



# 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 900m north of Mt Cook Airport is the NZAC Unwin Hut. Immediately prior to the Hut entrance, turn down a gravel road. Just after the substation, the track splits; take the left fork and park in the gravel pits as marked.

This parking location was recommended by the manager of the NZAC Hut. They also request you leave a note in the window about your intentions.

## Approach on Foot

Please do not approach the NZAC hut unless you intend to stay the night there..

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 scrubby. 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.

You may find 8mm galvanized bolts and dyneema cord: these were placed by a visiting French expedition in 2015, and will be completely unsafe now. Efforts are underway to remove them.

## 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.

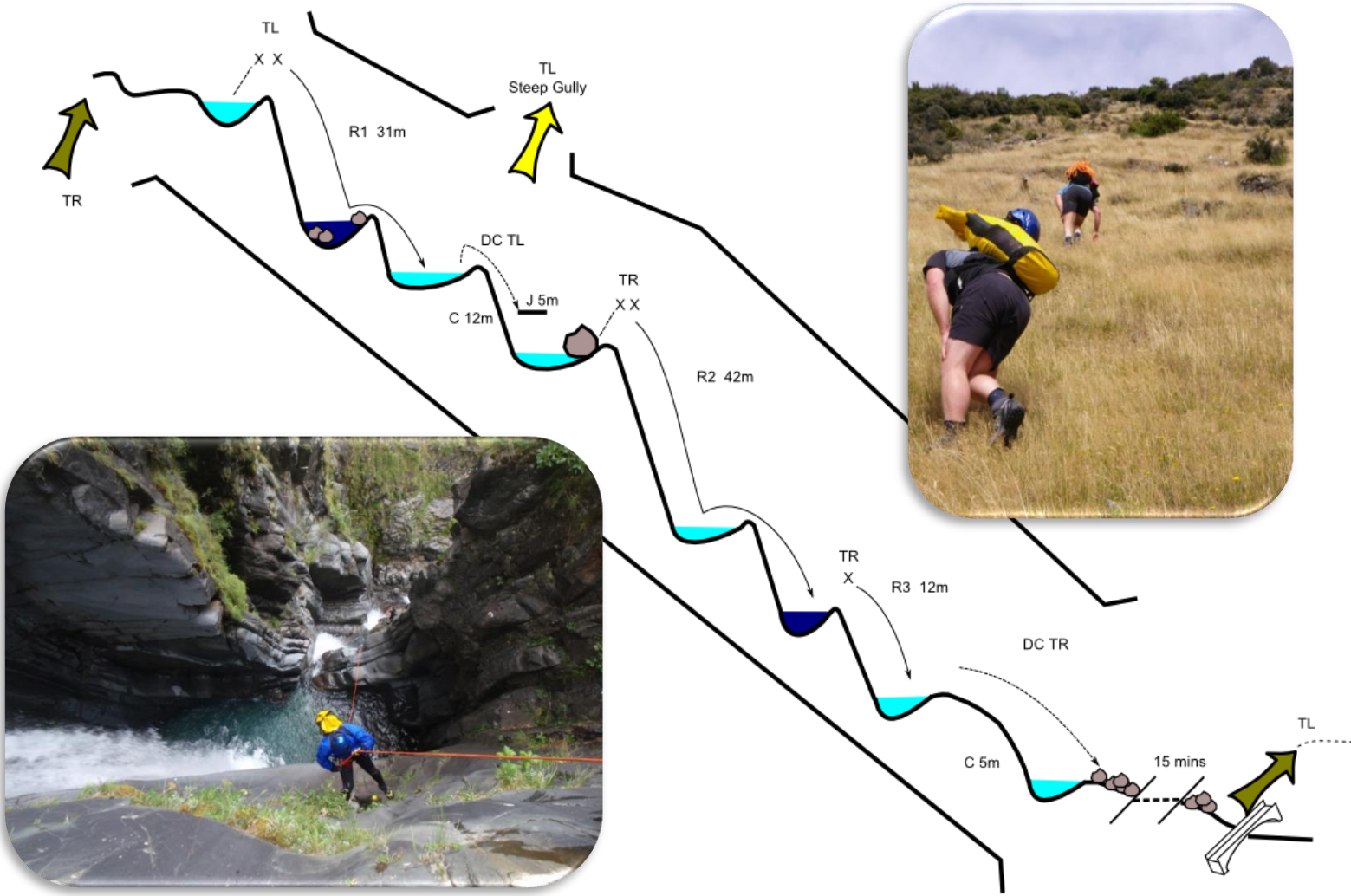
Beneath the middle pool on R2 there is a small cave that can be explored.

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>

*Topo by Daniel Clearwater updated Apr 2022*  
[www.KiwiCanyons.org](http://www.KiwiCanyons.org)



**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**

First descent unknown.

Topo information from a descent by Grant Prattley, Toine Houtenbos, Daniel Clearwater Mar 2010.

