



PARSONS CREEK

canyon v4a2IV ★★

Location

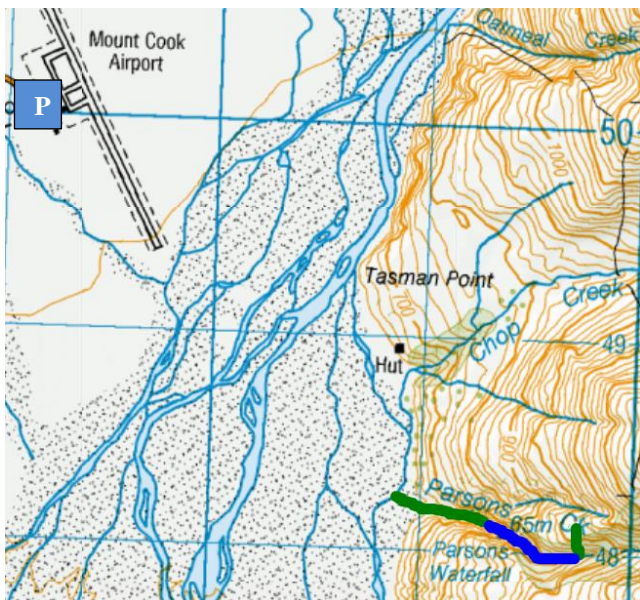
Mt Cook; overlooking the Tasman River valley.

Character

A fun northwest-facing canyon which gets the summer sun. The exit series of 7 back-to-back rappels is committing once started.

Map

BY15 Birch Hill



Approach by Car & Helicopter

From Mt Cook airport, charter a helicopter to fly you for 3 minutes to just above the canyon and arrange a pickup later in the day to cross the Tasman River 2 minutes.

As at February 2023 "One NZ" had phone coverage at the base of the canyon so contact could be made with the airport for a pick up. This should be reconfirmed with the airport whenever their services are intended to be used.

Approach on Foot

Having been dropped off by helicopter on a spur (approximately at the "C" of Parsons Creek on the topo map, roll downhill into the canyon until you hit a deer track above the canyon rim. You may need to follow the track upstream for a couple of minutes to find an easy drop in immediately above R1. (15mins)

Rock

Greywacke, generally good quality with a few exceptions.

Water

Moderate flow.

Note crossing the Tasman River would possibly be the most hazardous water feature of a trip to Parsons, dependent on river course and water levels which can be very high on the warmest of days as it is glacier fed.

Catchment

3 km²

Anchors

Mostly 10mm stainless steel Double Bolt Anchors with the occasional Single Bolt Anchor or Single Bolt 10mm stainless steel ring anchor in combination with a French expedition anchor.

While most have been removed - beware of any remaining French expedition anchors; identifiable by the bolts being less than 10mm, not made of stainless steel & use of old dyneema!!!

Gear

Longest drop 60m on a stretch (minimum 3x 60m ropes recommended).

Route Description

R1 10m DBA TR (belay out to exposed anchor)

Handline 10m SBA from boulder on TL (low angle but in flow).

R2 20m DBA TR (belay out to exposed anchor) interesting "drop in" under waterfall mid-way into pool.

Followed shortly by an exposed down climb to rocky pool (take care!).

20 minutes of rocky stream way rock hoping descent with two notable features. Firstly, down climbing through an arch and secondly a 3m shallow slide.

A sharp 90 degree left hand bend in the stream way brings you to the start of the exit series which is several back-2-back rappels, some of which you are best to stay "on rope" until secured at the next anchor.

R3 10m SBA TL into a pool.

R4 15m DBA TL into a pool.

R5 20m DBA TR into a pool (the original French expedition anchor remains on the TL)

R6 10m DBA TR into pool.

R7 15m DBA TL.

R8 60m (a full 60m on the stretch) DBA TL into a pool. There are anchors on both the TL and TR 10m down, though these are awkward and fraught to use and as such best ignored if the flow is manageable.

R9 25m DBA TL into pool.

20 minutes of stream way rock hoping brings you to the open Tasman River valley and with luck the helicopter pick up you have arranged.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	30min
Canyon descent	4hrs
Return to vehicle	30min
Total	5hrs

Flash Flood Danger

Moderate

Escapes

Between R1 and the start of R3 it is likely that escape out of the canyon and back to the helicopter drop off would not be too demanding.

Once down R3 however, you are committed to completing the canyon with at best - the ability to get out of the flow between some rappels.

Notes

First descent: French 'Aotearoa 15' Expedition – Jan 2015.

Second descent and write up: 8 February 2023 (Sheree Atkinson, Gabriela Scheufele, Justin Hall).

Fun to effort ratio: Lots of vertical in the sun & with a little contribution to a helicopter at Mt Cook airport; downhill access & exit all the way!!

Access issues: Public land.

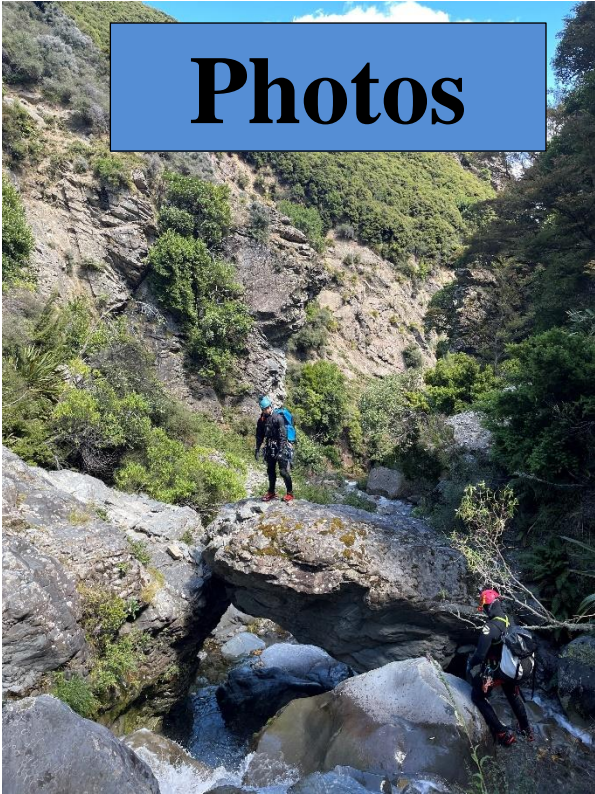
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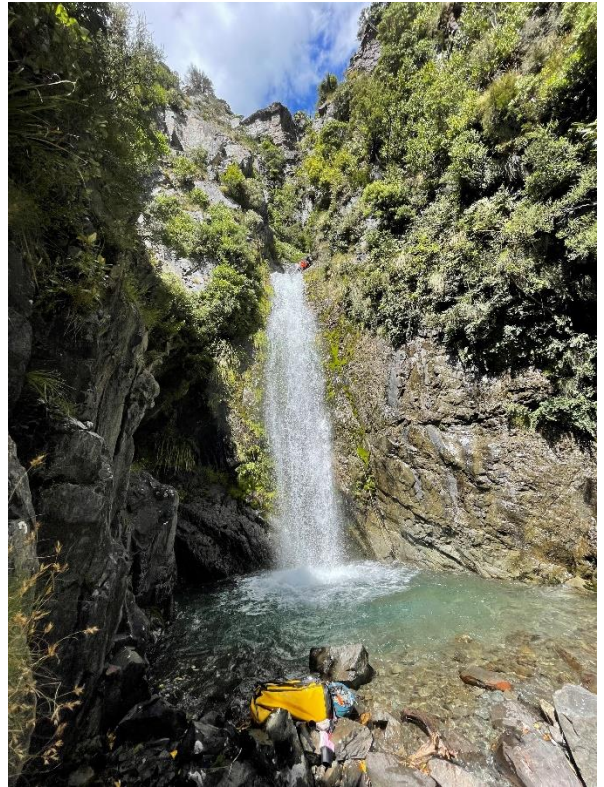
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Photos



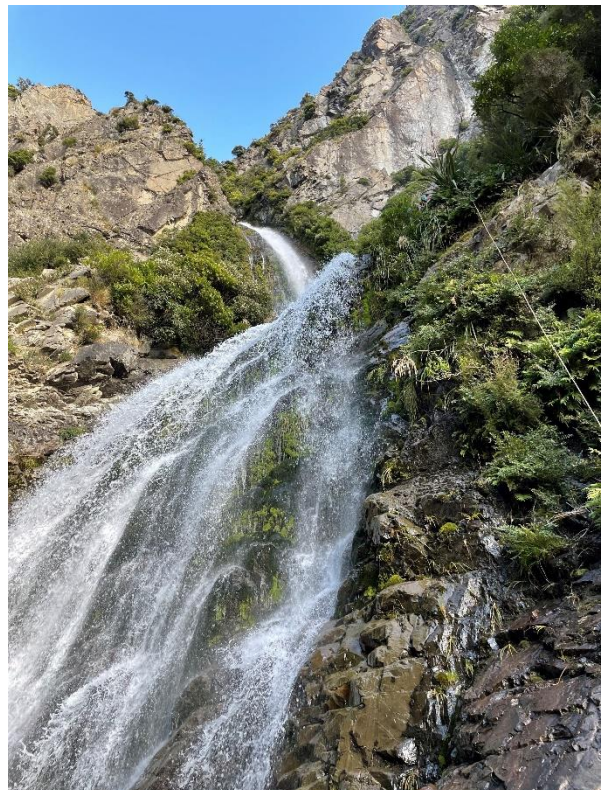
The "Arch", scramble down through it.



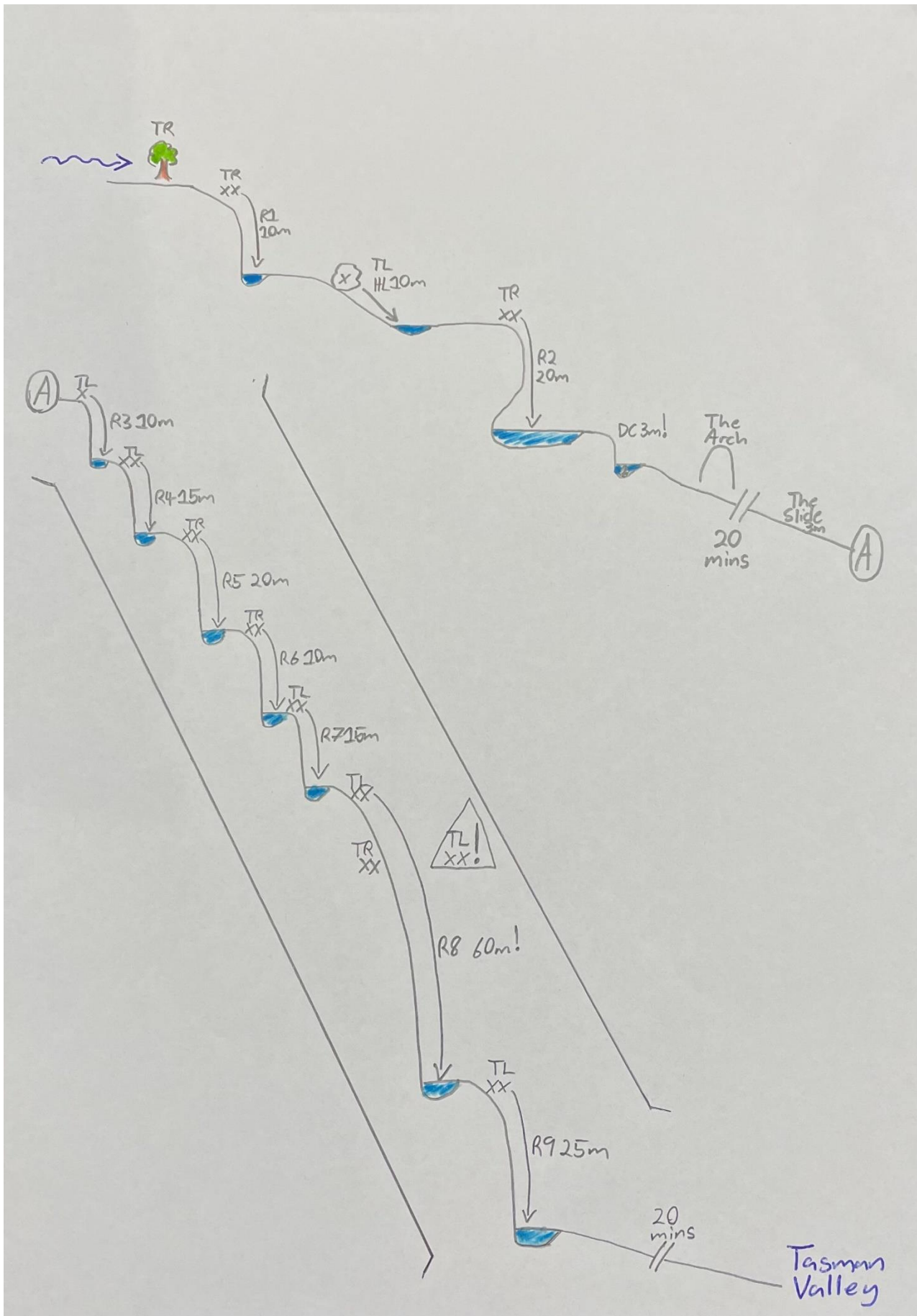
R7 maybe?



R8, 60m on a stretch!



Looking up R9



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