



SHIFT

Creek v4a3IV ★★☆☆



As at Nov 2017, the 2m wide slot (R15 & R16) is completely blocked by a log jam caused by a huge slip. It is impassable, which is obvious when standing at the top of R14. If you are still going to do Shift Creek (the upper sections of the canyon are unaffected and are still worth doing) you'll need to lower a short escape rope above R14 on your way into the canyon.

Location

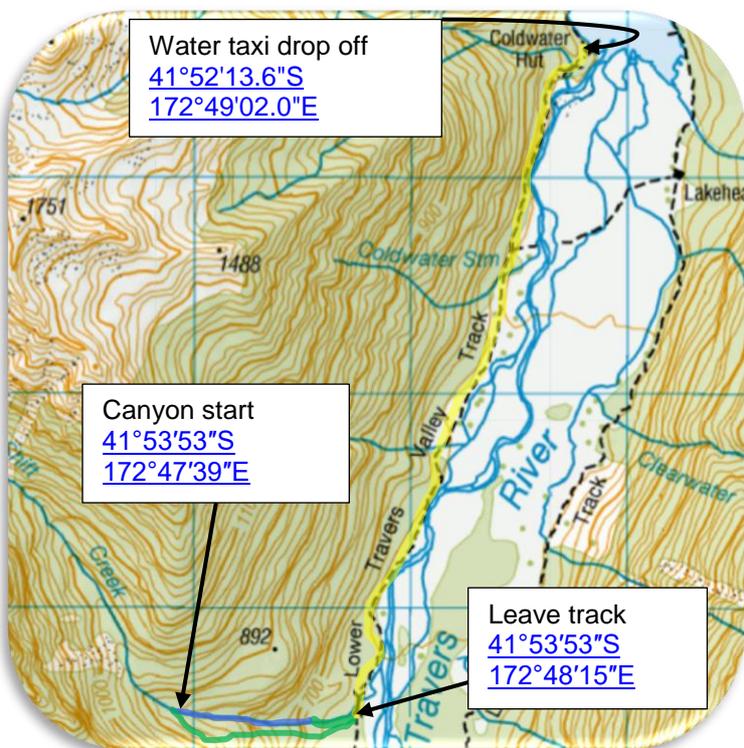
Lake Rotoiti, Nelson Lakes National Park

Character

Arguably the best intermediate-level canyoning trip in the Top of the South. Enclosed and committing, with several large, spectacular rappels and a few cool jumps.

Map

BS24 Mount Robert.



Approach by Car and Water Taxi

From the center of St Arnaud, drive 500m south on Kerr Bay Road to the [lakefront](#). Take a water taxi ([rotoitiwatertaxis.co.nz](#)) to Coldwater Hut at the head of the lake (15min). The water taxi is typically flexible with times if you have a sizeable group. Alternatively, it's a 1h kayak or 2h walk (7km) up the lake.

Approach on Foot

From Cold Water Hut, follow the track up Travers Valley for 3km. Once you cross the bridge over Shift Creek,

head up through open beech forest, following close to the canyon rim until ~800m. You can see some of the drops on the way up. From 800m follow the ridge line to 860m and then sidle into the canyon, where the creek is flat.

Rock

Very hard greywacke.

Water

Medium flow in normal conditions. Vertical flow can be avoided on all the big rappels. Cold.

Catchment

5.8 km²

Anchors

Predominantly double or single bolt stations.

Gear

Minimum of 2 x 30m ropes.

Route Description

There are four distinct sections to the canyon, as shown on the drawing. Each section is narrow and enclosed. In some places, you can touch both canyon walls.

Some of the rappels require staying on rope to reach the anchors. None are particularly technical, but do require solid rope technique.

R9/R10/R11 (in the second section) is one of the best sequences of the canyon. It is reminiscent of Peak Creek (although you can stay out of the vertical flow if you want) and you need to stay on rope to reach the anchors. The top of R10 looks a little nasty from above, but in normal flow it's straightforward to climb out of the pool before the pour over.

The other top sequence of the canyon is R14/R15/R16 (in the third section). R14 is a very spectacular waterfall and R15 and R16 are great jumps.

Time

Coldwater Hut to start of canyon	1h30m
Canyon descent	4h
Return to Coldwater Hut	1h
Total	6h30m

Flash Flood Danger

Moderate to high.

Escapes

There are easy escapes between each of the four enclosed sections of the canyon. There are only handful of escapes elsewhere. Some sections are very enclosed and committing.

Notes

First descent: Fergus Bramley, Richard Bramley, 10/2/2017. (first section: Lee Den Haan, Pete Coate).

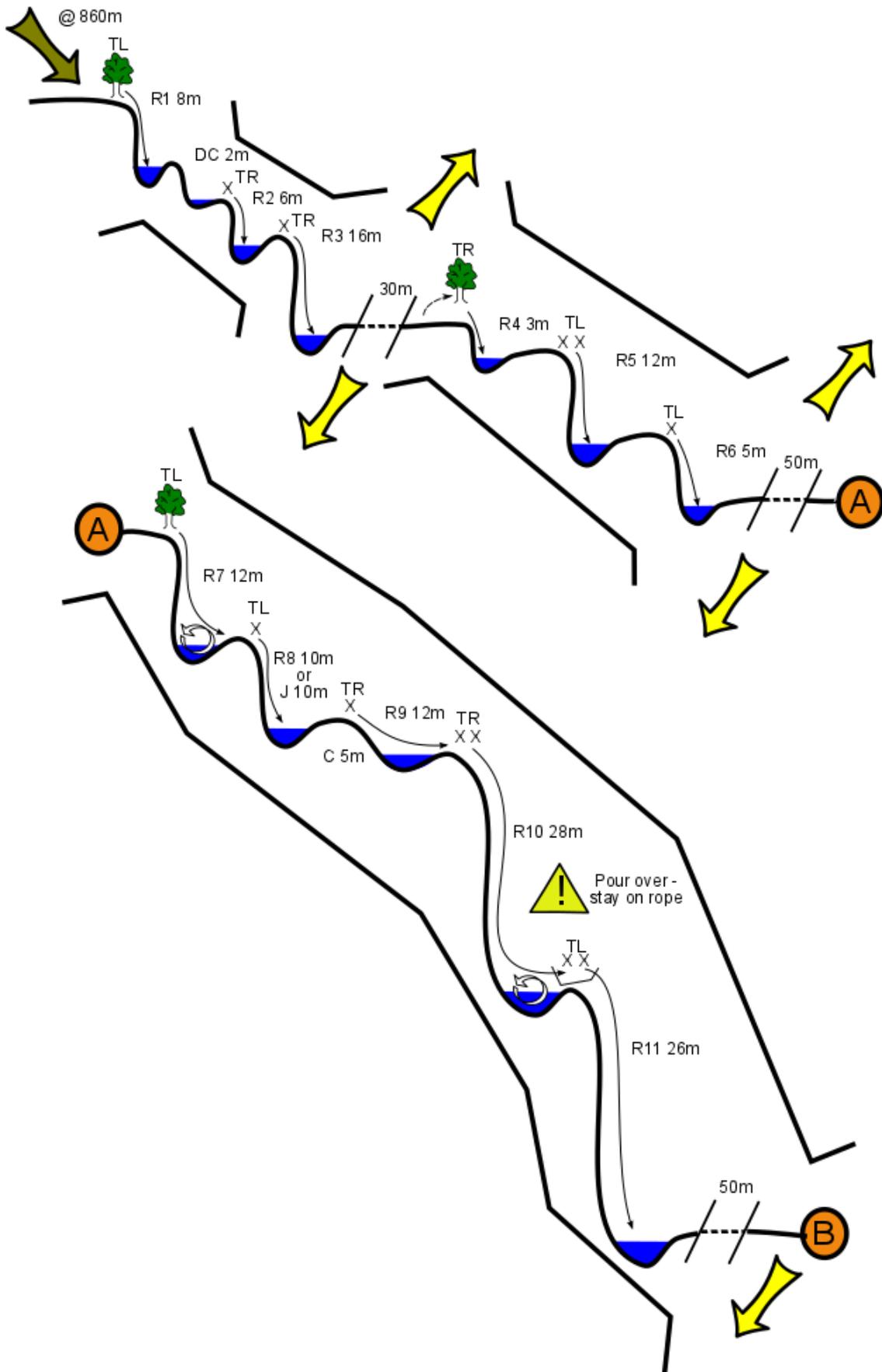
Fun to Effort Ratio: $(4 + 6) / 2.5 = 4$

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Topo by Richard Bramley
www.kiwicanyons.org

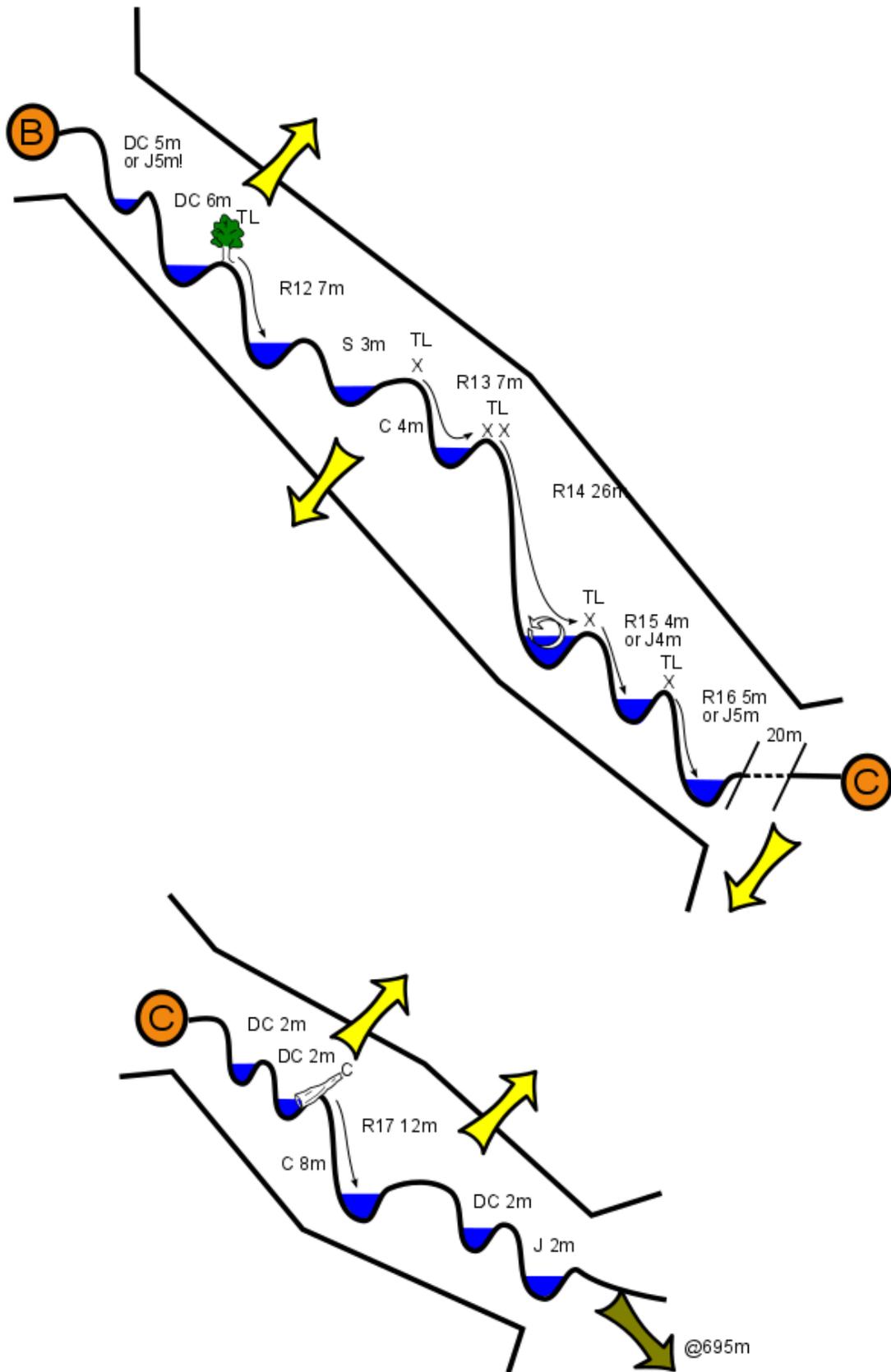
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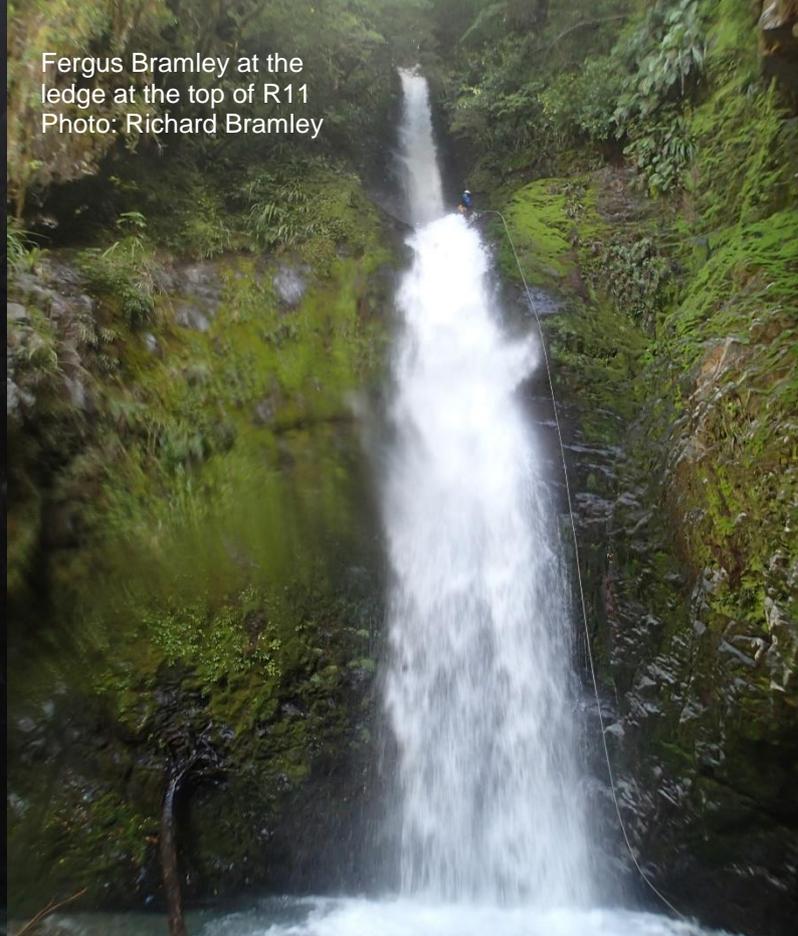
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Fergus Bramley at the top of R8
Photo: Richard Bramley



Fergus Bramley at the ledge at the top of R11
Photo: Richard Bramley



Looking down from the top of R14
Photo: Richard Bramley



Jump to escape the narrows! The view at the top of R16
Photo: Richard Bramley

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