



LOWER GRIFFIN

Creek v4a4III ★★

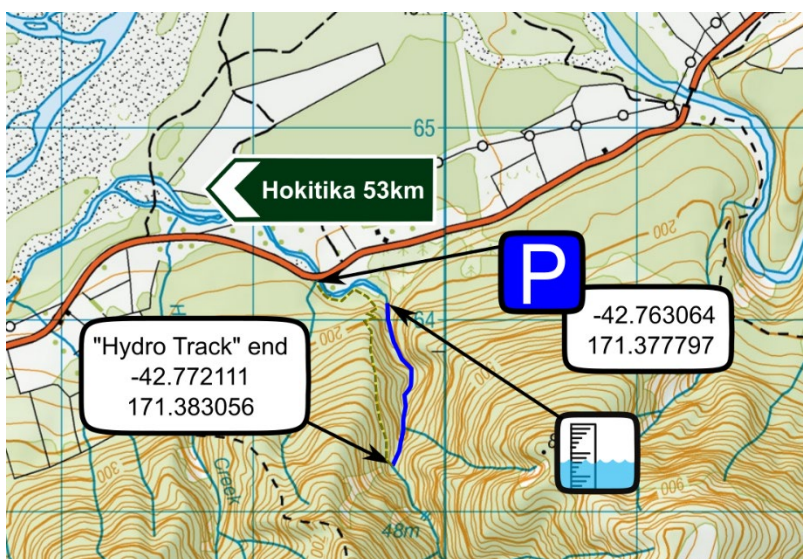
Location

Taramakau Valley, West Coast

Character

A much shorter, less technical taster of the mighty Griffin Creek, with a handful of abseils, jumps, slides and scrambles

Map



Approach by Car

The carpark is on SH73, about 53km / 40 mins from Hokitika. (Google Map pin [-42.763064, 171.377797](#))

Look for a small turn off on the TL, upstream side of the bridge.

Approach on Foot

From the carpark, head up the TR of the creek. About 200m upstream of the bridge, on a small grassy flat on the right, you should notice tape that marks the start of the Hydro Track. (GPS coords [171.379968, -42.764348](#))

Leave your bags here, and continue upstream to check the water level reference point.

The Hydro Track zig zags up the spur at first, sidles along the valley wall (with some ups and downs) to reach the water just below the corridor.

Rock

Schist, solid where it counts.

Catchment

14 km²

Anchors

Mostly double bolted 10mm with ring hangers. Some anchors have been damaged by floods. Check the trip logs on [kiwicanyons.org](#) or ask locally for more information. Be prepared to repair or replace anchors.

Gear

Max drop is 29m. Recommend 2x60m ropes per group.

Time

Approach	45 mins
Canyon descent	2hr
Return to vehicle	5 mins
Total	2h50m

Flash Flood Danger

High. Big catchment, high rainfall area, but quite a few places where you could wait out a flood.

Route Description

Lower Griffin is much less technical than the Upper section, but there are still whitewater hazards to manage.

Start with a series of smaller jumps before the horizon drops away at Double Falls.

Take a moment to ponder how Justin Venable must have felt paddling these during the first kayak descent of this section, solo, in Jan 2015.

Some anchors might need spotting or a belay to reach if the canyon is slippery conditions.

The final narrows offer a few more jumps, swims, scrambles and hydraulics.

Escapes

There are reasonably frequent places where you could scramble out of the water course to avoid a flood.

Full escape back to the car would involve steep travel through thick bush back to the Hydro Track

First descent

Nic Barth and Neil Silverwood 6 Mar 2013.

Warning ! – Hydro scheme

The hydro track is the access track for the proposed Griffin Hydro Scheme. .

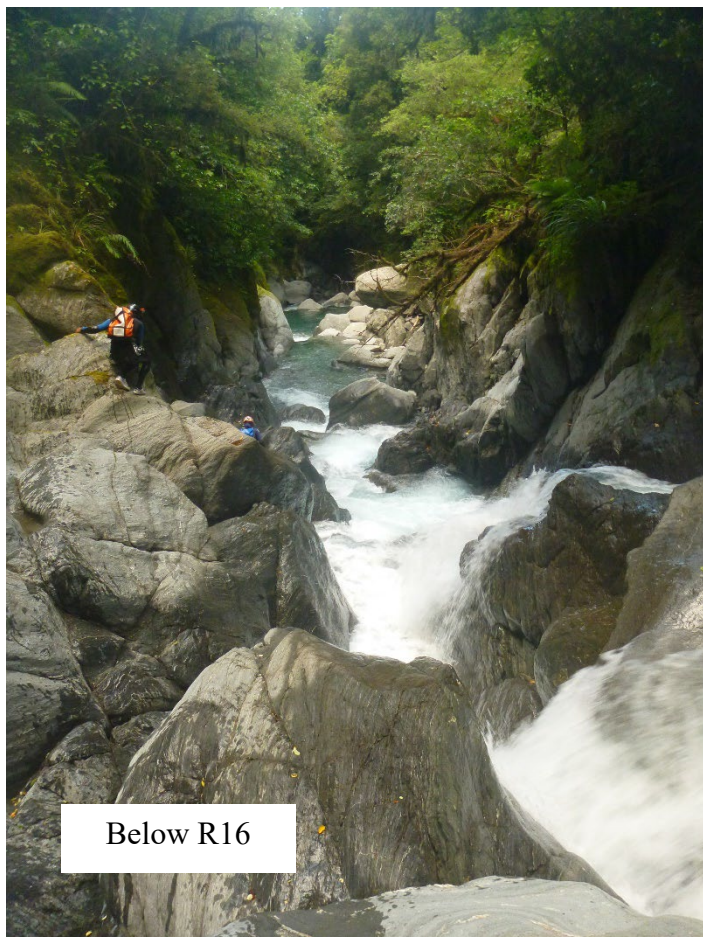
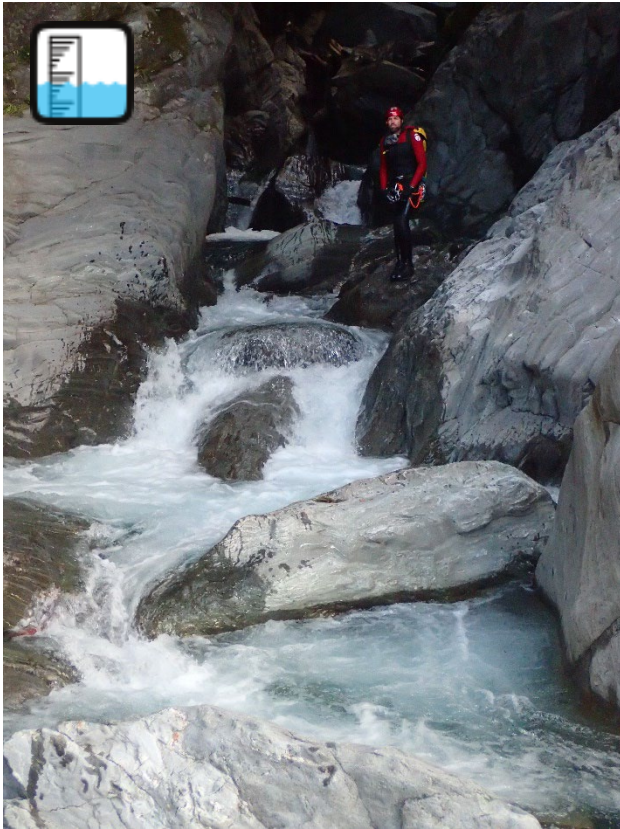
So, if you turn up to the bridge and notice construction traffic – maybe it's best not to continue. Construction would cast debris into the lower canyon.

Water

The photos below are taken from where the creek exits the bedrock canyon.

The photo with the canyoner shows a normal flow, suitable for fit canyoners, experienced in high-volume canyons.

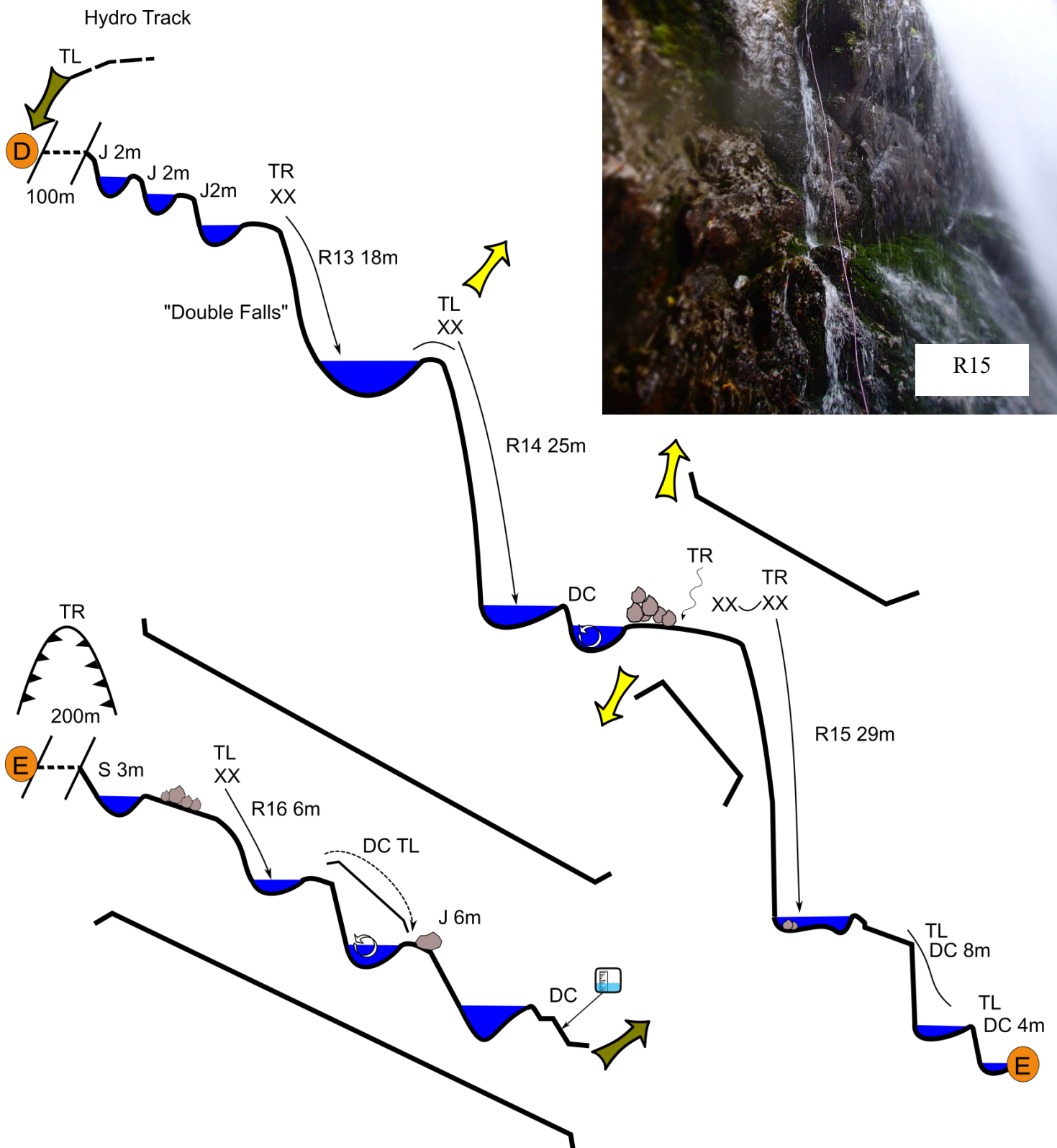
The photo on the right is likely to be near the upper limit for expert teams with prior knowledge of the canyon. But this upper limit has not been verified yet.



Below R16



Approaching R15



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Topo updated 14 Dec 2025