



CRANE CREEK

Canyon v4a4IV ★★

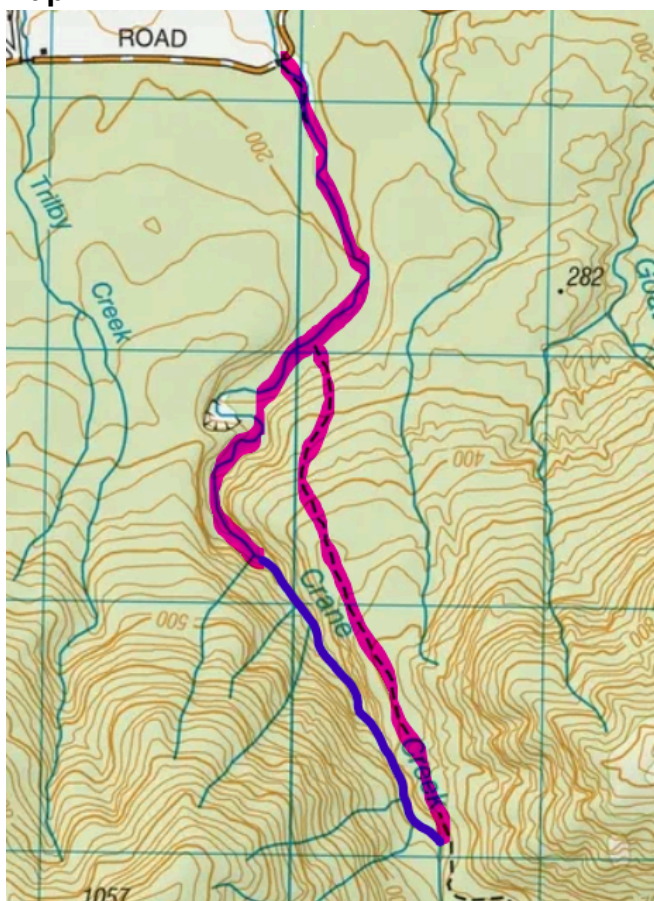
Location

Haupiri (inland from Greymouth).

Character

A long trip with lots of water and some impressive features. Lots of downclimbs, swims, small jumps, and short pitches, plus two larger drops. Very messy with boulderpiles and logjams throughout, but still very good fun.

Map



Approach/return in purple, canyon in blue.

Approach by Car

Drive towards Haupiri, from Greymouth, Moana or Jacksons, by a long partly gravel road. There is a carpark next to the Crane Creek bridge.

Approach on Foot

There is a marked walking track to Rochfort Basin that passes very near the top of the canyon. Follow the creek upstream and join the track where you see white metal markers. The track is intermittent and hard to follow along the river flats, but becomes much better

once the uphill begins. At the 500m contour it's only a short bushbash to reach the open stream, a short distance from the first drop.

Rock

Schist

Water

Medium-high flow.

Lots of potential for strainer and entrapment hazards, particularly in higher flows, due to the log jams & boulders in the canyon.

The nearby WCRC Ahaura river gauge can be used as an estimate of water levels in the region, although it is a much larger river so won't necessarily indicate the flows in the canyon well.

On a trip with the Ahaura at ~2.25 m on the WCRC gauge the canyon had manageable whitewater features as you'd expect at the grade. On a trip with the Ahaura at 2.1 m the flow was noticeably lower and the whitewater features much less intimidating.

Catchment

8.5 km²

Anchors

Mostly double bolted. The anchors are well placed to avoid flood damage, but the West Coast gets some big floods. Bring natural anchor materials in case anchors are missing or features change. These may also help with any downclimbs that are too hard.

Gear

2x 60m ropes recommended, natural anchor materials.

Route Description

This is a very long canyon (1.5 km) so make sure you leave time to finish before dark. The gorge is intermittent, in some places very enclosed but there are frequent openings. The topo diagram shows only the main features, there are often boulder sections, downclimbs and swims between each pitch.

- The first section R1 - R6 is reasonably continuous, with only short walks (< 5 minutes) between each feature.
- Between R6 and R9 is mostly walking, with only a few small features.

- Between R9 - R12 the features are closely spaced, followed by numerous downclimbs and swims before the end of the canyon.
- Below R13 the terrain slowly becomes more river walking than canyoning.

There are pitches that land in sometimes intimidating whitewater, but the features are usually easier than they appear.

The crux is R4, 'The Jacuzzi', where all the water and spray funnels into a narrow horizontal chute. This is easier than it looks but it can be hard to see and there are possible entrapment hazards. It's a great feature but if you're not confident there's an option to abseil to the ledge at 30m down, then climb up to a ledge high on the TR and do a dry abseil from a single bolt.

The R9 - R10 drop is hard to see from the top, as R9 goes around a corner to the TR to avoid the flow as much as possible. The last person should consider abseiling on a double strand for an easier pull down. The anchor is hanging but has a flat ledge next to it which makes the sequence easier. R10 is away from the flow, try to avoid damaging the moss on this pitch.

There are some serious logjams in this canyon - treat with caution and bear in mind they may move or new ones appear between descents, which may change some of the features significantly.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	2h15min
Canyon descent	5-6hr
Return to vehicle	1h15min
Total	~9h

Flash Flood Danger

Medium. Must get some big floods but in many places you could get above the water. Only narrow in very short sections.

Escapes

Some possible escapes into the trees, but escape out of the gorge proper could be difficult or impossible.

Notes

First descent: Ben Fletcher, Conor Handley, Amy Burney, Christian Miller, in April 2025.
Topo updated March 2026.

Fun to effort ratio: Approach by walking track! Easygoing compared to many similar West Coast canyons. A bit of boulder bashing involved but definitely worth it.

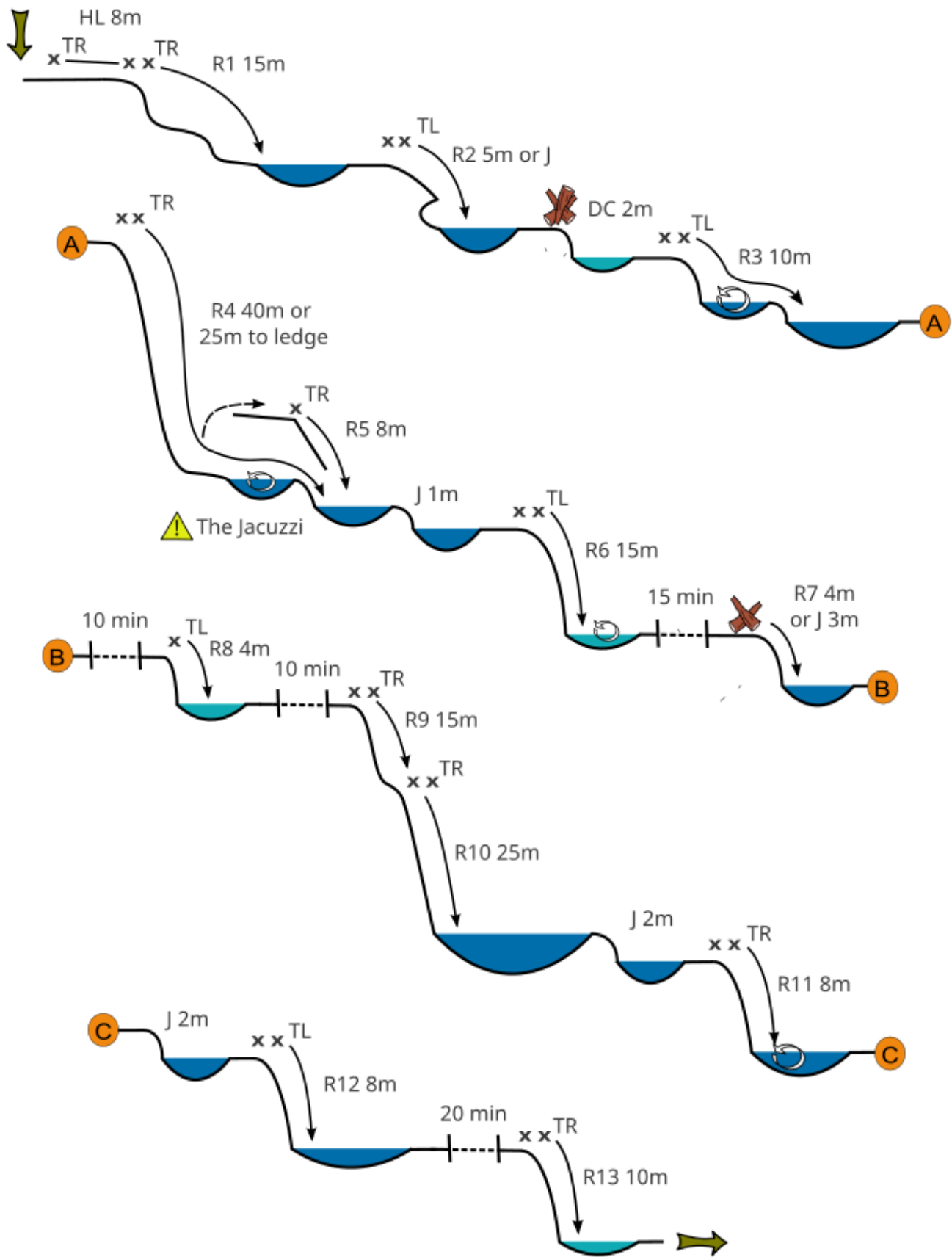


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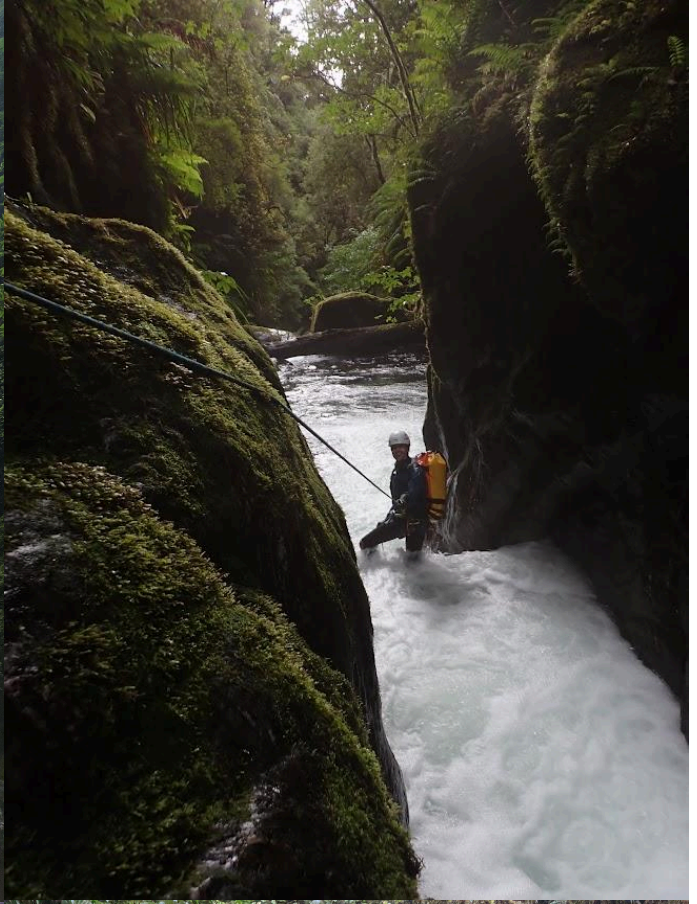


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