

The Lion King; v4a3IV*

Topo by Tom Johns

A classic case of a great wee canyon with a sub-optimal walk in. An all round adventure that begins with a river crossing then a boulder hop/bash, followed by dense young Beech saplings. Man, I'm really selling it! The canyon is open for the majority of it's length and has scenic pitches and cool features throughout and if it was closer to the valley floor would be a favourite. As it is... worth the walk.

Canyon summary

Map: BW19 Taylors Camp

Highest Waterfall: 40m

Minimum Rope: 2x 50m

Anchors: Simple natural anchors and 2 bolts

Length: 400m

Drop: 220m

Rock type: Greywacke

Catchment: 3km²

Flood Danger: moderate

Recommended season: Summer

Approach: 2.5 – 3 hours

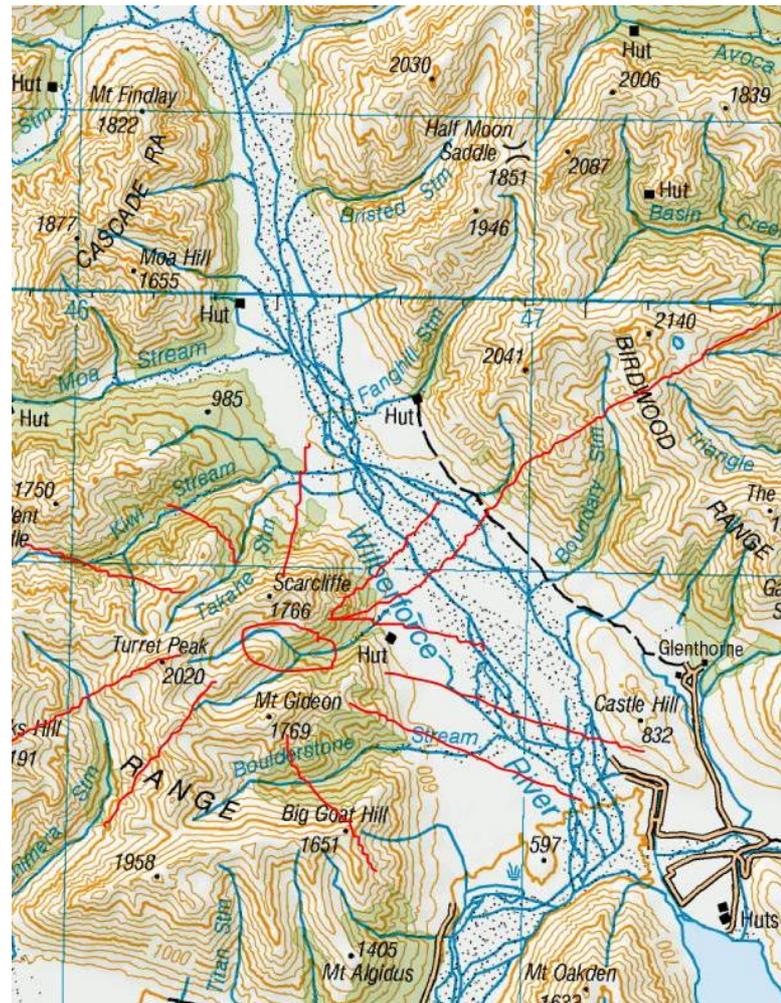
Descent: 2 – 3 hours

Return: 2 – 2.5 hours

Total: 6.5 – 8.5 hours

Approach by car:

Important! Although the canyon is on DOC land the access is across working stations, unless permission is given then you cannot access this canyon. Before you head up the valley call Algidus Station on (03) 318 5846 and ask, they are happy for people to walk across their land but they like to know who's up there.



Approaching from Christchurch drive towards Windwhistle. Once at Windwhistle follow signs to Olympus Ski field taking Coleridge Road. At Dog Box corner turn onto Homestead Road and follow this and signs to Glenthorne Station. Turn left onto Harper Road and keep going until you reach the group of houses and the canal (past the Olympus turnoff).

Permission to use the Glenthorne Station track can be granted and a key hired by calling the Station Manager (03 3185822) If you have been granted access to use the Glenthorne Station track then you'll have directions, if not then turn right after the

first canal bridge and follow the road around the river bed until you get to the Wilberforce Canal, following the track past the intake gets you out and into the riverbed. From here it's all wheel marks and rough tracks up the Wilberforce until your destination is reached.

Because there are working stations on either bank of the river it is important to stay in the Riverbed unless you have received permission to use the station tracks. At the time of writing (Feb 2017) the best place to park is at the west end of the Fanghill Flat around 69'7, 19'5 on the topo map. If you have a vehicle capable then crossing the river is an option, but be wary, as it is a long walk out if you get swamped or stuck.

Approach on Foot:

Crossing the Wilberforce. Pick a spot where the river is braided and be careful, it is worth walking to where the river is in multiple channels. Crossing should not be attempted by people inexperienced in river crossing and river crossing techniques are advised.

Crossing the river above 280 cumecs (fighting hill **on the Rakia** readings) would be very hazardous even for experienced river crossers. It is worth noting that the Wilberforce has a long history of drowning people and vehicles and demands respect and care at all flows.

The walking access is straight up Kakapo Stream, it's steep and has waterfalls in it so hopping out and into the bush on the true left bank is sometimes required. Although there are many smaller streams marked coming out of the bush, not many have any water in them so it is pretty easy to tell when you're at the right confluence. If you do somehow miss it then there is a waterfall about 300m past the confluence which will turn you around. As a side note we didn't run this one and think there is likely a bit more canyon up there.

From the confluence get up and above the stream on the true right, there are a mixture of deer tracks, thick beech and bluffs which you pick your way up and through. The bush for the last 200m before the canyon is pretty and open and makes for much easier going.

The entrance for the canyon is slightly above the confluence of the two streams at 64'7,18'3, this is the part with the large chockstones.

Route Description:

R1 begins from trees on the TR of the stream and gets you underneath the chockstones, there's a good sieve in the pool before the first chock and the potential for jamming a rope is very high from the base of R1, thankfully there are other anchor options to break this pitch up. The slide at the base of the pitch is good fun. An easy rope retrieval option exists from the base of R1 by eascaping and walking back up to your anchor.

There's a bit of slidy down-climbing to R2, which is low angle.

For less experienced downclimbers an extra pitch or handline would put a smile on some dials above R3. R3 is straight forward and there is potential for jumps and slides at the base of the pitch.

R4 is on the TL to avoid the water, but the TL is also an option, the rooster tail in the middle is a boys dream come true.

R5 has a rad cave in the back which you end up in wether you like it or not, this anchor may shift with floods.

Stay on the rope on R6 until you reach the bolts of R7, which is a great pitch. R8 was named after watching one of the first decentionists lying on his side trying to feed two ropes through his rappeling device thrashing about like a stuck turtle.

Water Level:

The Wilberforce River provides the best gauge of water levels. If you can't cross the river then the canyon probably won't go (you'll be on the wrong bank). The first decent was done when the Rakaia was reading 142 cumecs (<https://www.ecan.govt.nz/data/riverflow/sitedetails/168526>).

Escapes:

You could pretty easily get out of this canyon from anywhere except the top of R7.

First descent: Tom Johns, Ashley Stewart, Jerm Holliday, Archer Mcleay & Rocky Smith. 6-1-2018

