



FAWN FALLS

Canyon v4a3II ★★

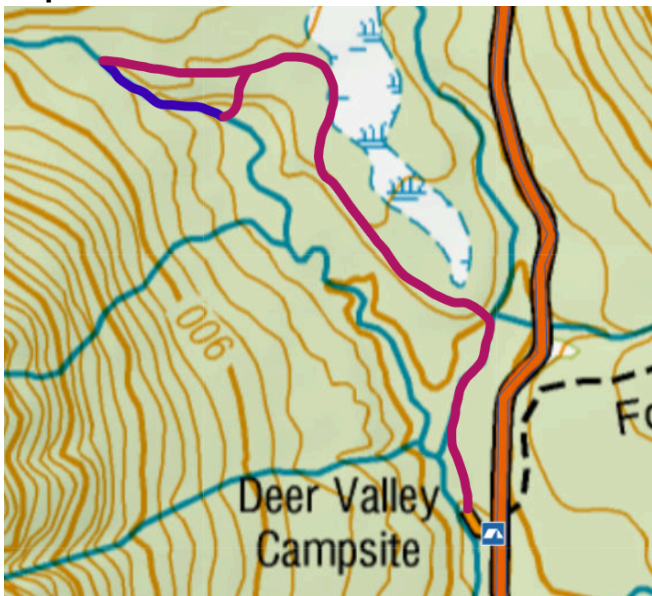
Location

Deer Valley, Lewis Pass

Character

A short and fun canyon with some entertaining pitches, and jumps into deep pools. A good adventure, particularly given the reasonably fast approach.

Map



Canyon in dark blue, approach/return in purple,

Approach by Car

Park at the Deer Valley Campsite, 10 minutes North of Boyle village.

Approach on Foot

Bushbash/follow a vague track from the carpark to reach a tributary creek. Follow this upstream for ~200m and cross shortly before the gravel cliff on the TR of the creek. Go uphill to the open beech forest on the plateau above the Deer Valley creek. Follow easy animal tracks until the bush thickens then skirt around to the North before veering back towards the canyon. You can take a more direct route but the bush will be thicker. After finishing the canyon you can follow the creek (slippery) back to the campsite or go back through the forest the same way (probably slightly faster).

Rock

Greywacke, very hard.

Water

Medium flow. Very wet, with swims, jumps, and vertical flow. Deep, gravel bottomed pools throughout. Pool depths might change if the gravel moves in floods, and the creek carries a lot of logs, which can be seen in some pools. Check the pools before jumping.

Catchment

7.5 km²

Anchors

Double bolt anchors.

Gear

At least one 60 m rope is recommended. Use longer ropes than the minimum for the pitch height, so you don't have to do the pull down while swimming.

Route Description

Two short sections of canyon, 3 features and 2 features, separated by a 100m walk. Two good jumps are possible, and the other pitches have fun vertical flow.

R1 is a standout feature where you meet the flow halfway down and cross it. This is the crux of the canyon and unless the flow is low it may be challenging (but very fun). There is a minor hazard where a small rock feature has caught on a canyoneer's harness, leaving them stuck in the flow for a second before escaping. For this reason it is safer to descend with your knees against the wall rather than sliding with your harness against the wall.

The following 4m jump can be easily downclimbed on the TR to just above the water, despite looking steep. The first person should climb down to check the pool so others can jump. There is a bolt on this drop that can be used if necessary. The top of R2 is the most enclosed part of the canyon. This will be a pour over in high flows but should be easy to manage.

The anchor for R3 is hard to reach, but can be accessed with a handline. Both R2 and R3 look intimidating but the vertical flow can be mostly avoided if you're careful. R4 has good jumping options of about 5-7m, although there is a rock to avoid in the centre of the pool. The anchors are hidden behind an unstable logjam, which can be climbed around on the TL.

Walk 20 minutes back up to repeat the canyon or return to the campsite by either following the creek or bush bashing the way you walked in.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	1hr
Canyon descent	1h30min
Return to vehicle	45min
Total	3h15m

Flash Flood Danger

Low - short and escapable.

Escapes

Easy escapes during the short walking section after R2. It should be possible to escape by climbing after R1 and R3, but probably not easy.

Flow Gauges:

Check the water level at the creek by the campsite. The following photo shows a high water level, where the canyon can be descended but will be harder than the given grade:



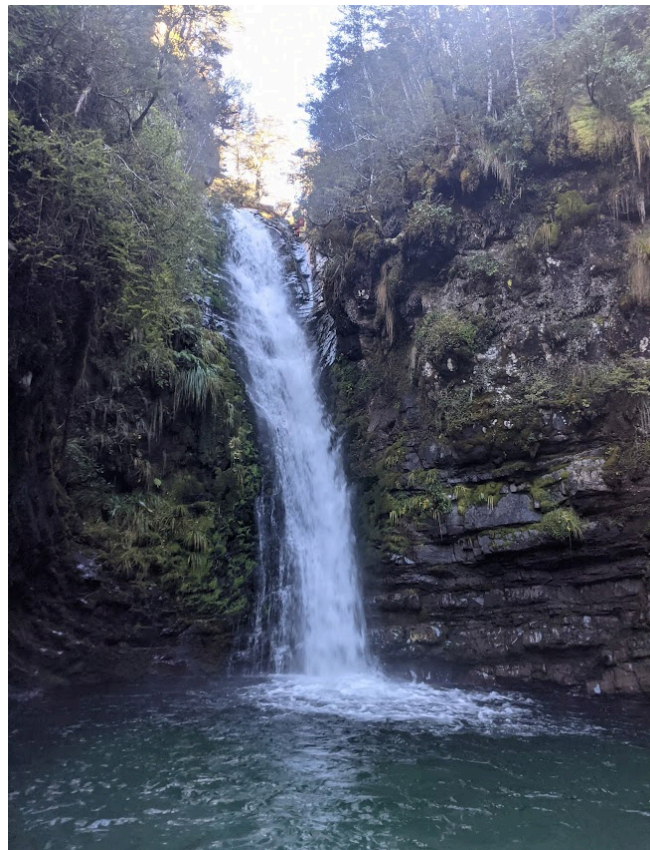
Bear in mind the canyon is only a tributary of this creek, and the flow is hard to compare when there is no bedrock at this point.

The Waiiau at Glenhope (which is not very close to the canyon so is an indication only) was at 1.7m on this day. On another, much easier trip, the height at the Glenhope gauge was 1.5m.

<https://flowrate.co.nz/river/waiiau-uwaha-river/glenhope>

Notes

First descent: Amy Burney, Ben Fletcher, Christian Miller, Conor Handley. May 2025.



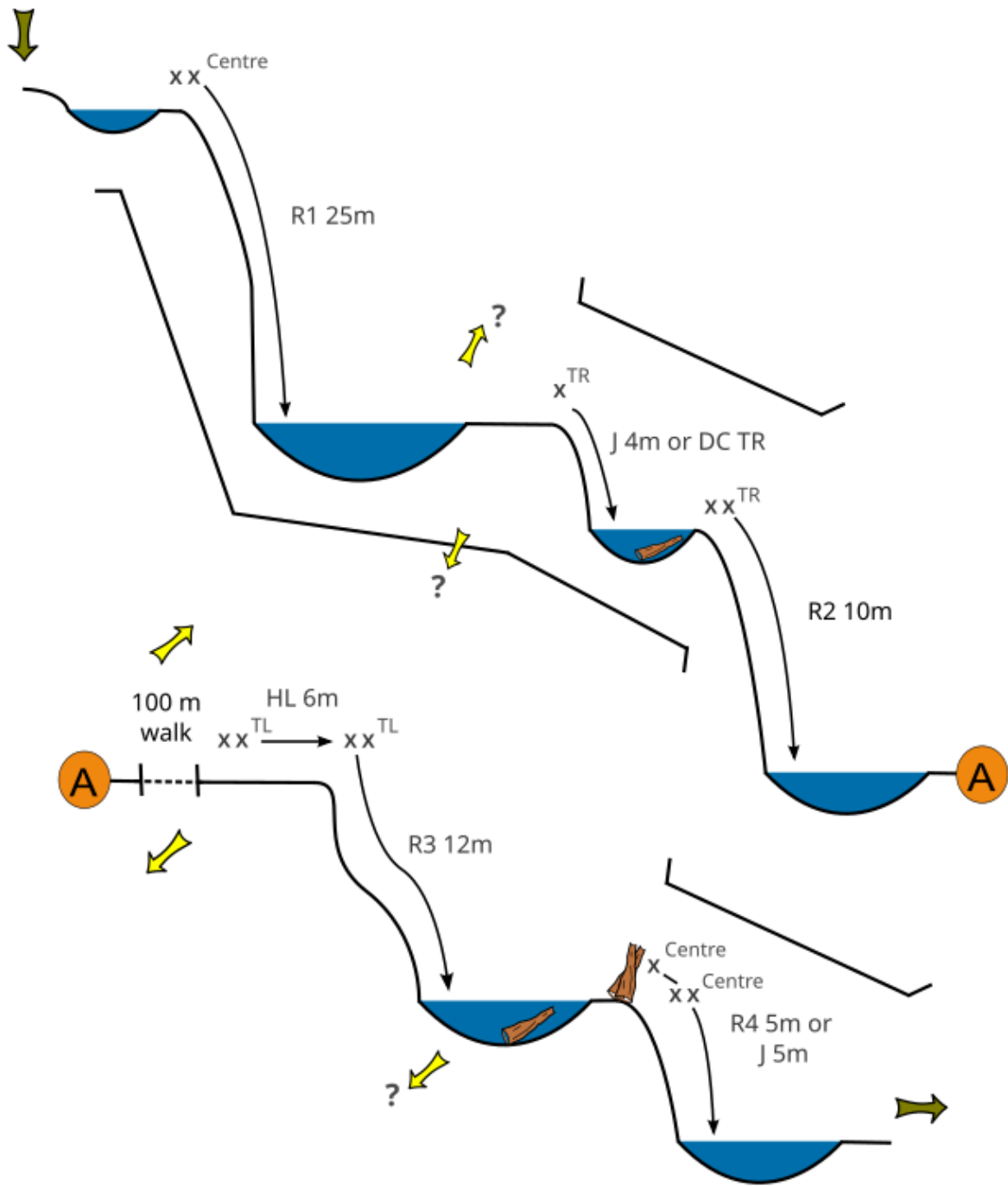
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*Topo by Amy, Ben, Conor,
and Christian*

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Deer Valley, Lewis Pass

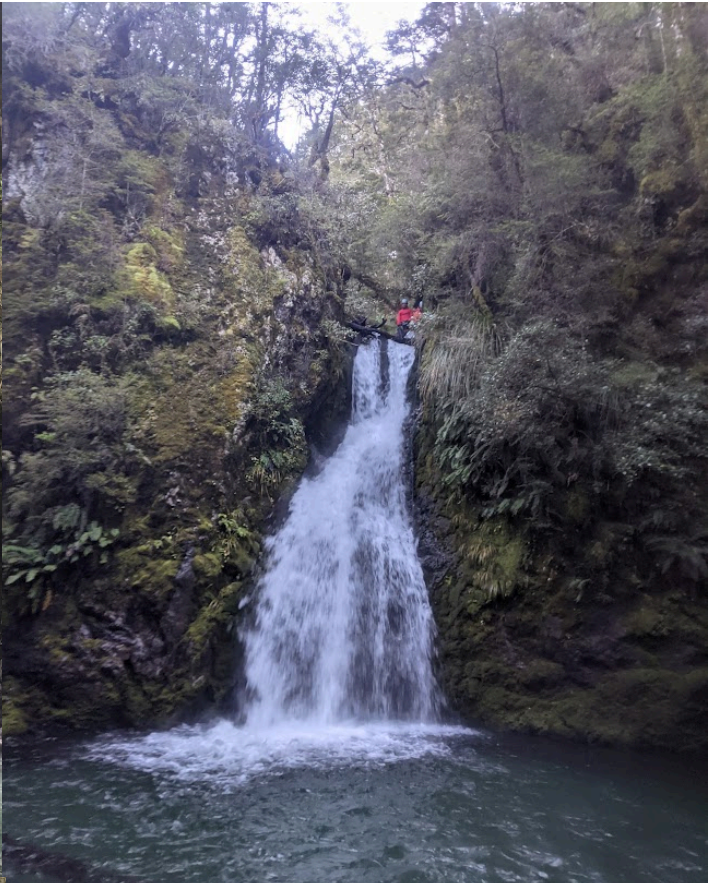
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