



MACKAY CREEK

Canyon v4a2III ★★

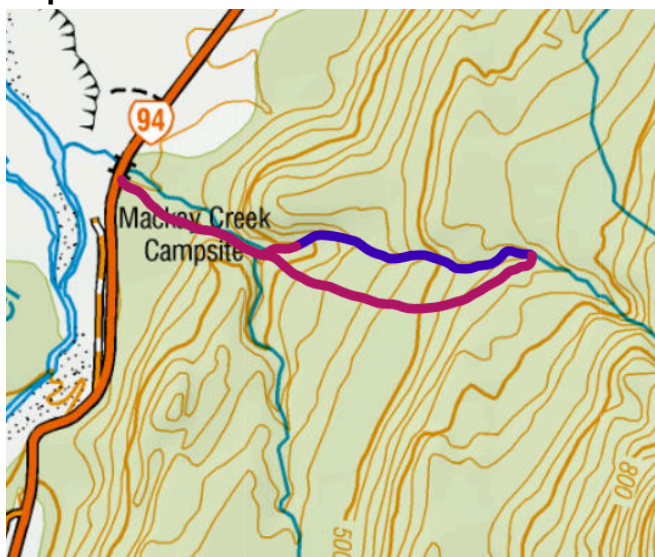
Location

Eglinton valley, Fiordland.

Character

An incredibly deep slot canyon with 10 pitches. Despite the low aquatic difficulty this is a great Fiordland canyoning trip. Suitable as an introduction to the area or as an easier day.

Map



Approach/return in purple, canyon in dark blue.

Approach by Car

Park in the layby North of the bridge crossing Mackay Creek. This is the first main lookout in the Eglinton valley and is often busy with tourists.

Approach on Foot

The canyon is in the unnamed North branch that joins Mackay Creek close to the road.

Follow the trapping line marked with blue triangles on the true left of Mackay Creek. Once the stream diverges into two branches, cross the South branch and continue uphill to find the trapping line again on the true left of the canyon. At some point you will have to cross a tributary with a small gorge, and soon will find a trail of pink flagging tape. Continue to roughly 540m where a route down to the stream is marked with the pink tape.

Rock

Diorite and paragneiss. Likely to be slippery if not recently scoured by floods.

Water

Normally low flow.

Catchment

3.2 km²

Anchors

Mostly double bolted anchors.

Gear

1 x 40 m rope.

Route Description

Reasonably straightforward canyoning with low flows. There are some good pitches and the slot is very impressive, but none of the pools are deep enough to jump or slide.

The creek carries a lot of boulders - take care not to knock any down pitches while someone is abseiling. Particularly above R3, rocks will move if anyone walks near the top of the drop.

The crux is R3 where a steep handline is used to cross the flow and reach a hanging anchor on the true left.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	1h30min
Canyon descent	2hr
Return to vehicle	30min
Total	4hr

Flash Flood Danger

Medium - the canyon could handle a lot more water before serious white water features form, but some of the downclimbs will get rapidly more difficult. There are places in the lower canyon where one could wait out a flood.

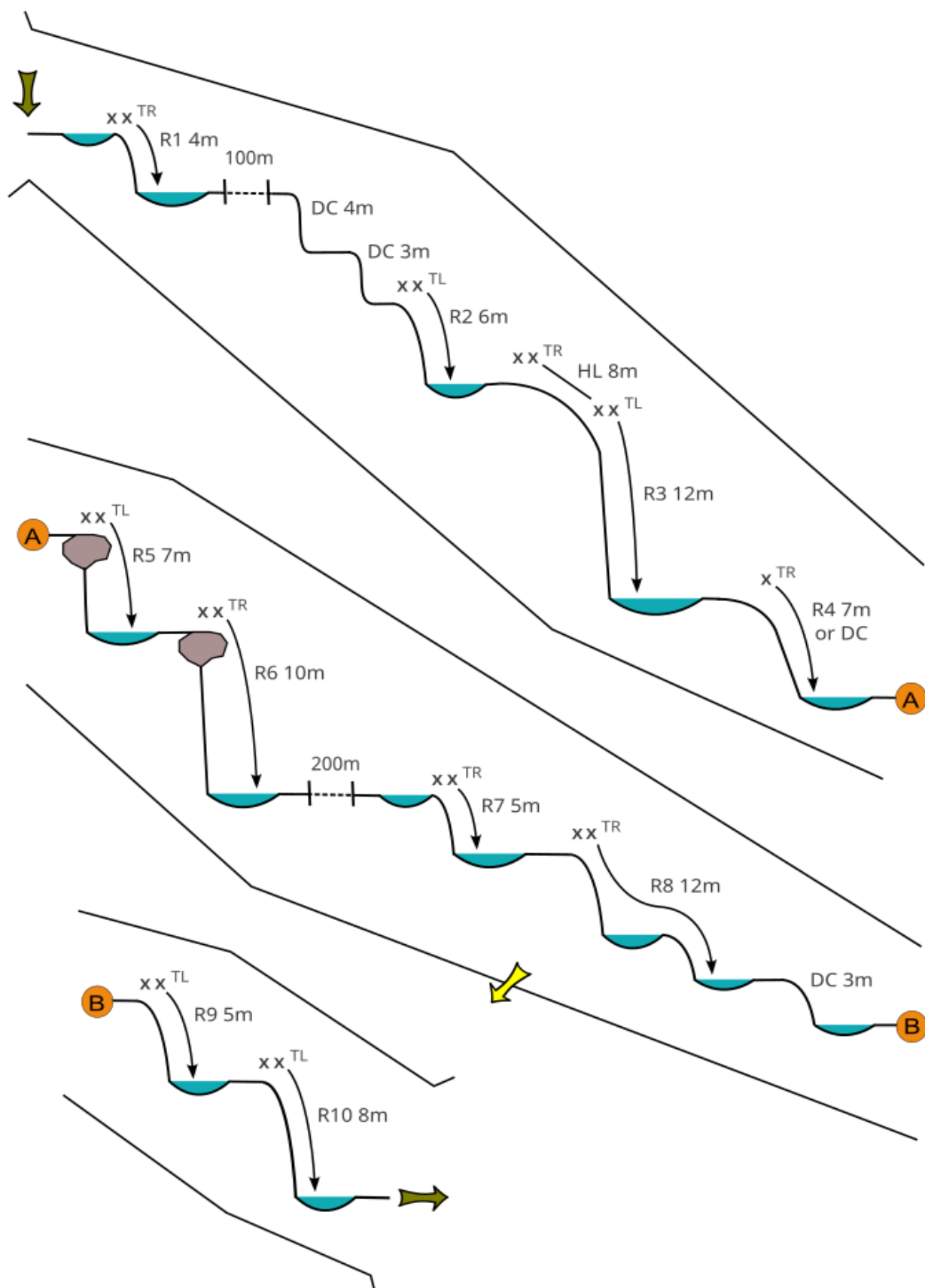
Escapes

A very committing canyon. There is one possible (unconfirmed) escape after R7 on the TR, but it would be a steep and slippery climb.

Notes

First descent: Alex Motyka, Amy Burney, Ben Fletcher, Christian Miller, Conor Handley, and Patrick Timm. December 2025.

Fun to effort ratio: Reasonably easy access and very scenic. But not a very aquatic trip.



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Topo by Alex, Amy, Ben,
Christian, Conor, and Patrick
www.kiwicanyons.org



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