



KIWI JACKS

Canyon

v3a3II☆☆

Location

Franz Josef, South Westland

Character

South Westland's first bolted gorgeous native rainforest surrounded canyon. Starting off easy and finishing off with spectacular views and bigger abseils and swimming pools. All while being surrounded by native rainforest.

Map

-43.397408, 170.12651



Approach by Car

From Franz Joseph Glacier township, drive over the Waiho bridge in the direction of Fox glacier. Just after you drive over Smithy creek bridge there's a gravel stop/ carpark on the left side. You can park your car here. Or drive up to the next gravel stop on the left side. The next gravel stop has a white sandbag in a corner.

From Fox glacier township, you drive in the direction of Franz Joseph. On the last hill coming down you drive over the Kiwi Jacks bridge and about 1km further down

there is a gravel stop carpark (with white sandbag) or 600m further you can park just in front of Smithy creek on the gravel stop/ carpark on the right side.

Approach on Foot

From Smithy Creek car park, it's an easy stroll along the road (watch out for cars, people don't expect you to be walking on the side of the road) up to the next gravel bay (the one with the white sandbag). At this gravel stop, there is a small goat track going through the grass and is marked by old road signs down to a tributary stream. Climb this side stream down until you get to the main stream. From here it's an easy 2-minute walk till the start of the gorge.

Rock

Shist and greywacke bedrock.

Water

At the start where you come out of the tributary stream the water level is between ankle and knee deep. Just before where the water goes into a gorge there is a well weathered bedrock with a pink quartz vein running through it (on TL). If the water is below the pink vein the canyon is doable. Not too cold water as Kiwi Jacks is rain/ swamp fed canyon. Do not attempt this canyon after heavy West Coast rain. At moderate flow the canyon is fun to do.

Catchment

2.3 km² (Rain fed)

Anchors

Natural and bolted anchors

Gear

1x 50m and 1x 30m. Potential for zipline/ guideline into the big pool of the big abseil. Natural anchor protection needed.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	20min
Canyon descent	1h45min
Return to vehicle	40min
Total	2h45min

Route Description

At the start of the gorge you can start with a 3m slide or DC on the TL around it. R1 is about 12m and has an overhang on the TL, best taken on TR in stream. Potential for 2m jump on TR of pool, climb the rocks and jump in the pool.

The gorge narrows up at R2 which you can DC on TL or abseil through the water. At the narrow section there is potential for foot entrapment as a boulder is jammed just below the surface. In normal flows it's easily avoidable. Bottom of R2 has a logjam with an undercut on the TR. You can DC or J 2m in a small pool.

R3 has a handline bolt on TL which is needed in anything but low flows. Anchor is placed around the corner on TL of main abseil. From the handline bolt you can abseil, slide or jump in the pool below. In low flows it's also jumpable from TR. R3 can be set up with zipline or guided rappel using the anchor of R4 or the big tree jammed in front of it.

Bottom of R3 is a big swimming pool with a tree in it. The whole TR side of the pool has a massive undercut. You need to swim across the pool to reach the access cord to climb up to the anchor of R4 on TL. In moderate to high flows this swim can be challenging. There is an

access cord above R4 for a 5m jump into the big pool. R4 can be done as roped up slide or rappel. There's an extra bolt set up on TR for a deviation to rappel into the main flow. Roped up slide is on the TL. The last pool is very shallow.

Flash Flood Danger

Flash flood danger during heavy rain.

Escapes

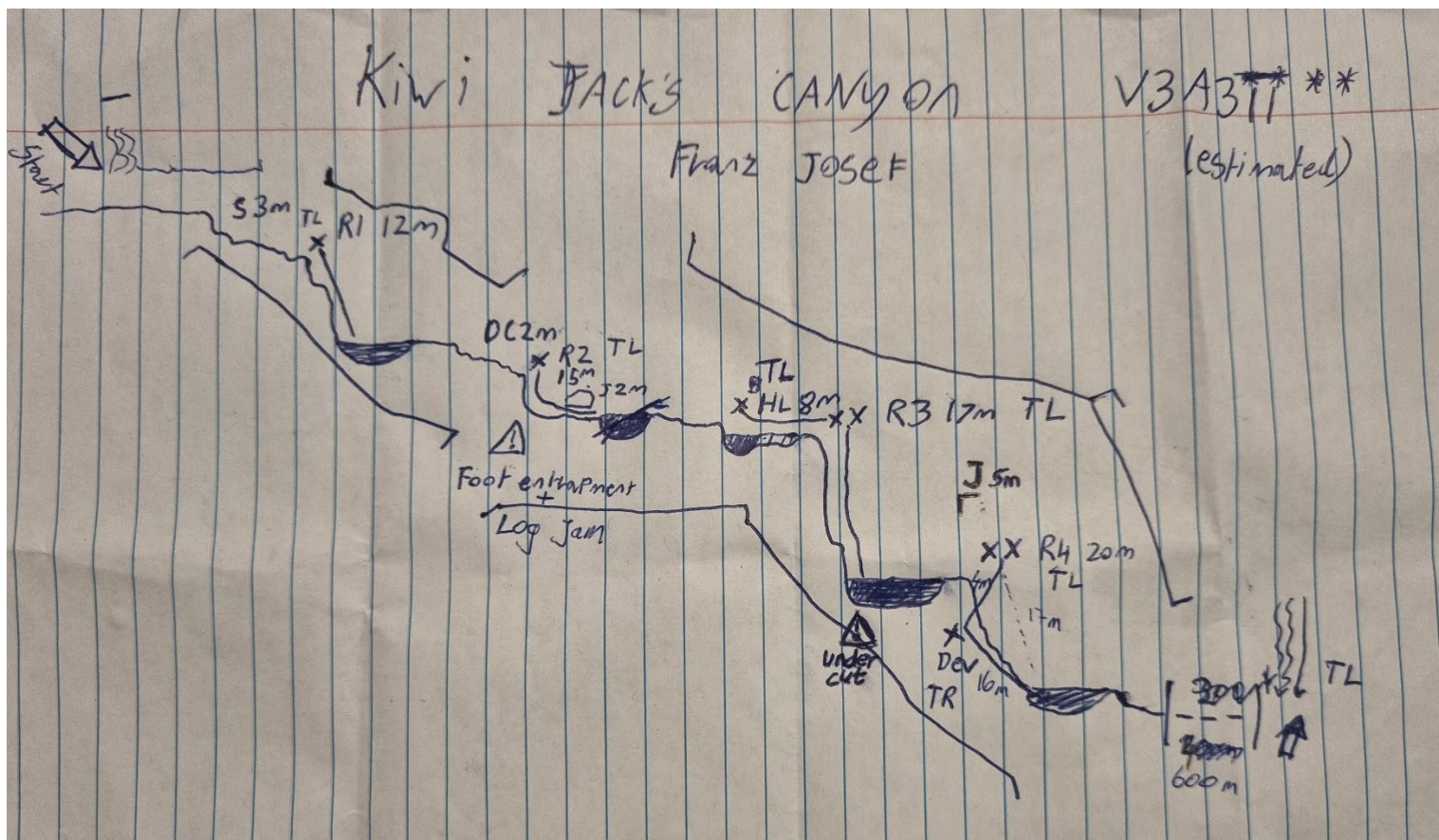
1 escape right before R1 (bad bush bash follows you back to the road) 1 escape behind handline bolts of R3 leads you into the bush out of the stream but won't get you to the road. And the same is for the escape in TL corner of the big swimming pool between R3 and R4, it gets you out the stream but won't get you back to the road. These last 2 escapes can be used to wait out any heavy rain or sudden rise in water levels.

Notes

First descent: Jeroen Verhees (Stretch), Billy Norton, Mhairi-Bronte Duncan, 7 September 2024.

Fun to effort ratio: Great fun short canyon in beautiful native area. Slides, roped slides, jumps, abseils big and small, potential for zipline.

Access issues: In National Park Westland Tai Poutini
Commercial Canyon: Nope



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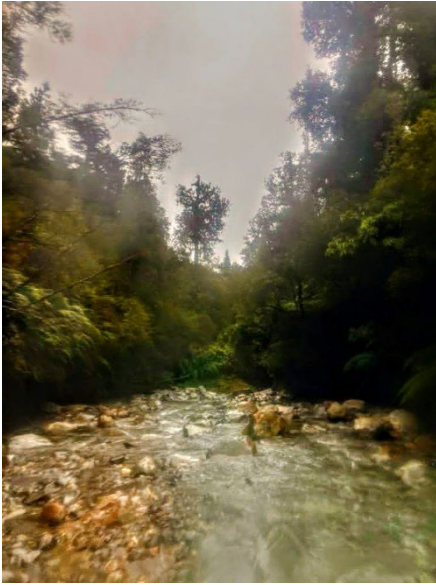
Canyon V3A3II ★★

Topo by Stretch
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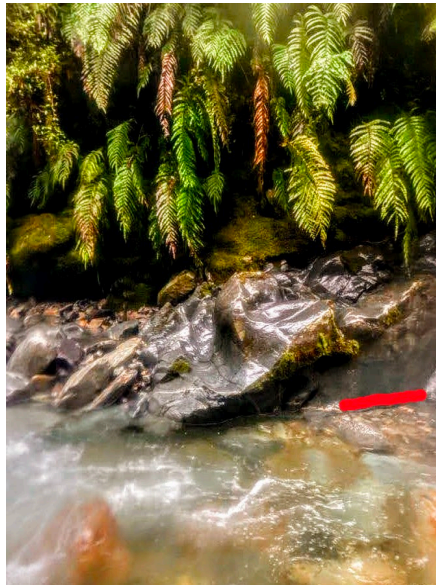
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Photos:

Start of Kiwi Jacks Gorge



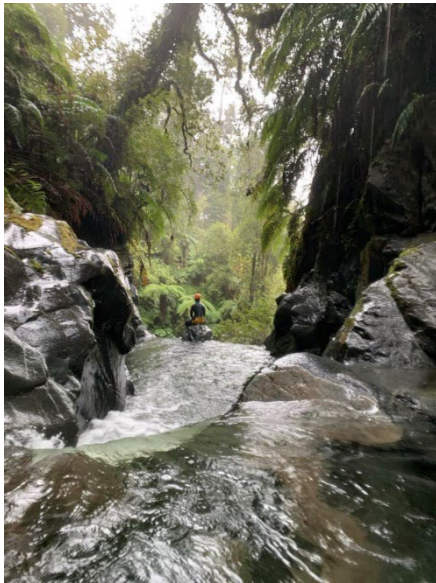
Water level rock (start of gorge)



R1 12m or J 5 or 3m



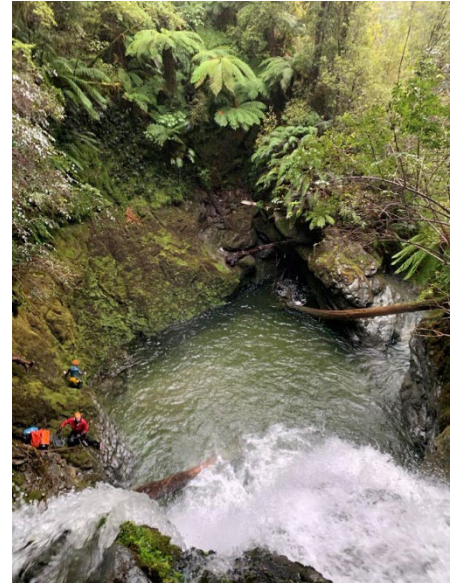
Top of R3 DC/J 3m



Top of R3 17m



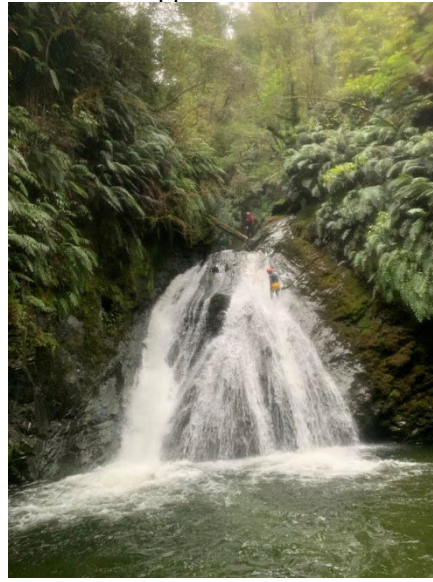
R3 with big pool.



R3 17m rappel



R4 17m rappel/ Slide



The walk out.

