



RIORDONS CREEK

Canyon v3a1III ★

Location

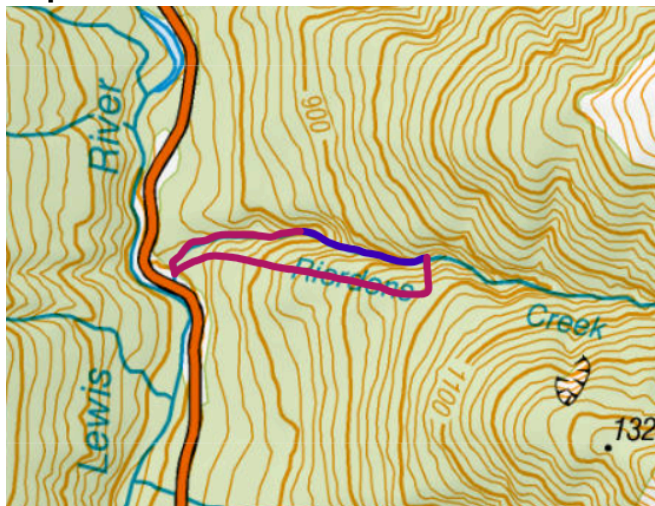
Lewis Pass

Character

Reasonably enclosed for a greywacke canyon, with some nicely slotted bits. Mostly small pitches and lots of downclimbs, some natural anchors required. It's a wet canyon but there are no swims deep enough that you can't touch the bottom.

Good for an early or late season trip - since there's not much swimming you shouldn't get too cold.

Map



Canyon in dark blue, approach/return in purple.

Approach by Car

Park at the bay to the East of the road, right next to the creek.

Approach on Foot

Approach through the forest on the TL. It's very steep at the bottom but there is a tape track that makes it easier. Soon you reach open forest with animal tracks to follow. Very enjoyable for a canyon approach!

Getting down to the canyon is much harder and there's lots of potential to get bluffed out if you don't find the right spot. Leave the spur at coordinates 5300728.32N, 1551813.49E (at the 980m contour at the edge of the gully).

Rock

Greywacke, good enough. Often slippery.

Water

Low flow.

Catchment

2.5km²

Anchors

Natural anchors and single bolts. Until this canyon is more permanently bolted it should be treated with caution. Natural anchor materials are essential.

Gear

2 * 20m ropes, natural anchor materials.

It can get dark, since the canyon is at the bottom of a gully. If it's late season a headtorch could be useful to help see what you're doing, even in daytime.

Route Description

There are lots of small drops that are mostly downclimbed. Not all are easy and if boulders or logs move some might require an additional abseil from natural anchors. Only the main obstacles are shown on the topo diagram. There are some false floors on log jams.

There are a few sections of numerous downclimbs, but there are no long walking sections (except the 30 minute return to the car). R4 and R5 are back to back, so are R6 and R7.

Follow the creek downstream to the road.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	1h15min
Canyon descent	2h30min
Return to vehicle	30min
Total	~5h

Flash Flood Danger

Medium, it should be easy to get above the water in places, but fully escaping is likely to be hard.

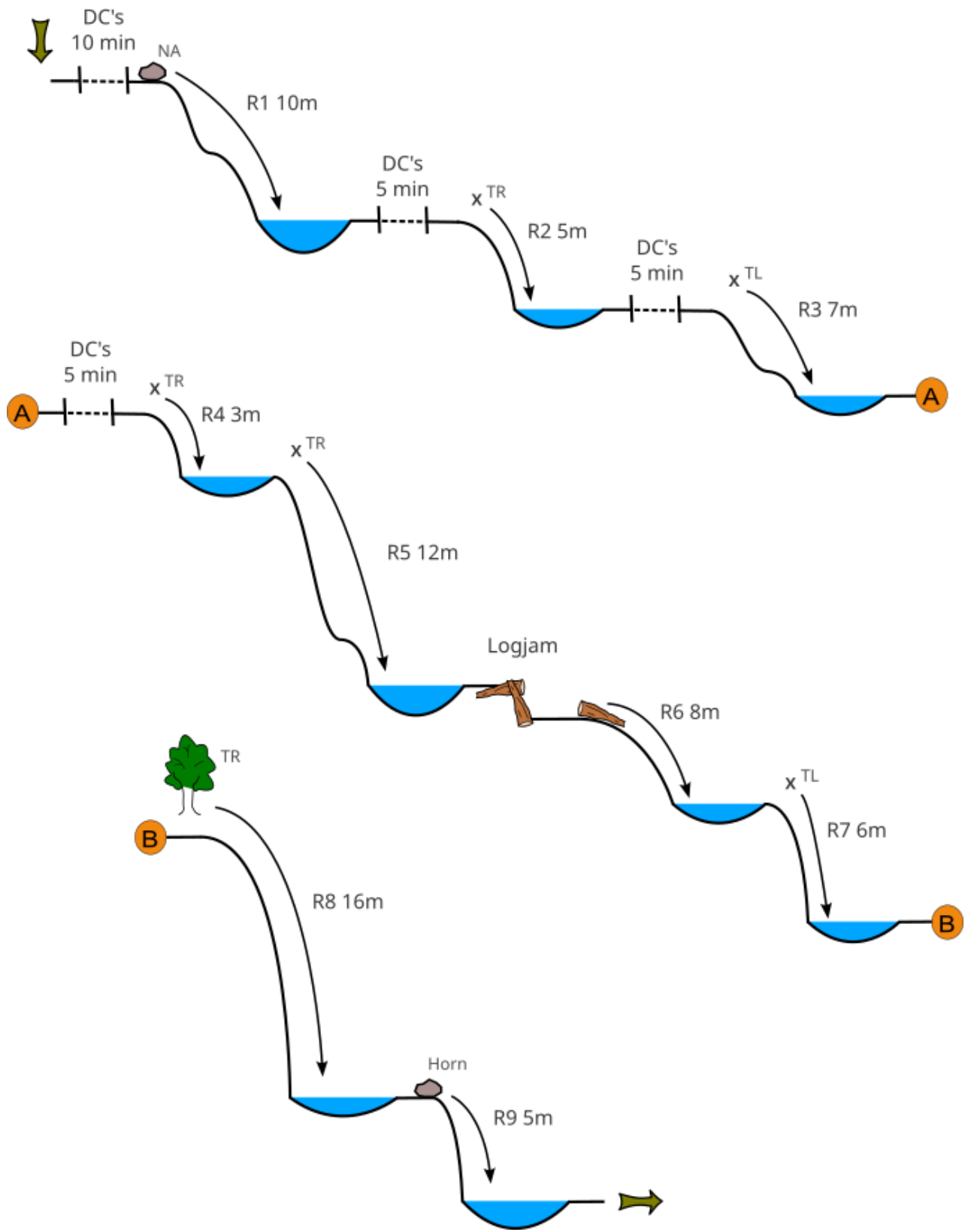
Escapes

None specifically noted, but probably possible in a few places with a bit of steep and maybe chossy climbing.

Notes

First descent: Amy Burney and Christian Miller, April 2026.

At the start it was noted there is more gorge upstream... although it seems to be less vertical at this point compared to lower down.



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Topo by Amy Burney and Christian Miller

www.kiwicanyons.org



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Page 3