



# CHAIR CREEK

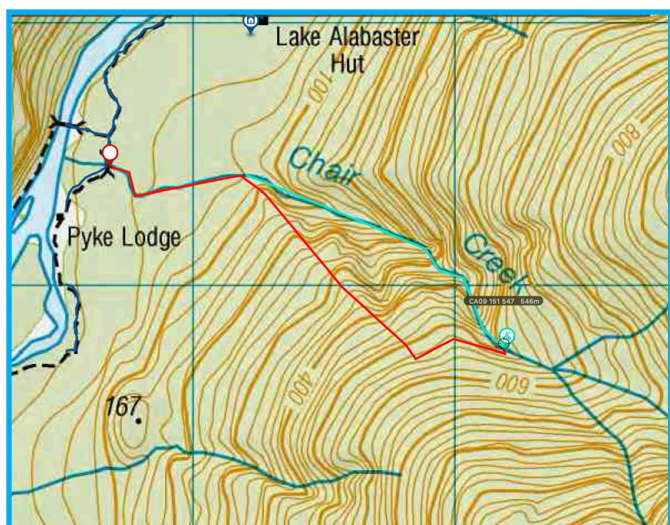
Canyon v4a4IV ★★

## Location

Lake Alabaster, Fiordland, New Zealand

## Character

Chair Creek generally has an open character with a short enclosed section. The crux passage with the big waterfall is a nice testing ground for your abseiling skills in fast flowing water.



## Map

CA09 - Alabaster Pass

[Car park Hollyford road end](#)

[Lake alabaster hut](#)

Start Canyon: CA09 151 547

WGS84: S 44.52893 E 168.16943

## Approach

Leave your car at the start of the Hollyford track.

Hike or [packraft](#) for approximately 20 km to the south of Lake Alabaster. Here you can stay at the Lake Alabaster Hut (hut or campground) or at the more fancy Pyke Lodge (reservation necessary).

## Approach on Foot

Hike up on the true left side of the canyon. Don't stay too

close to the canyon but follow the more easy terrain on the true left side. Around 530m you can traverse into the canyon. An abseil from a tree might be necessary to reach the canyon.

## Rock

pyroclastic breccia

## Water

Chair Creek takes a considerable stream and was opened in autumn after a dry spell. Most of the water can be avoided except in the crux passage which gives the canyon it's A4 grade.

## Catchment

5 km<sup>2</sup>

## Anchors

Exploratory rigging!

Most rappels are equipped with (single) 10 mm stainless steel 306 expansion bolts and [Tebylon](#) Hangers. Trees are rigged with 5 mm Dyneema (HMPE) or webbing and a [Tebylon half ring](#). Some 10 mm holes were drilled for temporary bolts.

## Gear

2 x 80 m ropes . (Re)bolting kit.

## Route Description

A short walk will bring you to the first descent. From here it's a quite continuous enchainment of descents. The canyon closes in a bit for the crux section with some nice splashy descents. A bolt on the true right is used as a start for the big rappel. Careful with the slippery approach to this bolt as there is a 75 m waterfall below you! You descent 15 m until the water ejects from the tobogan. Here you will find two bolts on the true right for the second 60 m high abseil. The descent is in the full force of the water and there are some sharp edges on the way so please take care when rigging!

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## Time

Vehicle park to Lake Alabaster Hut	1 day
Lake Alabaster Hut to start Canyon	2h45min
Canyon descent	4h
Return to Lake Alabaster Hut	30min
Total (from Lake Alabaster Hut)	7h15min

## Flash Flood Danger

The canyon was opened after a dry spell. More water will make the descent probably much more difficult/dangerous so only make descents in stable and dry weather.

## Escapes

Multiple possibilities for escapes were spotted throughout the canyon but none were tested.

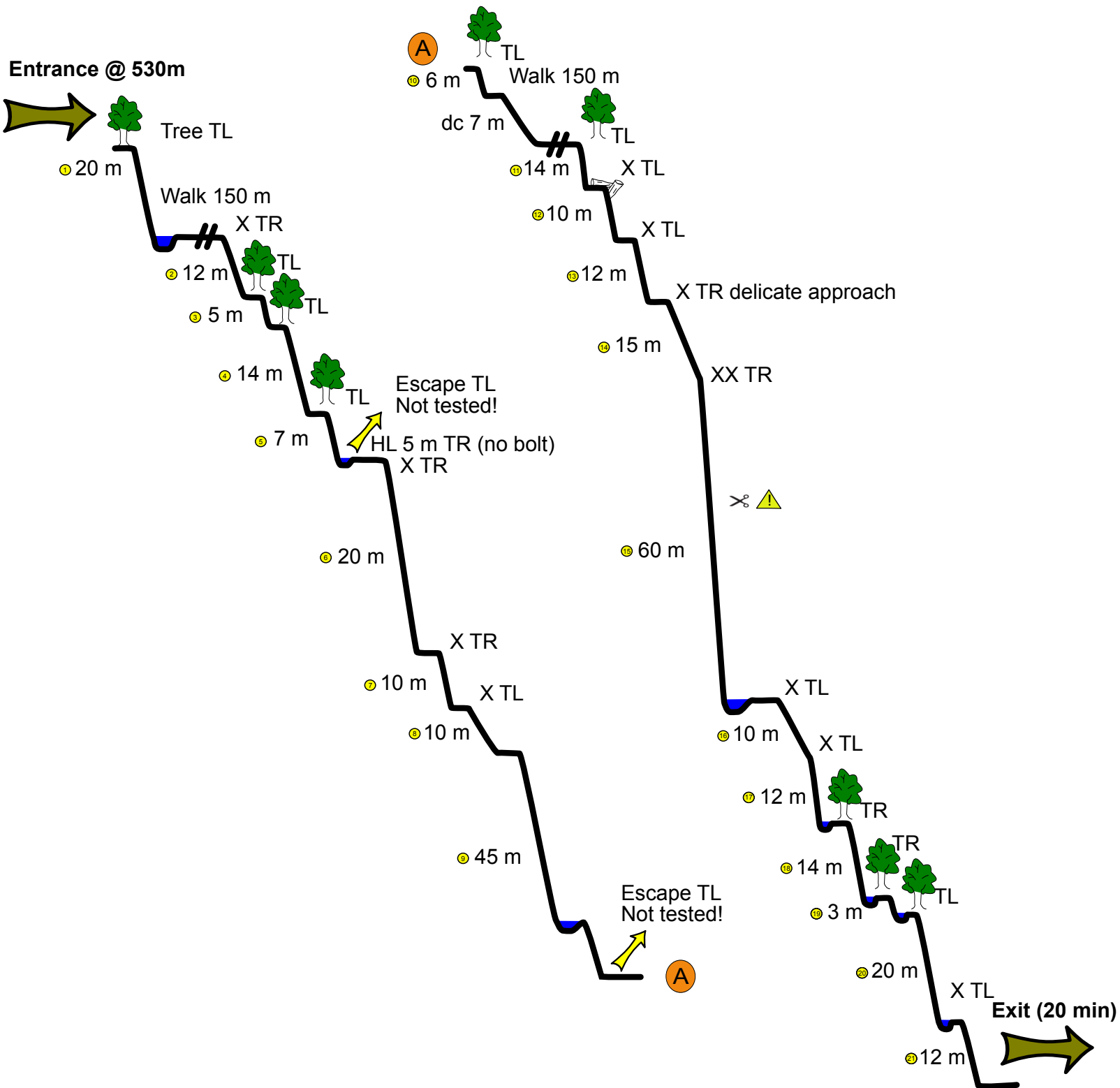
## Notes

First descent: 05-03-2025

[Dutch Canyoning Expedition](#) - Erik Birkhoff, Erwan Coq, Pepijn Hoeksema, Bas Hetterscheid, Britt Joosten, Jaap Sikkema, Bram de Vries, Loys van Asten







## CHAIR CREEK

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Topo by E. Birkhoff  
www.kiwicanyons.org





R15





**R16, Into some beautifully  
enclosed section**



**R14, Tricky to get to the next  
anchor for R15**





**R15, A nice 60 meter abseil  
into the spray!**





# EXPEDITION NZ 2025



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