

# Pudding Hill Stream

Map	Drop	Rope	Anchors	Length	Height	Rock	Area	Flash Flood	Season
BX20 Methven	35m	2 x 40m	Bolts & Natural	2km	550m	Greywacke	8km <sup>2</sup>	Moderate	11-03

This canyon starts with abseiling below the South Face of Mt Hutt Ski Area in steep alpine terrain and transitions to a lower angle, incised bedrock canyon with moderate water flow with multiple jumps, slides and abseils into beautiful potholes. A big day out but well worth the effort.

Carpark to start 2hrs  
Canyon descent 6hrs  
Return to car 1h15'  
TOTAL 9h15'

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## Approach using cars

As the start and finish of this canyon are 4km apart on the Mt Hutt Ski Area road, recommend using two cars. (Otherwise, you have a 4km walk uphill at the end of the day).

From SH73 take the turnoff to Mt Hutt Ski Area. Head to the Scotts Saddle (at the top of Pudding Hill Stream Route) and leave one of your cars. With your second car drive further up the road until you reach the locked gate—park at the obvious layby area.

## Approach on foot

Walk up the road until you reach the ski area car park (30min). Head south and uphill to the south face traverse track (30min).

Walk around the traverse track into the south face proper and head downhill, choosing the best route down on the steep scree.

Before the canyon sides steepen up, find a flattish area to get your gear on (as there is limited space at the first anchor).

## Route description

The top section starts with five drops (R1-R5) in an alpine setting at around 1450m. The first abseil has a few loose rocks underfoot, so take care. The further you head down the South Face stream, the better the rock quality until R5 is solid bedrock. Two of the anchors are pinches so bring some spare sling. (Note: R5 anchor needs extending 1.5m for a cleaner pull)

A further 10 minutes below R5 you reach the Pudding Hill Stream. The angle is not so steep; however, the stream has more than doubled in size. A further 40 minutes on you get to a series of three fun slides. The first two are low angle chutes and the last being steeper, finishing in a bowl feature. Alternatively, abseil the last slide by climbing up and along a ledge on the TR (R6) to a set of bolts.

By now the canyon has narrowed with high bedrock walls. Access the start of R7 around a handline on a series of bolts on the TR. The abseil bolts are around 1.5m above the end of the handline (lookup). The landing pool is not very deep at low flow, and you can stand up. Either continue abseiling down the next small cascade or undertake a jump.

A further 10 minutes on there is nice 5m jump and then the final main feature in the canyon, R8. This feature involves setting a handline down the first small cascade (TL) to the bolts that are out of sight on a ledge on the TR. An abseil of around 10m finds you at a pool. There is an obvious undercut water feature to avoid on the TL. At low flow, the pool is not deep, and you can stand up. You can continue abseiling over the next small cascade or keep hard TR and climb up and around out of the pool (recommended for higher flows). A final downclimb finds you at the end of the main canyon section.

An hours boulder hopping down Pudding Hill Stream finds you at the lower gorge. The walls narrow up and negotiating the water in a few places needs care.

Around 10 mins on from the lower gorge exit there is a large cairn on the TL indicating the Pudding Hill Stream Route to Scotts Saddle. Put the brain in neutral and walk uphill for the next hour and a quarter on a steep well-formed track back to the car.

## Water

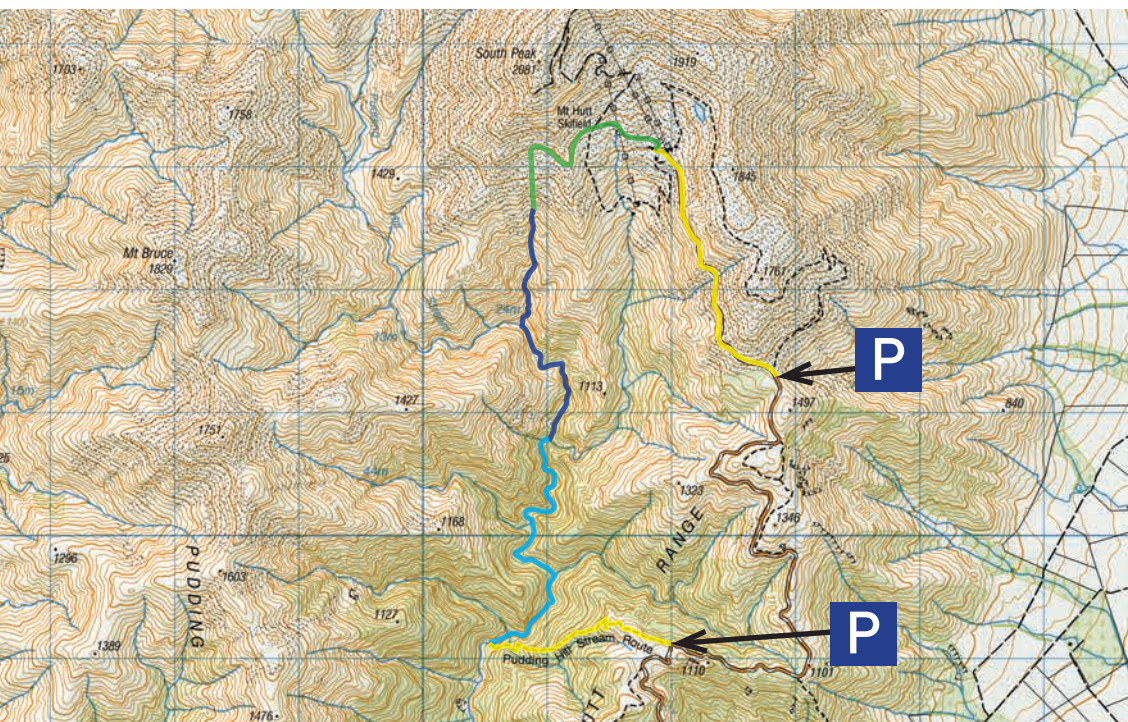
Moderate flow in normal conditions. The river gauge at Pudding Hill Retreat (ECAN website) is 0.3 cumecs for low flow. As a guide, anything over 1 cumec the canyon is going to be pushy and potentially have more water hazards than identified in the topo. On our first trip, the canyon was running at 1.6 cumecs at the gauge, and we decided to pull out just before R7.

Note 1: the canyon has significantly more water than what the gauge says (or is running under the SH73 Pudding Hill bridge). Use it as a relative guide only.

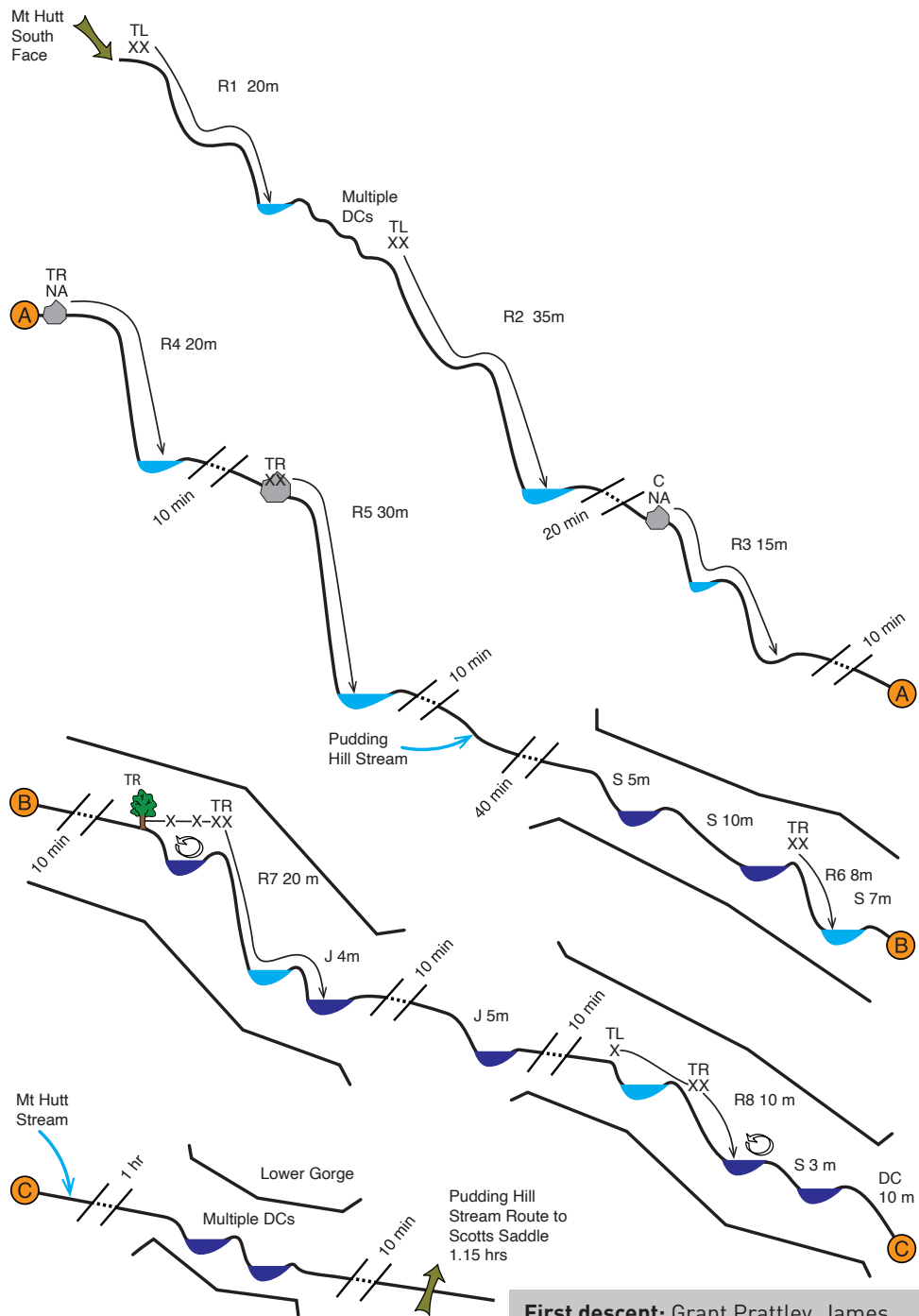
Note 2: The South Face section of the canyon has a catchment area of around 1km<sup>2</sup>. The Pudding Hill section of the canyon has a catchment area of around 8km<sup>2</sup>.

## Escapes

Escapes are possible from multiple locations but are going to be long and arduous. These escapes include ridges and screes that run into the canyon. Head towards the Mt Hutt Ski Area or access road (whatever is closest). The day we decided to bail from above R7 it took us 4 hours to get back to the car!







**First descent:** Grant Prattley, James Abbott, Nola Collie - Mar 2020.

**Topo:** Grant Prattley - Mar 2020

Canterbury | Pudding Hill Stream (Version 1, Mar. 2020)



Above: Sth Face Section - 20m R4.  
Photo / James Abbott



Above: Pudding Hill Stream, J5.  
Photo / Nola Collie



Above: Super bowl slide - 7m, R6.  
Photo / Nola Collie



Above: Pothole pitch - 20m, R7.  
Photo / James Abbott