

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE
2021-22 CANYONING SEASON**



2021 FMC photo comp overall winner: Mangaturuturu Canyon by Gavin Barry-Morgan

Presidents report

By Dan Clearwater

With a year of Delta lockdowns impacting many of us, and then Omicron wave which caused de-facto lockdowns, finally it seems that we are moving towards living with covid rather than trying to hold it away.

Meanwhile, Canyoning in New Zealand continues to grow and develop strongly. More and more motivated teams are out exploring, and finding, excellent new canyons. Blank spaces on the canyon map are being filled with colourful little pins, showing great adventures for those who dare to venture beyond the pages of the guidebook.

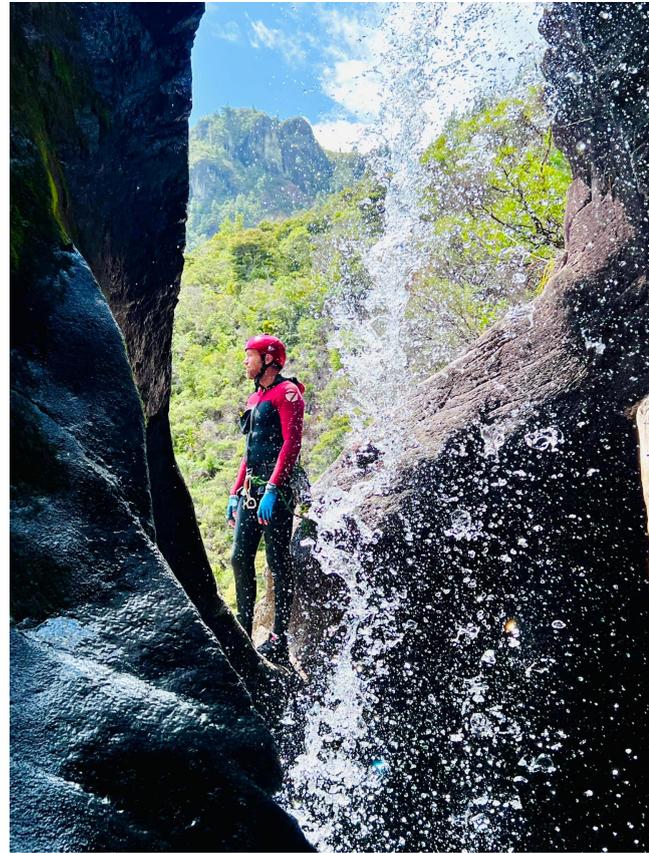
The community is growing steadily, and despite covid setbacks, we are still getting together to form new bonds across the community. The 2022 Canyoning festival in Tairua was nearly another covid casualty, but when Auckland's long level 3 changed to Red traffic light, Brad Schimanski re-started the planning and pulled off a successful event. It showcased a number of newly explored high quality canyons, such as Oteao Falls and Rangihau Stream, and enticed a handful of out-of-towners to come up to sunny coromandel to join the upper North Island canyoning community in their back yard.

CanyonSAR continues to develop, and although courses were limited this year, funding continues, whilst teams are being called out more often, as the Police start to become properly aware of the unique capability that canyoning can offer to search and rescue missions. Just before the festival, Russell Hodgson, Grant Prattley and Oli Polson facilitated a successful one day Canyon SAREx through Sleeping God, with a stretcher moved through the lower $\frac{2}{3}$ of the technical section, keeping those skills sharp for when they are needed.

And whilst the community flourishes, the canyons themselves remain under threat. The Griffin Creek saga continues into its final stages, with Federated Mountain Clubs taking legal action in an effort to prevent the hydro scheme, where advocacy and appeal alone hasn't stopped the project.

Hydro electricity is the obvious future for NZ's energy needs, and the government agrees; this means more and more magnificent canyons are under threat. Whilst NZ is going to need more renewable energy, we're going to have to be prepared to fight the proposals which destroy canyoning opportunities, whilst supporting those where the impacts are minimal.

It is a tough road ahead, but the growing strength of our community gives me much hope for the future.



*Dan in Oteao Canyon
Tairua Canyoning Festival 2022
Photo by Shanan Fraser*

Canyon SAR

By Oliver Polson

Equipment

A new Kong911 Canyon stretcher has been purchased and is now stored in the Tasman area. This brings our coverage across the country to four stretchers located in; Wakanka, Christchurch, Motueka & Thames. We are also getting storage/transport bags built for these to help protect them and make deploying them (and all the bits and pieces that go with them) simpler and easier.

This year's funding focus has been to allow our teams to equip themselves with the majority of teams looking to purchase patient care/bivy gear & rigging gear to complement their kits.

LandSAR have kindly provided 6 Tait radios through the GPT process, these will go out to the Upper NI, Lower NI, Canterbury and West Coast teams. We will look to secure more radios through this process next year as well.

LandSAR and Garmin have also provided CanyonSAR with 6x Inreach Mini's and some GPS units for all our teams. The Inreach devices will help provide a more definitive comms solution in canyon (when radios sometimes wont work) and come with 3 years of free subscription (Thanks Garmin!!)

Courses

CanyonSAR team numbers nationally are pretty solid and our competency timeline is 3 years. No new Canyon 1 or Canyon Search courses were required. Next year will see a first round of refresher courses for those that hold Canyon 1 and possibly a couple of Canyon Search courses as the "search" portion of CanyonSAR is proving to be the larger part of our workload.



*Overall NZCA Photo comp winner:
Guided rappel in Ore Stream by Andrew Tyrrell*

Funding teams

| Item | Amount (\$NZ) | Explanation / comments |
|---|---------------|---|
| TOTAL FUNDING | | |
| Carryover from 2020/2021 | 23,000 | This was unspent from last year's budget, because a large amount of last year's training costs were unexpectedly paid by LandSAR |
| 2021/22 LandSAR funding | 25,000 | Confirmed OSC funding (Nov 21) |
| 2021/22 LandSAR Admin Grant | 500 | LandSAR funding to be used solely for administration costs. |
| Contingency | -5,000 | Set aside for next year and in case some items run over budget |
| Total funding available | 43,500 | |
| BUDGETED EXPENSES AT NATIONAL LEVEL | | |
| Training | 3,000 | Set aside \$500 per group (likely covering food) for a local refresher/exercise day. Last year NZCA ran 2 canyon rescue courses and 4 canyon search courses. The year before that NZCA ran 4 canyon rescue courses. We would expect people to repeat courses every 3-4 years, so there does not seem a need to run courses this year. We prefer to put emphasis on regional refresher days/exercises. We may start running canyon rescue courses again next year. |
| Exercises / activities | 4,000 | 1 x regional SAREX, location to be determined (requests/suggestions welcome). There's a possibility of combining one with the Feb 2022 festival in Coromandel, but it remains to be seen whether that happens. Budget is to cover travel costs - there's a possibility that it could be used to subsidise the travel costs of SAR team members attending the festival. |
| Equipment | 3,000 | For bolting/anchor cache of each group - Done - Came in under original 3.5K budget but total Cost will be finalised once packs are sent out. |
| Stretcher | 10,000 | Due to the savings last year, we think we can afford one stretcher and still allocate a decent amount to regional teams. To be determined where the stretcher goes - currently there are stretchers in Wanaka, Canterbury, and Coromandel. Possibly to be stored in Top of the South but also double as the stretcher to be used on training courses. |
| Radios | 2,500 | Top-up Radio purchase (2x TAIT SARtrack capable) 6 Radios supplied FOC from LandSAR GPT. 2x Radios each to be allocated to UpperNI, LowerNI, Canterbury & WC (Wanaka & TOTS already have access to team radios) |
| Total national budget | 22,500 | |
| FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR SIX REGIONAL TEAMS | | |
| | 17,000 | Please submit your applications to sar@nzcanyoningassociation.org . Teams are free to apply for funding for any equipment, if they can identify a need. Ropes and rescue rigging gear are likely needed by most groups. |

SAREX

A small scale SAREX was held prior to the National Canyoning Festival in the Coromandel. The exercise was held in Sleeping Gods with a small (but realistic) team turning out. The focus of the day was to run the exercise using a LandSAR IMT format with formal taskings & briefings. One of the “Patients” for the day was Dr Paul, the physician overseeing the standing orders that will allow our team to provide more advanced pain relief options in a real event.

It was really great to see a relatively small team was still able to efficiently, effectively and most importantly, safely move a stretcher through some very technical terrain, while also managing and “guiding” an inexperienced canyoneer out of the canyon.

Callouts

A summary of significant CanyonSAR callouts is provided below. It was generally a quieter summer, likely due to Covid-19 still restricting international visitors, but we still saw teams getting deployed successfully on LandSAR searches.

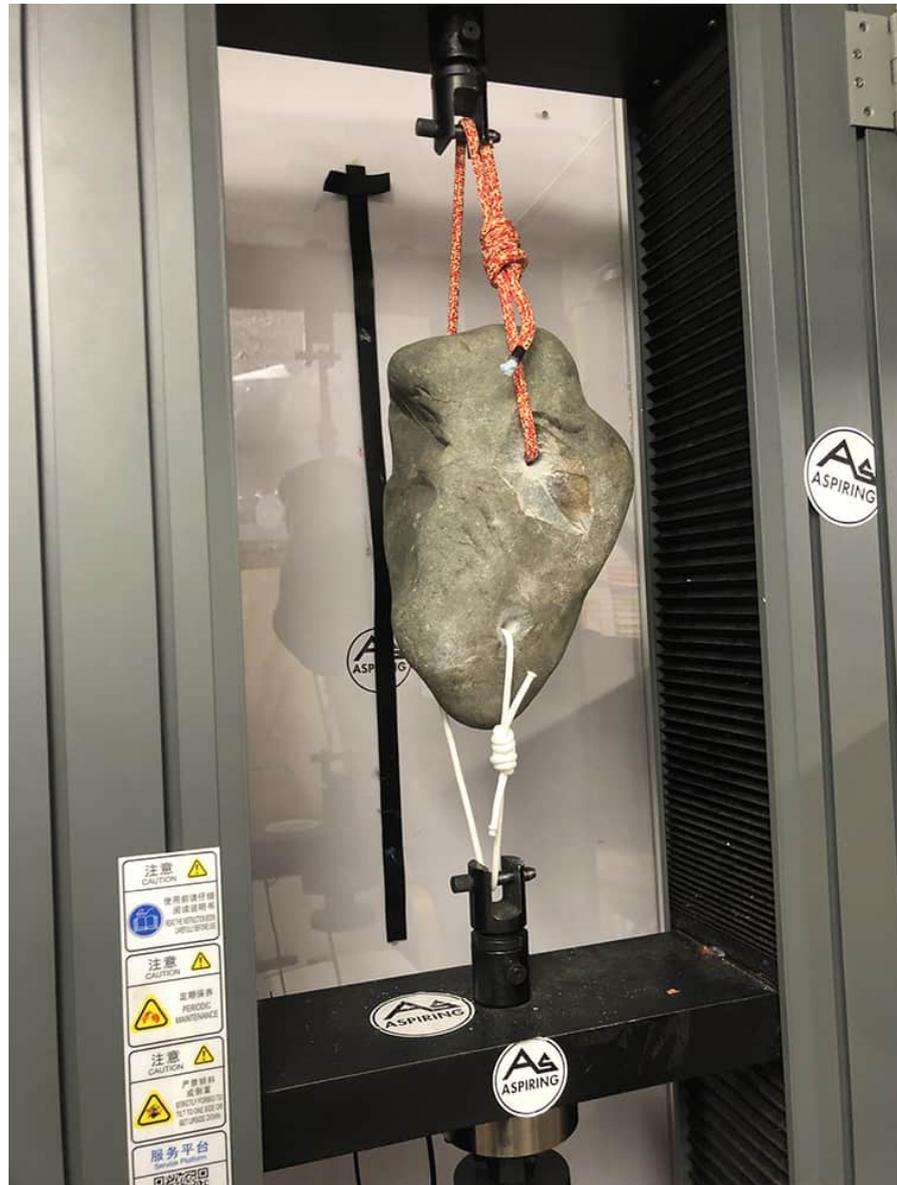
| When | Where | What | How | Who (Rescuers) |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Mar 2022 | Kaikoura - Ohau Stream | Missing walker | Male missing for 3+ weeks after vehicle located at rest stop on kaikoura coast road. Tasked to search tributaries of Ohau Stream after extensive LandSAR and public search effort. Body of male found by canyonSAR teams at the base of a cliff in search area. | Canterbury & Tasman CanyonSAR |
| 29 Mar 2022 | Giants Gate Falls - Fiordland | Missing Tramper/Climber | Wanaka CanyonSAR requested to search and clear Giants Gate Canyon during a search for missing tramper attempting Devils Armchair, MP located (deceased) approx 4-5 features into canyon. Police National Dive Squad guided in the following day by CanyonSAR to enable recovery. | Wanaka CanyonSAR |
| 1 Apr 2022 | Mingha Canyon | PLB activation by Canyoners | Two persons canyoning in the Minga River gorge activated their PLB. RCC sent Rescue Helicopter which located them just south of the canyon, 1 x has a shoulder injury, taken to Grey Hospital by Helicopter. SAR monitoring only. | Canterbury CanyonSAR - Advisory Role |

Technical standards developments

By Shanana Fraser

Work has continued on refreshing the NZCA Bolting Code of practice. A final draft has been completed and submitted to the NZCA executive for peer review and approval and we are in the process of incorporating feedback that has been received into the final version.

Part of the update work to the bolting COP was to test and evaluate screw anchors and rock threads. Screw anchors appear to be a promising option for temporary anchors, as they are easy to remove and the holes can be used for permanent solutions.



Rock Thread Testing
Grant Prattley / OTE Rescue

Another set of [testing was done on rock threads](#), which are similar in concept to the Abalakov anchors which ice climbers use. The theory is that such anchors might be a suitable option for anchors where you cannot protect an anchor from flood damage. In a flood, a normal metal bolt would be smashed and unusable. Replacing it with another metal bolt would only last until the next flood, and soon you'd have a bolt farm of rubbish and no more rock to anchor with. The promise for rock threads, is that it only uses a hole and webbing/rope anchor material. After a flood, only that anchor material would need to be replaced, whilst the hole remains useable..

We look forward to releasing updated COP which adds details about these techniques, as well as numerous improvements and updates throughout the whole document.

Community Report

By Dan Clearwater

The NZCA has begun to support the KiwiCanyons.org website, with annual funding for the web hosting and domain registration. This helps keep the resource free for everyone and makes the site sustainable into the future. Slowly but surely, canyons from the out of print guidebook are being uploaded to the site, and NZCA is acknowledged for its financial support by the site.

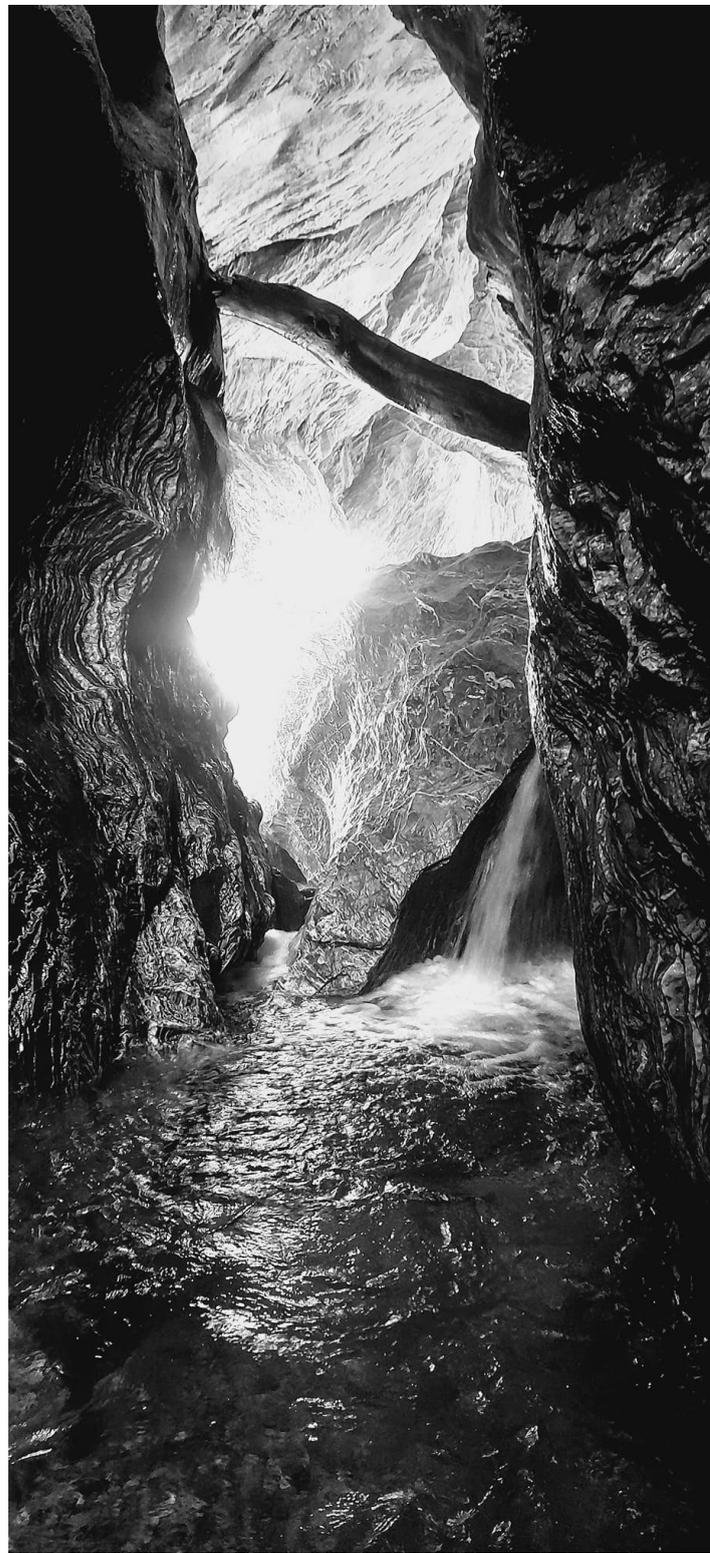
Each year, NZCA enters the top shots from our photo competition in the autumn, to the Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ competition in the spring of that year. A special congratulations to Gavin Barry-Morgan, who was named the overall winner of the 2021 FMC photo competition! His was the winning shot out of 478 entries from 27 clubs.

The 2022 NZCA photo comp was run in April, with some fantastic shots. The winners are published within this annual report.

The covid pandemic played havoc with planning for the Coromandel Canyoning festival, but once restrictions were relaxed, the event came together, albeit in a simpler, more organic fashion than previous festivals; see the Upper North report for more details.

Likewise, Dylan Grace volunteered to put on a Central North Island weekend meetup based out of Hillary Outdoors Tongarirro. Unfortunately with one month's notice and covid uncertainty, there was not enough interest and the event was unfortunately cancelled.

NZCA will be hoping to put on more weekend meetup events in coming seasons, but relies on volunteers to make them come together. Please contact us if you are interested; we'll provide all the admin and promotional support, you just need to organise a venue and host the event on the day.



*Wilson Canyon
Below Bushline no human element runner up
Rachel Jones*

Treasurer's report

By Warren Fitzgerald

NZ Canyoning Association currently administers two different funding streams. Since the introduction of CanyonSAR, funding has been provided to improve the search and rescue capabilities within canyon-style environments throughout New Zealand. NZCA also administers the Canyon Fund, which receives membership fees and donations, to promote and enhance the canyoning opportunities throughout Aotearoa.



Mangaturuturu Canyon, Tachelle Leach-Wahanui. Winner, Above Bushline with human element

CanyonSAR Funding

CanyonSAR was accepted as a specialist discipline within LandSAR New Zealand in 2019 and is being administered within the NZCA as a separate financial stream to other NZCA expenses.

In November 2021, CanyonSAR received another \$25,000 Outdoor Safety Committee grant for the LandSAR financial year (1 July - 30 June). Due to every region in New Zealand having different expertise and different requirements, the NZCA executive has attempted to give local CanyonSAR groups autonomy by pre-approving budgets for local groups to upskill and equip themselves.

This year we also set aside a specific funding allocation of \$500 per group, for them to run their own inhouse training throughout the year. These efforts are supported by national training and SAR exercises, as well as knowledge sharing between groups.

As detailed above, for the 2022 financial year, \$17,000 was budgeted for local group support, \$15,500 for national gear allowances, \$3,000 for local training, and \$4,000 for a national SAREX. From 1 April 2021 through to 31 March 2022, \$19,872.43 has been spent on purchasing equipment nationwide, and \$5,053.78 on training and administration

NZCA Canyon Fund

The Canyon Fund was established in late 2017 to ensure the funds raised from NZCA activities are reinvested in the canyoning community. A sunset clause exists to release money back into the contestable Canyon Fund if approved projects are not completed by the end of the following financial year.

This year we changed our funding mechanisms to a paid membership scheme, which gives exclusive access to NZCA events and access to funding via the Canyon Fund. In January 2022 we hosted a Canyoning Festival in the Coromandel, which helped increase our paid membership to over 50 members, and saw many generous donations to the Canyon Fund.

It has been a busy year for the NZCA Canyon Fund throughout the 2022 financial year, with five projects completed and a further two applications being approved.

During the 2022 financial year, the following projects were completed:

- Upgrade anchors in Lower Griffin Creek (Hokitika) - Troy Watson
- Place anchors in Oteao Falls Canyon (Coromandel) - Brad Schimanski
- Upgrade anchors in Muriel Canyon (West Coast) - Keith Riley
- Upgrade anchors in Wairere Falls (Waikato) - Shanan Fraser
- Expedition funding for canyoning exploration in Fiordland - Richard Bramley*

**See the end of this annual report for an article on the Fiordland expedition.*

The following projects were also approved:

- Place anchors in the Bulls Run and Lower Rangihau Canyon (Coromandel) - Sacha Knight
- Create a canyoning skills training area (Queenstown) - Riki Brown

Applicants will be reimbursed upon the completion of these projects.

The NZCA always welcomes more applications to the fund!

<http://nzcanyoningassociation.org/resources/#canyonfund>

Advocacy Report

By Dan Clearwater

Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (FMC) continues to advocate on our behalf over the hydro electricity proposal that threatens the Griffin Creek canyon.



*Griffin Creek, just above the proposed hydro intake
Photo by Dan Clearwater*

The latest step is a judicial review to confirm the water abstraction rates permitted; FMC believes they were only granted the lower rate, but currently it appears inconclusive in the documentation. To have a court rule that the lower rate was in fact the one granted, would likely spell the end to the hydro threat: the company has stated for some time that it would be uneconomical to build without more water abstraction (hence their application to vary the concession to take more water!)

NZCA voted to make a donation of \$1000 to FMC's legal fund to help with the costs of the judicial review. This fight potentially has precedents to set should we win it: that recreational values of canyoning must be properly taken into account when DOC considers hydro concessions in the future.

Hydro electricity is going to become more and more important for New Zealand in the future, so we must ensure that we oppose only the projects which cause major degradation for canyoning and natural values. The Conservation Act demands that concessions be granted only where there is no more suitable option on public land, or where the activity cannot be undertaken elsewhere: Future executives will need to keep a careful balance of not opposing everything, lest we lose our credibility, but standing strongly when it really matters.

Griffin is certainly one such canyon worth standing for, and it's vital we continue this important work alongside Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand. With this in mind, the executive voted to double our annual subscription to FMC in recognition of their ongoing support for canyoning values and the fights which are just around the corner. Our contribution is now on behalf of 30 NZCA members, for a total of \$510 per year.

I am handing over the advocacy coordinator role to Annette Phillips, who we warmly welcome back to the NZCA Executive for the coming season.

Upper North Island report

By Brad Schiamanski

For the upper north all the chatter was about the coromandel, building up to this season with some first descents on the east coast side of the ranges on the tail end of last summer, many streams walked and some new gems found.

Paton Stream, Brunton Stream, Oteao falls, Rangiahu Gorge via moss creek and Rangihau via bulls run. A Lot of solid work was done to prepare these canyons for the masses but due to covid dramas these were largely untouched until this season when we sent out the topo maps and floods of people got to experience new canyons. A great summer was had in the coromandel by all who arrived, the festival was a success considering the covid limitations with lots of new members learning the skills from the exec team stepping who stepped up to the plate to share their knowledge.

Unfortunately the end of the season has a change to access with the current access into Oteao Falls removed, It seems the quiet road was overwhelmed with the new traffic from canyoners and as the access land has now been leased to another owner. No further developments on this at the time of writing, but we will be working on a resolution to this over the winter months that will hopefully regain long term easy access for these canyons with the residents blessing.

With the new enthusiasm for exploration in the area we are excited to see a few of the less accessible descents completed in the coming 2022/23 summer

Some whispers of descents on Ruapehu, other than that I haven't heard anything from other parts of the upper north other than



Dolomedes aquaticus
Native Flora and Fauna winner
Shanan Fraser

Lower North Island

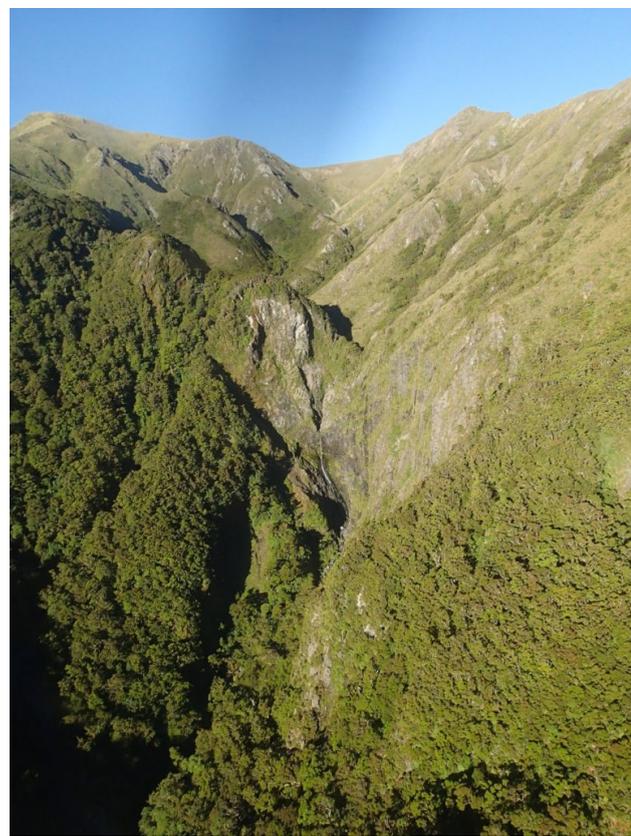
By *Lee den Haan*

Further development of grass roots entry level canyoning occurring once again in fruitful season for Wellington. Several more smaller first descents on waterfall tramping style canyons have been made notably with the well known McGregor falls in the eastern Tararuas and a smaller stream named Billy Goat stream in the Te Kopahau Hills above Red rocks South of Wellington were done in Canyon Packing (fast light weight approach) style by members of the mountain running community.

A bigger undertaking in the first full descent of Isabelle Creek was successfully done over 2 days by cavers Justin Hall, Gavin Holden and Alex Horvat. Given the lore and history preceding this descent in the Tararuas, it has most definitely boosted the profile of canyoning and exploration in the Wellington region particularly among the local tramping and mountaineering clubs.

Wellington has had its most notable entry sport canyon, Little Akatarawa, run commercially through the YMCA Kaitoke branch, with several trips over the season.

Lower North Island CanyonSAR have had only one near call out for an injured hunter but stood down due to successful heli extrication. Regardless, the Lower North Island Canyon SAR team are still committed to meeting, and training and have plans to implement skill currency over the next season.



*Isabelle Creek Headwaters
Justin Hall*

Top of the south report

By *Richard Bramley*

There was one small first descent near Lewis Pass, but otherwise no exploratory trips that I'm aware of. A third descent of Table Creek happened early in the season.

It's also been a very quiet year from a SAR perspective, presumably thanks to Covid limiting visitors. No callouts that I'm aware of.

A new canyoning company - Canyoning Aoteroa - was established in Nelson Lakes. That should be a positive development, with canyoning getting more exposure in the region.

There are discussions in the works about organising a meetup in the spring of 2022.

Westland report

By Dan Clearwater

There has been a small flurry of first descents on the coast.

The descent of the upper canyon of Dickson River v3a4IV*** was completed by Keith Riley, Zak Shaw and Zack Stone in April 2022, after the first partial descent by Justin Venable, Richard Bramely et al in December 2018. Keith describes Dickson as “In the top three canyons on the coast, alongside Griffin and Red Granite” so it is bound to be a classic.

Diedrichs Canyon also got a visit by Keith Riley, Big Al and Greg Lee, 15 April 2022. The sister drainage to Muriel, Keith called it “as good as Muriel, but better with more, cleaner jumps” Another neo-classic, if visitors can get used to the solid approach criteria and long days of best west coast canyons!

And finally, one of the monsters of the coast got a 3 day first descent by Shannon Mast, Shannon Mast, Greg Lee, Phillip and Rata. The three major gorges of the Tuke river has been eyed up by canyoners and elite kayakers for some time. NZCA even sponsored an expedition to go there in 2018/19 but conditions never came right. After one of the driest summers in recent memory, the team flew in to where the Dickie Spur route meets the river. It took the team three days, with main crux gorge is just above Truran creek. Took them a day to progress about 500 metres in that gorge. www.kiwicanyons.org/tuke-river/

A phenomenal effort, which is unlikely to be repeated in a hurry..

*Dickson Creek first full descent
Keith Riley*



Canterbury report

By Grant Prattley

Arthurs Pass Area

Things have been quite busy around the Arthurs Pass area. Twin Creek rebolting has been done over two trips. The main focus was the 30 year old bolts in the middle section. There are a few other small jobs to do. Updated Topo to come. Some bolts are not in the same place as previous.

Maintenance trips were done through AP classics including Bridal Veil, Curtis and Rough Creek

First descents include;

- Keyhole canyon an amazing 12 pitch side creek of Barraks Creek
- Carol Hut Canyon – lots of downclimbing and
- Long drop canyon (off Mt Aiken Track) a simple low flow 14 pitch canyon off natural anchors .

Pre new year (in 2021) Goat Hill Creek was descended, possibly some of it for the first time and some of it as a second descent.

Other areas

As there was big floods in Canterbury May 2021. Several maintenance trips were done in local canyons to check the status. Sharplin Falls as an example has had a few changes with bolts 7m above the stream being destroyed. The canyons in general held up well.

Rawles Creek (South Canterbury) - 1st descent a roasting day until the Wx change came in and then NO visibility! Seemed to take forever to descend and there were 30+ small waterfalls, some lovely ones too. A topo will never be done.

Search and Rescue

The CanyonSAR team from Canterbury (and Top of the South) was called out for a search In Kaikoura at the end of March 2022 – who had been missing since Feb 2022.

As part of the call out, three teams of two descending 6 canyons in one day. One of the teams located the person after they had been missing for a month. The following day we assisted the Police to the site for recovery.

That's all from the Canterbury crew. Bring on next summer.

*Fungi on the approach
Native Flora and Fauna runner up
Josh Hudson*



Aspiring area report

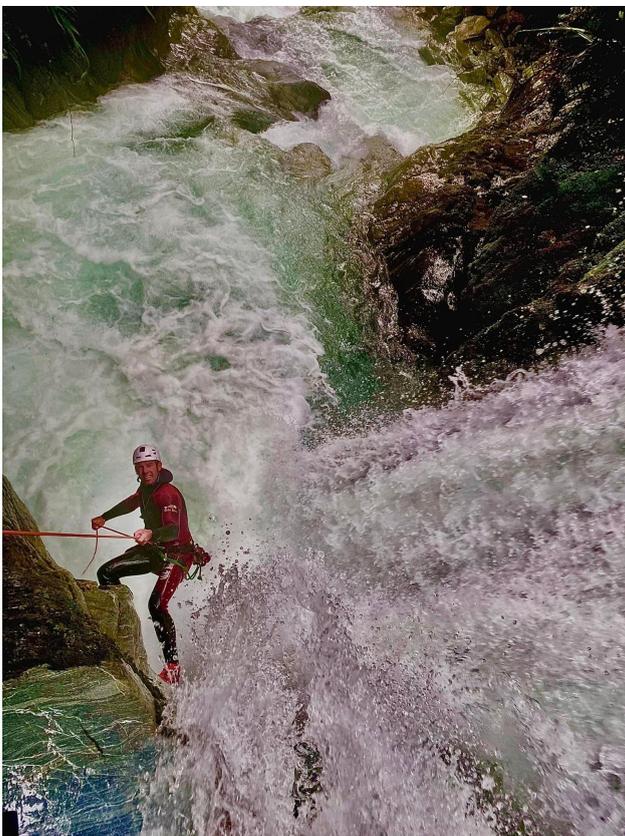
By *Patrick Timm*

Another great canyoning season has rolled by, with mostly dry and clear weather allowing for early access (November/December) into typical 'late season' canyons like Ore Stream and Mill creek. Unlike last season, more people were out and about with many new people giving recreational canyoning a go. The lack of open borders is still felt however with less people overall than in pre 2020 levels.

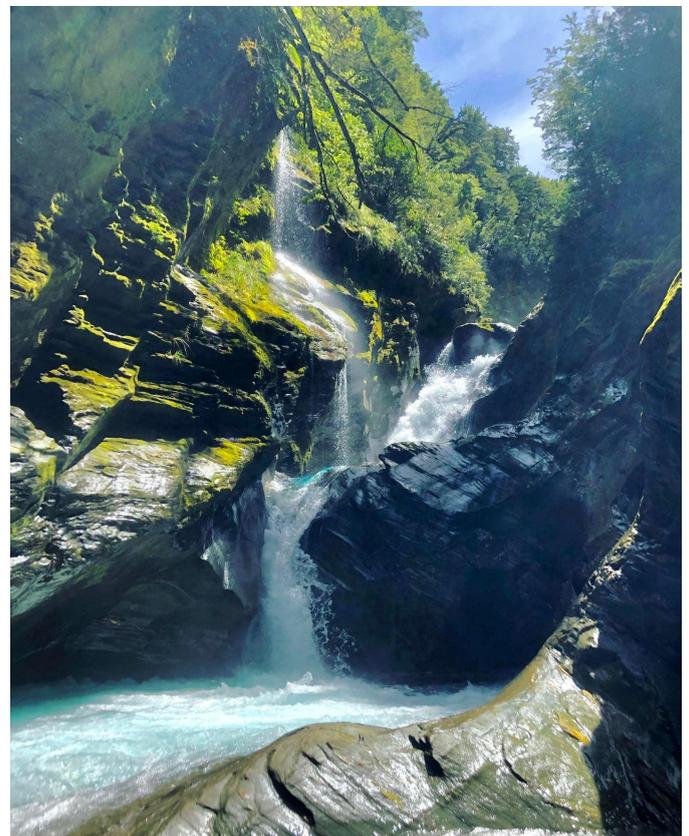
Eagles Nest got another decent, as did Falls creek in Fjordland. Fish river in the Haast area was descended, possibly for the first time after a long time being unattended. It seems that with borders closed many people are getting out further from the classics and exploring.

And on that note, the Hunter valley was explored via a heli trip with another 3 star canyon being opened up (<https://www.kiwicanyons.org/big-60-canyon/>). With the whole valley hosting a wealth of canyons, most of them being high quality, and a convenient hut (Forbes hut) as a base, there is discussion of a potential canyoning meetup there, something I will investigate further. Either way, another Blaast in the Haast meetup will be organised for the next season as we (hopefully and finally) predict some normality to return.

All up it's been an enjoyable season for recreational canyoning, and I look forward to seeing the sport develop further with new canyoners developing their skills and getting out more.



*Scott Creek, Runner up Historic category
Shanan Fraser*



*Mill Creek. Winner, Below bushline no human element
Emma Stanley*

Fiordland Canyoning Expedition

NZCA Canyon fund report

By Richard Bramley

NZCA's Canyon Fund recently contributed \$450 in rigging gear to a canyoning expedition into Fiordland by Toine Houtenbos, Troy Watson, Justin Venable and Richard Bramley in April 2022.

Here's a briefish 'lessons learned', for the benefit of others who might be considering something similar.

We spent about 3 weeks in Charles and Caswell Sounds. We accessed them using two 4m inflatable boats. Which seemed bold in the planning stages and even bolder (to the point of negligence?) when all alone on the southern ocean in 3m+ swells. Maybe one day we'll have proper boats like proper Southland locals.

The trip was inspired by a 2-week sea kayaking trip in Doubtful Sound that Troy and I did in 2020. During which we only managed to do one canyon (Blanket Bay), because of a combination of bad weather (it rained A LOT) and temporarily having to ditch our canyoning gear because our kayaks were at risk of sinking. But we saw quite a few good-looking canyons, so decided to go back to Fiordland with vessels that could transport more gear and get us around faster.

So what did we find in Charles and Caswell? Well, lots of amazing waterfalls. But not many amazing canyons of the slotted variety. We thought that all the rain Fiordland gets, along with Fiordland's good rock (mostly Granite), would create good canyons in small/moderate catchments.



But instead, as Toine describes it, coastal Fiordland seems to have lots of low flow canyons that flood a lot, rather than moderate/high flow canyons that have carved into the rock. Maybe we should have been looking in areas of marble or greywacke, rather than granite?

The most promising canyons in coastal Fiordland's granite are those with a larger volume (>5m²) and quite low angle. These tend to be feeding into the major rivers at the heads of the fiords. But to get into those larger volume creeks you need a decent patch of dry weather, which is hard to get in Fiordland. And they're time consuming to access because they're not right on the coast.



Unsurprisingly, just surviving in Fiordland (setting up camp, catching fish, hunting, cooking, managing the boats, etc) is time consuming and it's difficult to dedicate lots of time to other adventuring. If you are serious about canyoning you should thoroughly research the creeks you're interested in beforehand (not easy), so that you can setup a base camp and transport in most of the food you need.



Fiordland is an incredible place. Stunningly beautiful. But you've got to work for it and be on your game – we had enough sandflies to last a lifetime, a boat popped by a (small) shark, a cracked boat transom, got the sh*t scared out of us by a massive landslide, Troy and I both needed stitching up by our resident doctor, we ran low on food at times, almost flipped a boat, etc etc. Which all made it more rewarding when we finally made it back out to civilisation.



So in summary, I personally wouldn't dedicate more time to canyoning in coastal Fiordland – at least the parts of Doubtful, Charles, and Caswell that I've seen. Yes, there are some good canyons about, but I think bang-for-your-buck (in terms of time and effort) will be much better inland, including around lakes Te Anau and Manapouri.

Just in case anyone does not heed our advice and goes canyoning in coastal Fiordland, we found there were generally plenty of good tree anchors. When there wasn't, we used Hilti concrete screws, although the granite was quite hard and we only just made them work. I wouldn't go to Fiordland completely reliant on screws – a mix of screws (which are removable and therefore a bit better ethically) and expansion bolts (for when the rock is too hard for screws) is the way to go. Temperatures in early to mid April were surprisingly mild (low of 10, high of 15). Having two InReachs, in addition to radios, was key to comms when our group split up on some days.

Thanks again for the NZCA for supporting the expedition. Hopefully it inspires others to get out there and give it a go, albeit perhaps not in coastal Fiordland. The Canyon Fund doesn't usually use all of its budget and the application process is easy, so don't let that put you off.

And as final food for thought, what kind of world do we live in when we return from 3-weeks out of civilisation to discover that the only news anyone seems interested in is that Will Smith slapped someone at the Oscars? 🤔

