



UPPER SYLVIA STREAM

Canyon v4a3IV ★

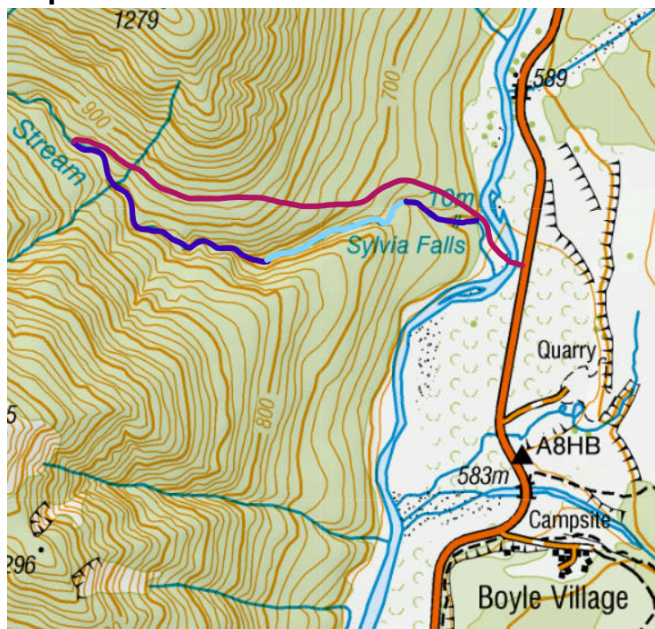
Location

Lewis Pass

Character

Aquatic with many jumps. Quite spread out, with walking sections between the features, but the walking is easy so doesn't feel too bad. Some good features, including an intimidating handline to reach the biggest pitch.

Map



Upper and lower canyons in dark blue. Creek walking between the canyons in light blue. Approach/return in pink.

Approach by Car

Park at the sign for 'Angler Access' by the side of the road shortly North of the Boyle village. The same as for the main (lower) Sylvia Stream canyon.

Approach on Foot

At the time of writing the canyon has been descended from NZTM 2000 5294356.78N,1547545.07E. There appears to be more gorge upstream, although at this drop in point the creek is open, and it's not known if there is worthwhile canyoning upstream.

From the car, cross the river and find the end of the creek. Go into the forest on the true left and walk uphill. Until ~850m stay reasonably close to the edge of the gully formed by the creek. At 850m sidle above

the creek until reaching the start point. It should be easy to walk into the creek at this point.

Rock

Greywacke.

Water

Medium flow.

Catchment

11.5 km²

Anchors

Mostly single bolts, one natural anchor. Prepare to use natural anchors or meat anchors to check the jumps.

This canyon is yet to be fully bolted! Treat with caution until then.

Gear

At least 1x 60m rope. Natural anchor materials.

Route Description

There are a lot of small features but not many bolts in the canyon. Many drops will require judgement on whether to jump, downclimb, or find a natural anchor. Expect to be walking between features.

Some of the jumps are very deep, but others are shallow jumps requiring landing in exactly the right spot - if you're not sure then check them first, and meat anchoring will be a useful skill. The J 2m! before R1 has a small and shallow landing area with rocks on each side. The anchor for R2 is far back from the edge, so for the easiest pull down, pull the rope from the ledge halfway down and jump the last few metres. The pool becomes rapidly shallower further out so it's essential to land in the right place. The R3 anchor is accessed by a slippery traverse on the TL.

The walk to the lower Sylvia Stream canyon takes about 30-40 minutes. It may also be possible to bush bash out and walk back through the forest.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	1h 45min
Canyon descent	3h
Walk to lower Sylvia canyon	40min
Lower Sylvia canyon to car	45min
Total	~6.5h

Flash Flood Danger

Low/medium, mostly not very narrow so there are places to get above the water.

Escapes

It's likely some escapes are possible outside of the slotted section, although the sides are very steep in places.

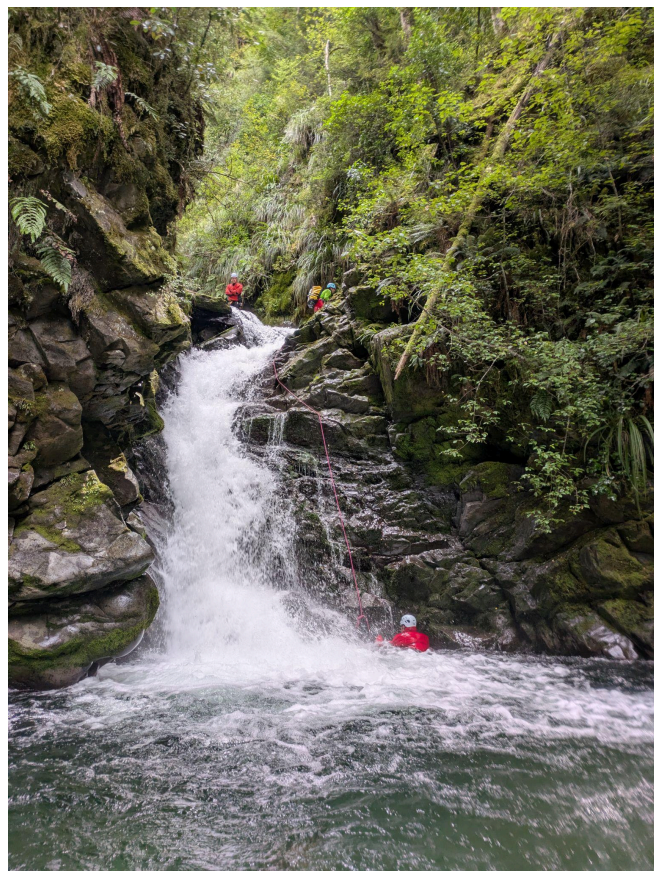
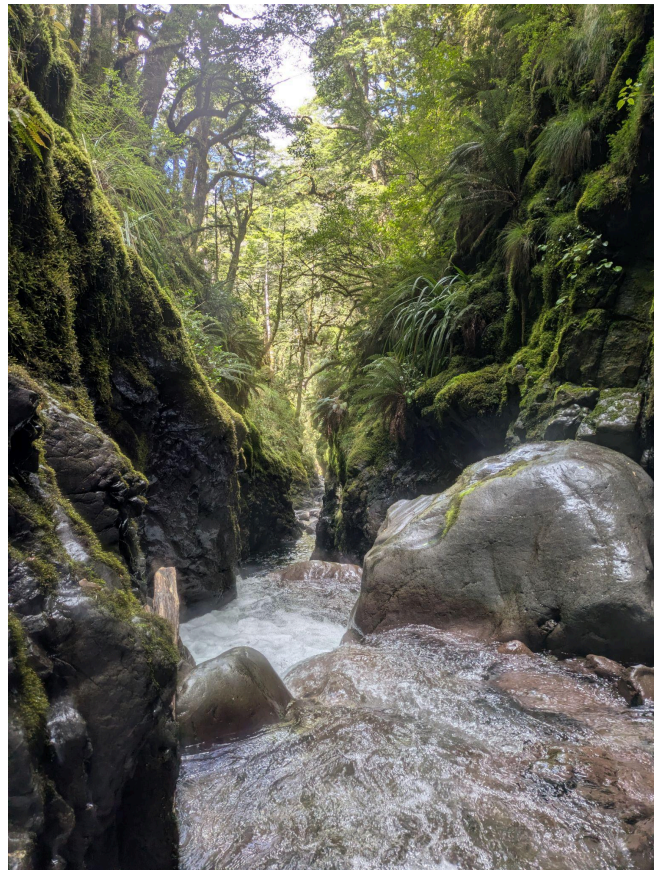
Notes

First recorded descent: Amy Burney, Ben Fletcher, Christian Miller, Conor Handley. February 2026.

There are rumours this canyon was first explored in the 90s, although no further details are known.

Fun to effort ratio: Lots of walking, but also lots of jumps. The walking is reasonably easy.

The lower Sylvia Stream canyon is sometimes used by outdoor education groups. Give them space if you see them.



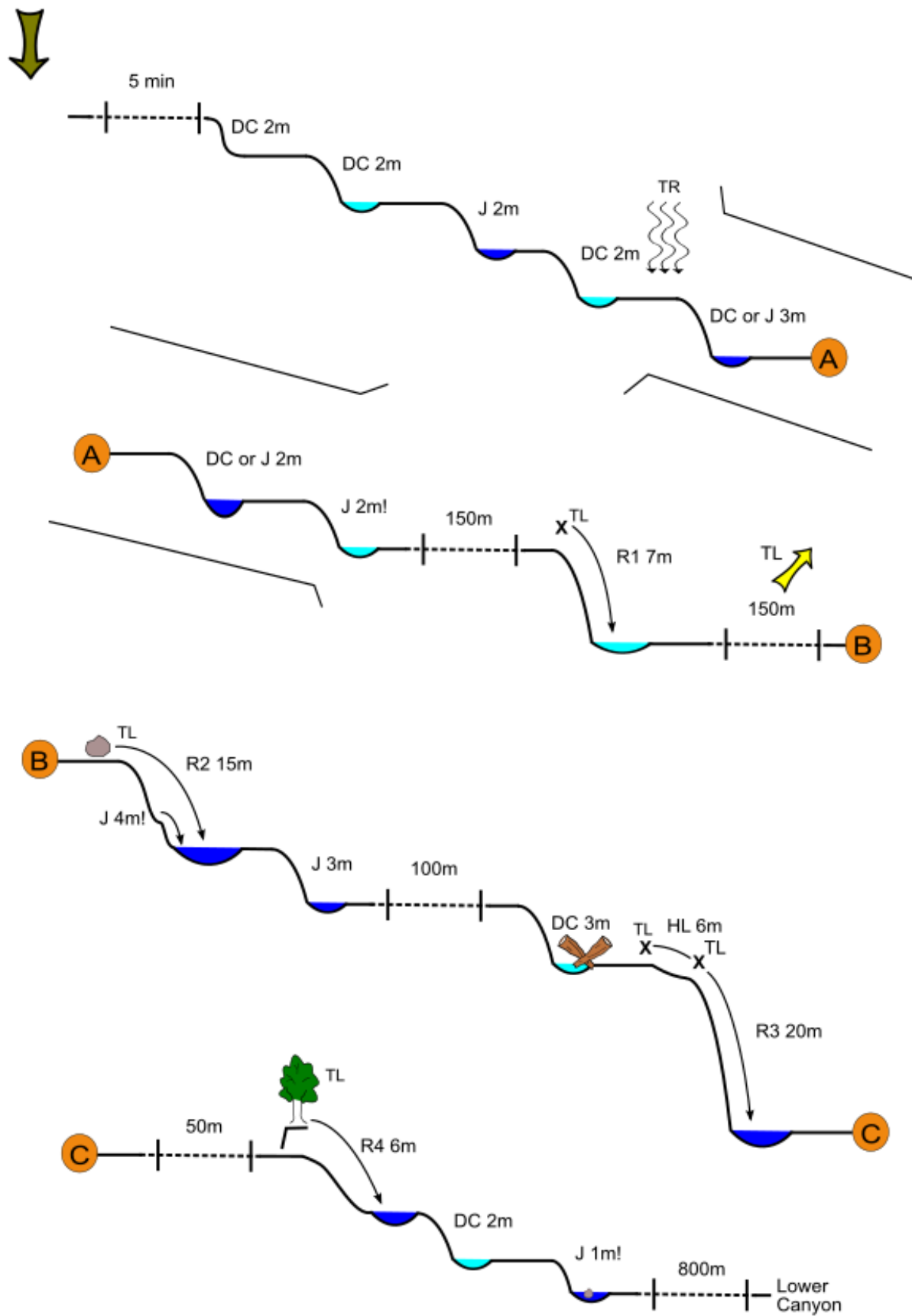
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*Topo by Amy, Christian, Ben
and Conor*

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