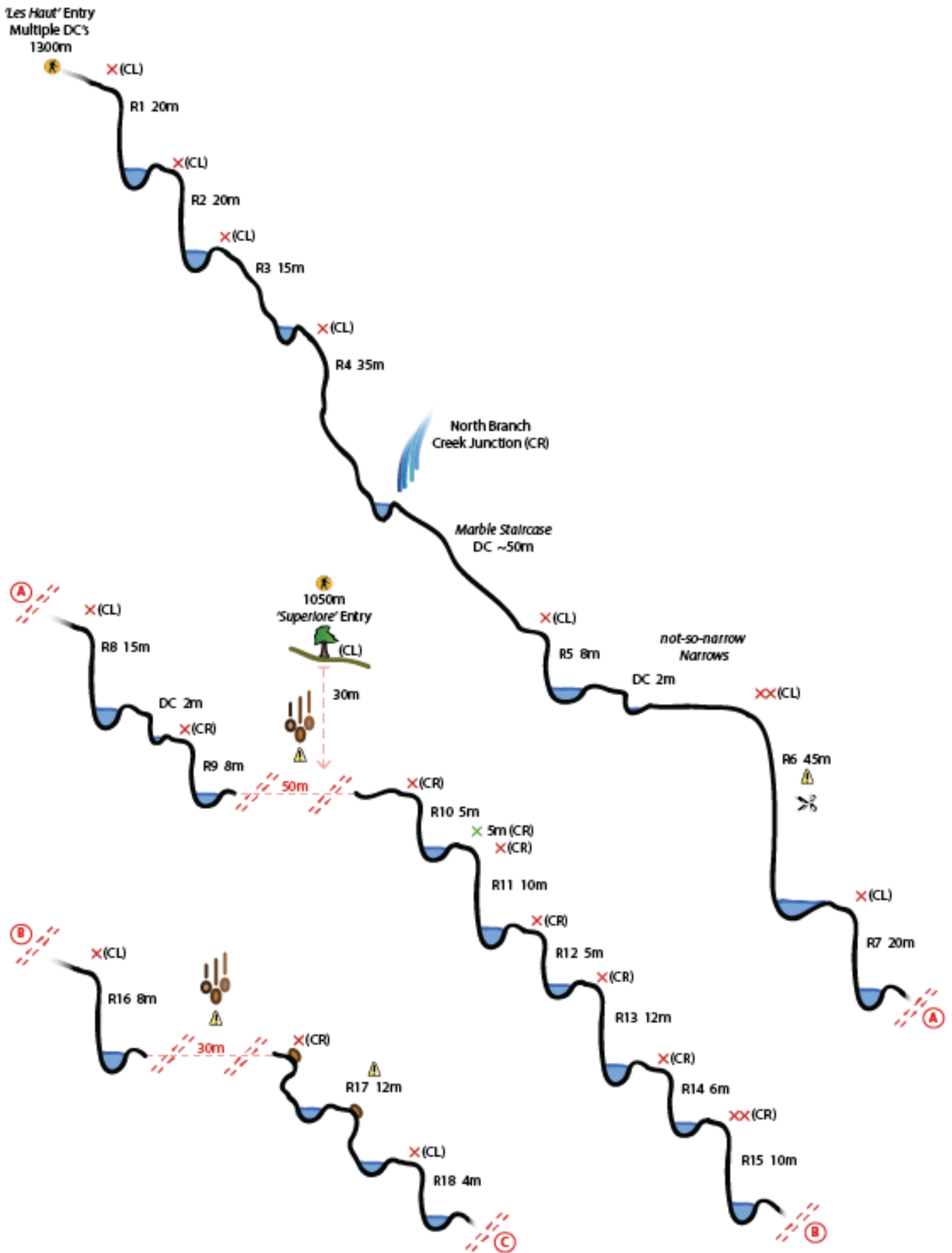


The view from the R24 anchors, looking down to R25 and the Slot of Doom
(Photo credit Greg Tilden 2016)

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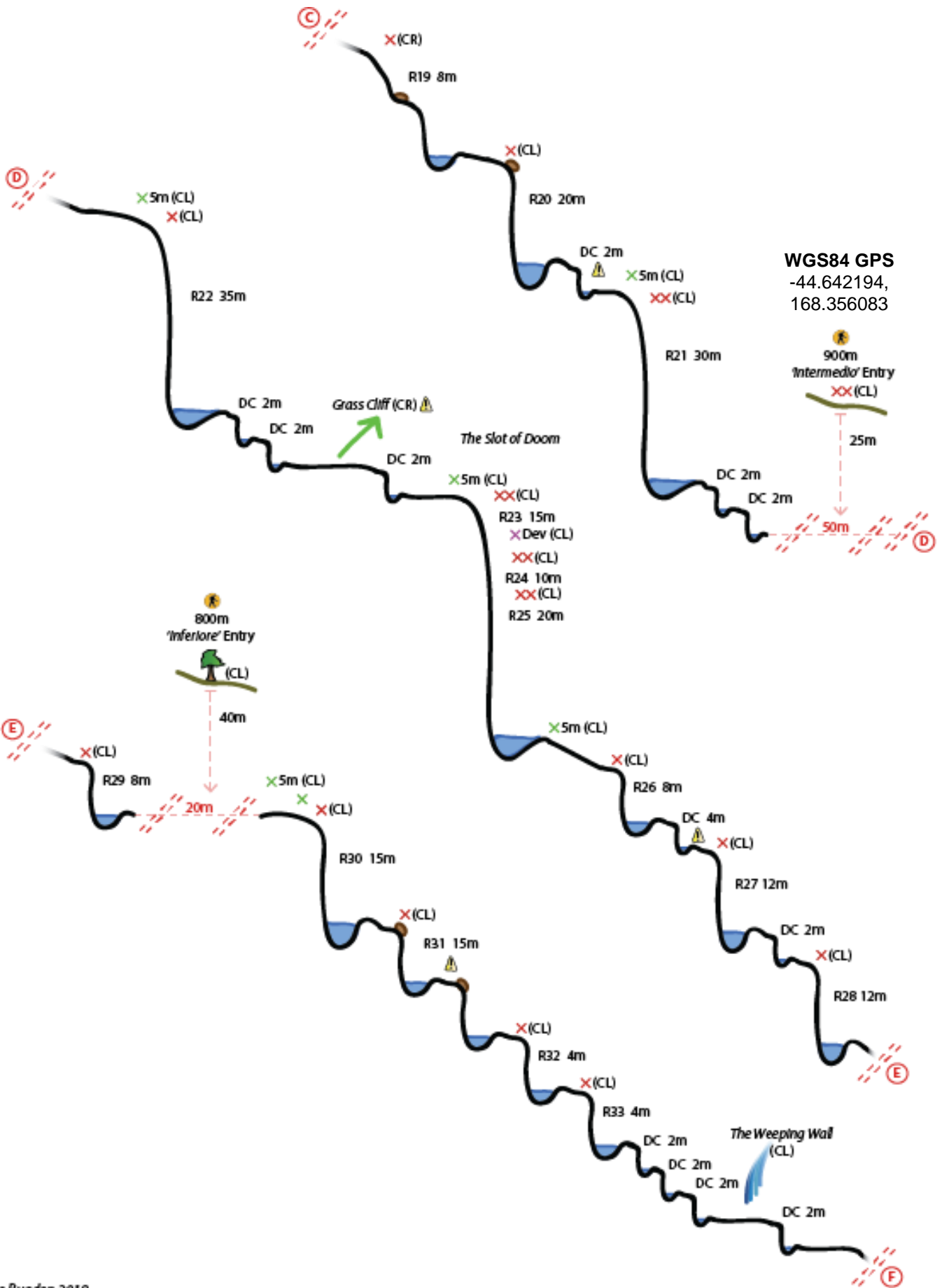
Topo by Joe Bugden
www.kiwicanyons.org



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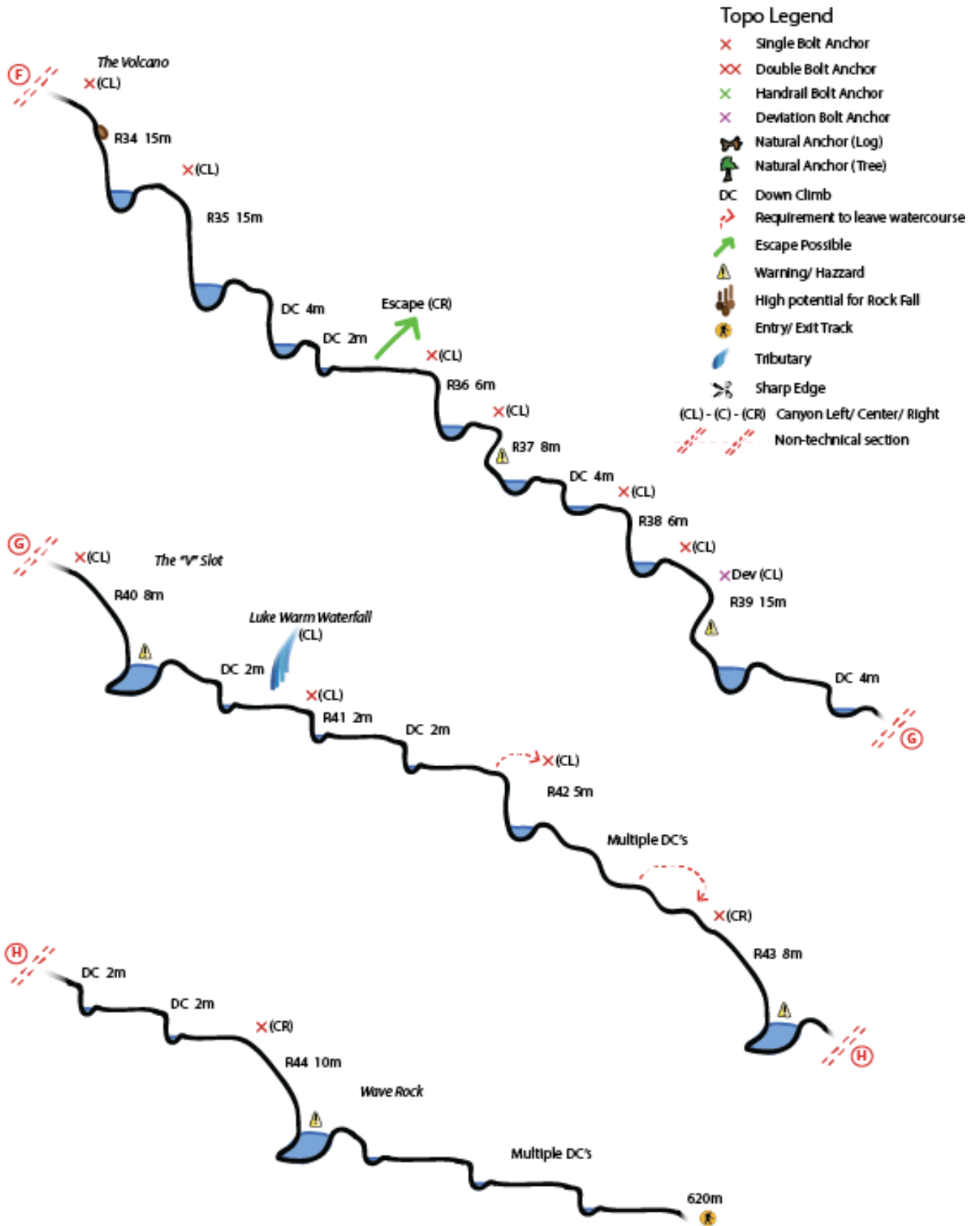


Topo: Joe Bugden 2018

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Water level reference photos

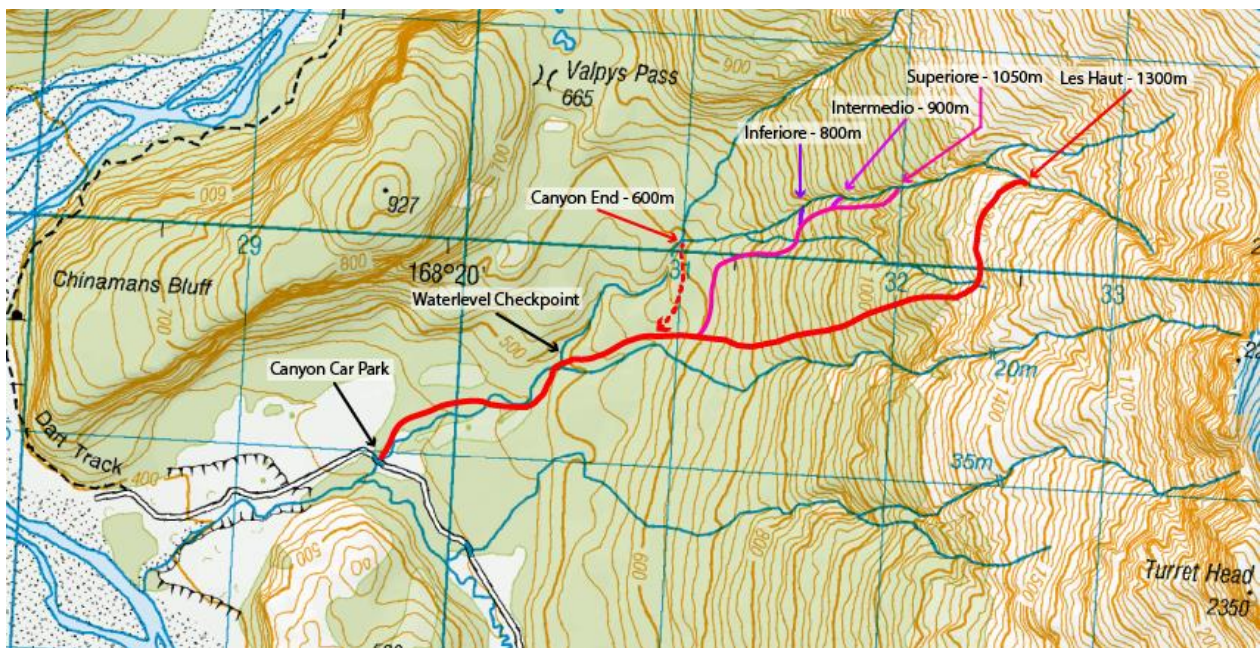
Moderate/ High

(note the small stream running over the rocks in center right of picture)



Low/ Moderate

(note the lack of small stream running over the rocks in center right of picture)



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