

INTRODUCTION

On his map made in 1902, Albert Peter Low applied the name Povungnituk to the north branch of the river with its source north of Lake Raglan. In 1912, the geologist and filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty attached the same name to the southern branch which joins the main northern branch at the southeast end of Lake Papittukaaq (approx. km 31 on our maps). Official maps followed Flaherty's naming until the 1950s, when they switched back to Low's toponymy. Flaherty's southern branch is now called either Flaherty River or Decoumte River. The spelling of the river name changed in 1995 from Povungnituk to Puvirnituk. The name means "It smells like rotten meat".

The Puvirnituk River originates in Lake Raglan, about 55 km northeast of the Pingualuit Crater. While it is possible to access the river from its source at Raglan Mine, our maps describe access from Pingualuit National Park of Quebec via the Vachon River, St. Germain Lake and St. Germain River. The Puvirnituk River follows a fault line and then winds its way through the arctic tundra, generally in a southwest direction, joining Hudson Bay at the Inuit village of the same name. The climatic conditions in this area are extreme. This is not a place for inexperienced, under-equipped or physically unfit paddlers. The paddling season is also short: If you arrive too early, the lakes will be covered with ice; if you arrive too late, the upper section of the river will be too shallow. On our 2011 trip (July 7 - July 29), we encountered ideal conditions: the ice on the lakes was almost gone (we had to haul our canoes only twice on Lake St. Germain); and we experienced sufficiently high water levels on the upper river and probably medium levels on the lower section.

To our knowledge, the River was first paddled in 1978 by group of 4 canoeists from Quebec led by Serge Théorêt. They went up the Vachon River and then through series of lakes south of Pingualuit Crater, thus bypassing the upper section of the Puvirnituk. The same route in the opposite direction was paddled in 1985 by 4 canoeists from France led by Philippe Zanni.

WORDS OF CAUTION

These maps were created based on notes taken during our canoe trip in July 2011 (our trip report is available at <http://sites.google.com/site/landtrips/Trips/puvirnituk-2011>). We marked our maps according to what we saw at that time, in order to provide information to any future visitors, however, by no means do I take any responsibility for how this information will be used. I do not guarantee that it does not contain errors, whether made by me personally or by bugs in the software used. Rapid classification is subjective. Our subjective evaluation of the class level of these rapids does NOT take into account the remoteness of the region (i.e. distance and time from help etc.), the water temperature (cold kills) and the size and power of this river (any swim could be a very long swim). Moreover, the class of rapids depends on the water level and that can change immensely through the season. Use the information provided here with caution. YOU are the only one responsible for your own decisions and for your own safety. Rivers described here are wild and very remote. Weather can be also very tough. DO YOUR OWN scouting and reconnaissance. I am not taking any responsibility for the information provided here or for your safety.

AN IMPORTANT WORD FROM OUR LAWYER

The information conveyed here, on our maps, on our website and in our trip reports is the sole opinion and perspective of Lynette and/or Laco alone and should not be taken as a basis in fact. Many of L&L's observations during the period

reported were made after only a very brief period, in very specific weather and water level conditions and often in a fatigued state. All readers are strongly encouraged and advised to do their own independent research (scouting) and form their own independent conclusions before deciding on any facts or actions in relation to any of L&L's freely published information. It is a well known fact that rivers can and do change completely, depending on multiple factors such as water levels, ice conditions, flood and/or drought conditions, continual erosion and altering seasonal and weather patterns. Each person who undertakes to travel any of these routes is responsible for their own judgments and safety.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This river was mapped during our trip July 7-29, 2011. All markings are subject to the water levels we had at that time (high enough at the start; probably average later on). High water marks were evident all along the river, alerting us to the fact that this river would be extremely different in high water. This is treeless country & campsites abound. I marked on the maps only exceptionally nice campsites. Some of them we used; some of them we only noticed as we passed by.

Maps 1 - 4

There are many rapids marked as "shallow" in this area. They are big rock-gardens. Some of them can be cautiously paddled, but, depending on the water level, many have to be walked, lined, pulled, scraped, carried-over, even portaged. The "Height of land" portage dividing Vachon & Puvirnituk watersheds is the second portage (P160) from Vachon River (Map 2). The 4 shallow rapids on the Saint Germain River (Map 4) were easier than most of shallows on the Vachon River. The first rapid on the Puvirnituk River (R1-2 on map 4) was an easy rapid with an ugly shallow drop-off at the end. Be cautious there; the drop should be lined.

Map 5

Innaq Rapid is a complicated class 4 rapid; very difficult to approach & scout. We did a bump & scrape down the right shore to a final lift over of the last steep drop-off. A detailed map and 2 photos of it is provided at the end - views from before & after. We had progressed too far along river right before seeing the current gathering for a slot along the left shore through a drop-off across the entire river and thus did "Option C" (which was difficult but SAFE). The fastest route might be "Option B", but it's the most dangerous and it's almost impossible to stop & scout. To scout it, we recommend taking out well upriver for a serious hike & scout along river left - a walk along the cliff probably offers great views. Option A - pass through rock garden on the left as soon as possible and then you are with the current but committed to a wild ride. The water pounding along the cliff has big waves and the cliff has jagged upstream-pointing protuberances which could be death traps if you get too close to the cliff.

Map 6

Sanguamaaluk Canyon is one of the highlights of the trip. However, be very cautious: it has several difficult rapids. At Qarraq rapid we did a 190 m portage on river left. The following Inaqaunittuk rapid is ugly, rocky, long and difficult. The Rocks were very sticky here and it would be easy to wrap your canoe!! Both our canoes got hung up here as we tried to negotiate the left side. We may have been better off staying out in the main flow, but it was messy everywhere and getting hung up in the main flow would make for a high risk situation. After Inaqaunittuk rapid much more enjoyable rapids begin. At km 356 there is a nice campsite on river left.

On river right is the place to start a portage to Lac Carré - access to headwaters of Little Puvirnituq River. No-one, to our knowledge, has paddled it yet (as of fall 2011), and we'd guess it may be very shallow at the beginnig.

Map 7

Sikkitaq is a rectangular/cubical rock visible from far away.

Map 8

There is a small campspot maintained by the Park at the Lamarche River. At the time we were there, it had a double tent platform with a windwall and a raised emergency supply box. Soon after, you will cross out of the Park boundaries.

Map 9

Another potential access route to Little Puvirnituq is via the Beuparlant River. The Beuparlant appears tumultuous, steep & shallow and at least the first 2 km would have to be portaged along the west side.

Map 10

Many shallows around Natirnaalik Island.

Map 11

Nuqraq rapid portage - the second half features a serious loose rock field. The only way to avoid it is go along the shore.

Map 12

Deschesnes Canyon portage: start: 18 V 504413 6796022 end: 18 V 504324 6795656 R 3-4 at km 294: we used left channel

Map 18

At km 225 (soon after Lac Allemand) the river splits into three channels. The middle one appears to take the most water and leads to the beautiful Allemand Chute, a class 4 rapid requiring a short easy (25 m) portage on river left. The left channel (southeast) looked dry from the bottom, but we were not able to see it well. At the right channel, we could hear rapids immediately at the top, and the bottom drop appeared (guessing from a distance) to be a shallow class 3. There is beautiful & spacious campsite on river left right after Normand Rapid (km 210).

Map 19

Sitajajuaq Rapid, km 204: very powerful rapid with high waves. We ran it successfully in one piece, however, it was dangerous and we were not able to keep to the plan. Be very careful if you paddle it. Portage is always a safe option. Nangiartuq Rapid, km 200, has a sneak option on the river right.

Map 20

Inaqunartuq Falls at km 193: the approach to the falls is a heavy class 5 with ledges. We ran & lined it along river right, took out above the falls and portaged along the small right channel. We paddled through a calm widening to the island just below the falls where we camped. It may be possible to portage the whole thing along river left (an option we did not investigate). At km 187.5 the river splits into two channels. We went left with what appeared to be the most water and portaged around the tumultuous Itivittuq Rapid (810 m). However, it may be possible to navigate the longer right channel. I added a detailed map at the end showing this option in better scale. If anyone goes there and scouts the right channel, we would love to hear from you. Qikirtaq Rapid, km 183: The river here splits into two channels, and the left channel later splits into 2 channels again. The middle channel finishes in shallows, and left channel continues into a powerful class 4 ledge. We used the right channel and stopped at the corner where river turns south-east to scout the following Tukimut Rapids from the hill.

Map 23

Class 3 rapid at km 154 is very powerful. We were able to paddle the left side.

Map 25

The river between km 135 and 127 is full of dangerous rapids and big waterfalls. Be very cautious and enjoy - there

are many scenic places waiting for your camera here. Nangiarnatuq Rapid: When approaching this rapid, we came through an R2 first. We had to make sure it did not push us too far left because we had to land on river right to do a portage/carry-over (P60). Nangiarnatuq Rapid is followed by a powerful class 3 rapid. Be very careful!! Qakurtaq Rapid: When approaching this rapid, we came through an R2 first, as the river turned sharp right (west). We again had to make sure it did not push us too far left because we had to land on river right to line this rapid. Before the river splits into two channels, there are class 2 rapids flowing between huge rocks (islands). These rapids were almost impossible to scout beforehand. After these R2 rapids, we camped on the island between two channels and went for a long hike to investigate our options for the next day. The right channel leads to Immuk Falls - it's actually a spectacular triple waterfall with 5 ledges (the third waterfall has 3 ledges). We portaged 1 km along the left side - beautiful views! There is an old tent ring marking the end of the plateau at the end of the portage. The left channel starts with Palliqupuq Falls, which would be easy to portage around using the dry riverbed, but after that a series of difficult rapids starts. From a safety perspective, portaging the right channel was a much better choice.

Map 26

Inuksuit Canyon: Both sides of the canyon are marked by many small inuksuit which appear (by the lichen growth linking the rocks used) to have been there a very long time. This is some kind of historic place, but we don't know what is/was the purpose of these inuksuit. One guess is that it was a trap line.

Map 28

Nunivakkaq Falls: We were able to successfully run the left side which had a nice, runnable channel. We also walked the Island on the right side to investigate the far right channel. It appeared to be too shallow for any enjoyable run.

Map 29

km 87: There is a complicated rapid here. The River splits here into three channels: The main channel had a few ledges which looked complicated to avoid. The best option we found was to line the right chute on river right. We saw the left channel only from the bottom; it appeared to be very shallow.

Map 30

Rapid before Natturalik Falls - we ran the left R2. The right side looked from the bottom like an R2-3, but because the takeout is on river left, the left side was a natural choice for us. Natturalik Falls portage: start: 18 V 407339 6687506 end: 18 V 407244 6687234

Map 31

Kiggavik Falls portage: start: 18 V 401030 6683912 end: 18 V 400789 6683736 Be careful!! The end of our marked portage above is BEFORE the following class 5 rapid. We were able successfully sneak and line the left side, however, it is dangerous with serious consequences. Portaging from the start of Kiggavik Falls all the way to the bottom of the class 5 rapid would be a much safer option. Atsaq Rapid portage: start: 18 V 399468 6683385 end: 18 V 399434 6683411 Tuulliq Rapid: While there seemed to be a left-of-centre main flow route, it looked extremely dangerous with serious consequences. We instead chose to sneak most of river right after carrying over the first ledge. We paddled the right shore until the island on the right side where we lined/dragged a sneaky right channel. Blue Velvet, km 55: We kept left. The right side was a class 5 rapid with big holes while the left side was a beautiful & easy class 2.

Map 32

Qiarngatuq Falls, km 44: short portage on river left with a beautiful campsite. Kallupilluk Rapid, km 43: short carry-over

river right. Anirnialuk Rapid, km 41.5: short portage on river left with another beautiful campsite.

Map 33

Nallukallak Passage: The river here splits into two channels. We walked the island and chose the left channel which starts first with a class 2 rapid (we kept right) which grows into a class 4 (we lined & did a short portage) and then into waterfall - Nirliq Falls. We portaged river right after lining quite close to the falls. The right channel starts with the narrow Quukittuq Falls, followed by difficult rapids. There is a difficult rapid also at the confluence of the two channels, so we chose to portage - see P180 on the map. Papittukaaq Lake, km 31 - Flaherty River here joins from river left. km 30, river right - beautiful historic Inuit campground on river right. There are more old structures on the ridge above.

Map 35

While it is possible to paddle around "Kangiriazq Tongue" peninsula, the day was very windy when we were there. Instead of paddling all the way around, mainly against the stiff wind, we chose to do a short portage across the isthmus (P50). km 9: We chose to use the left channel here (just to avoid paddling against the west wind). When we scouted later from the island in the middle, that seemed to have been the right choice. The right channel appeared to have a more difficult rapid.

Map 36

The River splits here again. There is a difficult class 4 with a ledge on river right. Instead we the chose left channel (which splits again, but the very left channel goes too far out) and paddled the friendly yet still interesting Aqasili Rapid. We did not need tide charts for this area, as the tides are fairly insignificant at this location.

TIME SCHEDULE / PROGRESS

Following is the progress of our trip. Note that on days 10-12 we were windbound, and we were partially windbound on at least two other days. This information is provided just to help you to plan your own schedule.

Day	Position	Day	Position
0	413 km	12	255 km
1	397.5 km	13	210 km
2	386 km	14	193 km
3	376.5 km	15	156.5 km
4	362 km	16	132 km
5	345 km	17	127.5 km
6	322.5 km	18	89.5 km
7	307 km	19	65 km
8	290 km	20	44 km
9	273.5 km	21	30 km
10	259 km	22	7 km
11	259 km	23	0 km

TRANSLATION OF GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

Inuktitut	English
Ujaralaat Rapid	Landscape covered with boulders
Iqaluk Point	Fish
Aqiggivik Rapid	Rock ptarmigan
Piujuk Rapid	Pretty
Aput Rapid	Snow
Innaq Rapid	Cliff
Sanguamaaluk Canyon	Changing direction
Qarqaq Rapid	Hill/Mountain
Inaqunaittuq Rapid	Ugly
Survaluk Rapid	Noise
Sikkitaq Rock	Square/Brick
Quarsaatippaa Rapids	He surprises him
Nuqraq Rapid	Young caribou
Pallipuk Creek	Dry
Tutsiani Rapids	Prayer
Kuuvvaluk River	Noise of rushing water
Sitjajuaq Rapid	Great breaking wave
Nangiartuq Rapid	He is frightend
Inaqunartuq Falls	Beautiful
Itivittuq Rapid	Portage
Qikirtaq Rapids	Island
Tukimut Rapids	In line
Amaruq River	Wolf
Amaruqaliniq Hills	Often frequented by wolves
Nangiarnatuq Rapid	Dangerous
Qakurtaq Rapid	White
Pallipuk Falls	Water moves
Immuk Falls	Milk
Nunivakkaq Falls	Mouse/lemming
Natturalik Falls	Eagle
Kiggavik Canyon	Hawk/Falcon
Kiggavik Falls	Hawk/Falcon
Atsaq Rapid	Black bear
Tuulliq Rapid	Loon
Naalagauvik Canyon	Lord's kingdom
Qiarngatuq Falls	Silver fox
Kallupilluk Rapid	Monster
Anirnialuk Rapid	God
Nirukittuq Canyon	Narrow
Quukittuq Falls	What has small opening
Nirliq Falls	Goose
Aqasili Rapid	Goodbye

CREDITS**Author****Lester Kovac, 2011**

Base Topographic Maps

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Map work/Text

Lester Kovac, 2011, 2016

Contributors

Lynette Chubb, member of expedition

Charles Leduc, integration

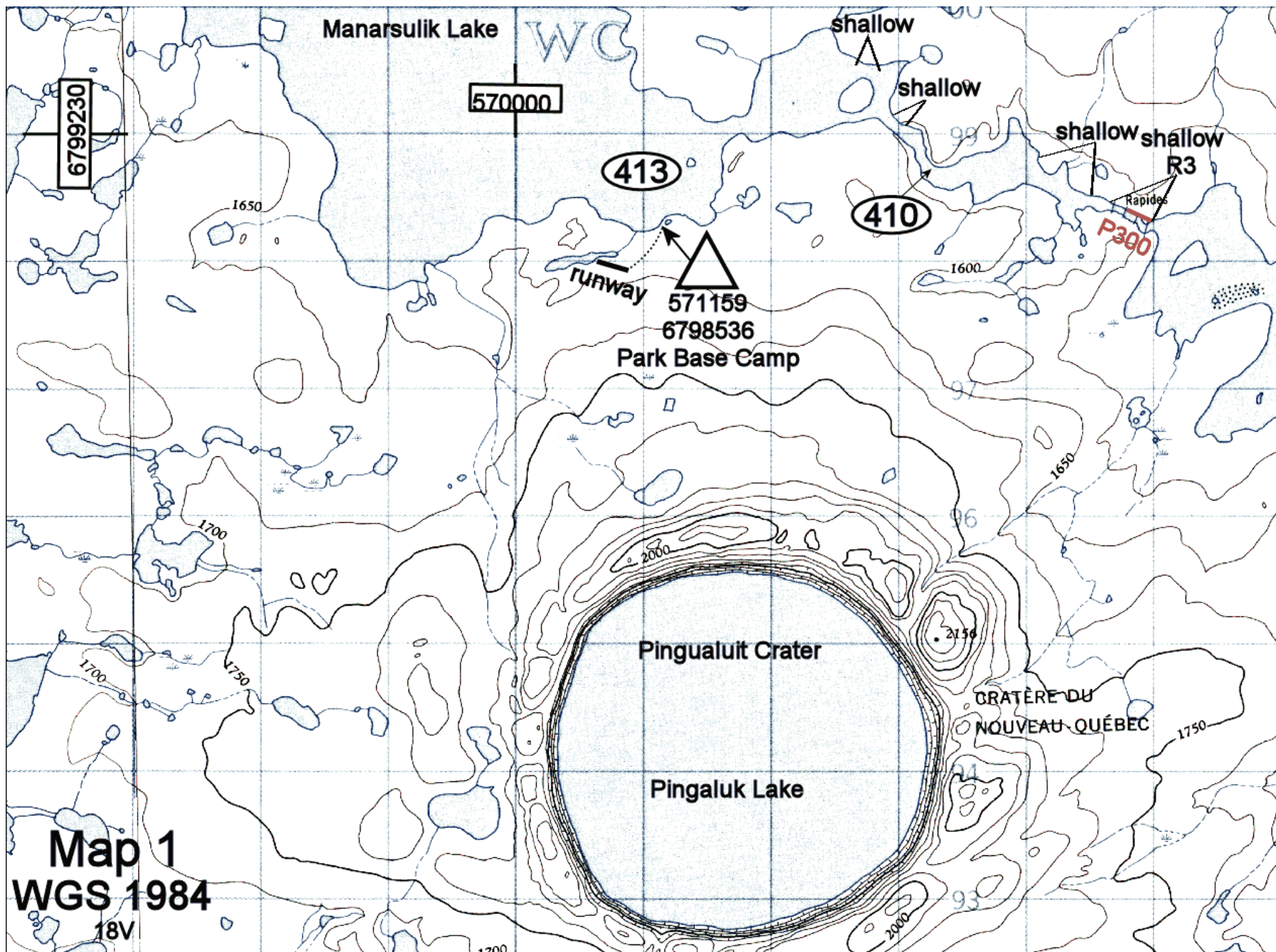
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Available from www.cartespleinair.org.**Contact**

To contact the author of these maps, see bottom of the page

<http://sites.google.com/site/landltrips/>



Map 2 WGS 1984

18V

6800222

580022

395

400

405

shallow
R2

shallow

shallow

shallow

P500

Ujaralaat Rapid

678093

6797459

Iqaluk point
current

P50



current

current

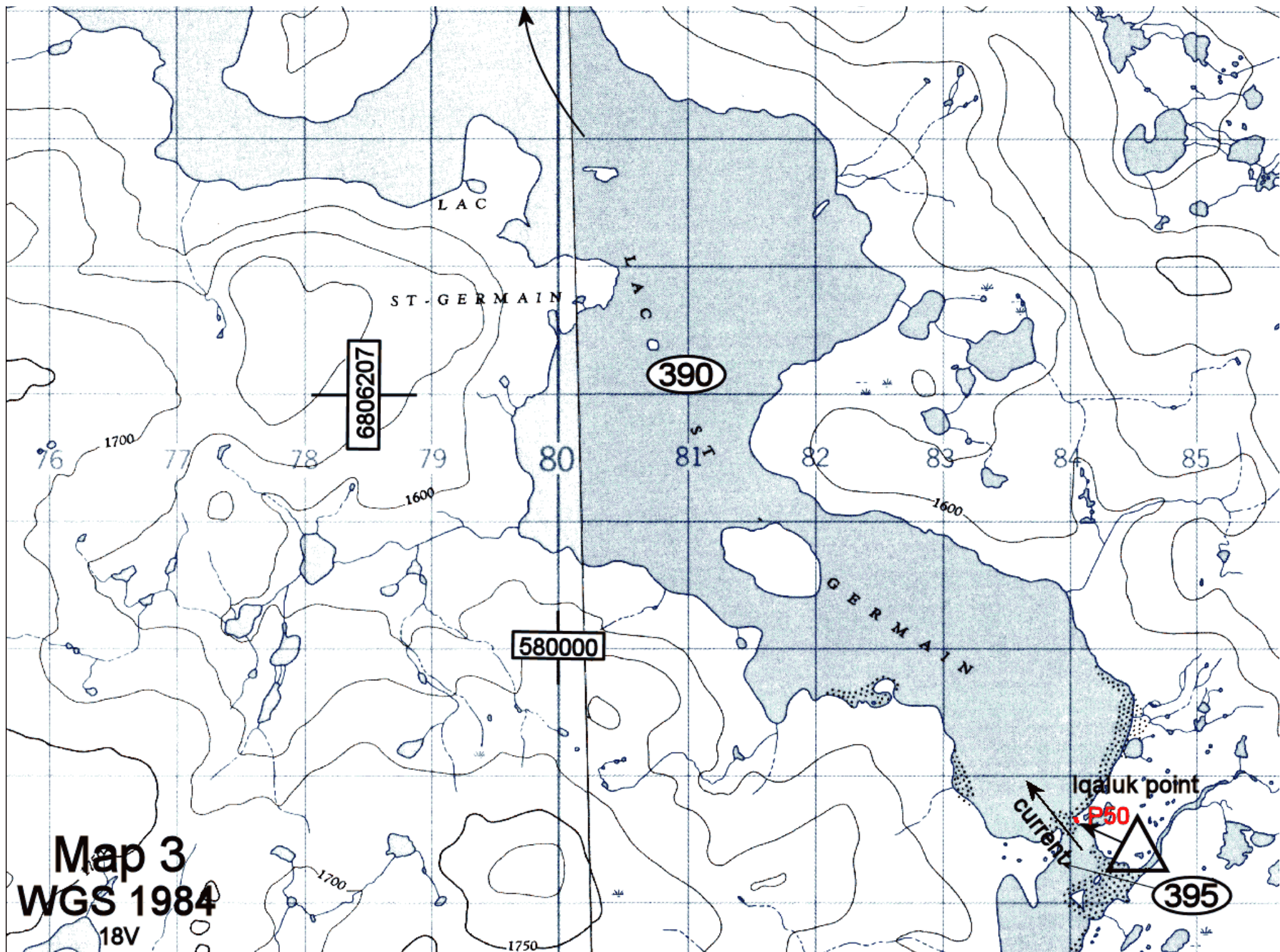
P160

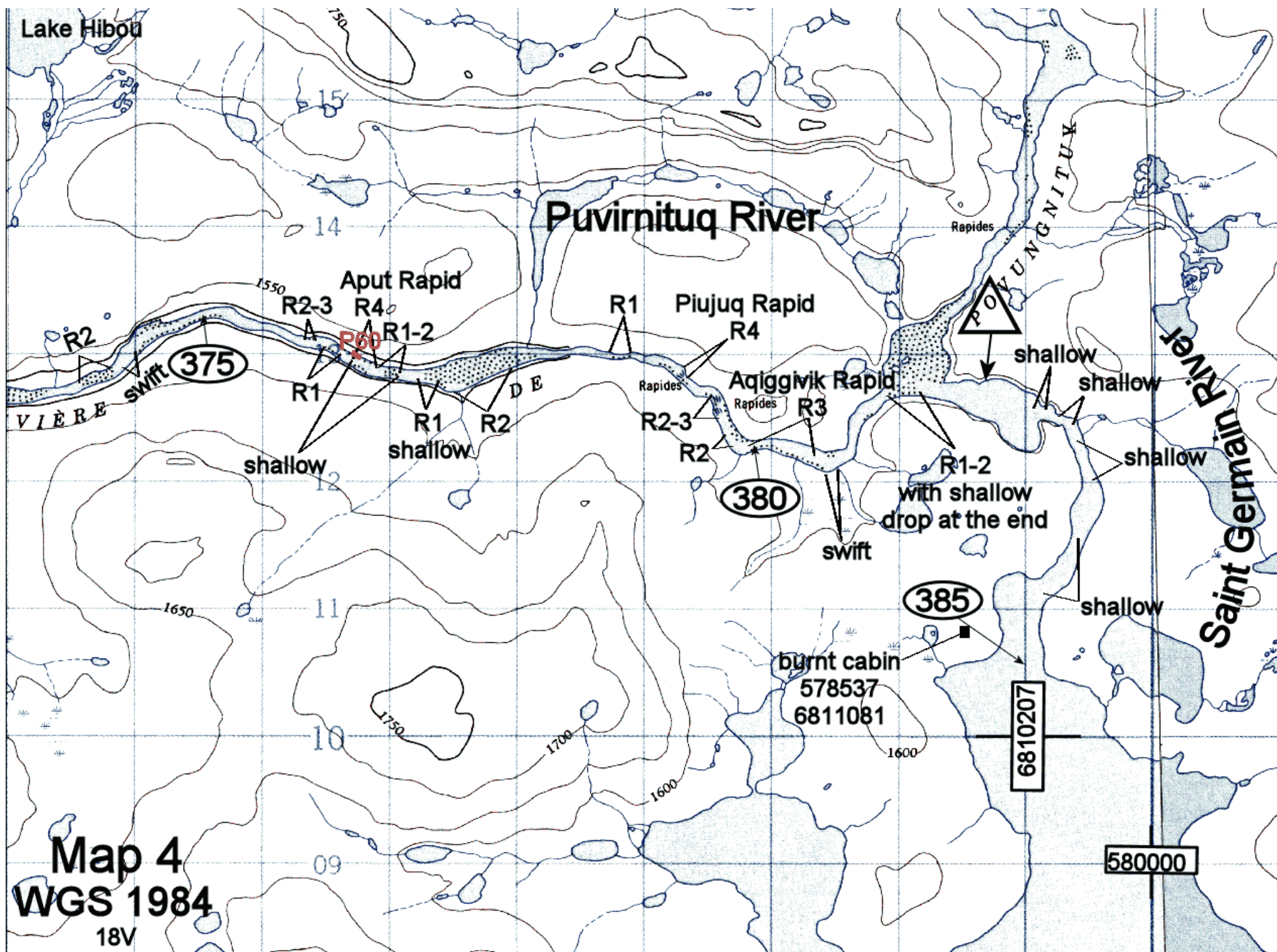
P240

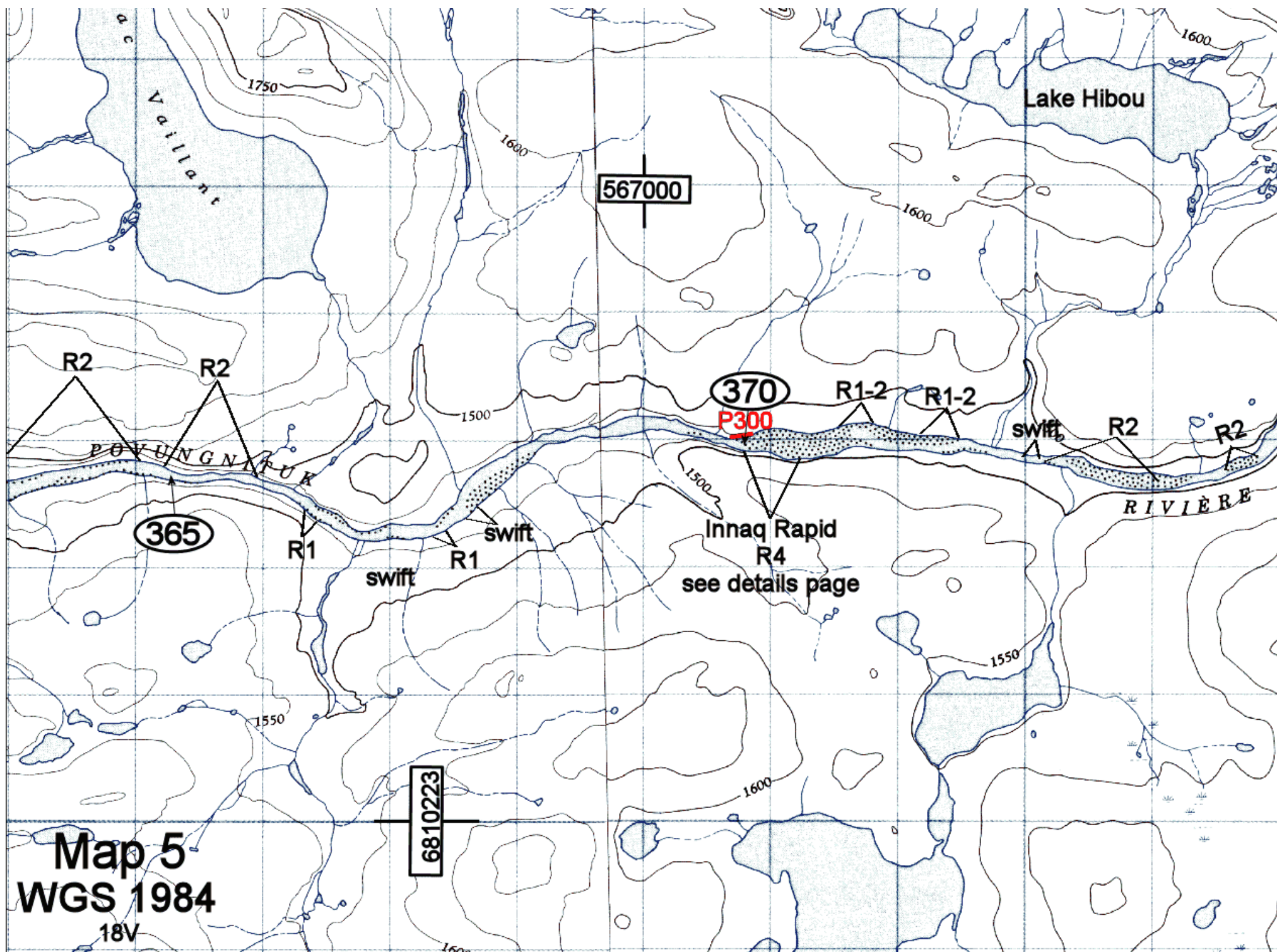
shallow

Vachon River

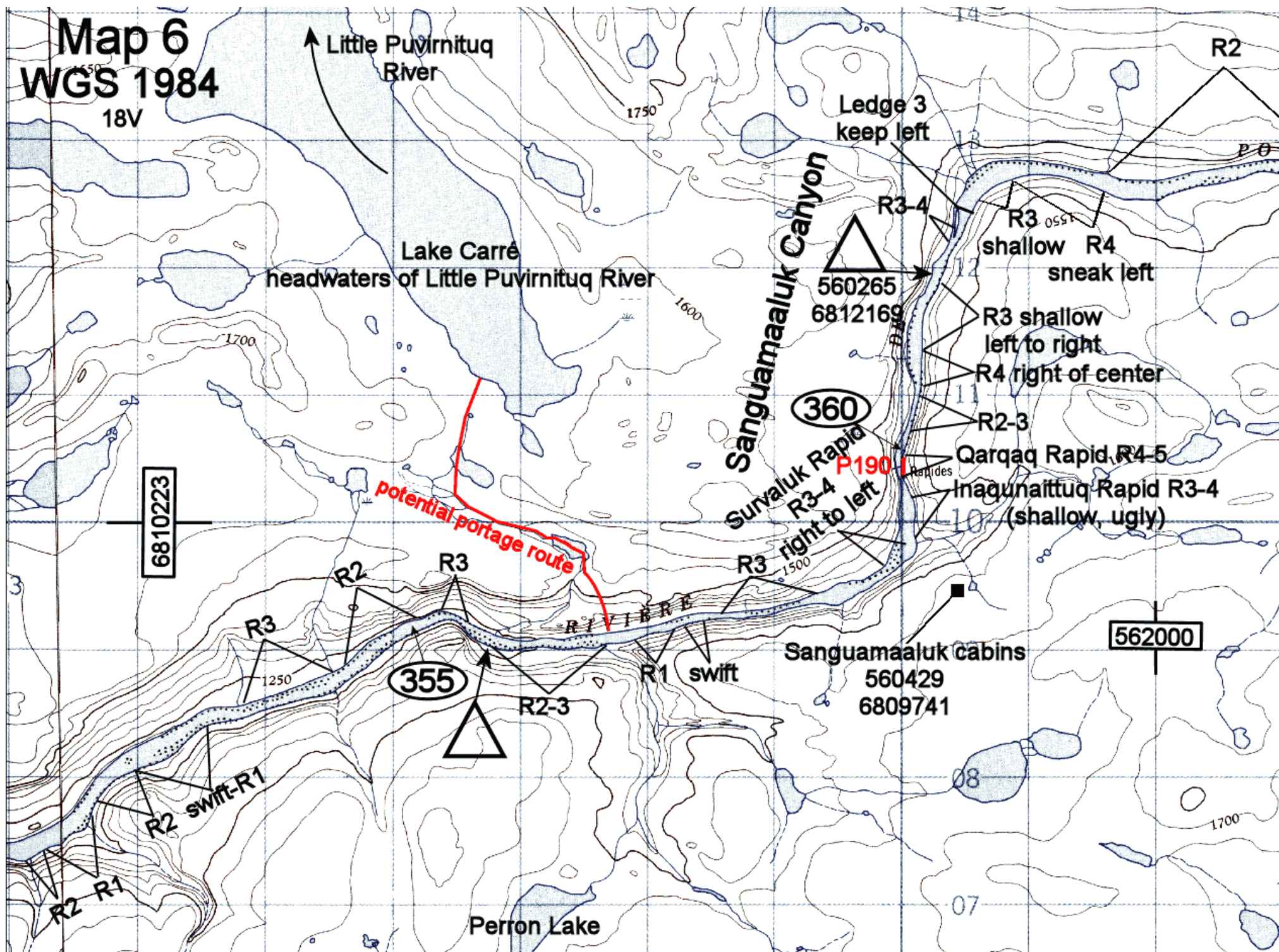
1650



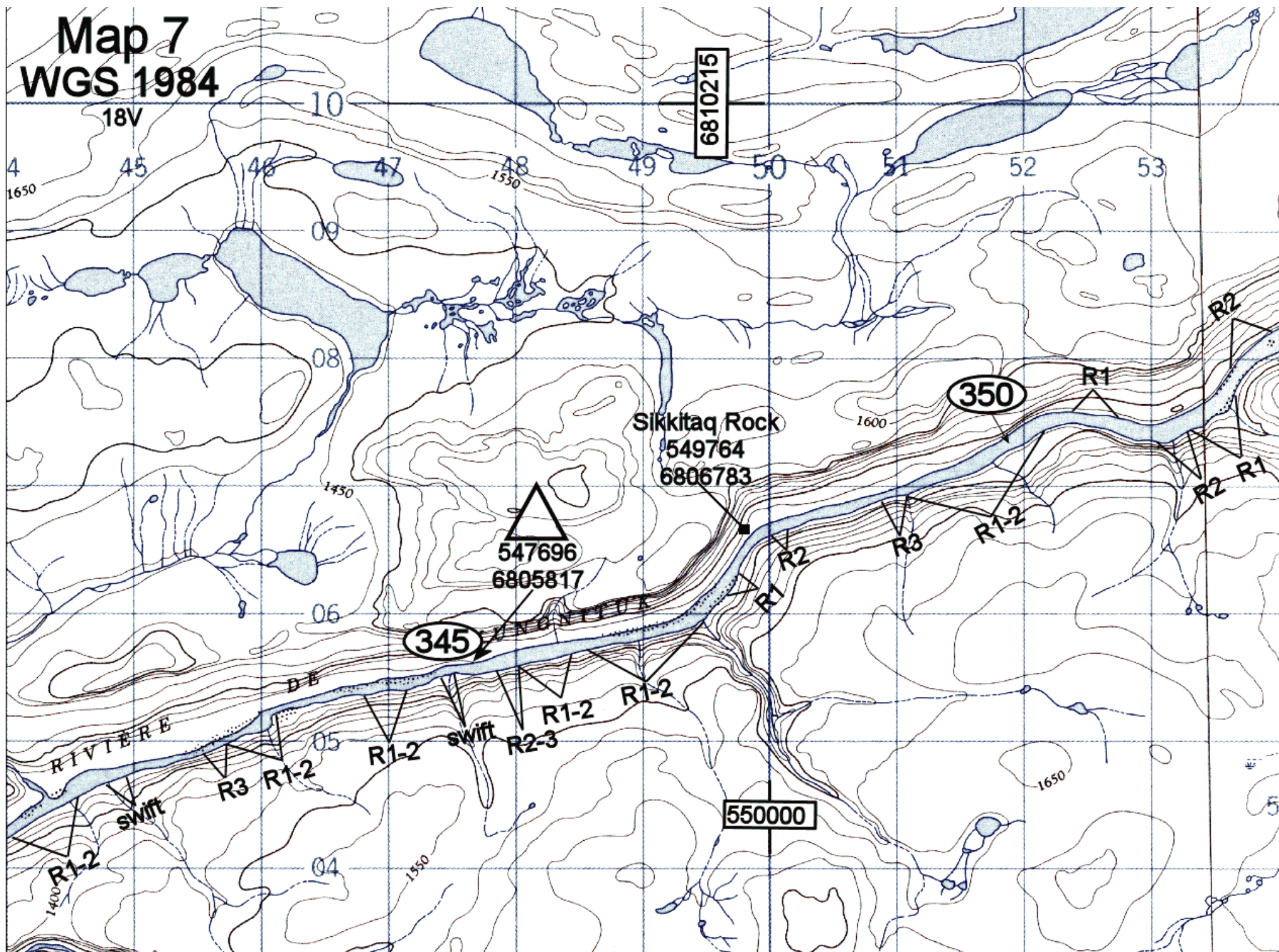




Map 6
WGS 1984
18V



Map 7 WGS 1984



Map 8 WGS 1984

18V

540000

6804206

1595

1450

340

R1-2
take right
channel

R2-3

R2

R1

R1-2

R1-2

R1

335

537616
6801904

R2R1

R2

R3

R2

R2

R1-2

Park boundary
(approx., as of 2011)

Lamarche River

542497
6804099

R1-2

RIVIER

WD

WC

WD

WC

36

37

38

39

41

42

43

44

4

Map 9
WGS 1984
18V

Beauport River
(another route to access
Little Puvirnituq headwaters)

portage
~ 2km

530000

6800230

527527
6799293

RIVIÈRE

GNITUK

R1, R2, R3, R1-2

swift

325, 330

1200, 1250, 1300, 1400

18V

530000

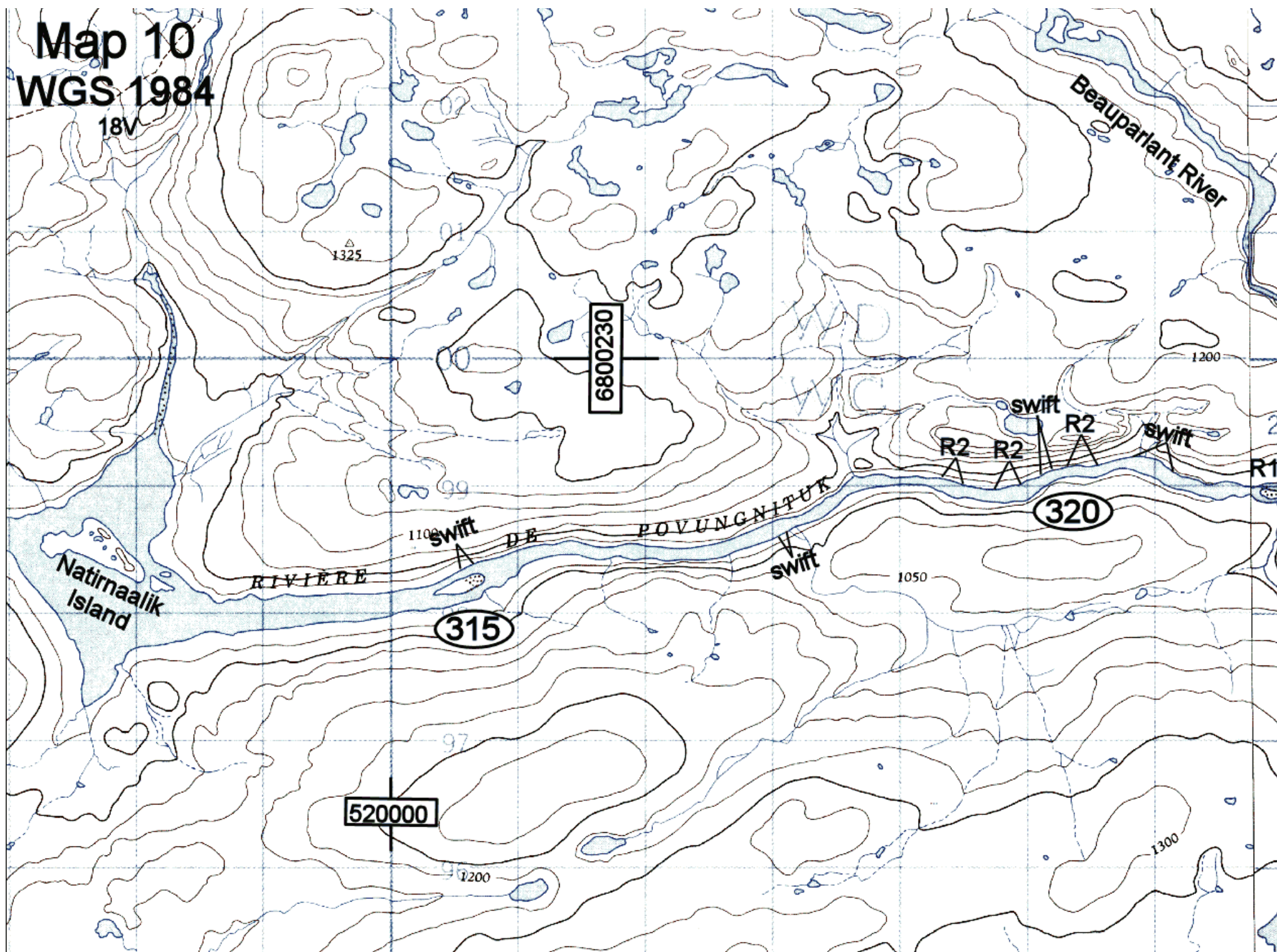
330

6800230

527527
6799293

portage
~ 2km

Map 10
WGS 1984
18V



Map 11
WGS 1984
18V

510000



513362
6799210

Nuqraq Rapid

P550

Quarsaatippaa Rapids

R3+
R2 R2 R1

310

6797213

305

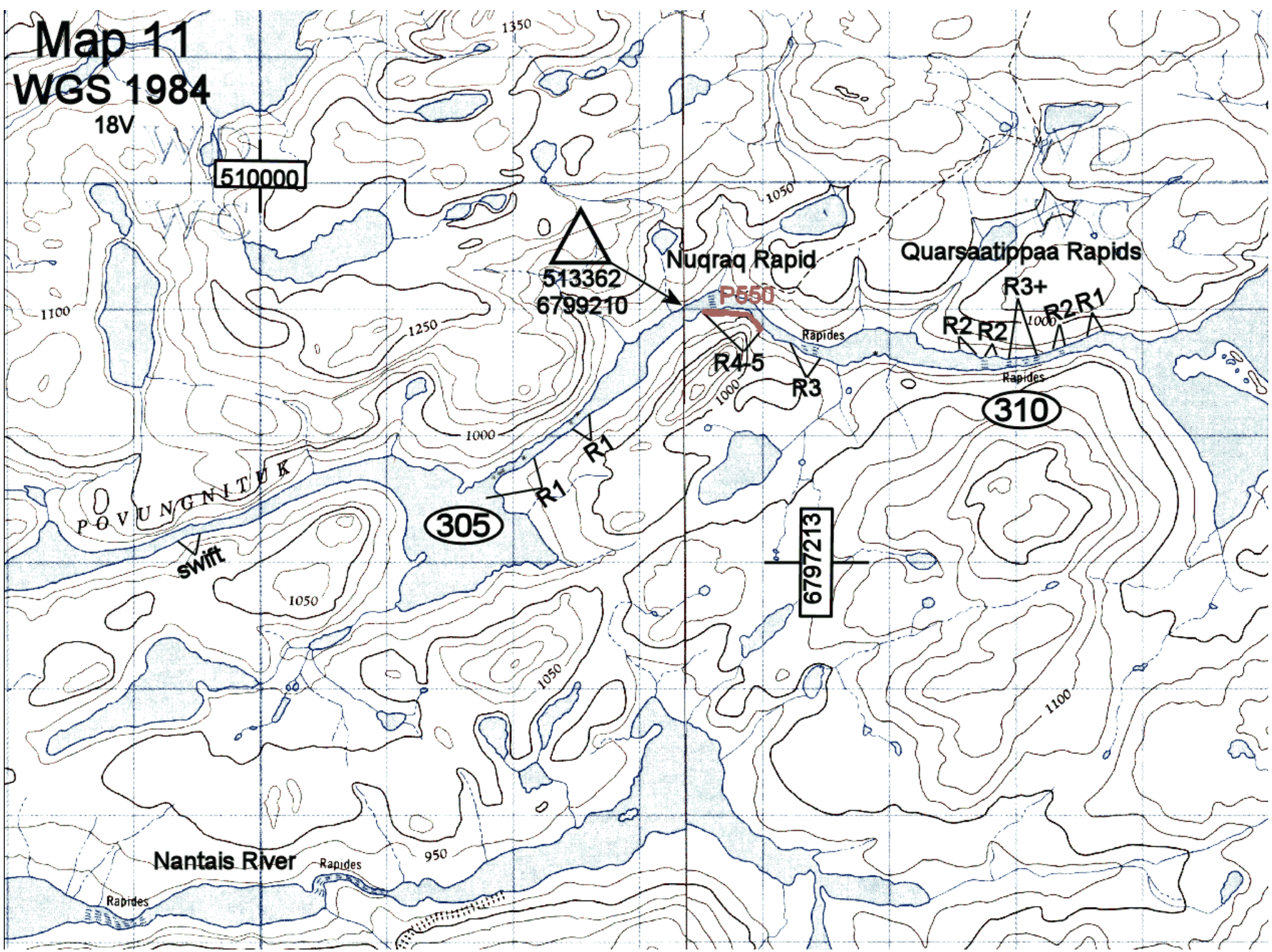
POVUNGNIUK

Swift

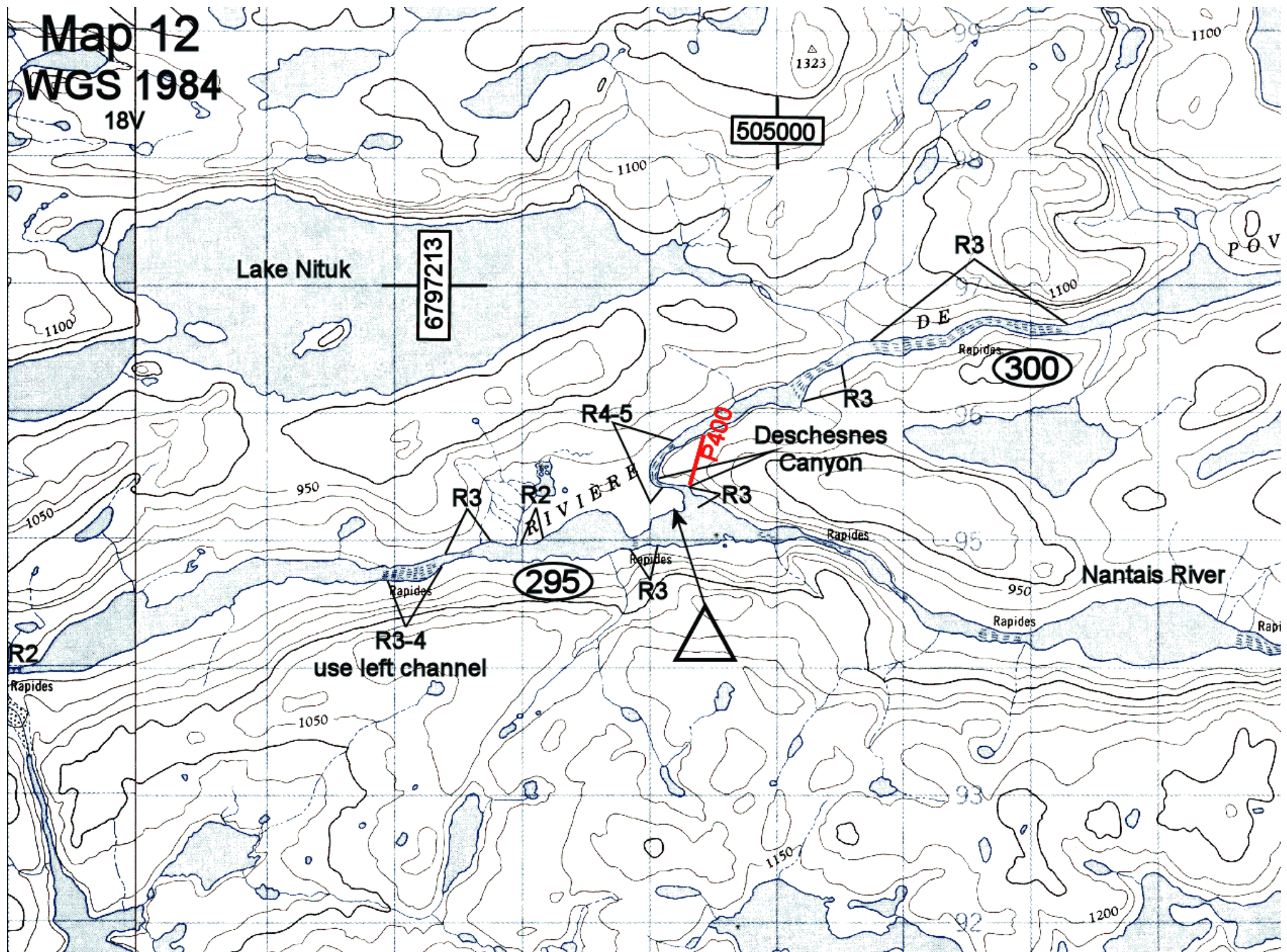
Nantais River

Rapides

Rapides



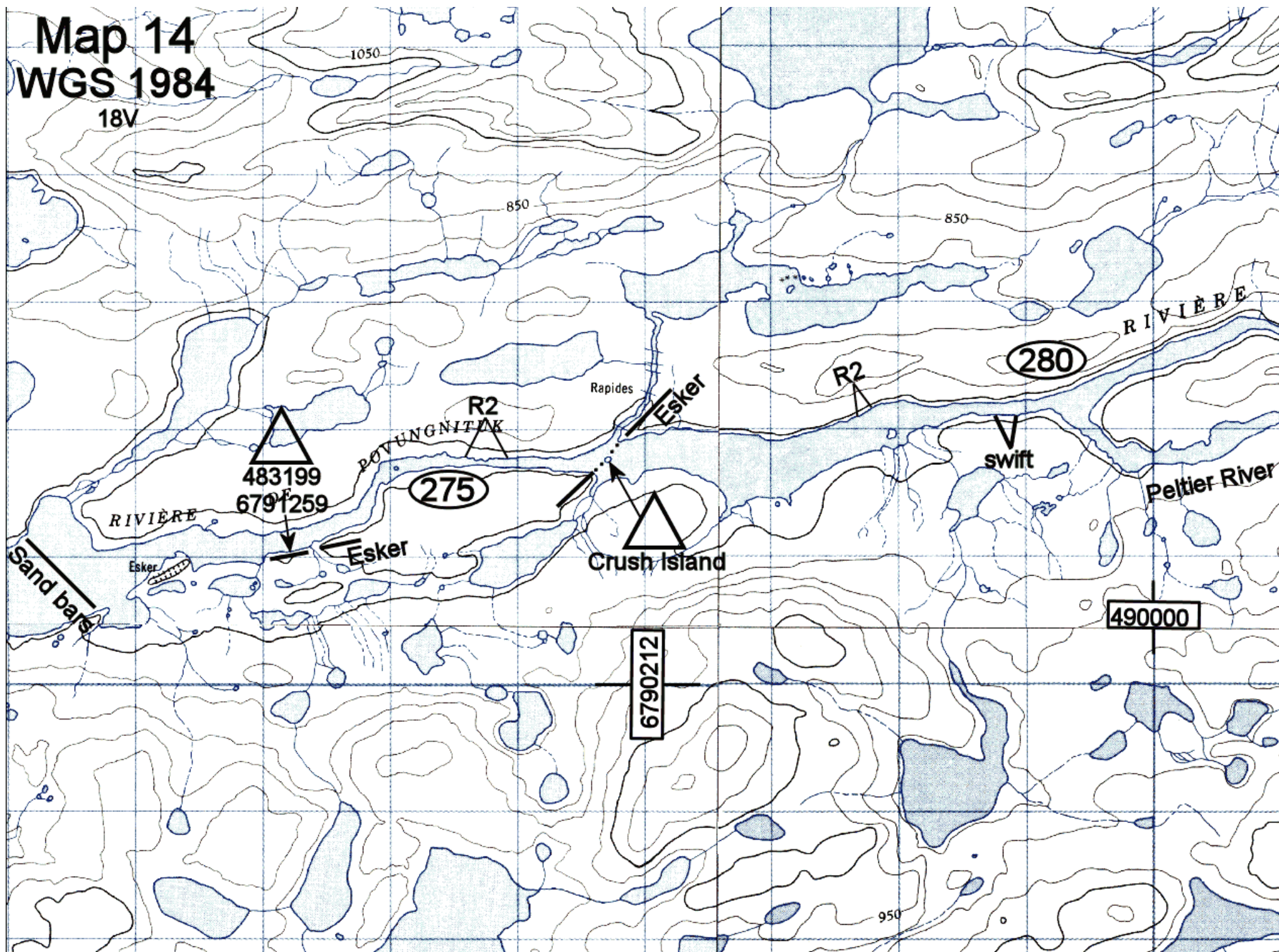
Map 12
WGS 1984
18V



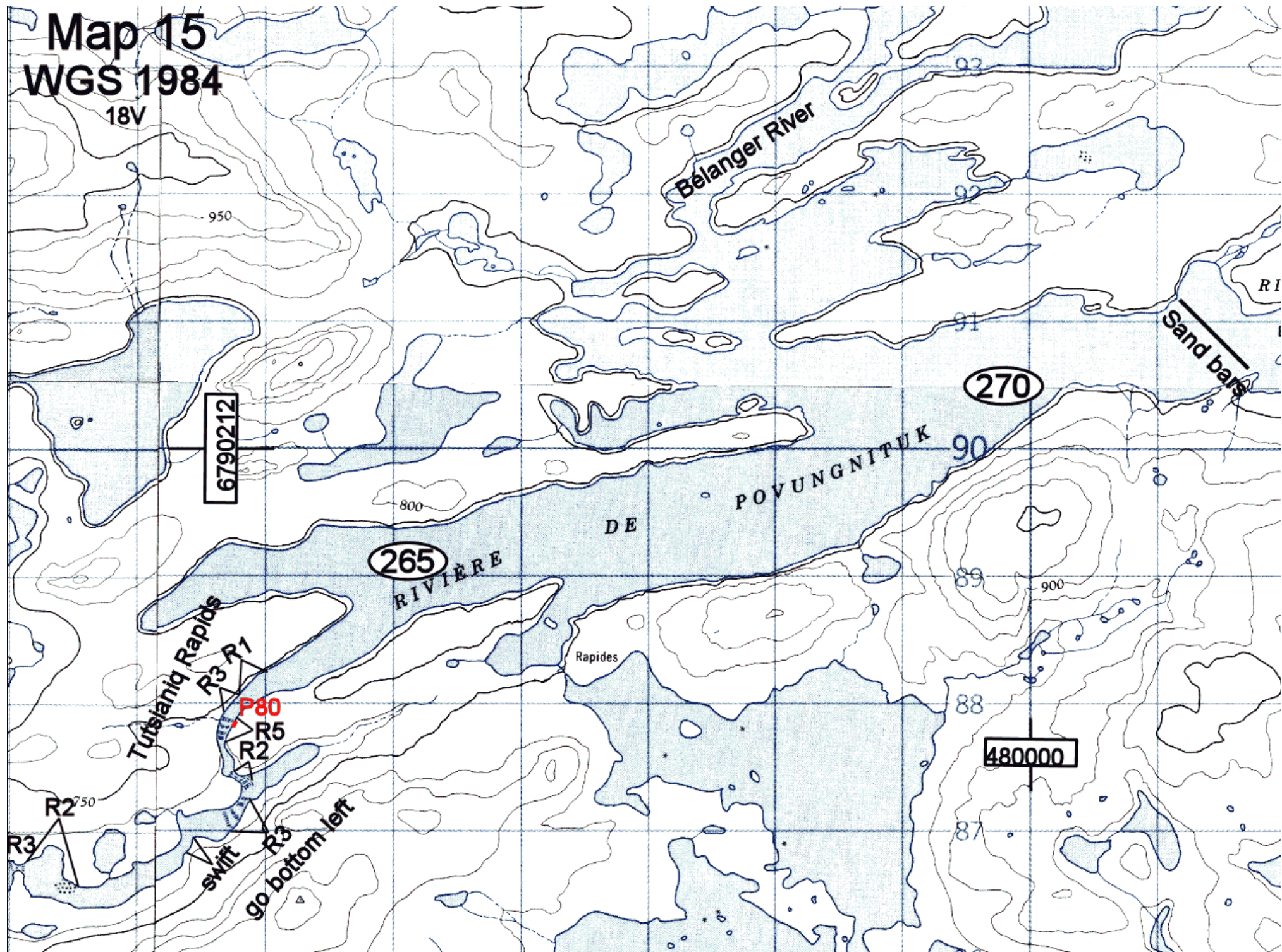
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Map 14 WGS 1984

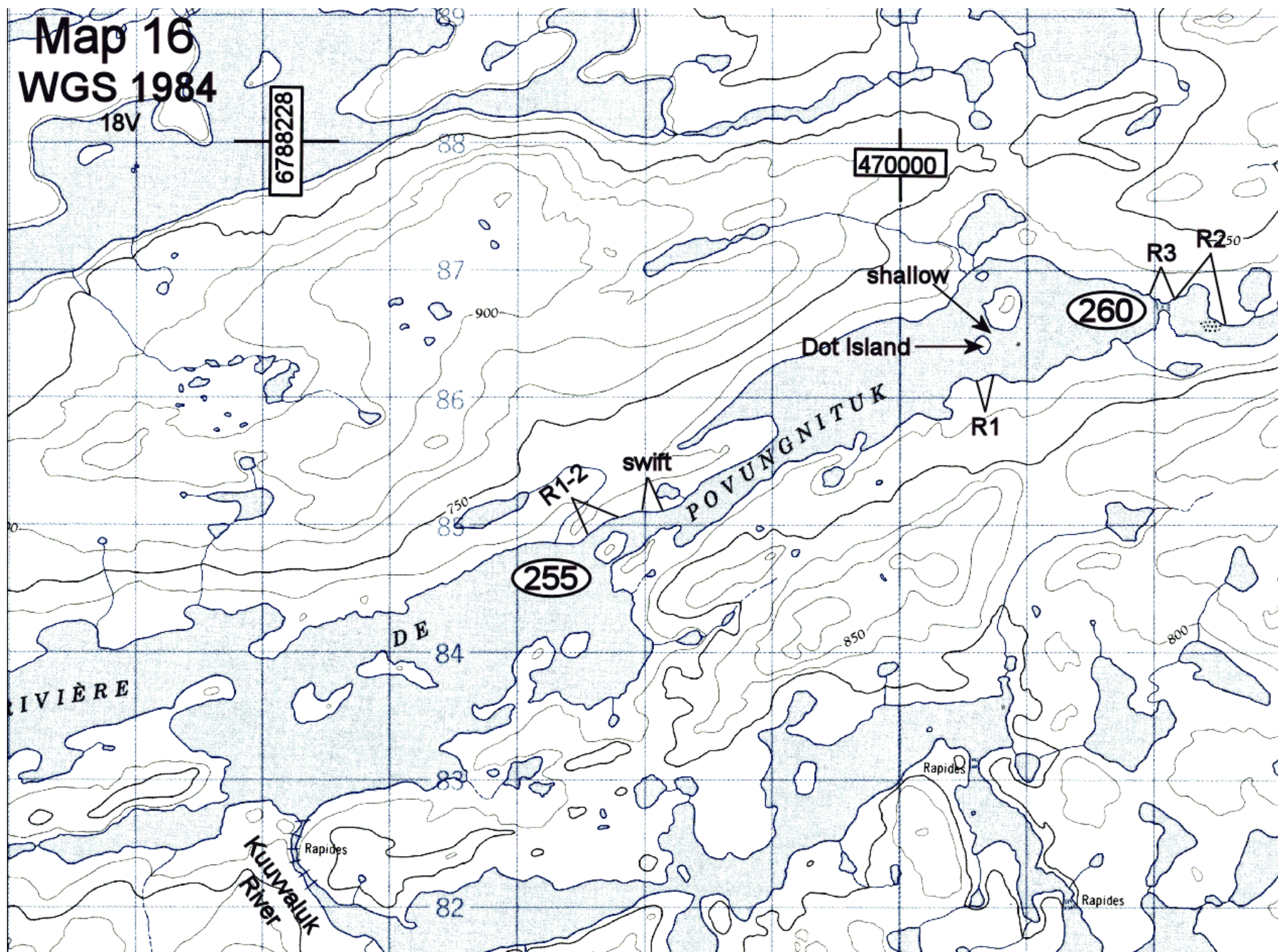
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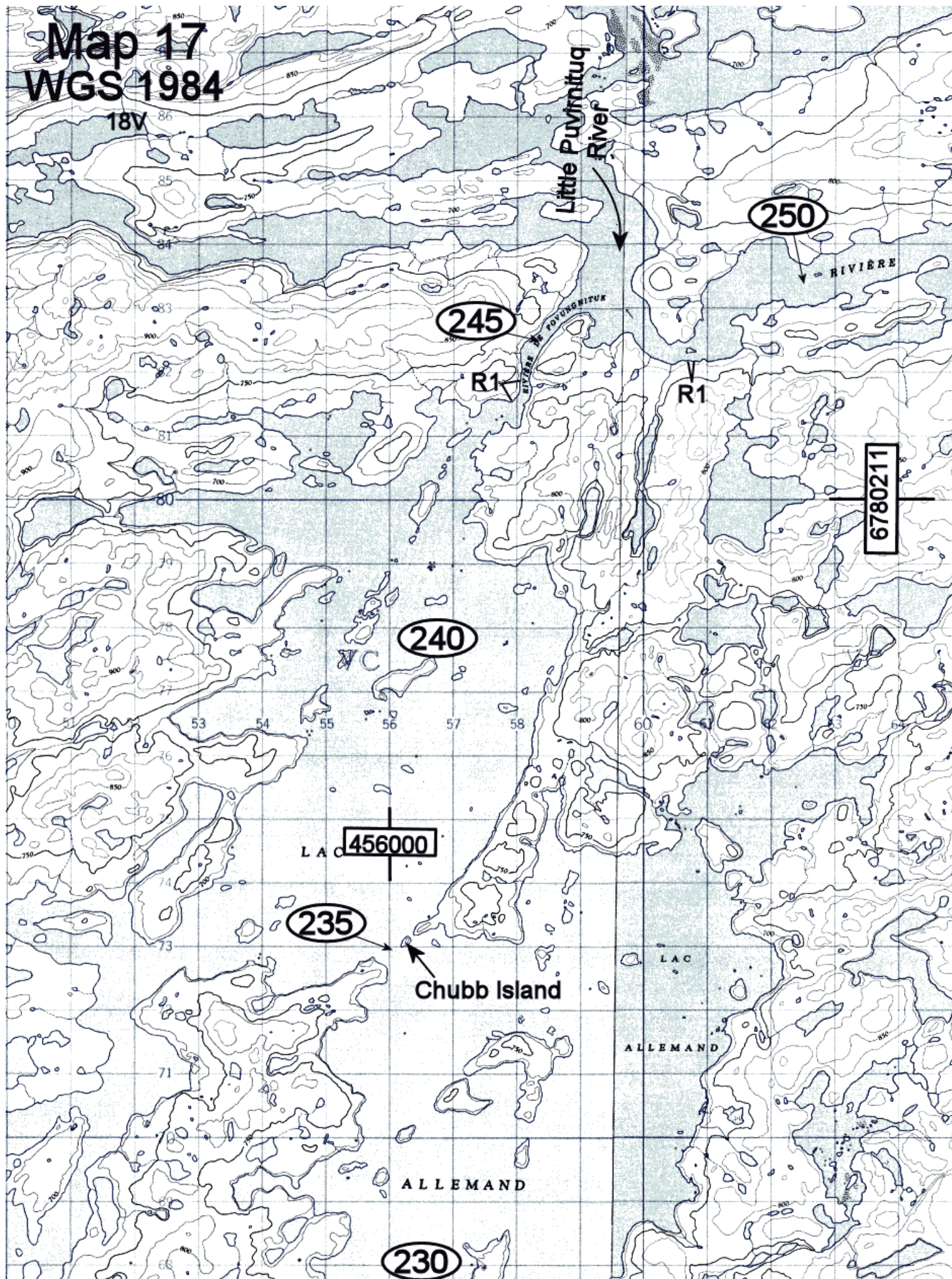
Map 15
WGS 1984
18V



Map 16
WGS 1984



Map 17
WGS 1984



18V

ALLEMAND

230

225

Allemand Chute

R4

good camping both sides

R3-4 in high water
dry in low

460000

6760216

220

215

Swift

swift

210

A map of the Normand Rapids area. The map shows a river flowing from the top left towards the bottom right. A road, labeled 'R3', runs diagonally across the river. A point on the river is marked with a small circle and labeled '2035'. The area is labeled 'Normand Rapids' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The map is oriented with North at the top.

SWIFT

458268 6751494

Map 19
WGS 1984
18V

6750215

SWIFT

199±

249

230

245

Sitajuaq Rapid
R4

460000

(205)

199±

458749

6746420

191±

(200)

220

Nangartuq Rapid
R4

sneakright

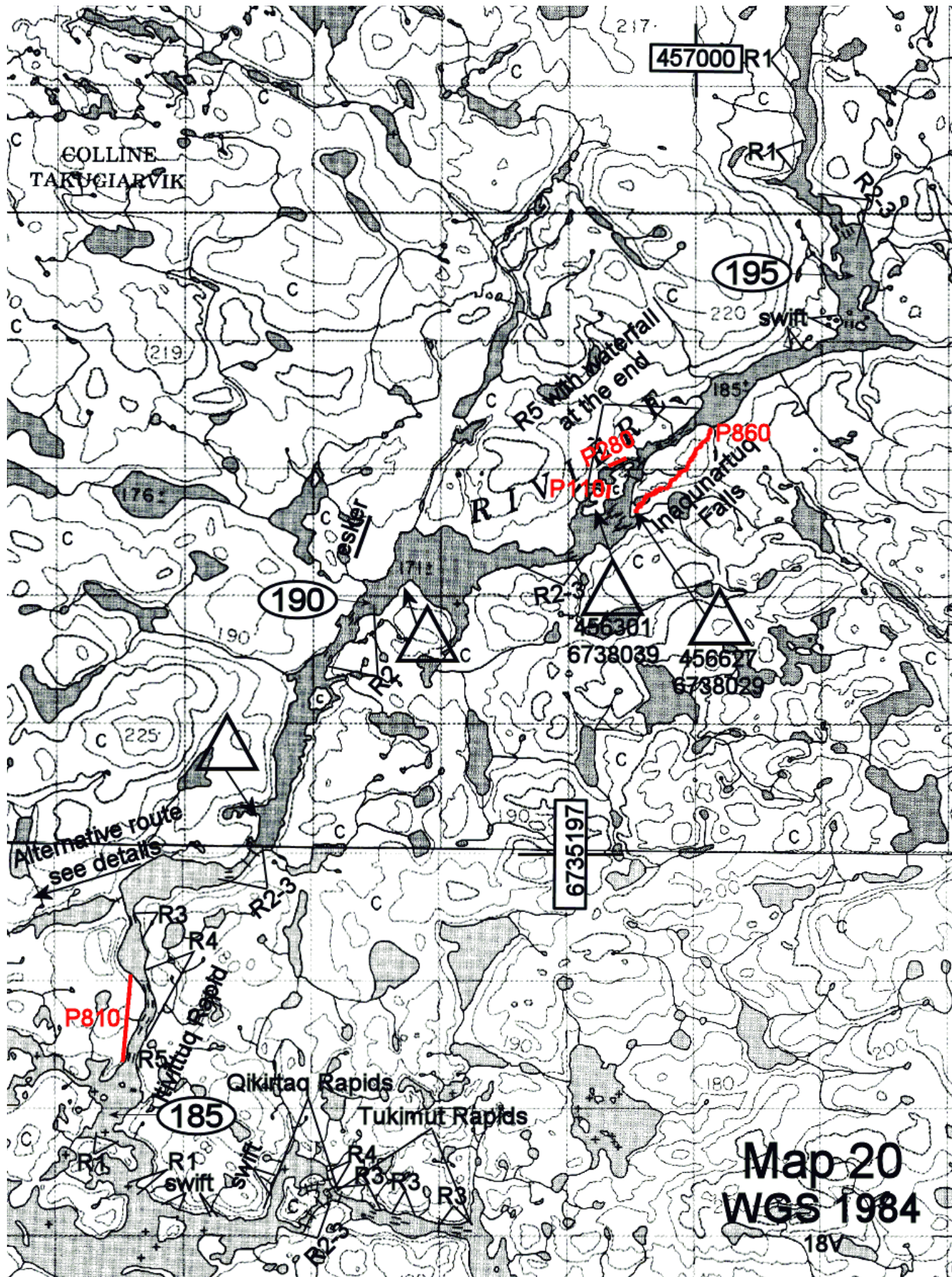
189±

R2

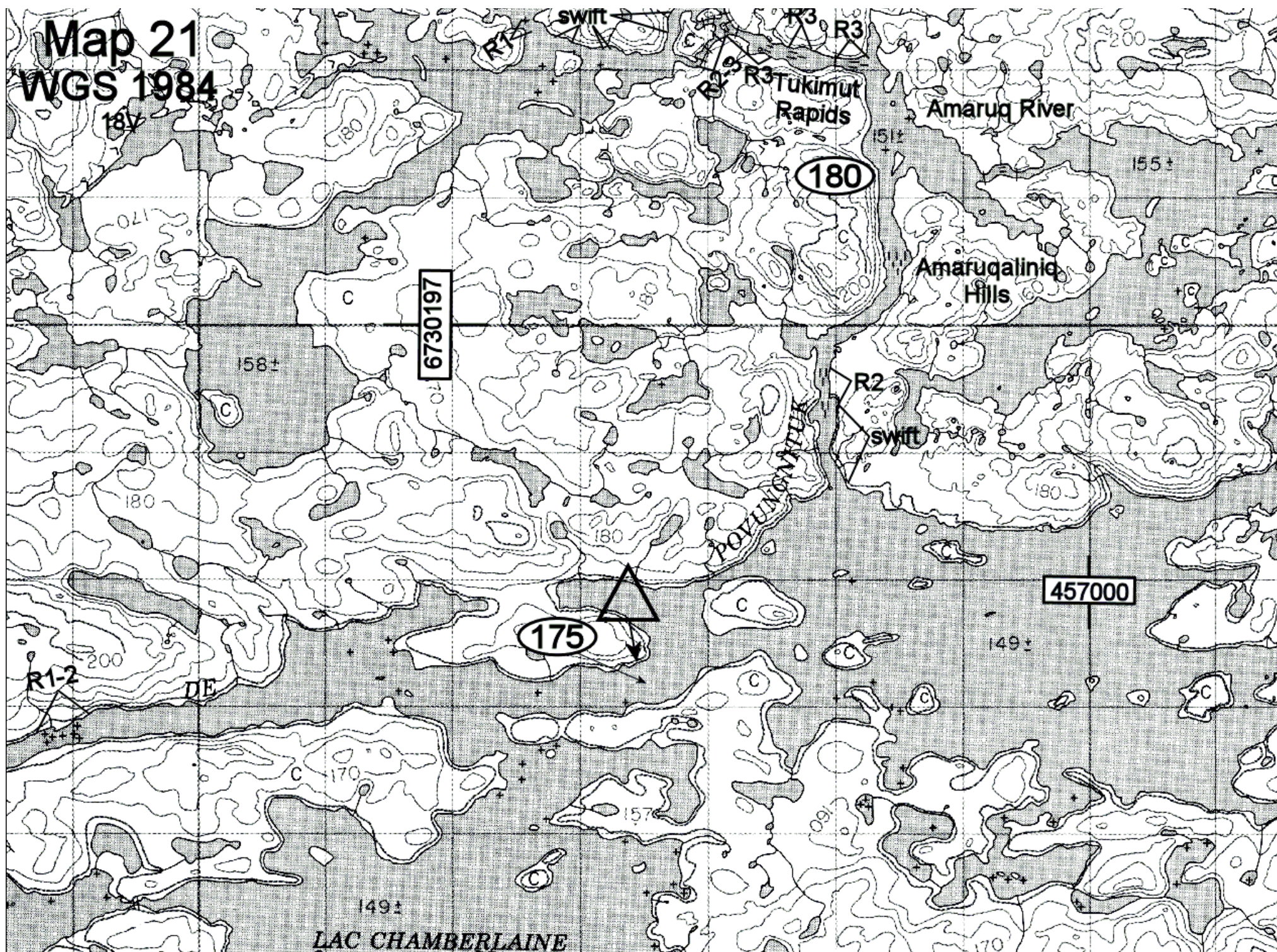
217±

96±

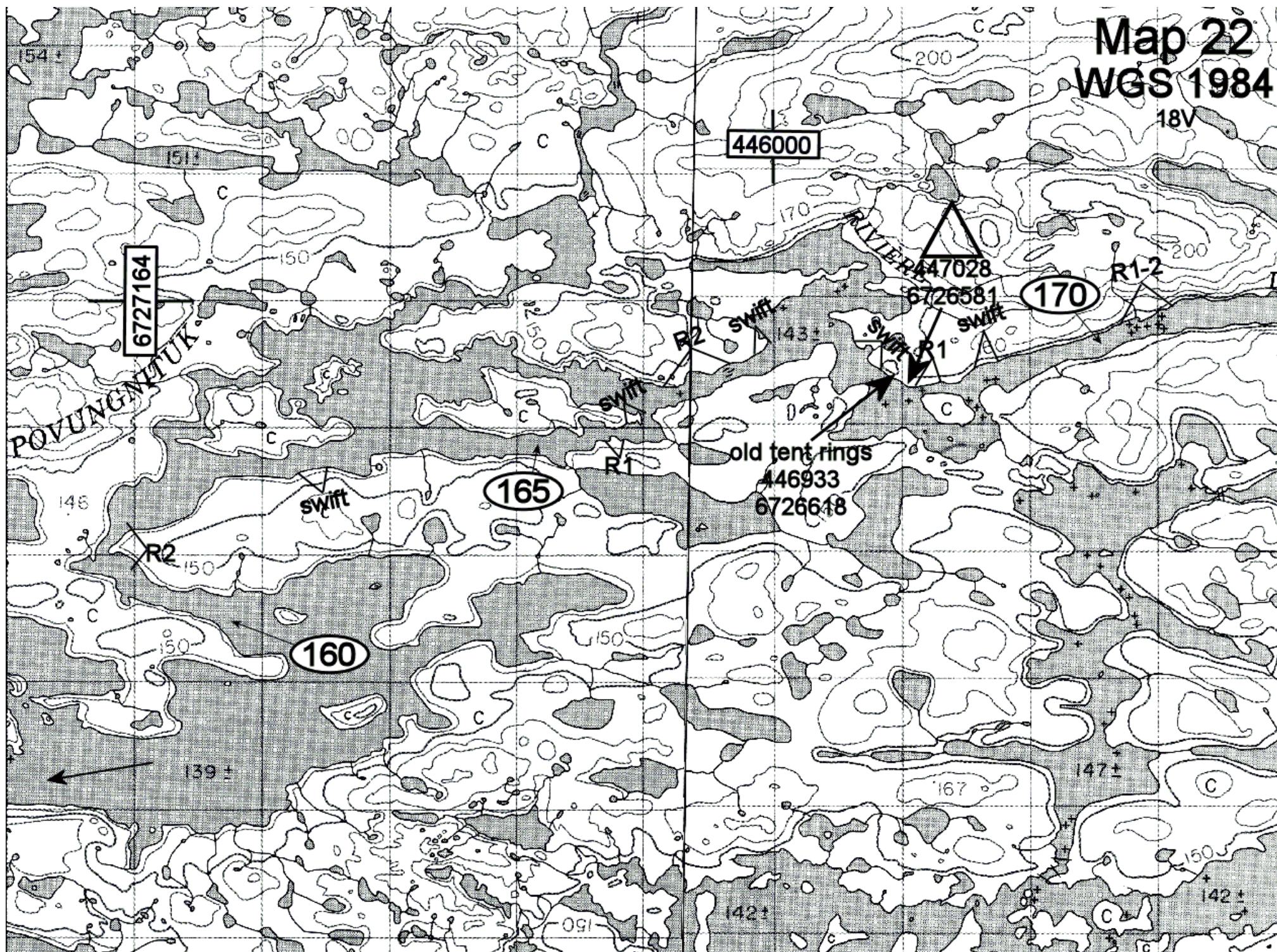
230



Map 21 WGS 1984



18V



Map 23 WGS 1984

445000

18V

160

155

439845
6723631

R2

R3
keep left

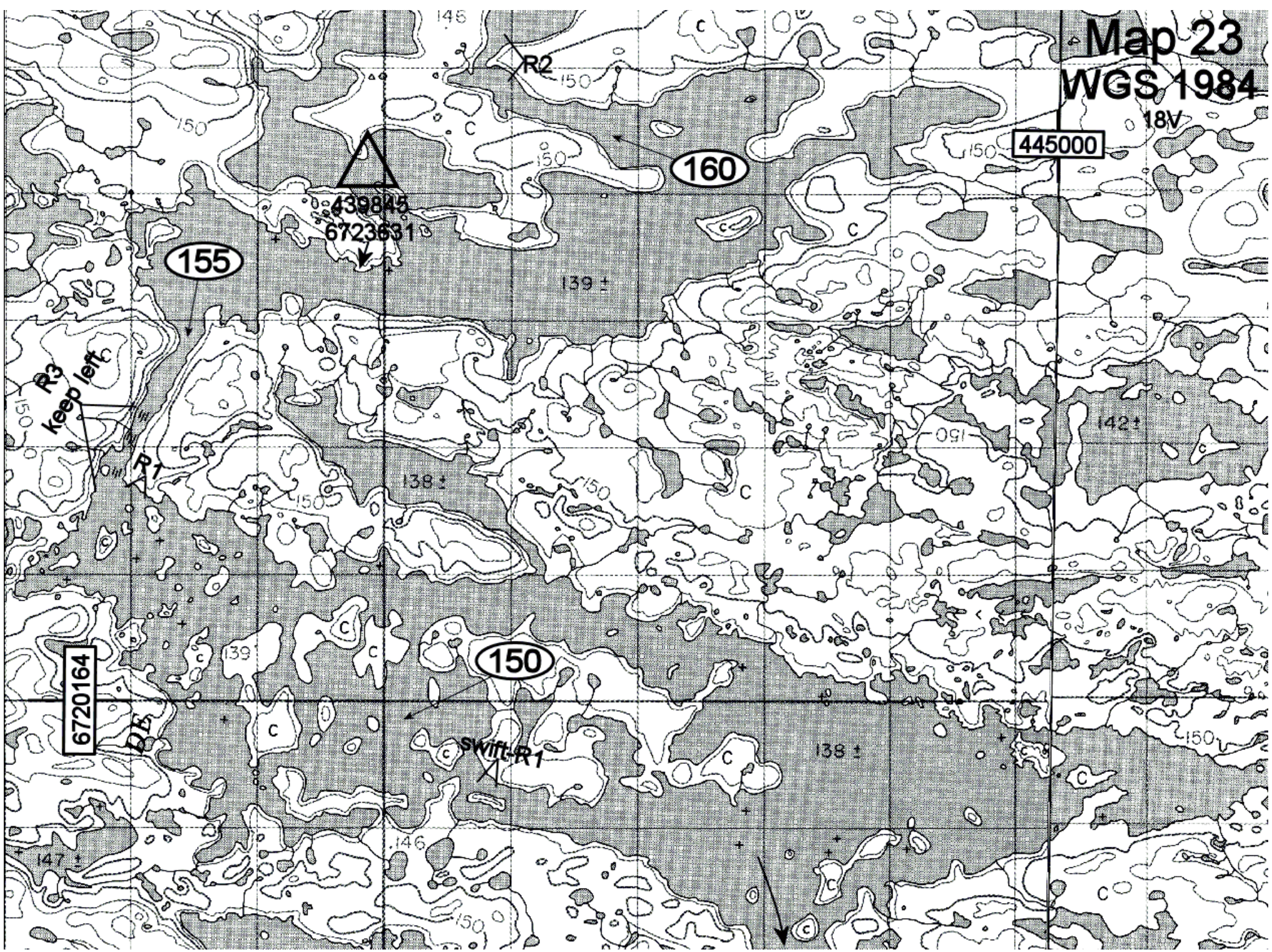
P1

150

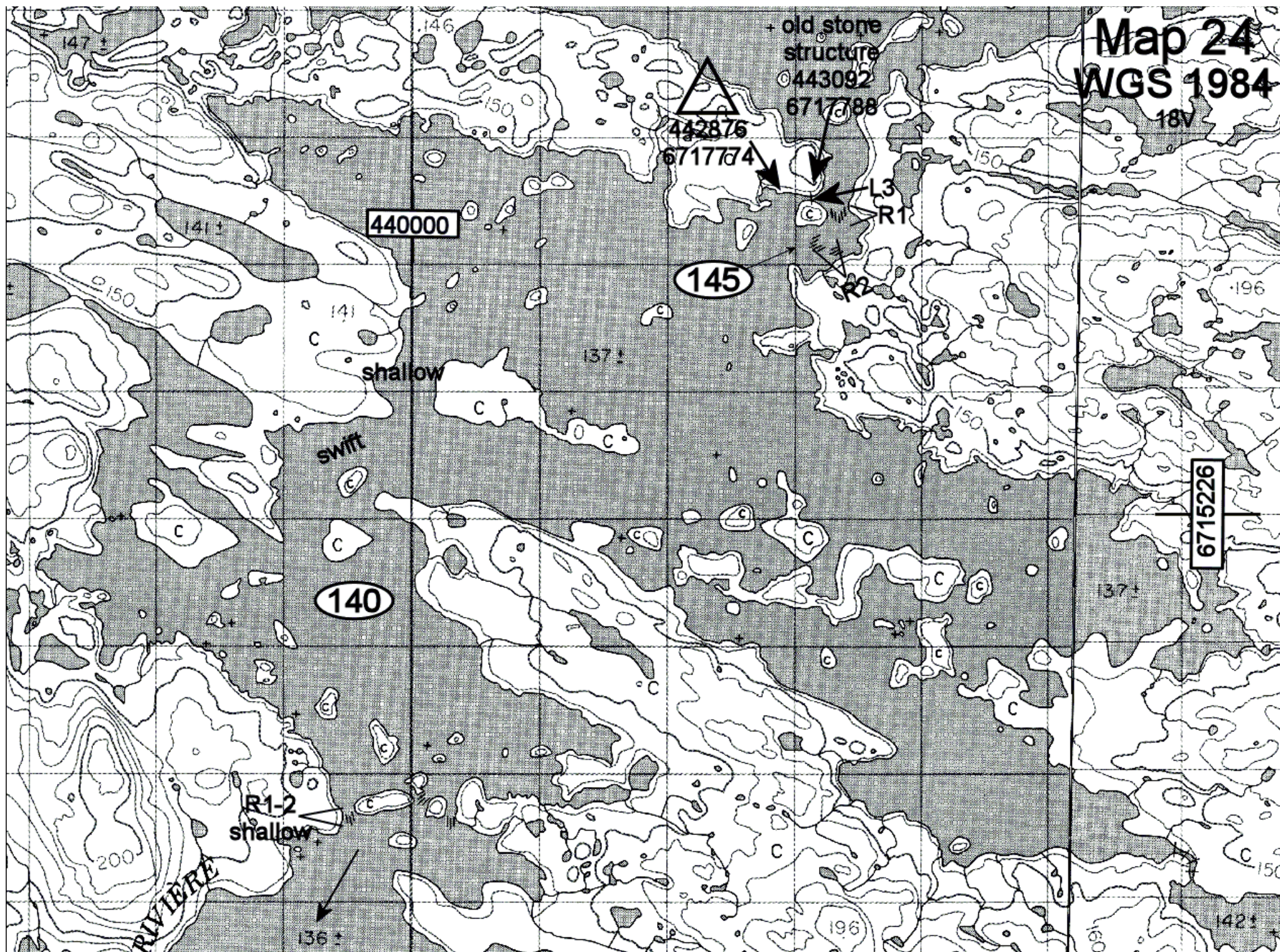
Swift R1

6720164

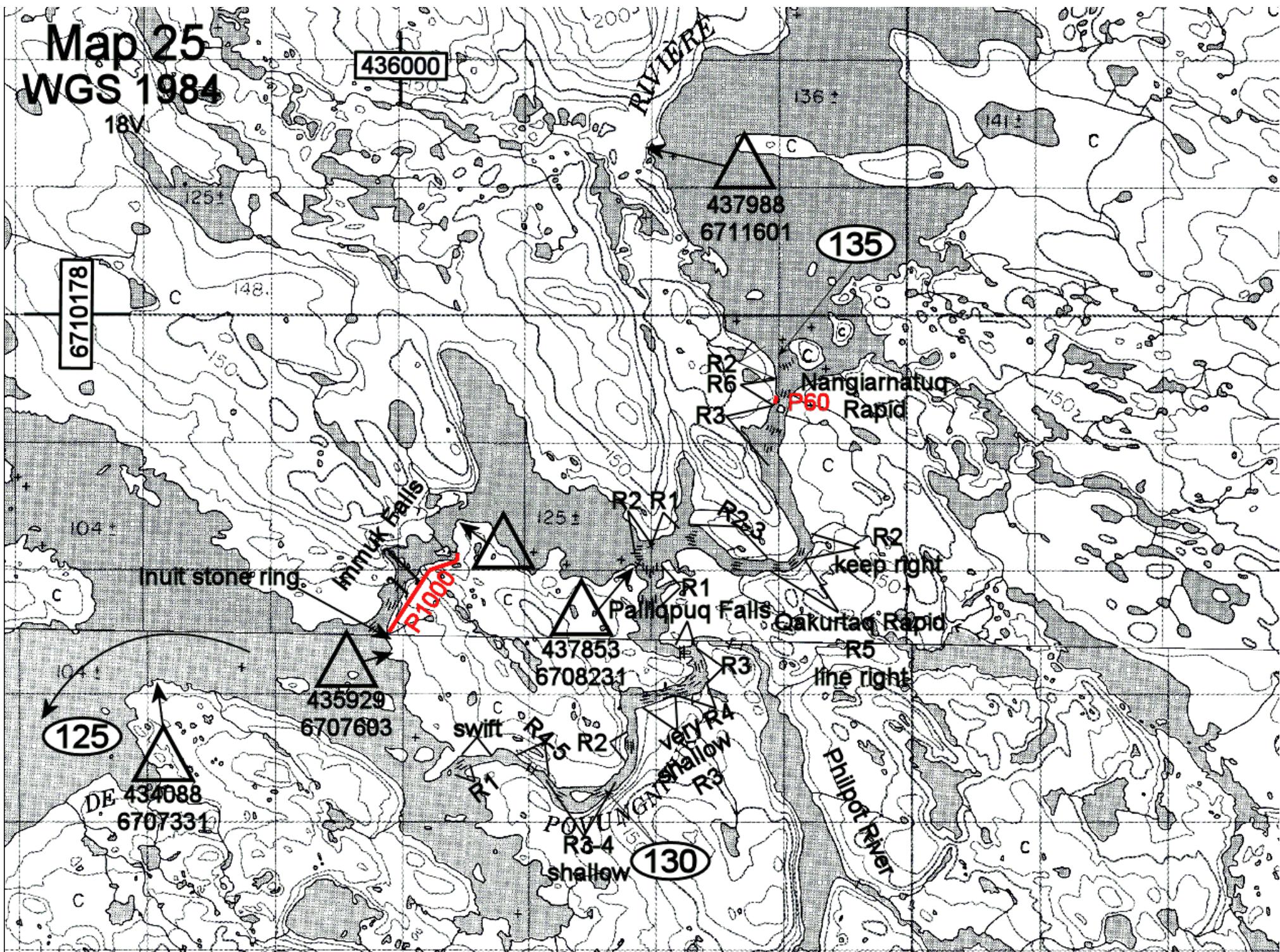
DE



18V



Map 25 WGS 1984



Map 26
WGS 1984
18V

430000

6708202

115

R2 swift

R2

swift

Inuksuit Canyon

R1

swift

R1

120

RIVIERE

R3

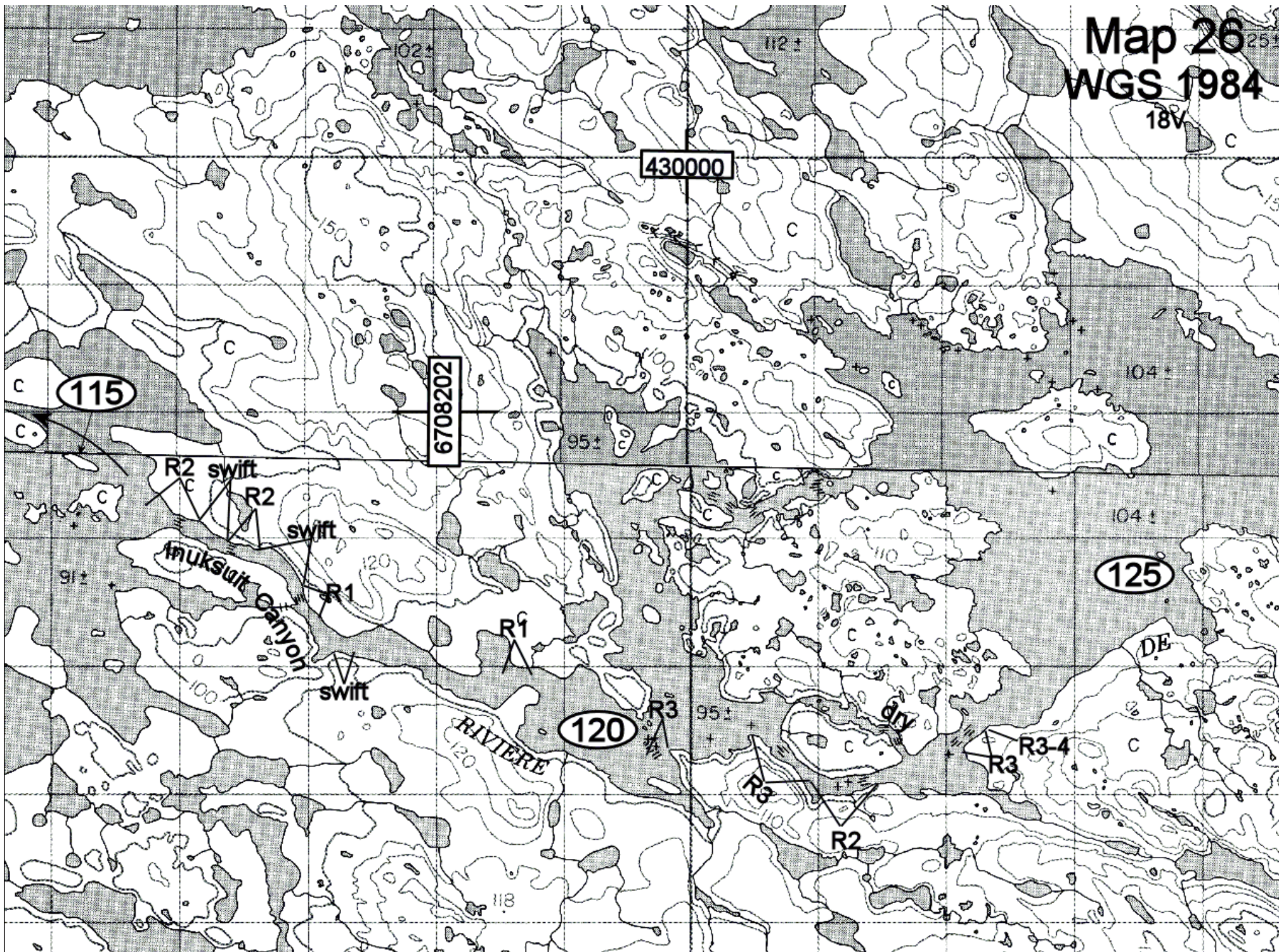
R3

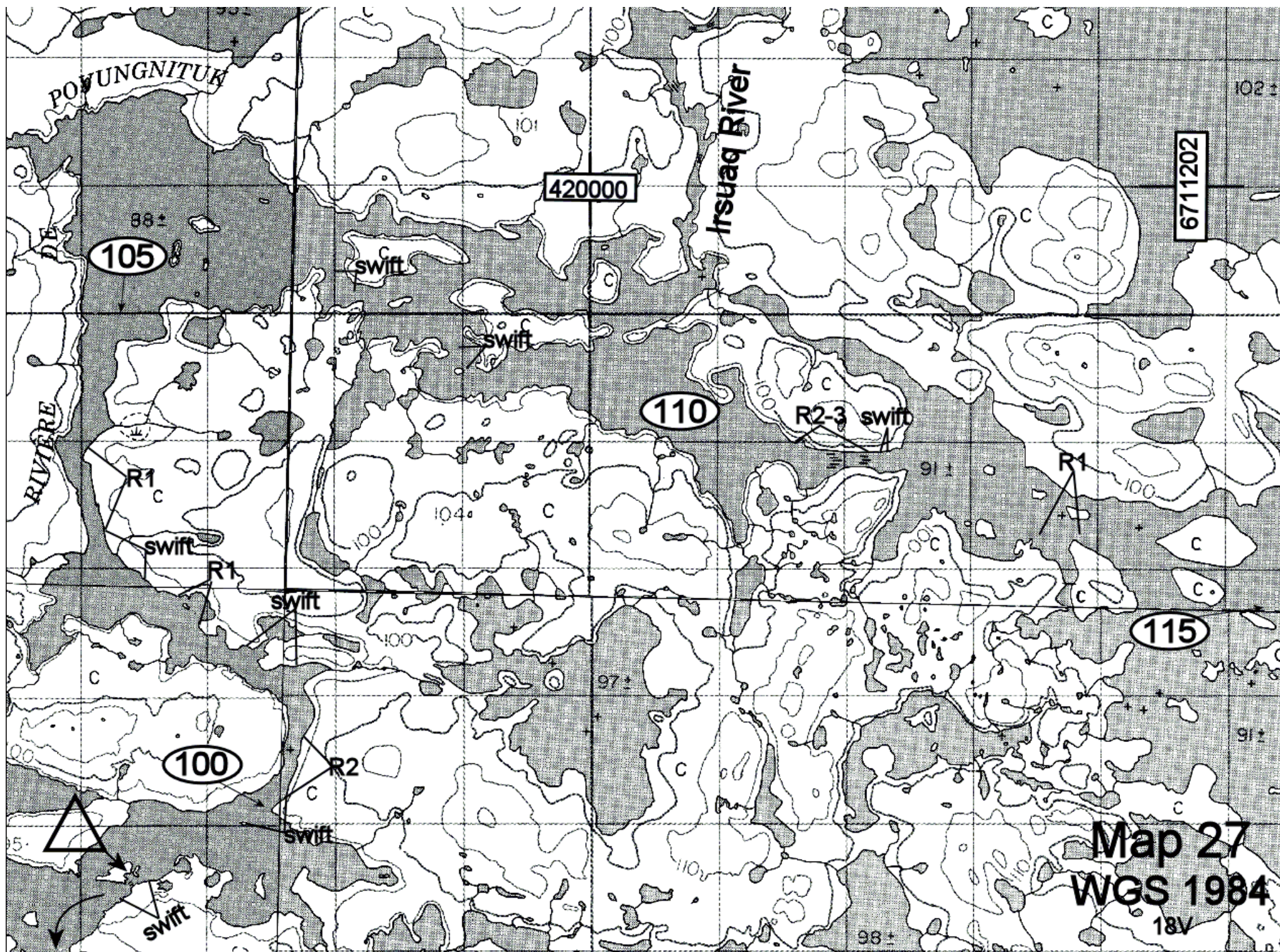
R2

R3-4

125

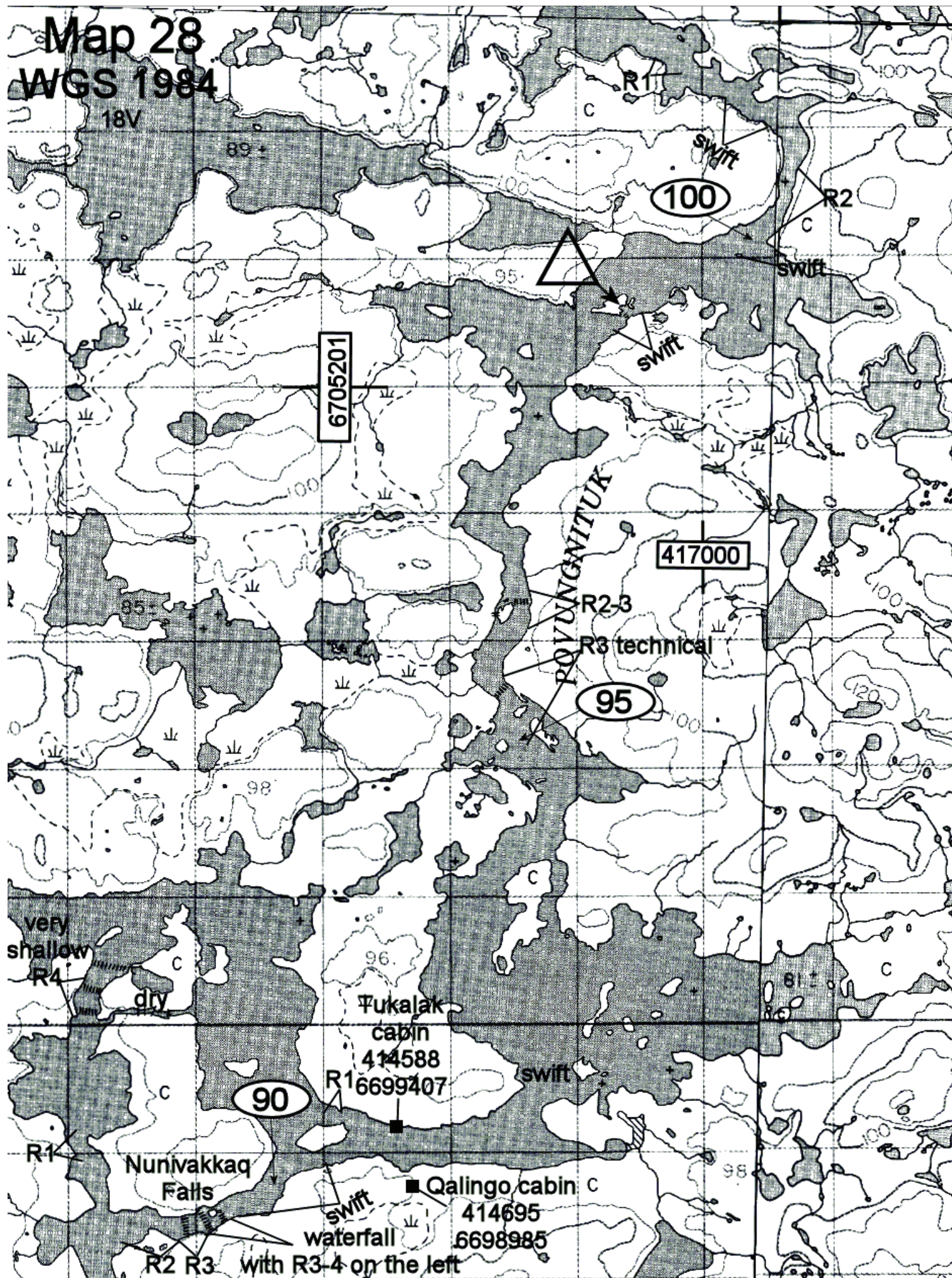
DE



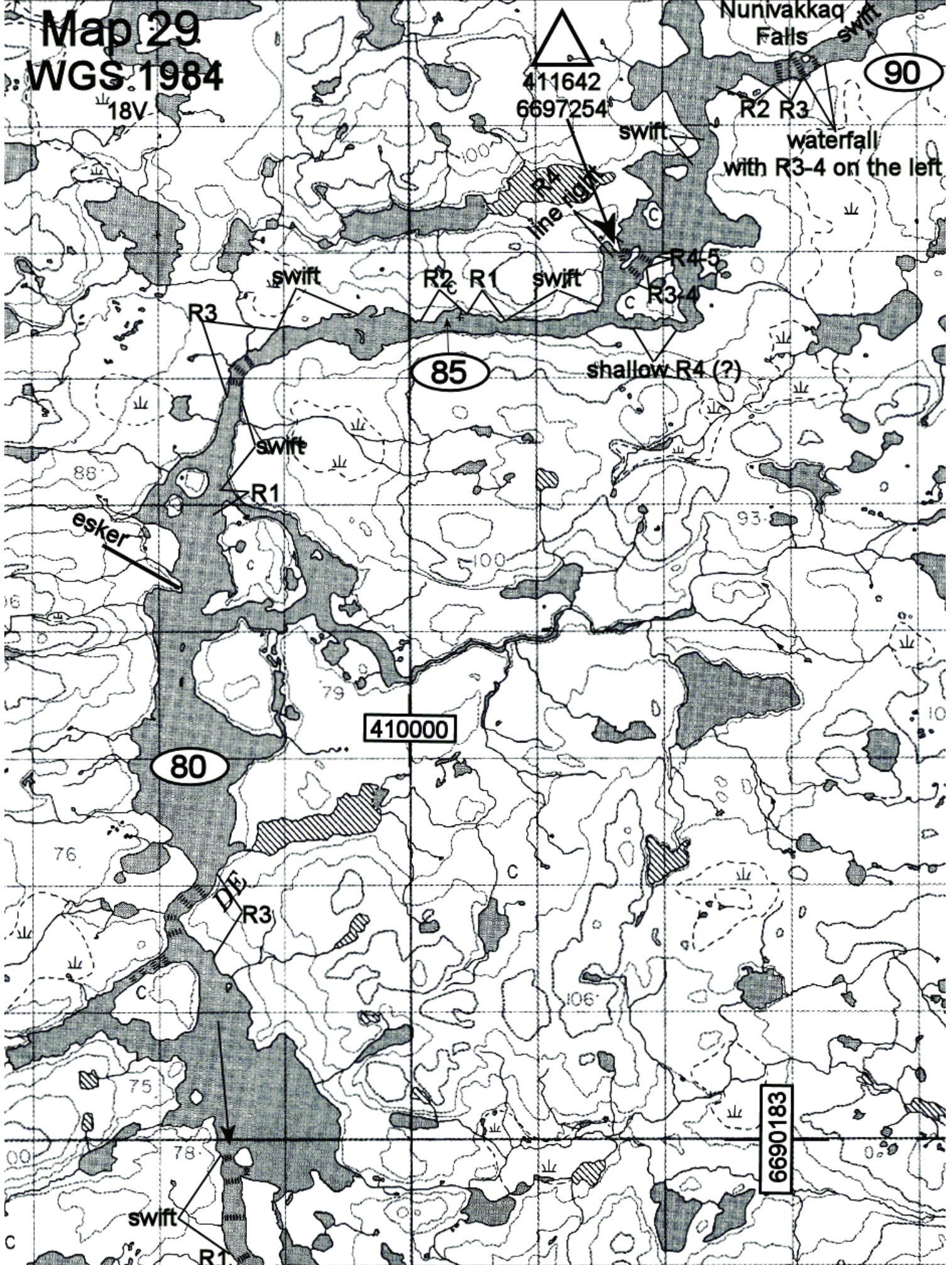


Map 28

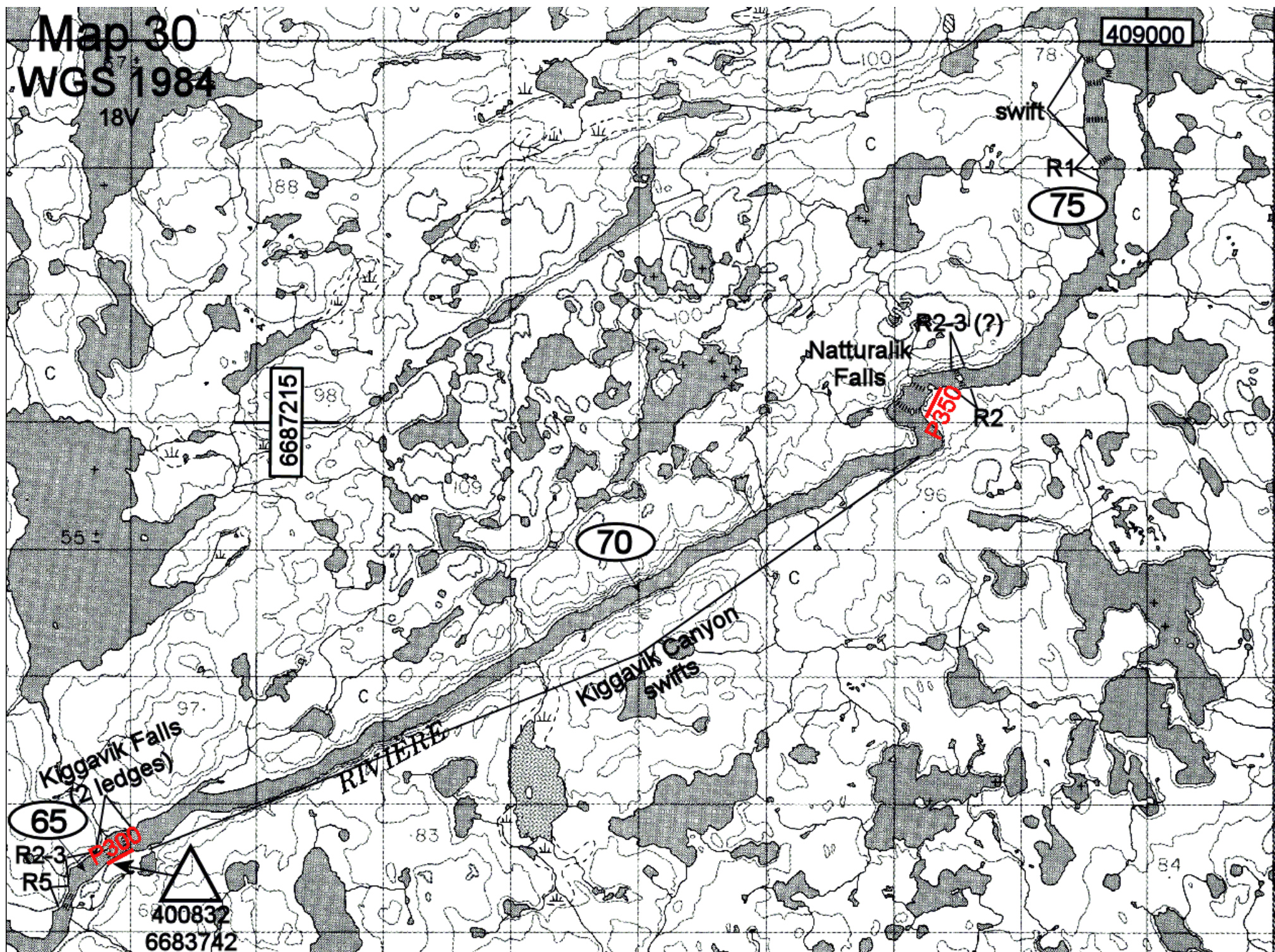
WGS 1984



Map 29
WGS 1984
18V



Map 30
WGS 1984



Map 31
WGS 1984



Map 32 WGS 1984



Map 33
WGS 1984

18V

40

Nirukittuq Canyon

swift

397624
6667413

35

Quukittuq Falls

R2-3
PASSAGE

NALLUKALLAK

R3-4 R4

R2

R4

Ninliq Falls

P40
P180
P65

swift

400000

old Inuit
structures

cabin

R1

cabin

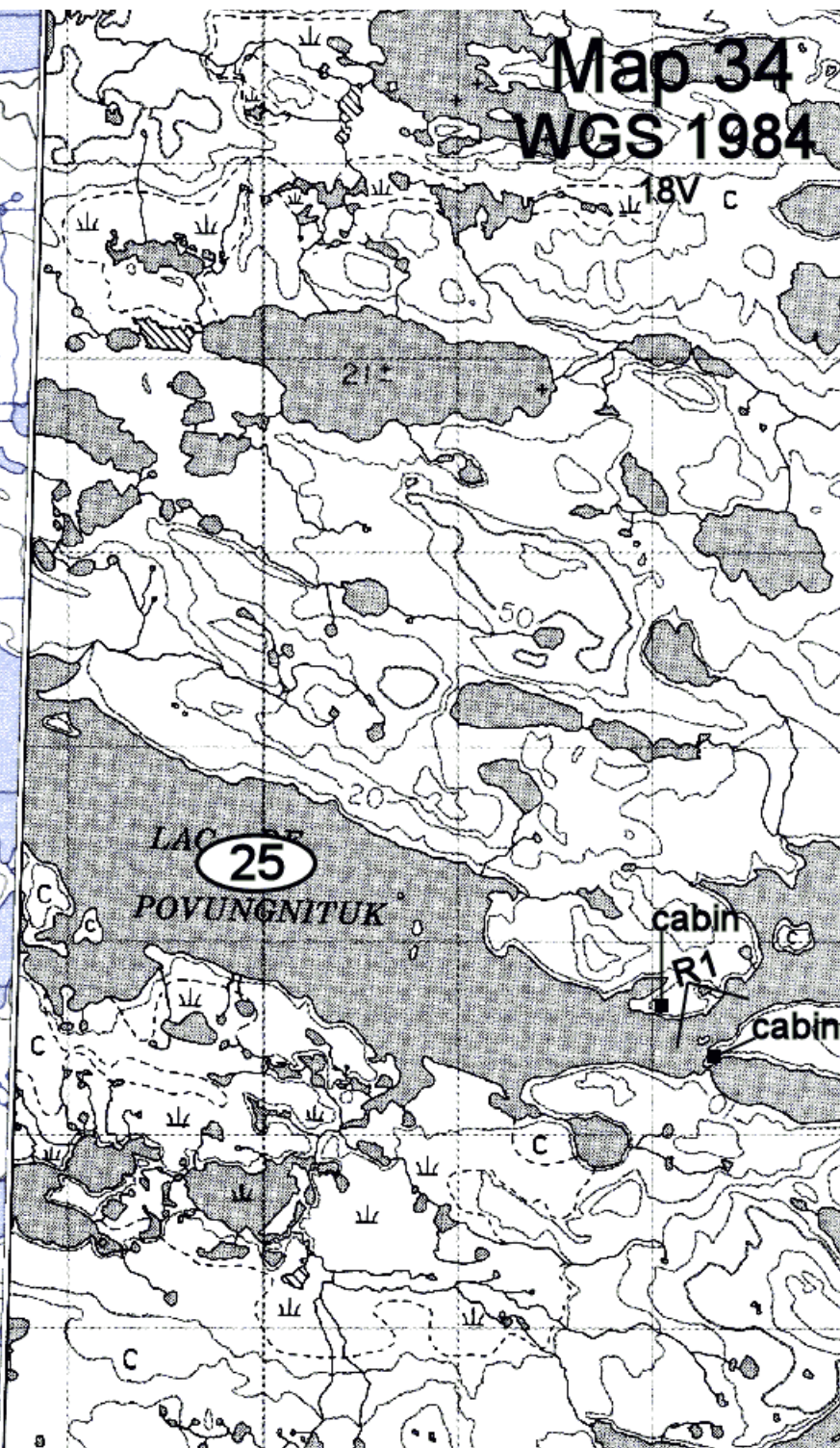
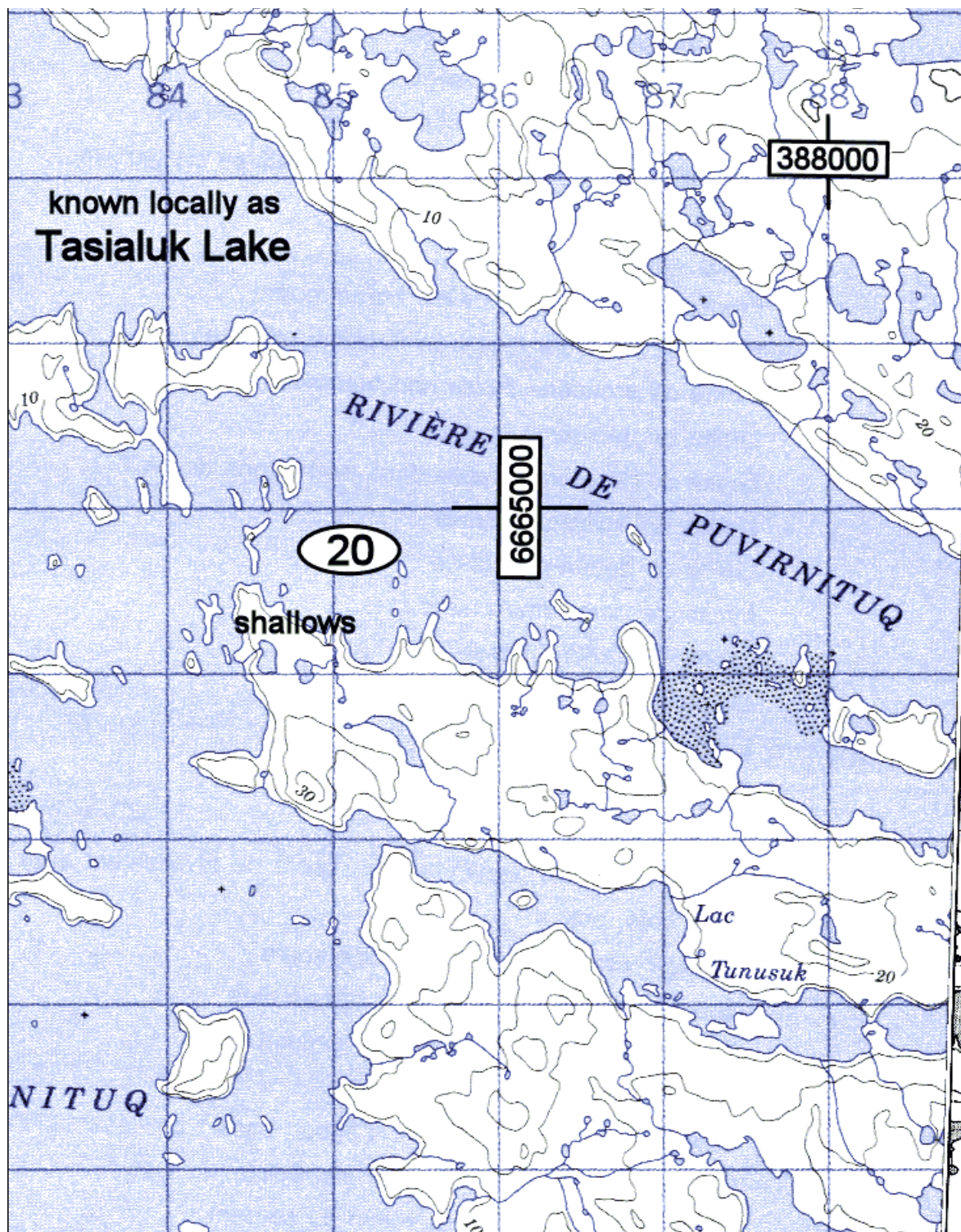
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30

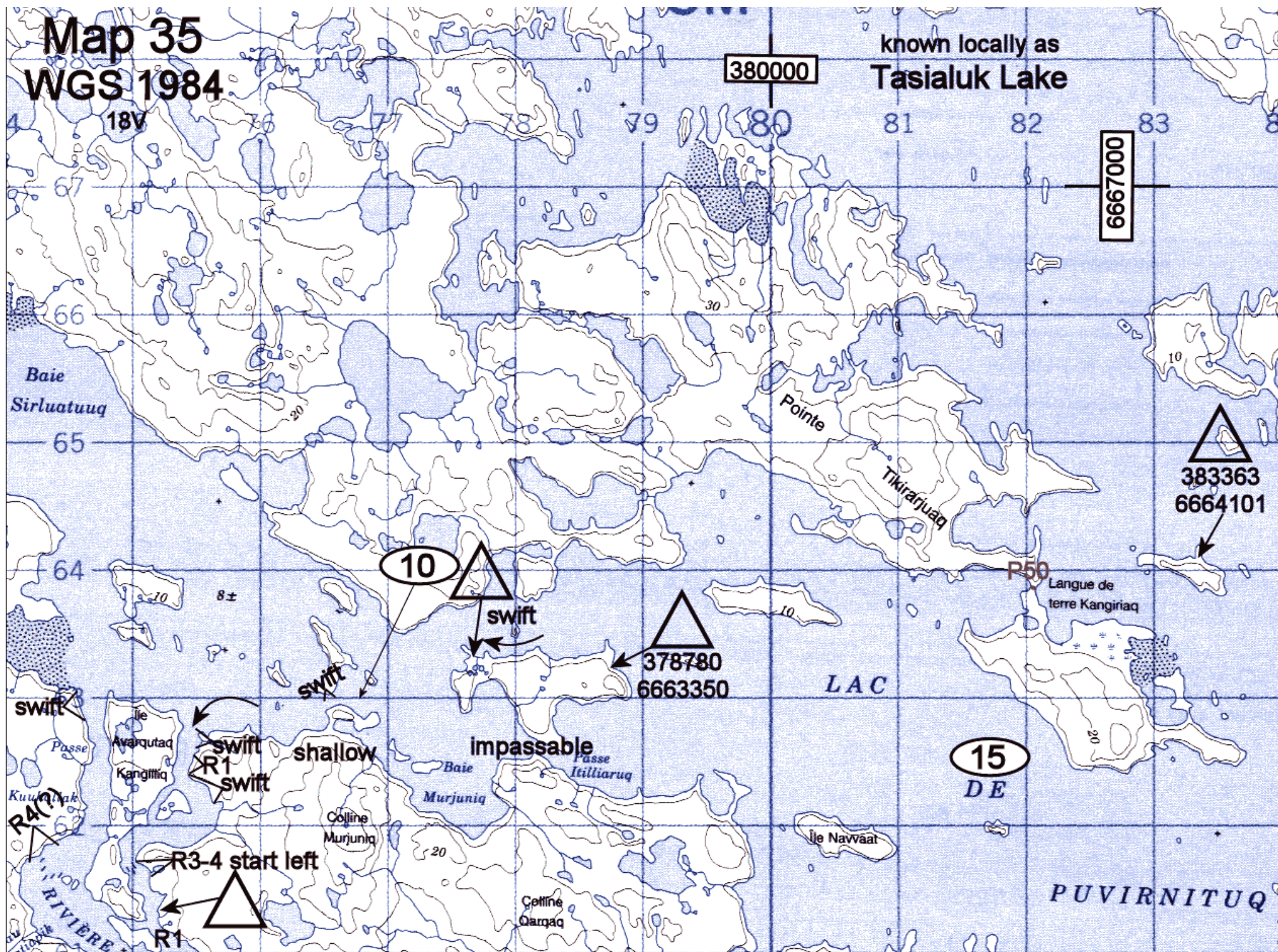
Papittukaaq
Lake

LAC
Decourte/Flaherty
River

6663196



Map 35 WGS 1984

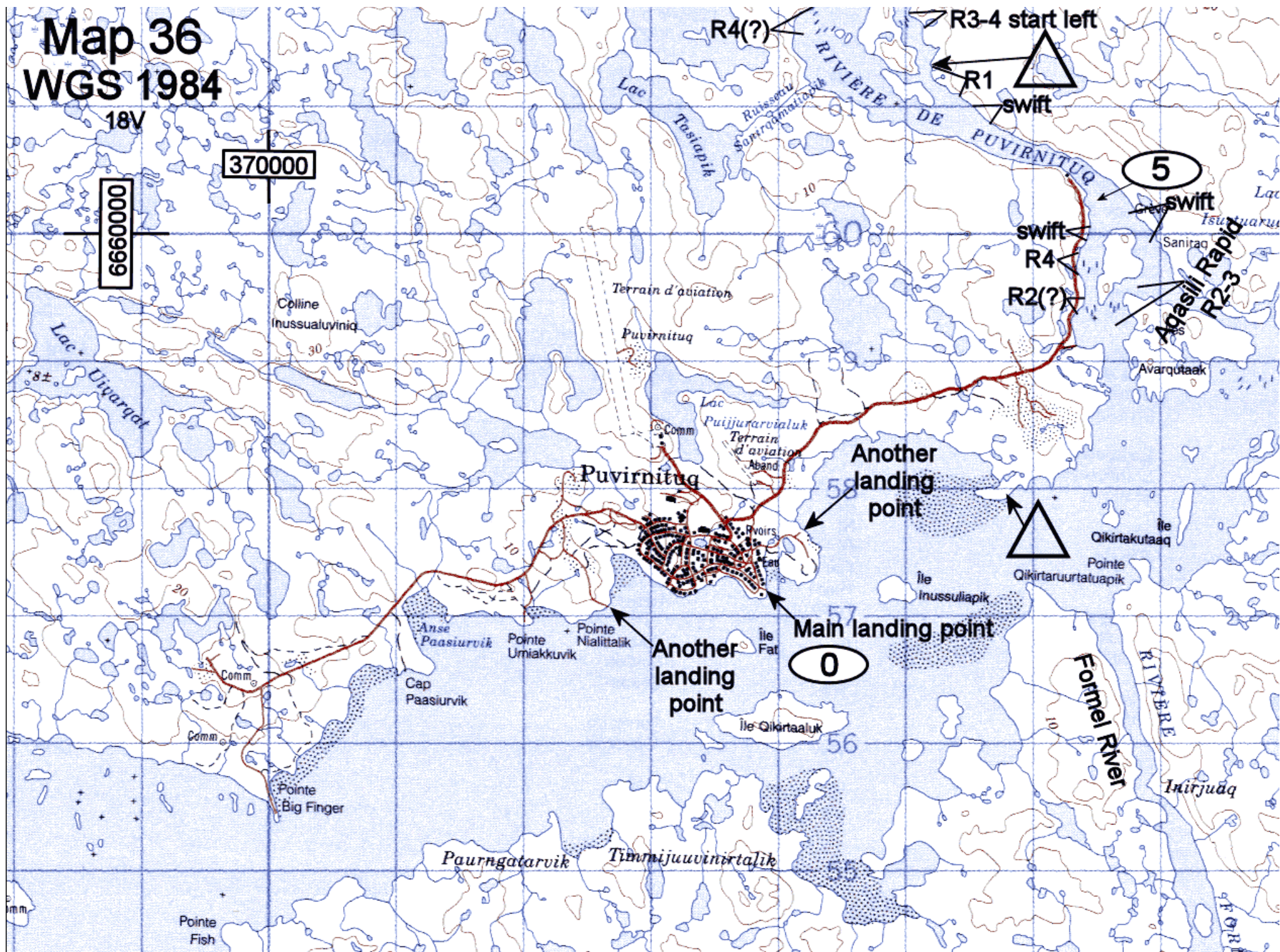


Map 36 WGS 1984

18V

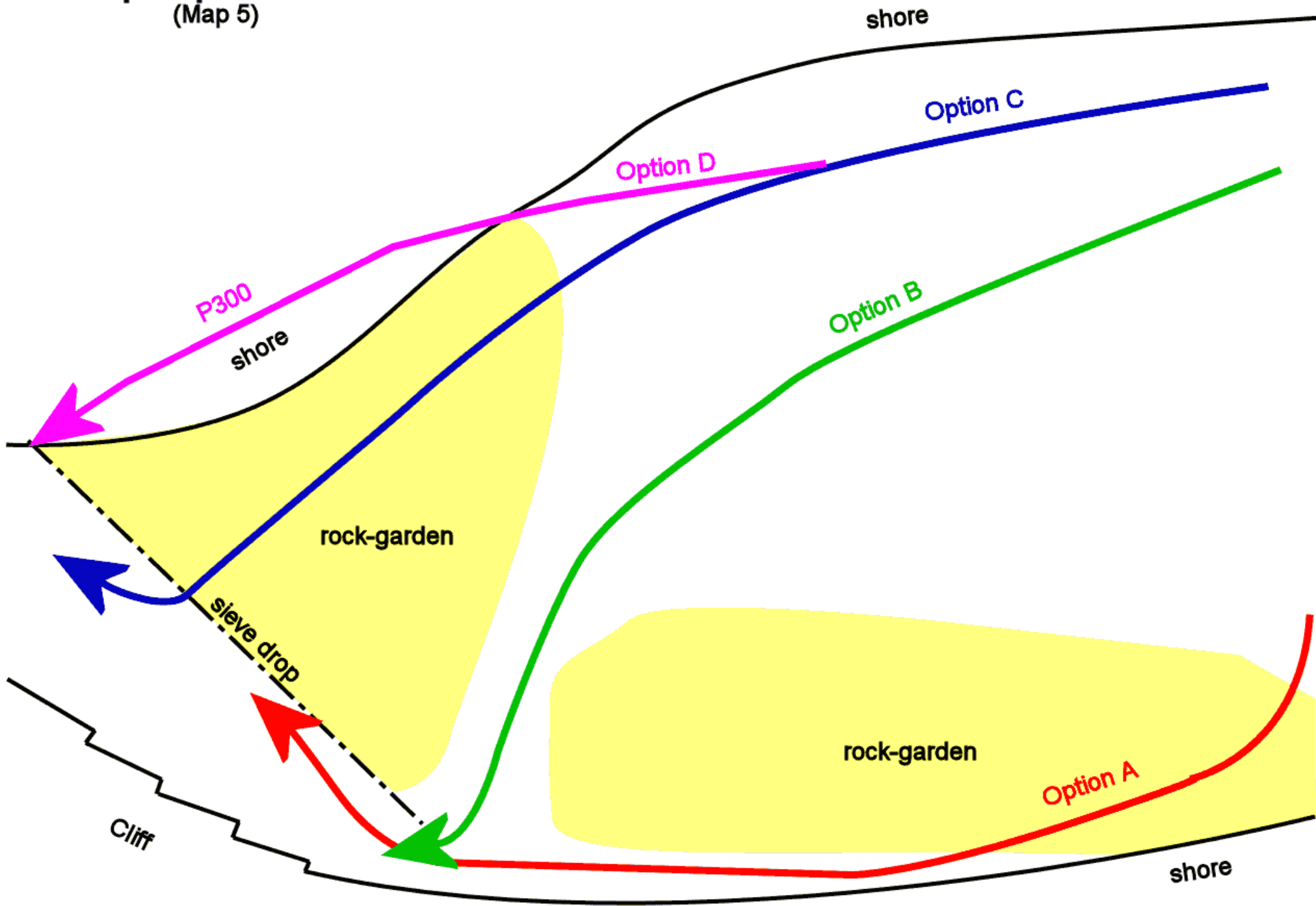
370000

6660000



Innaq Rapid - details

(Map 5)





Views of Innaq Rapid from above & below



Alternative route around Itivittuq Rapid

(map 20)

