



# MATHER

## Creek v4a4III☆☆☆

### Location

South of Pleasant Flat campground off SH6.

### Character

A long day out with plenty of variety: high jumps, down climbing, perfect slides, back to back abseils and beautiful narrows.

### Map

BY13 Lake Paringa.

### Approach by Car

Travel on SH6 to [Pleasant Flat campground](#) beside the Haast River.

### Approach on Foot

There is **Didymo** in the Haast River and Mather below the arch, so wear spare footwear for the initial approach (or take a bucket & detergent).

### [Download GPS KML file.](#)

*(Warning!: Positions approximate: trees degraded the accuracy when recording this track!)*

From the campground wade the edge of Haast River past Muir Creek (very small) to Mather Creek.

Walk up the wide bouldery riverbed, for 10 minutes to the Arch to check the water level.

Return about 100m downstream, wash your approach shoes (or change into spare footwear), and scramble up a moderately steep bank to a terrace above the stream.

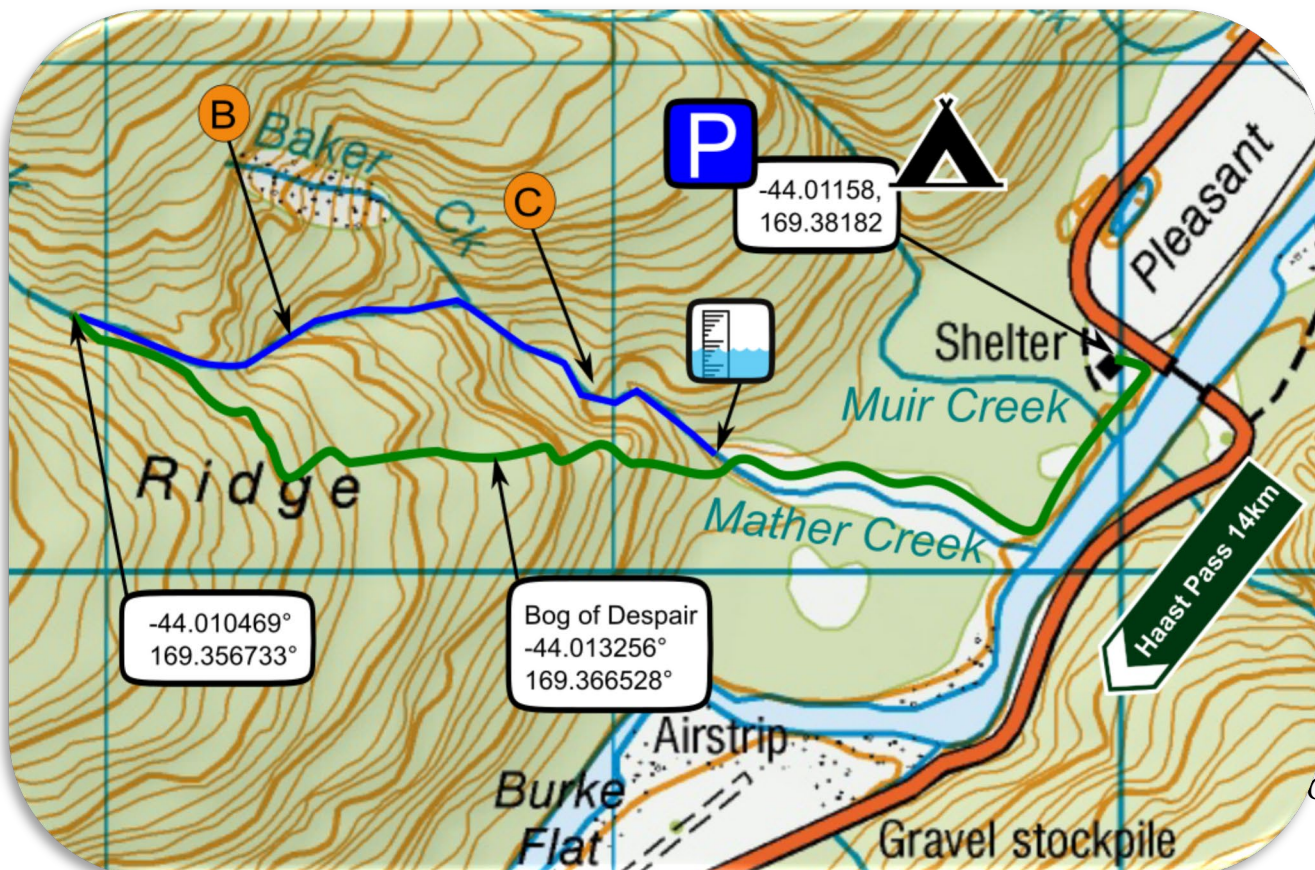
Follow the terrace rim, and pick up the trail, well marked with orange strips of PVC.

The track generally follows the ridge crest, which is more defined down low. In sections of ladder fern, you'll need to be more careful to spot the next marker before you leave the one you are at.

At the 300m contour, the track gets quite close to bluffs overlooking the canyon. At 350m, the terrain levels off at the 'bog of despair'. Keep a careful eye out for the markers through here!

The track continues west with a few meanders until the 500m contour. Follow markers along the 500m contour, through ladder fern and tiny side creeks. Again, be careful to follow the markers!

The track abruptly ascends 20m vertical to avoid a really scrubby zone, then continues sidling. From the 'Final traverse start' the track is much more defined through as it parallels the canyon rim.



## Rock

Schist, from soft to ultra hard, & some volcanic dykes.

## Water

Moderate volume in normal flows.

## Catchment

5.2 km<sup>2</sup>

## Anchors

Fully double bolted anchors.

## Gear

2x 60m ropes recommended.

## Route Description

### Upper Section

An entrance sequence leads to series of small jumps and a couple of excellent slides. Then the canyon turns abruptly and enters a rappelling sequence.

Reach R3 anchors by downclimbing by the TR wall to the edge of the drop. The anchors are on the house-sized boulder, on the TR side at shoulder height.

Handlines are helpful to reach the next few anchors. A large slip at R6 means the drop is now two different rappels. The slot opens abruptly at the end of the upper section.

### Middle Section

This section is long, more open and with lots of downclimbing. There are several 10-14m jumps, some landing in wide deep pools, others with relatively shallow and narrow pools. Check each pool carefully and if in any doubt, just rappel.

R8 anchors are reached via a slightly exposed downclimb on the TR. R10 is now two pitches, allowing you to stay in the watercourse. Stay on rope at R10a to reach the bolts on the face of R10b. It's a small stance, that would be tricky in higher flows. Alternatively, use a TR natural anchor to avoid R10a.

R13 is a huge false floor. Approach with caution. The rock type changes temporarily through a volcanic dyke after the 14m jump. The easiest route doesn't always follow the water: be prepared to backtrack a few meters and route-find the downclimbs and pool exits: its all part of the fun 😊

### Lower Section

Beautiful, narrow and moderately deep. Higher flows can create water hazards in this narrow section. R15 forms a pool-wide circulation that can be tricky to exit at high flow. R17 requires crossing the flow to the TR about halfway down: tricky in higher flow, but the rock is grippy!

The Arch pool is spectacular and can be rappelled down the middle of the flow, completely dry on the TR or jumped if the pool is still deep.

## Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	1hr45min
Canyon descent	4-5hrs
Return to Vehicle	15min
<b>Total</b>	<b>6-7hrs</b>

## Flash Flood Danger

Moderate. Reasonable drainage, but only a few sections where you could not get higher than the flood levels.

## Escapes

Noted on the Topo. Escape from the stream is easy between the sections, but it in places it would be very steep and difficult to climb out of the greater valley and return your car.

## Notes

First descent: Daniel Clearwater, Jethro Robinson, Nic Barth. 29 Dec 2009.

First full descent: Dave Vass, Scott Hall. 13 Mar 2010





