



# SAWYER

## Stream v4a3II ★★

### Location

Behind Mt Cook Airport, Just south of Mt Cook village, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park

### Character

Short, steep and sustained set of waterfalls through a solid sculpted greywacke canyon.

### Map

BY15 Birch Hill



### Approach by Car

Approximately 600m north of Mt Cook Airport, park in a suitable spot **well away** from the NZAC Unwin hut.

### Approach on Foot

**Do not** walk through or even near the NZAC hut. Instead, pick your way west through some matagouri. Go straight towards the broad tussock spur and bluffs on the true right of the stream. Cross the stream and gain the tussock slopes. Note that much of the water flows under the gravel here, so it is not an accurate gauge of the canyon water levels. Climb directly up the *very* steep tussock, through stands of matagouri. This very steep tussock climb would be extremely dangerous in damp conditions.

Head for the bluffs directly above, traversing left when required to avoid them, before regaining the spur. Stay on the crest of the spur, climbing until the spur begins to get rocky and scrambly. Traverse left again to avoid the rock, then angle back toward the top of the ridge.

Wander a few minutes further along the now broad ridge. Put your helmet on then descend to the flat upper headwaters of the stream. Angle up valley as you descend the loose scree to avoid bluffs.

### Rock

Solid, sculptured Greywacke

### Water

Moderate volume. There are spots between pitches where you can get a little out of the water.

### Catchment

3.8 km<sup>2</sup> (Glacially Fed)

### Anchors

Stainless double bolts with chain and one old giant ring bolt

### Gear

A minimum of 2x 60m cords to enable rope retrieval from a dry stance.

### Route Description

The canyon starts very abruptly, with the first pitch only 15m or so from the start of the narrows.

Scramble up the TL bank, through a little scrub to find the first anchor.

The two main pitches involve descending two distinct waterfalls per rappel. Don't, pull your ropes before you have found the next anchor...

After R1, scramble with a little difficulty down to a pool that can be scouted and jumped.

Beneath the middle pool on R2 there is a small cave that can be explored.

Boulder hop down the valley when the canyon ends. At a bridge like structure, scramble out on the TL and find a well benched track that leads easily back down hill to the gravel flats and your car.

### Time

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Highway to start of canyon | 1hr       |
| Canyon descent             | 1h30min   |
| Return to Highway          | 20min     |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>3h</b> |

### Flash Flood Danger

Moderate. Significant drainage and inescapable canyon. Very short though.

### Escapes

The only viable escape is a steep vegetated gully as marked on the topo. Inescapable otherwise.

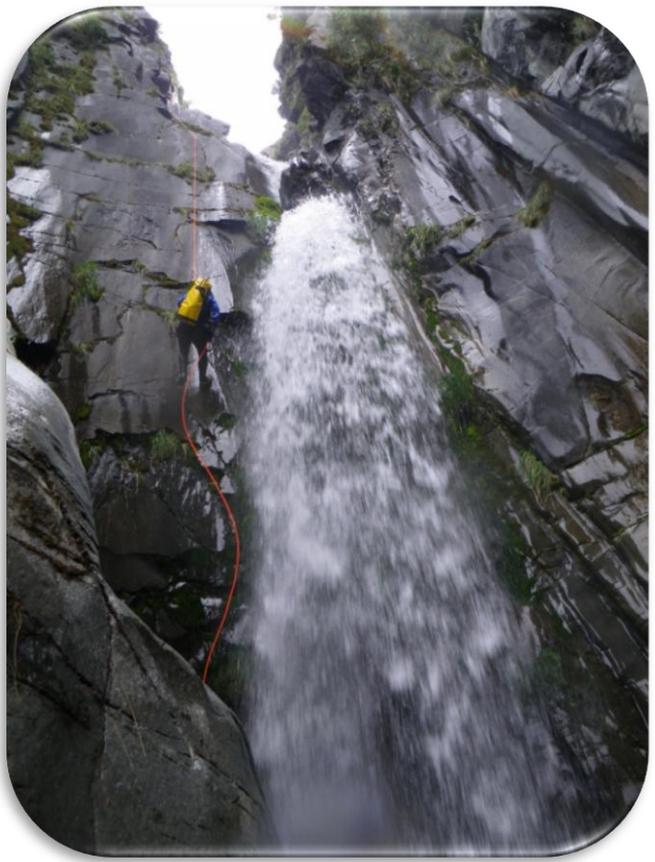
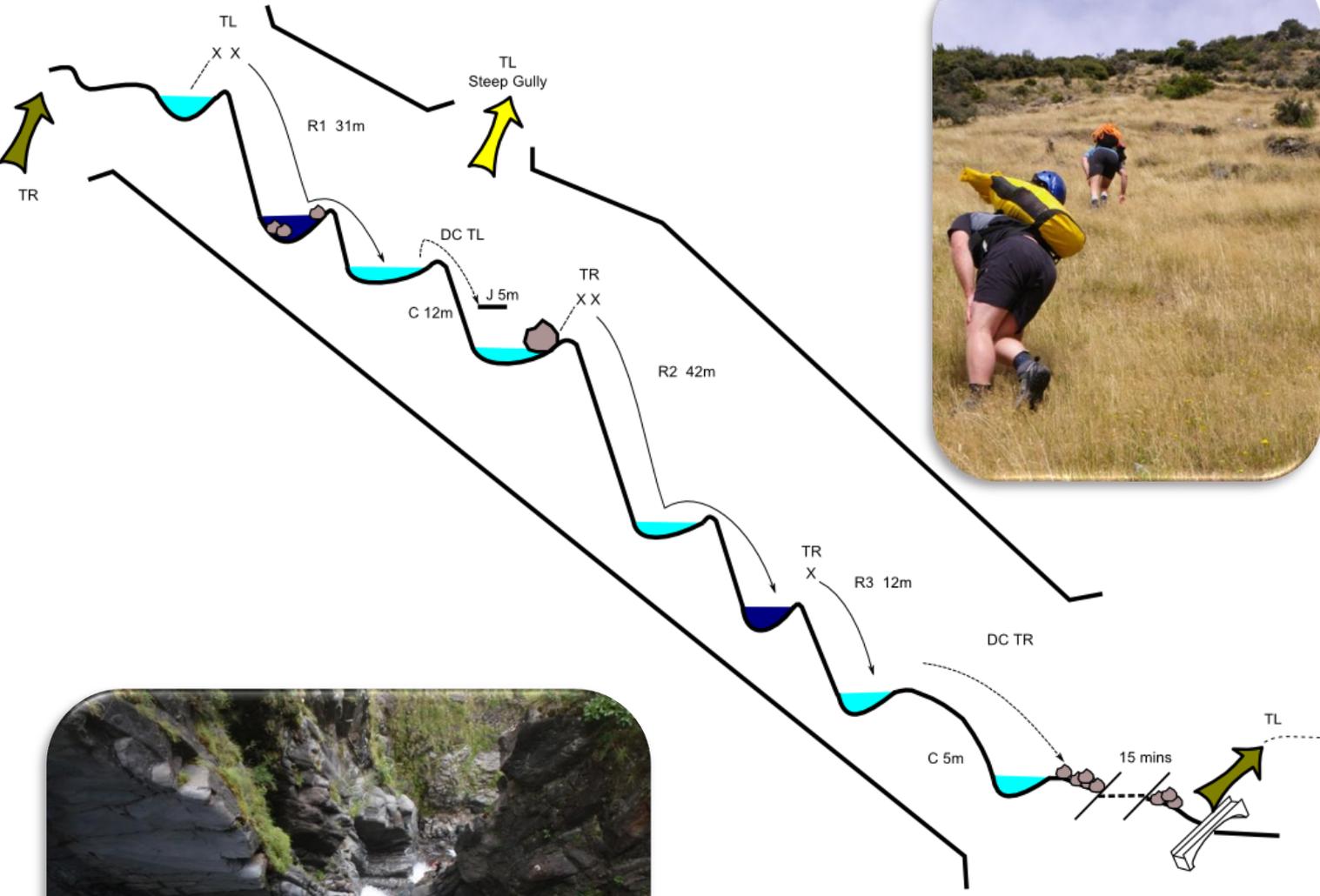
### Notes

Partial first descent;  
Grant Prattley et al.

First Full descent:

Grant Prattley, Toine Houtenbos, Daniel Clearwater  
Mar 2010.

*Topo by Daniel Clearwater*  
[www.KiwiCanyons.org](http://www.KiwiCanyons.org)



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