



Rooney River

V4A4III ★



Location

Lake Hauroko

Character

A short but interesting descent. The canyon that has the highest flow on lake Hauroko.

Map

CF-07 Mary Island



Approach

This canyon is only accessible using a boat.

Launch your boat using the Lake Hauroko public Jetty on the end of Lillburn Valley Road.

-45.989864, 167.382014 (WGS 84).

There is a large beach where Rooney River enters the lake.

-45.914825, 167.288089 (WGS 84).

You can stay at the Carolina hut (6 bunks) and combine this canyon with other canyons around the lake.

Approach on Foot (marked in red)

The last section of the approach on foot is a bit difficult to find and you might be able to shave some time off our approach time as we definitely didn't take the fastest route.

From the beach walk up to the last waterfall to check the flow (1hr). Walk back in the direction of the beach until a large tributary comes in from true left. Walk up this tributary for 150-200 m and go into the forest on true right. It is a steep uphill walk on animal tracks until you get on a small spur. Keep following the spur (easy going). There is some real exposure on your right side here so try not to trip over one of the many tree roots.

The spur gets a bit broader and keep following the animal track. When you reach 500hm you start to follow the 500hm contour in the direction of the canyon.

Keep following the contour for approximately 1 hr until you meet a small tributary coming from the right and descent to the canyon. It might be possible to follow this tributary to the canyon. We however went a bit further and descended through the forest. We had to do a couple abseils of trees when the terrain got too steep.

Rock

Granodiorite

Water

A rather large catchment so there always is a considerable flow. Some descents are in the flow. Do not underestimate the water levels! Check the last waterfall before you commit to a descent.

Catchment

14 km²

Anchors

Exploratory rigging!

Most descents are equipped with (single) 10 mm stainless steel bolts and Tebylon hangers.

Gear

2 x 55 meter ropes.

Please note that all pitch lengths are estimated.

Description

The canyon starts easy with some small rappels in a beautifully shaped canyon. When the sun and water work together you can see a rainbow from the top of the r2 in the tributary coming from true right.

R3 40 m is descended on true left next to the flow. Be careful here as there are some loose rocks! R5 & R6 are actually one big drop and this is the crux of the canyon. R5 descends on true right to a set of anchors for the R6. R6 is descended through the flow which might become hazardous with high water levels. There are 2 anchors on the bottom of R6 (TL) to set up a guided rappel to avoid the bottom section of this waterfall.

Time

Approach	3 hr
Canyon descent	1 hr 30 min
Total	4 hr 30 min

Total time is excluding the boat ride as this all depends on the type of boat and engine you will have!

Flash Flood Danger

The canyon has a considerable catchment. Only commit to a descent after checking the flow and during stable conditions.

Escapes

No escapes noted in the final section.

Notes

First descent: 25-03-2026

Dutch Canyon Expedition 2026:

Lisa Ahsmann

Erik Birkhoff (topo)

Max Bogaerts

Erwan Coq

Pepijn Hoeksema (pictures)

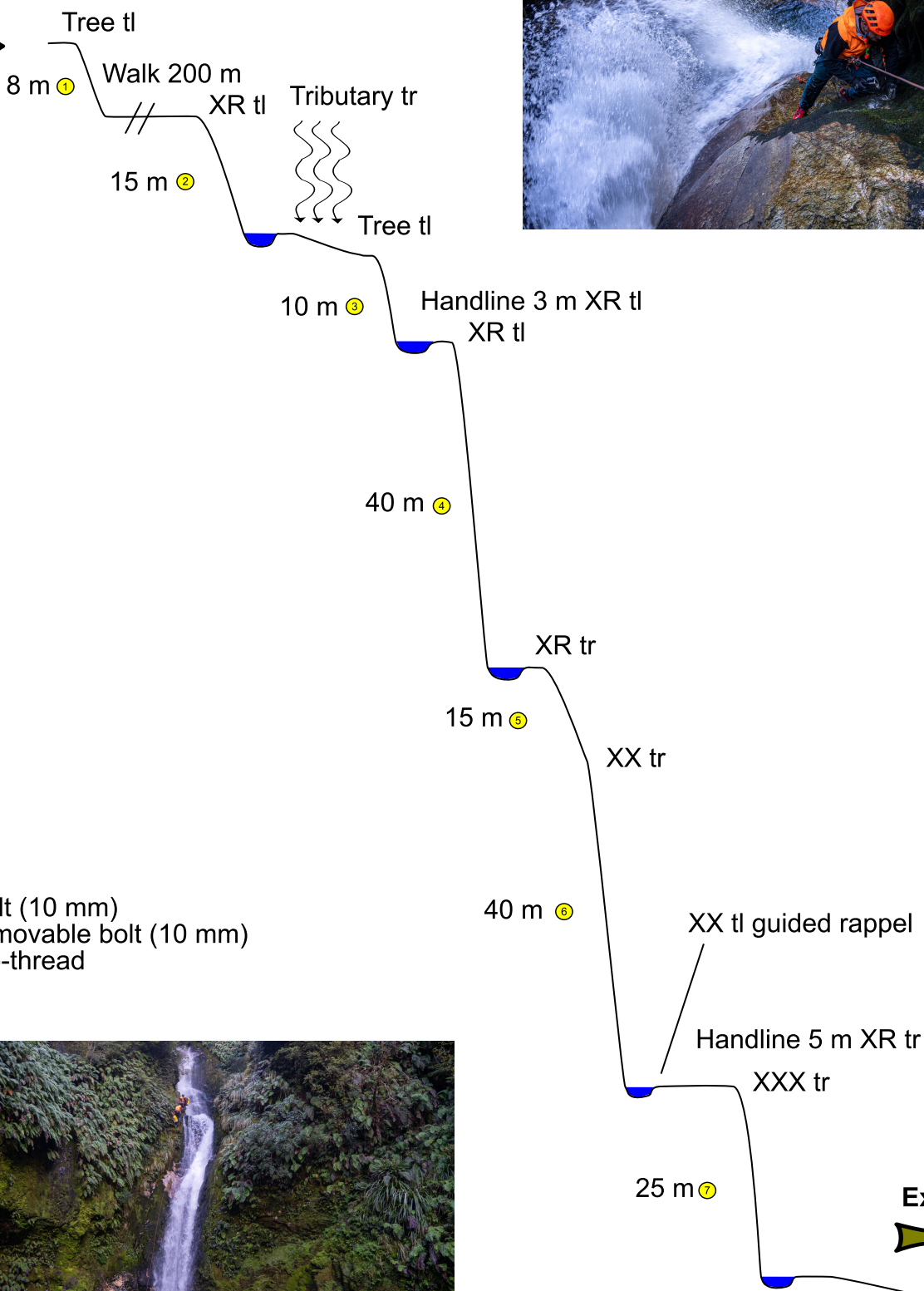
Kevin Leys

Stijn van de Ven

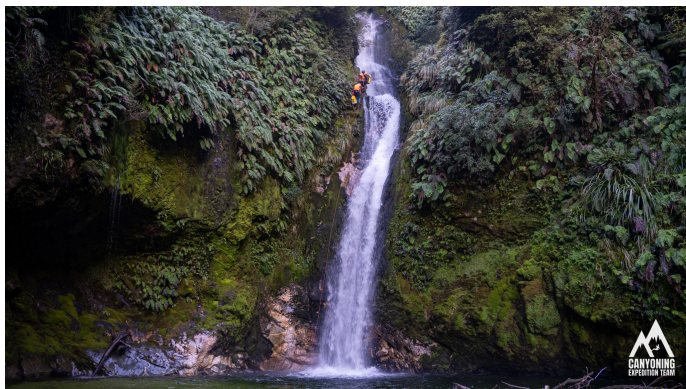


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X = Bolt (10 mm)
R = removable bolt (10 mm)
V = (V)-thread



A person in a bright yellow jacket and blue pants is rappelling down a massive, powerful waterfall. The water is white and turbulent as it falls over dark, jagged rock formations. A red rope is visible, extending from the top left towards the person. In the background, a large, dark, triangular logo is superimposed over the waterfall. Inside the logo, a smaller figure is seen rappelling down a similar waterfall. Below the logo, the text "CANYONING EXPEDITION TEAM" is written in a bold, sans-serif font.

CANYONING EXPEDITION TEAM

