



RAVEN CANYON

canyon v5a2IV ★★

Location

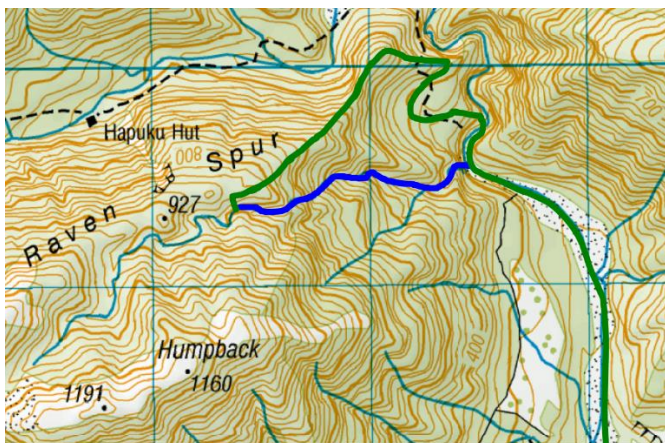
Kaikoura; on the North East slopes of Mt Fyffe overlooking the Hapuku River.

Character

An adventure canyon; multiple rappels, handlines and downclimbs often back to back.

Map

BT27 Kaikoura.



Approach by Car

From Kaikoura town center drive North towards Blenheim on SH1 for 9km. Turn left onto Parsons Road following it to a T junction turning right. The dirt road soon parallels the Hapuku River. Stay right at a fork, cross a ford and park on the Hapuku River bank just before the gravel road fords the Hapuku River itself. Kaikoura to road end - 15 minutes.

Approach on Foot

Head up the Hapuku River valley until you arrive below the exit waterfall of Raven Canyon. The walk will involve about half a dozen crossings of the main channel – if you can cross the Hapuku River on foot the canyon will likely be in normal flow. 1 hour.

300m further up the Hapuku River starts a DOC trail on the TR which avoids the Hapuku Gorge (the start location of this track is upstream to that shown on the topo map). Follow the DOC track to its high point of 550m on Raven Spur (the high point of this track is higher to that shown on the topo map). 45 min.

At its high point turn off the DOC track and follow Raven Spur uphill in a SW direction, soon a hunters (and canyoners) trail appears which generally stays close to

the spurs crest and offers fast travel uphill. At approximately the 850m contour, a manuka tree on the left is scored marking the turn off. 50 min.

Raven Canyon is 50m lower to the South, follow a steep and rough route marked by blue tape to avoid bluffs and join the canyon at the 800m contour. 10 min.

Approach by Helicopter

Point "927" is just large enough for South Pacific Helicopters NZ (0800 360 886) to drop off 4 passengers in their EC120. Meet them first at their Peketa airport offices to settle up, attend a safety briefing and practice unloading the helicopter.

Then follow the 'approach by car' directions to the Hapuku River where you will be picked up (this ensures you have a vehicle at the walk out road end).

From point 927 you can head East to join the canyon as per the route description or head West join the canyon at about the 900m contour (20 minutes either way). The section of canyon between 900m and 800m offers a few short rappels and two short but technical jumps. Not necessarily worth the additional walk in however if you flew in... add 1 hour in the canyon.

Rock

Greywacke, generally good quality with a few exceptions / slips towards the end.

Water

Low flow in normal conditions.

Catchment

2.5 km²

Anchors

Double Bolt Anchors and slings with rings from trees.

Gear

Longest drop 60m (minimum 3no 60m ropes recommended)

Route Description

A generally open canyon surrounded by dense bush where escape out of the stream is easy, however getting back to the track would be difficult. 15 rappels which tend to be clustered in groups, separated by sections of walking and down climbing. Additionally,

there are numerous downclimbs and exposed accesses to rappels – some having single bolt or tape & ring fixings around trees to assist.

The exit series of 3 back to back rappels is both stunning and committing giving the canyon its grade of v5. It is suggested that the ropes from the first 2 of these rappels is not pulled until a rope is set from the final precarious anchor. For this reason and for the Cascade series of rappels (120m in 2 rappels) – it is recommended a minimum 3 x 60m ropes are taken. 4 hours 45 minutes.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	2h45min
Canyon descent	4h45m
Return to vehicle	1h
Total	8.5h

Flash Flood Danger

Low

Escapes

Except for the final 3 rappels (which is committing), escape out of the stream bed is easy however back to the track difficult.

Notes

First descent: 22 February 2019 (Justin Hall, Jonathan Carr, Hamish Castle, Ant Alford, Gabriella Scheufele)

Fun to effort ratio: A big day with many rappels and downclimbs in an adventure canyon with stunning views and a stunning finish.

Access issues: Public land.

For a video of the first descent, click:

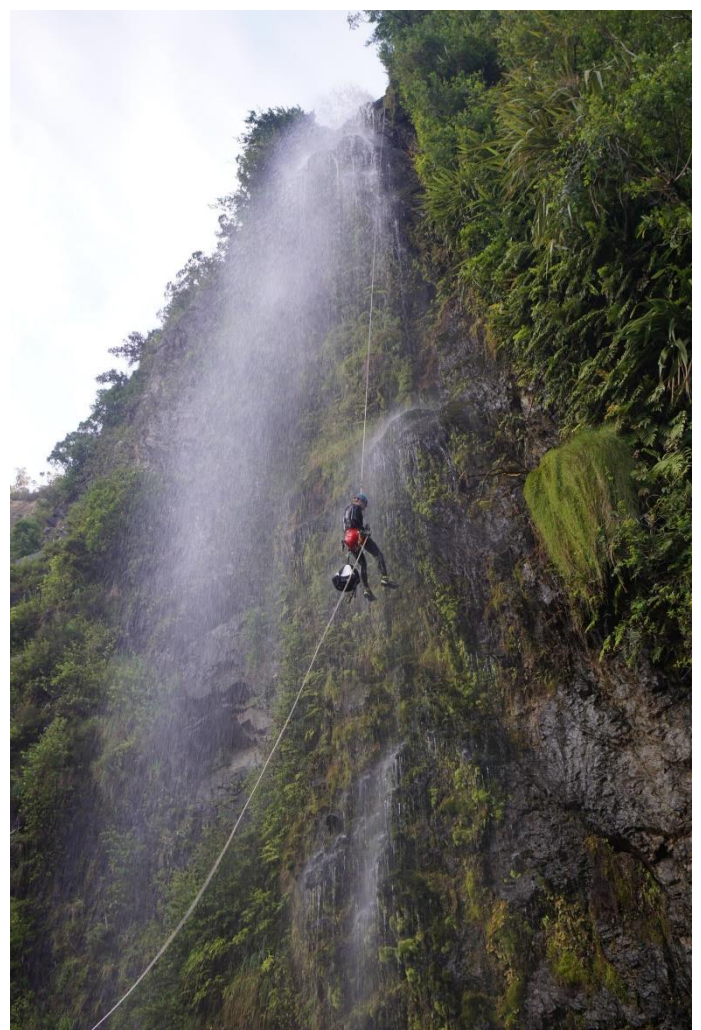
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Approach up the Hapuku river valley

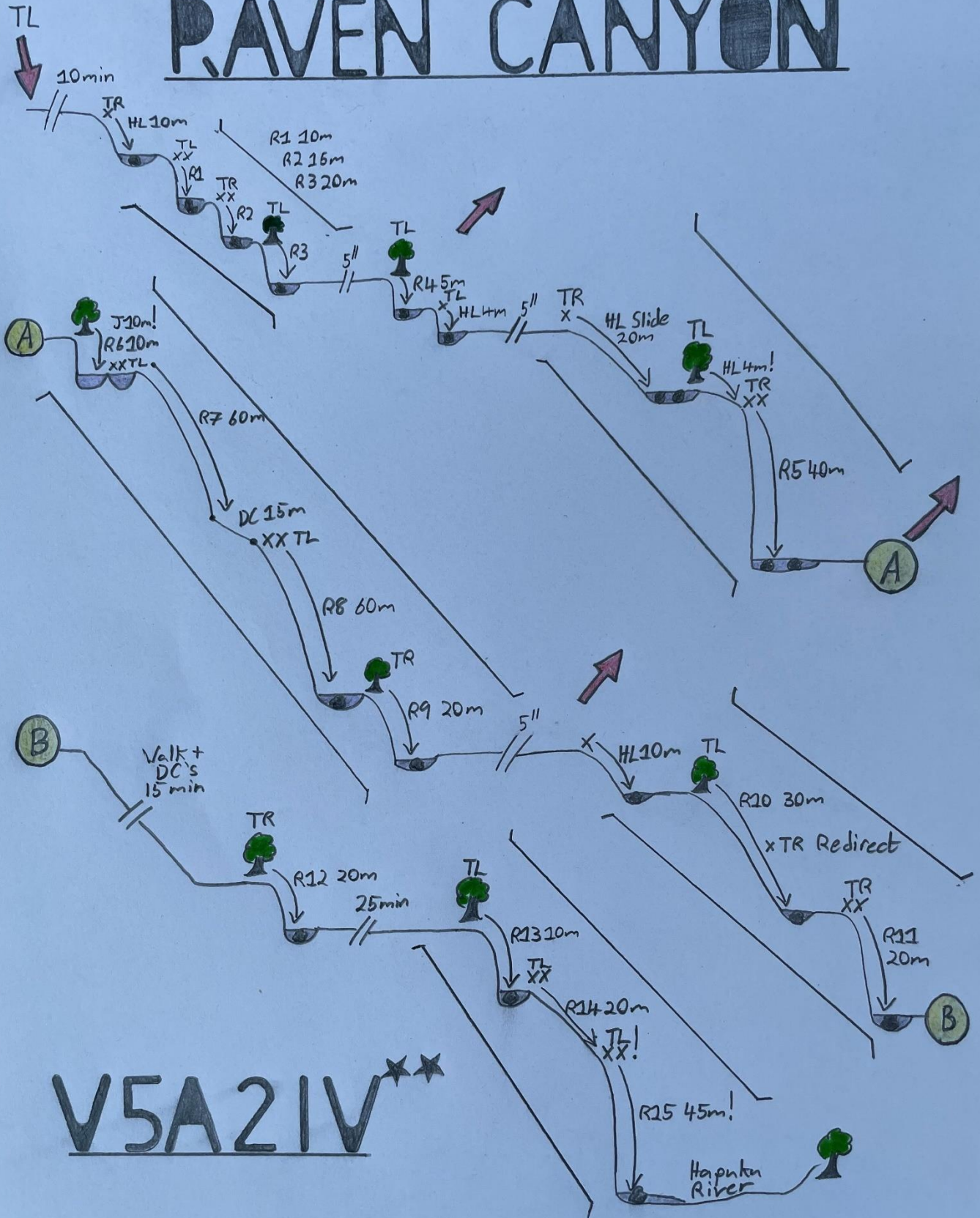


R5 Amphitheater rappel (40m)



R15 Hapuku rappel (45m)

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Topo by Justin Hall
www.kiwicanyons.org