



WILSON

Creek v4a5IV ★★★

Location

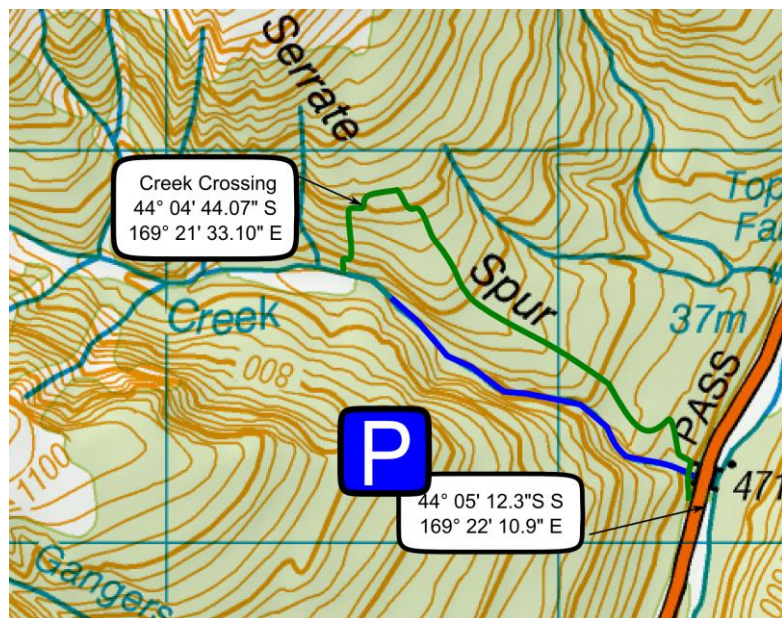
SH 6, just north of Haast Pass, Aspiring National Park

Character

Very deep schist slot canyon with many beautiful turquoise pools and significant flow.

Map

BZ13 Haast Pass



Approach by Car

Drive north from the summit of Haast Pass for approximately 2.8km. Park to the south of the bridge over Wilson's Creek.

Approach on Foot

From the Didymo warning sign, walk up a ramp which leads to the old wooden bridge crossing the stream. A faint track starts on the north side of the bridge. It heads north for a couple of meters before a sharp left turn through thick scrub. Beyond the scrub, the forest is very open, with fragile lichen, and even more fragile Sphagnum moss. It is very important to try to keep to the track and minimize damage to this fragile environment, though chances are you'll lose the trail at some point.

Carefully follow the faint trail up the spur as shown on the map. After about 1hr, at the 820m contour, sidle west. The key to accessing this canyon is finding the right crossing point of a small creek that is unmarked on the map. After crossing this small creek at the 800m contour, descend the very steep spur, keeping

the creek close on your left. There is a well worn trail on the spur from this point onwards.

Descend the very steep spur carefully for about 15mins, until you turn sharply right at a large tree, sidle under a small bluff, then continue south for a few more minutes down easy terrain to Wilson's Creek. (Beyond this turn, the spur bluffs out.) The Canyon starts abruptly 5 minutes walk downstream.

Rock

Dark grey Schist, with some loose rock in places

Water

Moderate to high volume with several pools that can feature dangerous hydraulics depending on the flow. Normal flow is approximately 1 cumec. When flows approach 1.5 cumecs the water obstacles require very careful management and high levels of canyoning skill to safely overcome. The times stated below allow up to two extra hours for the descent if water levels are high

Catchment

4.9 km²

Anchors

Double Bolt anchors

Gear

Minimum of 2x20m ropes.

Route Description

Apart from a few *slightly* more open sections as indicated on the topo, the canyon is deep, narrow and continuous. There are several passages that can be difficult and dangerous in high water. There are also some nasty hydraulics at the base of some falls to avoid. Anchors are placed well clear of any high water levels, so some are difficult and/or exposed to reach. R3 is best jumped from the TL anchors. The TR HL is only used in very high water conditions. "The Julie Pool" forms a powerful hydraulic which nearly drowned Julie Burton. You need to bridge across the top of the pool, well past the eddy line. Julie slipped before the eddy line and was sucked under and held down.

To access the anchor for R4, climb up to the right and squeeze through gap in the boulders to reach the far right canyon wall. The bolts are on a large boulder and you'll descend a small fissure well away from the main falls. "The boil" in the R5 landing pool has a very challenging hole in high water. You'll land upstream of the hole, but you need to be able to pendulum and leap over the eddy line otherwise you'll get stuck in the pool. "Star Wars Alley" is a long pool, where the canyon is only 1.5m wide.

Time

Bridge to start of Canyon

1h30min

Canyon to bridge

3-5 hrs

Total

4-7 hrs

Escapes

It might be possible to escape at "the rock fall" but would require considerable climbing skill to use. There are no easy exits.

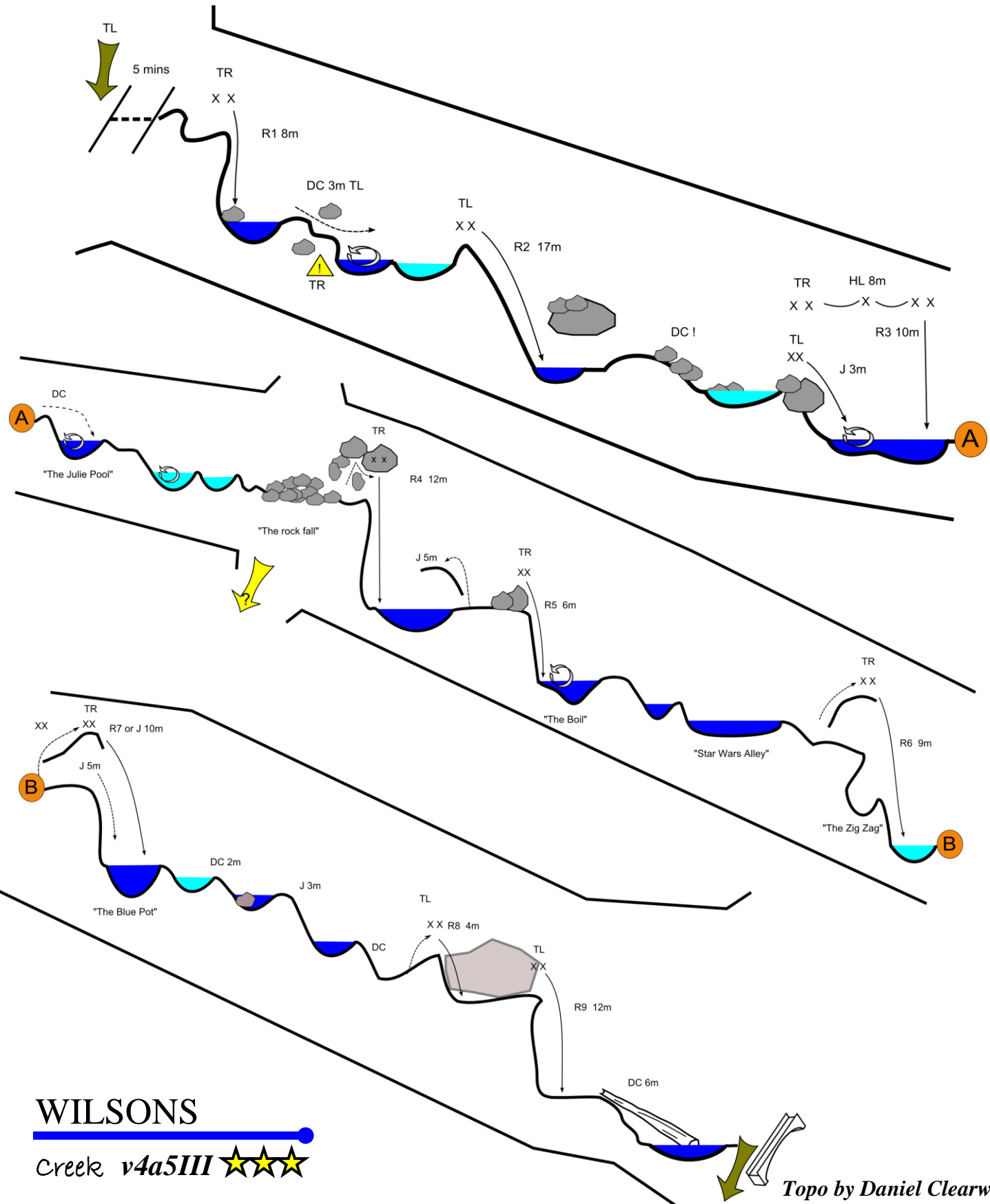
Flash Flood Danger

Extreme. Only a few areas to wait out a flood, such as at "the rock fall" and between "The blue pot" and R8.

Notes

First descent by Alain Rohr et al 2004.

Topo revised 09 Feb 15.



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Topo by Daniel Clearwater
www.KiwiCanyons.org