

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 toponomy. 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 Puvirnituq. The name means "It smells like rotten meat".

The Puvirnituq 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 Puvirnituq 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 a group of 4 canoeists from Quebec led by Serge Théorêt. They went up the Vachon River and then through a series of lakes south of Pingualuit Crater, thus bypassing the upper section of the Puvirnituq. 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/puvirnituq-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 & Puvirnituq 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 Puvirnituq 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 Qarqaq rapid we did a 190 m portage on river left. The following Inaqunaittuq 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 Inaqunaittuq 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 Beauparlant River. The Beauparlant 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

Sitajauaq 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

Inaqnartuq 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 Palliqpuk 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

Qiarnqatuq 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 "Kangiriaq 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 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
Piujuq 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
Pallipuq Creek	Dry
Tutsianiq Rapids	Prayer
Kuuvvaluk River	Noise of rushing water
Sitjajuaq Rapid	Great breaking wave
Nangiartuq Rapid	He is frightened
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
Palliqpuq 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

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Lester Kovac, 2011

Base Topographic Maps

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Available from www.cartespleinair.org.

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

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Manarsulik Lake

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shallow

shallow shallow

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Park Base Camp

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Pinguiluit Crater

CRATÈRE DU NOUVEAU QUÉBEC

Pingaluk Lake

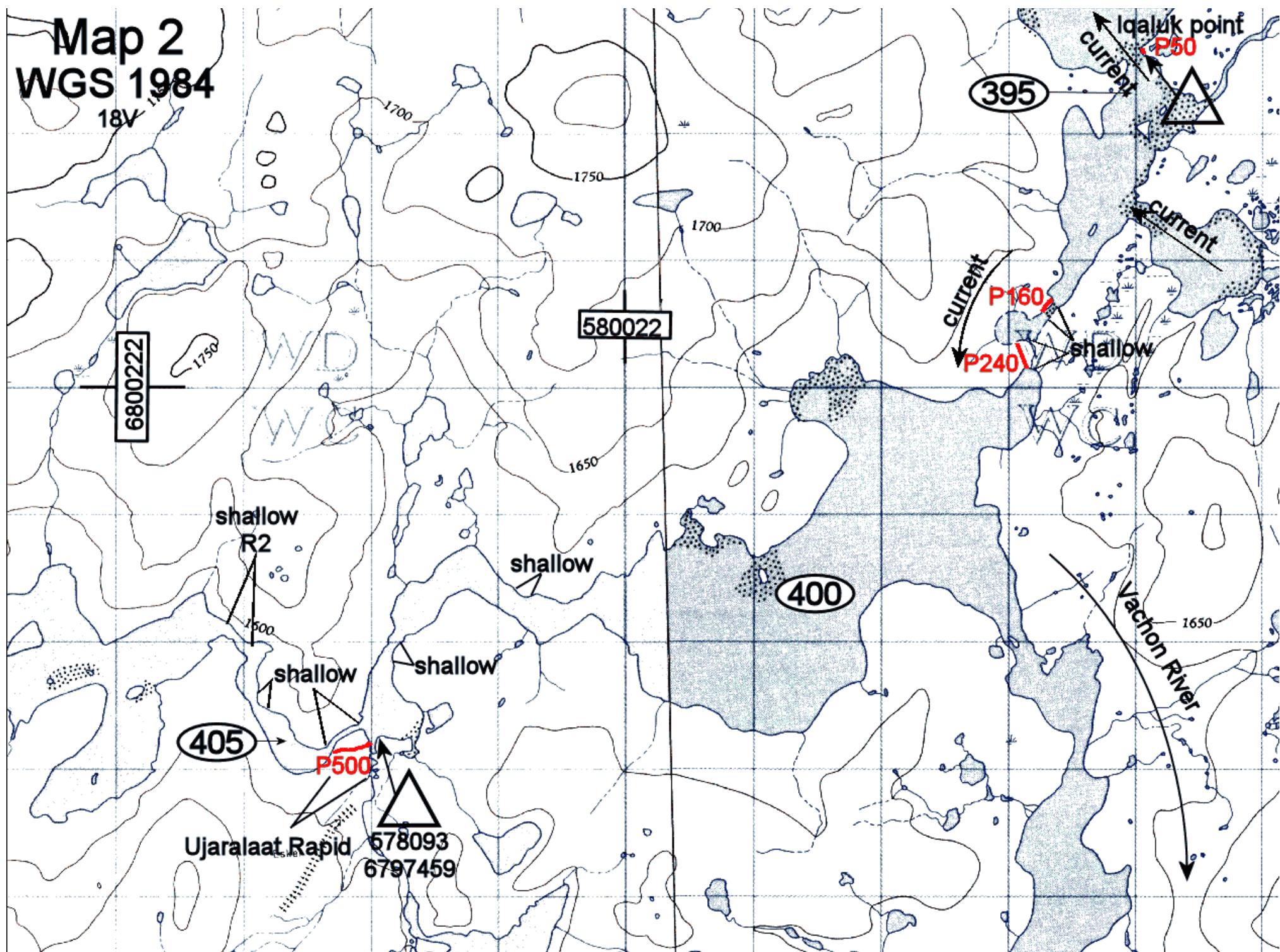
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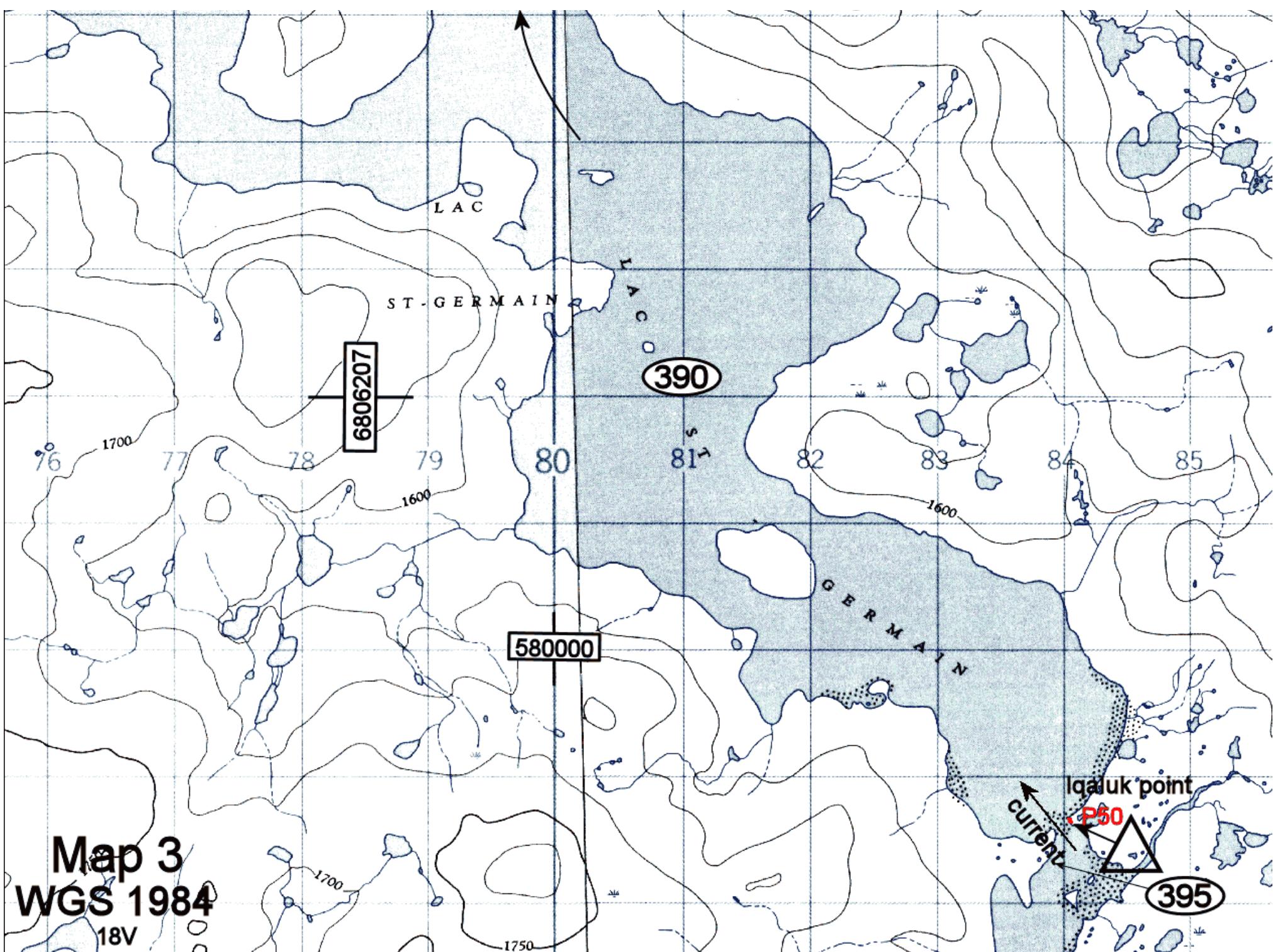
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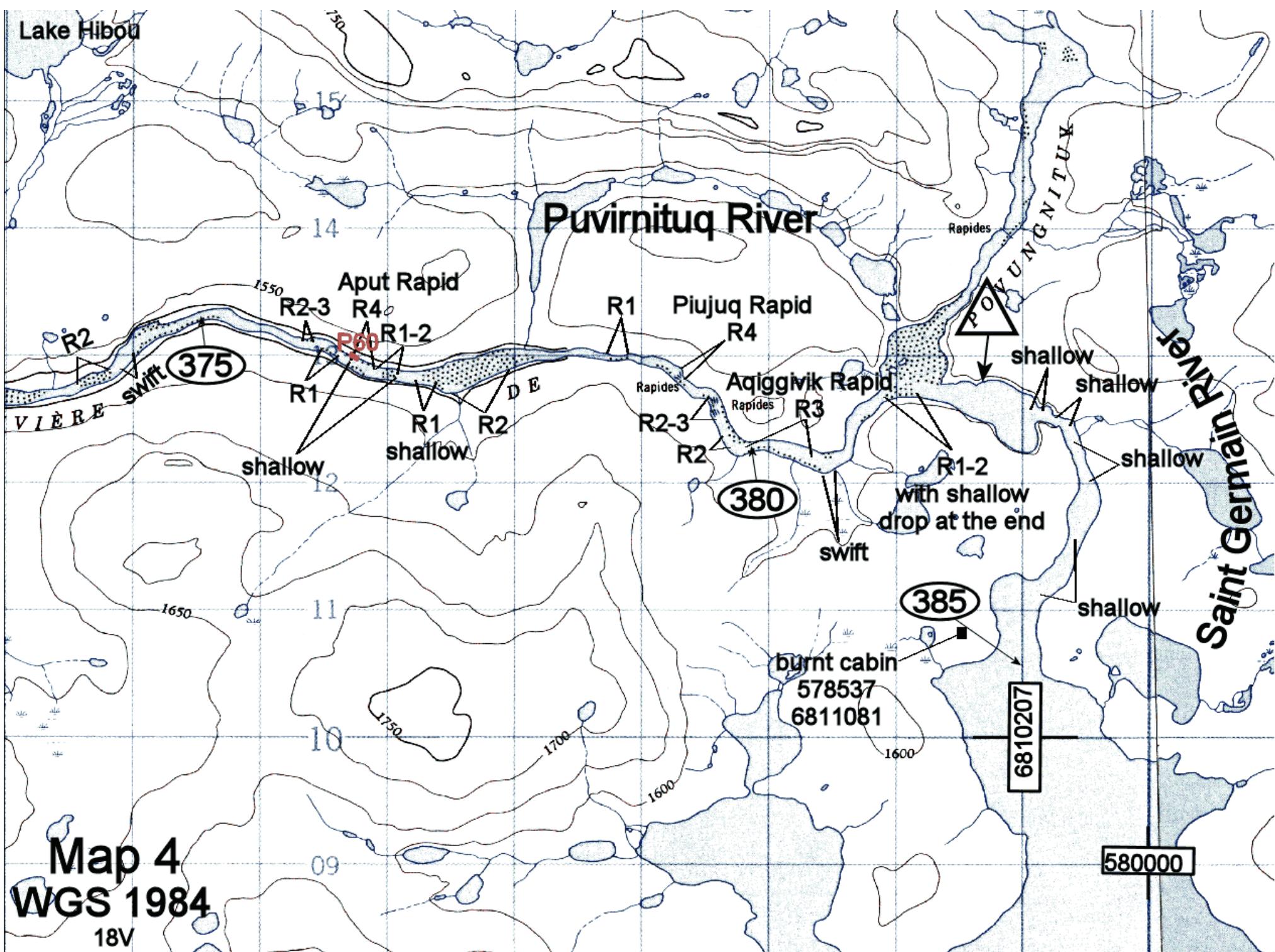
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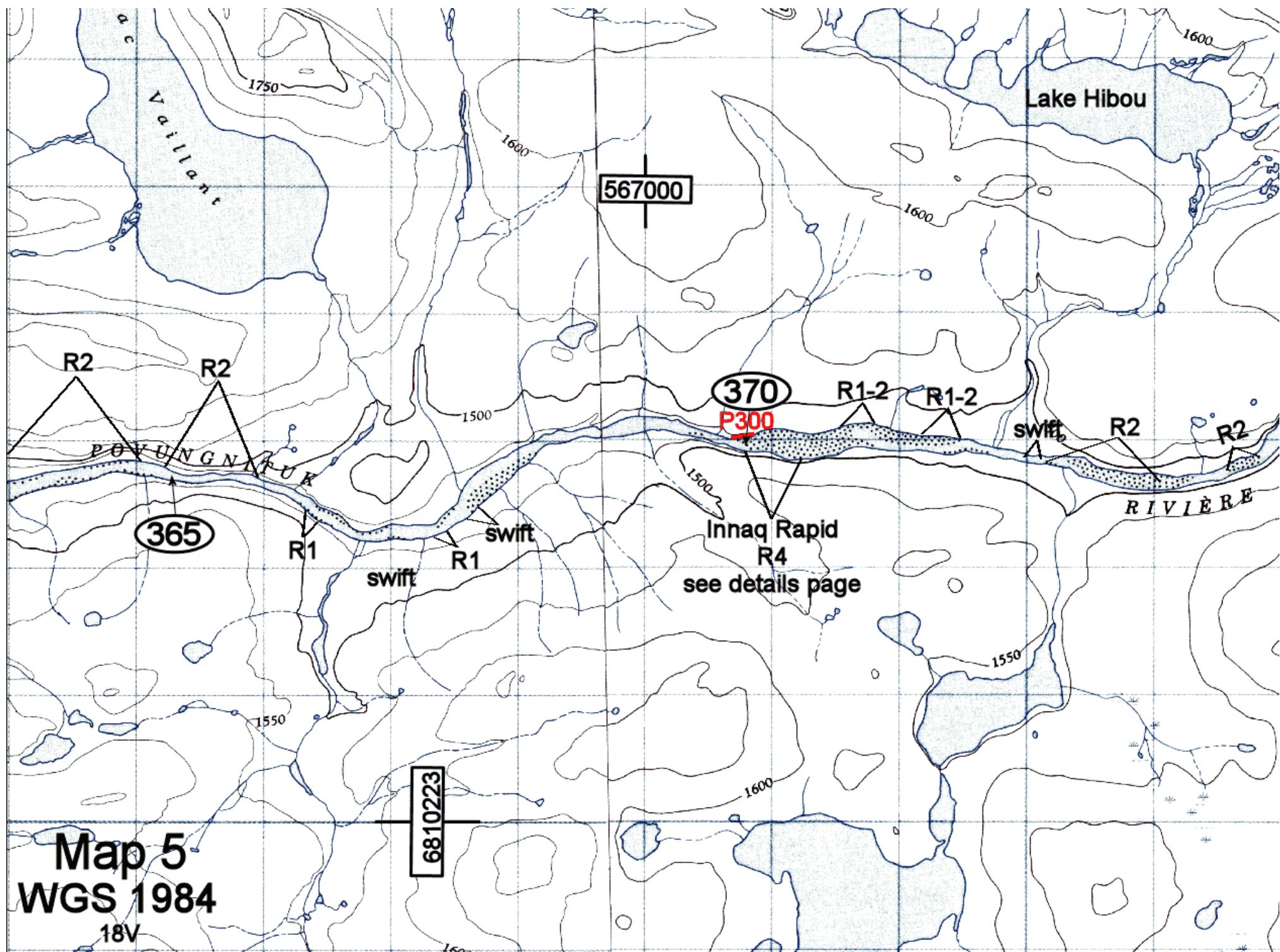
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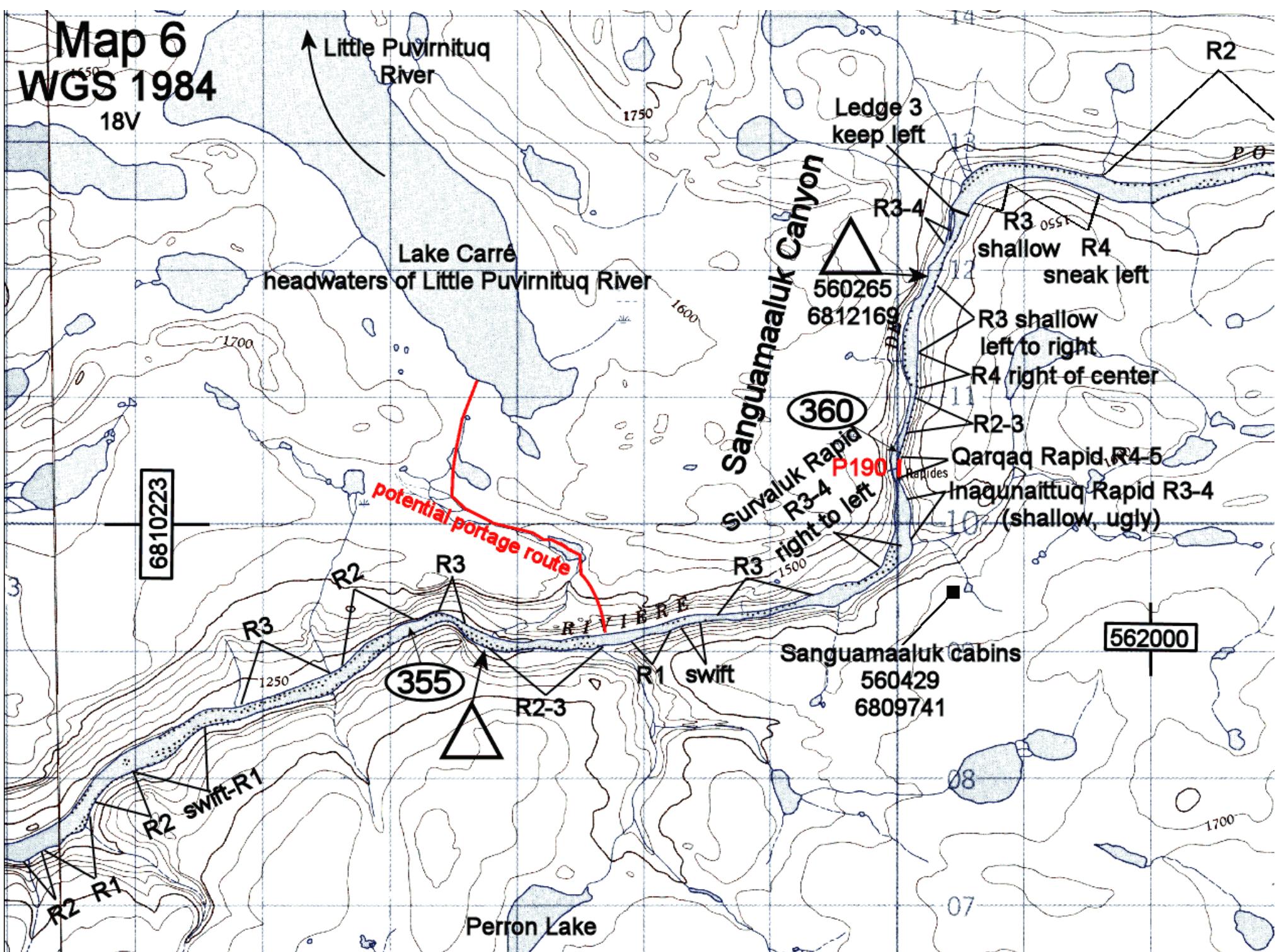




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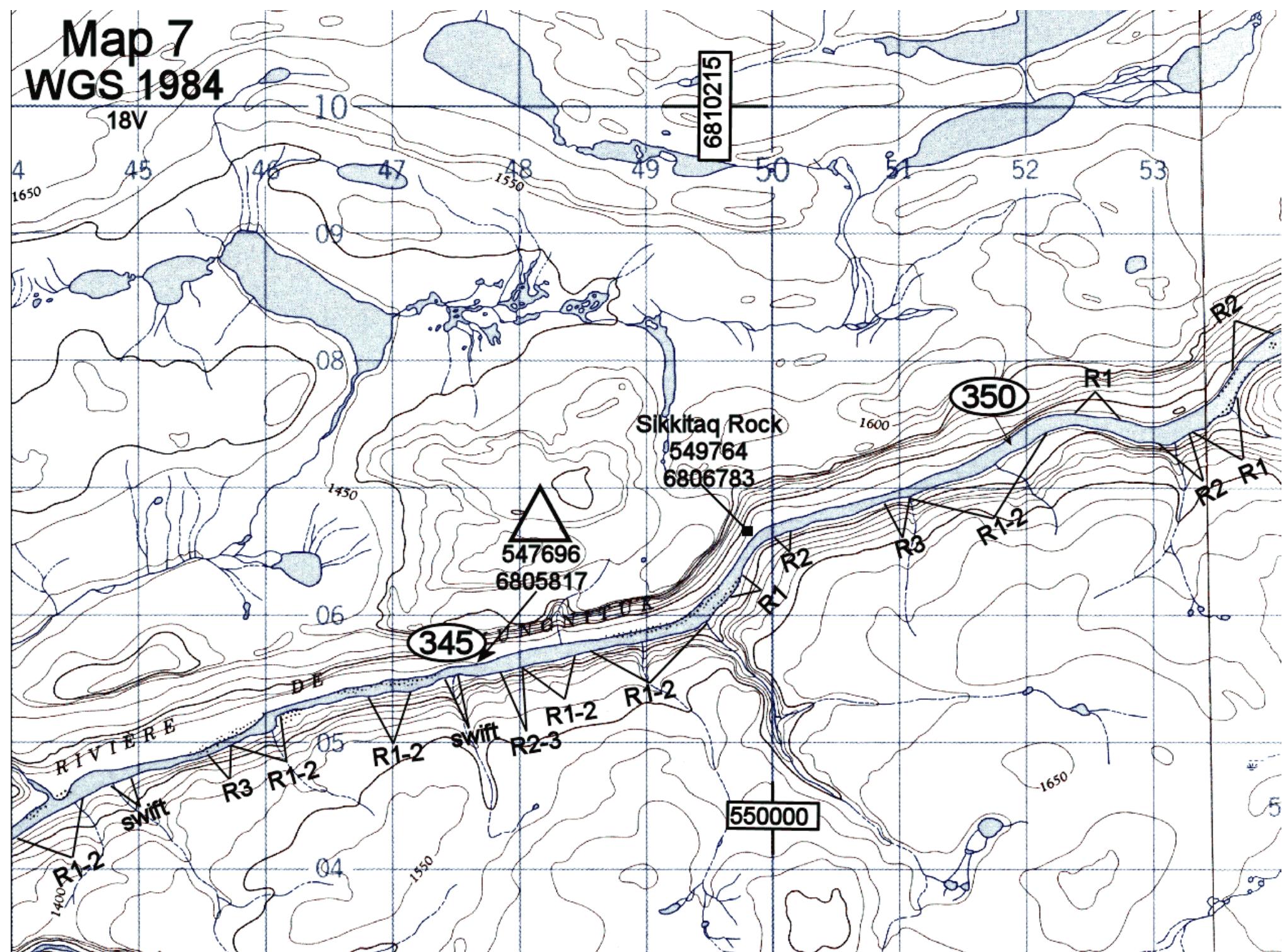
Map 6 WGS 1984

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Map 7

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Map 8

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Park boundary
(approx., as of 2011)

Lamarche River

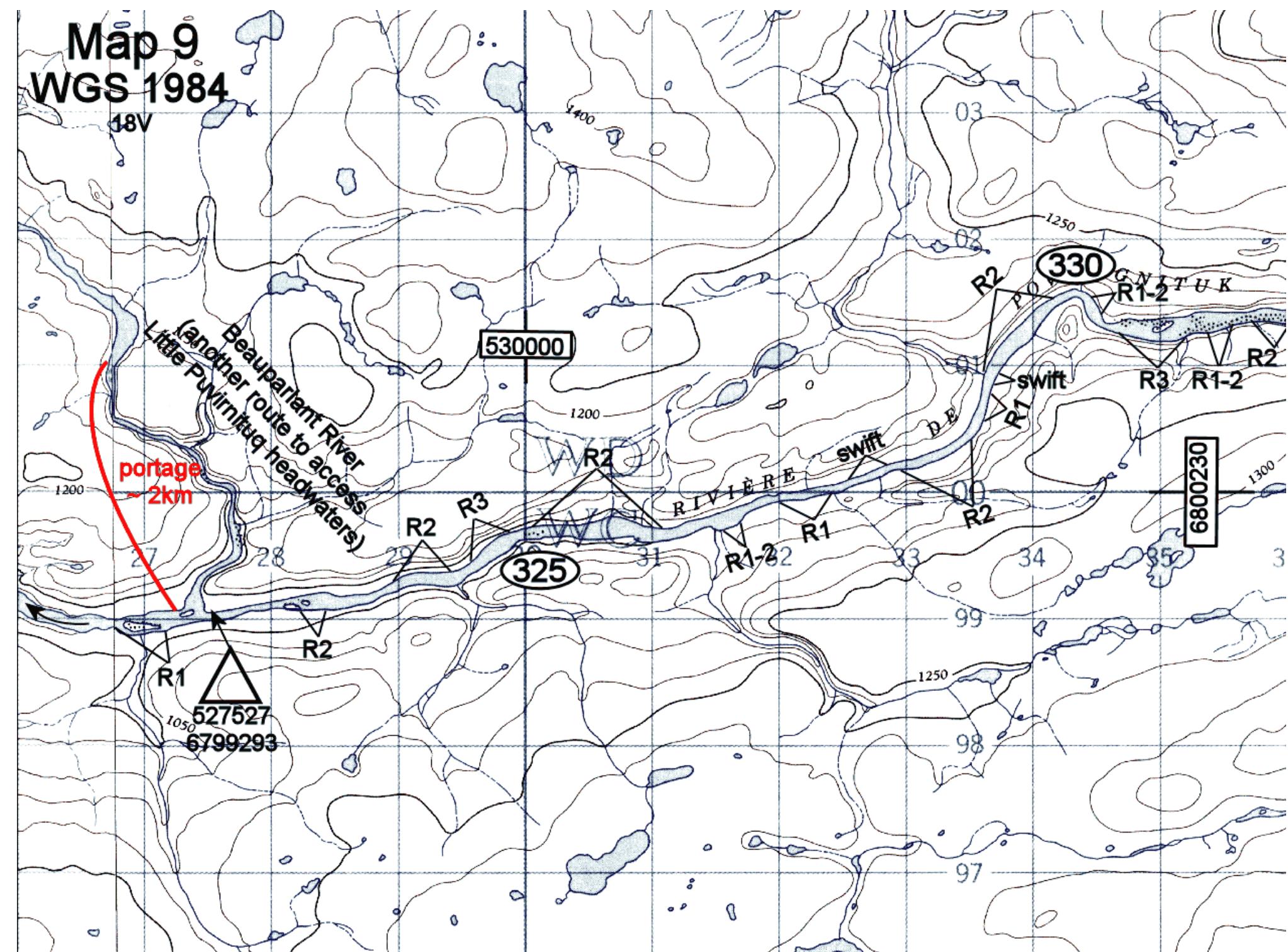
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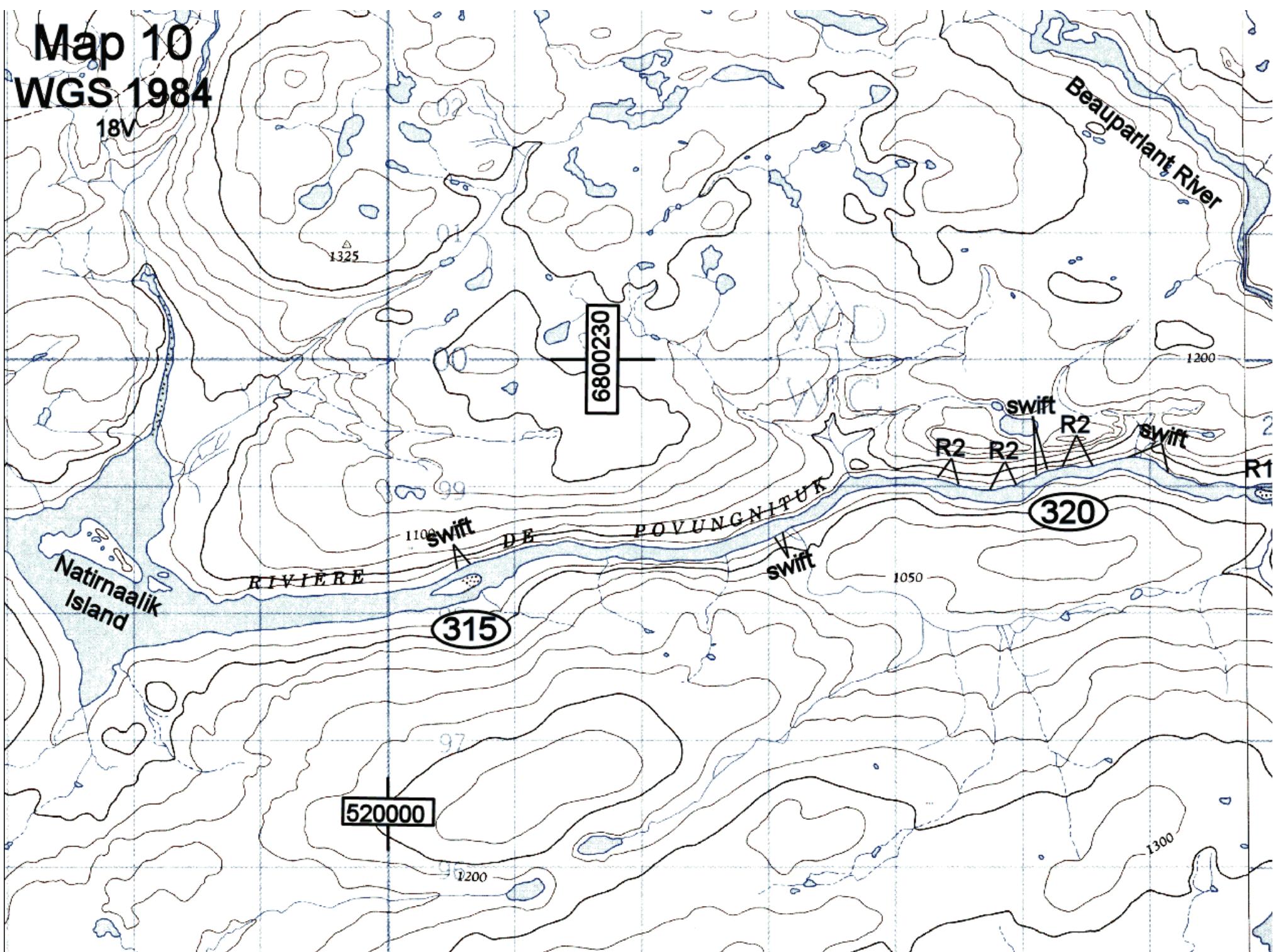
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Map 10

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Map 11 WGS 1984

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Nuqraq Rapid

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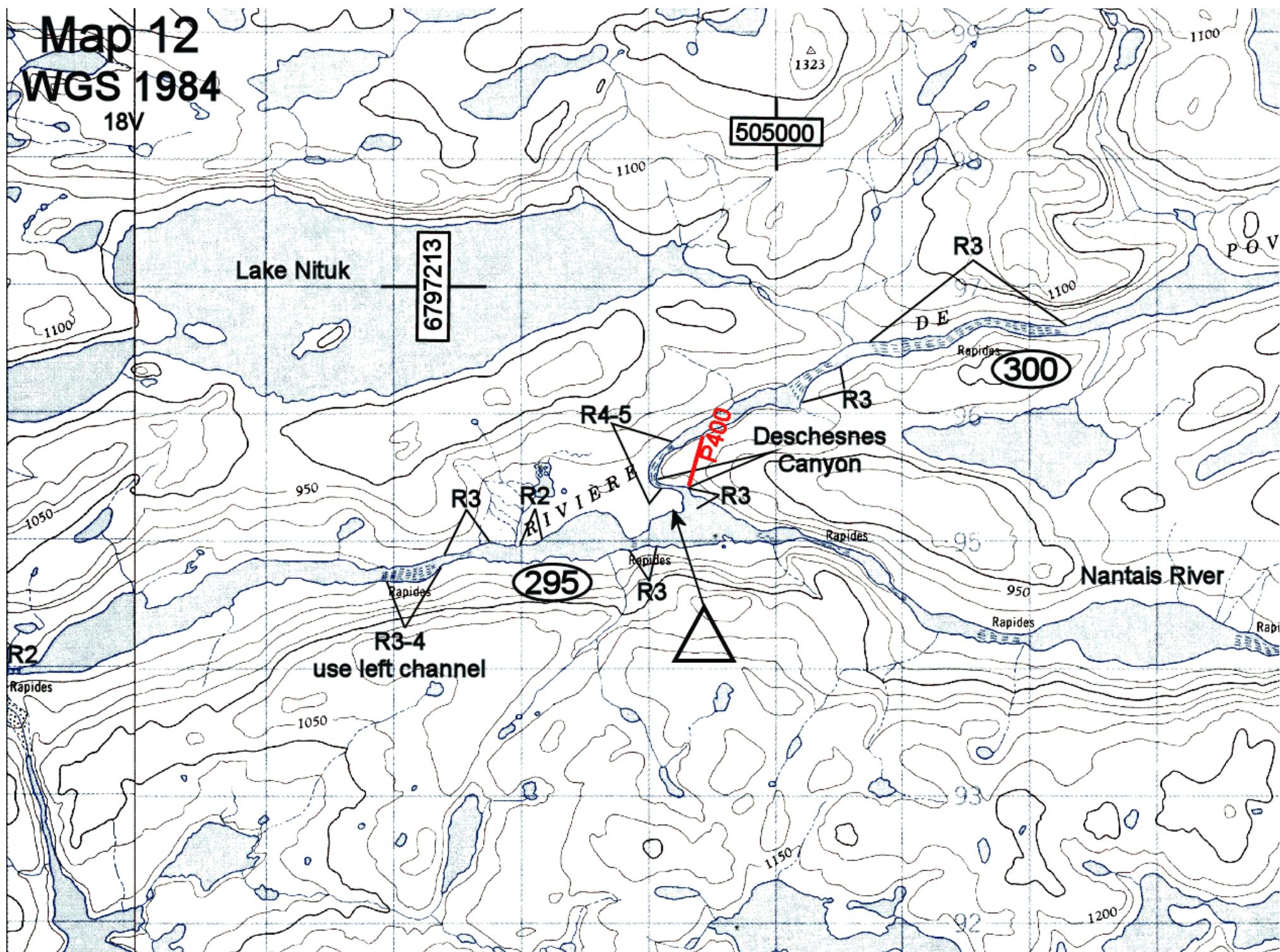
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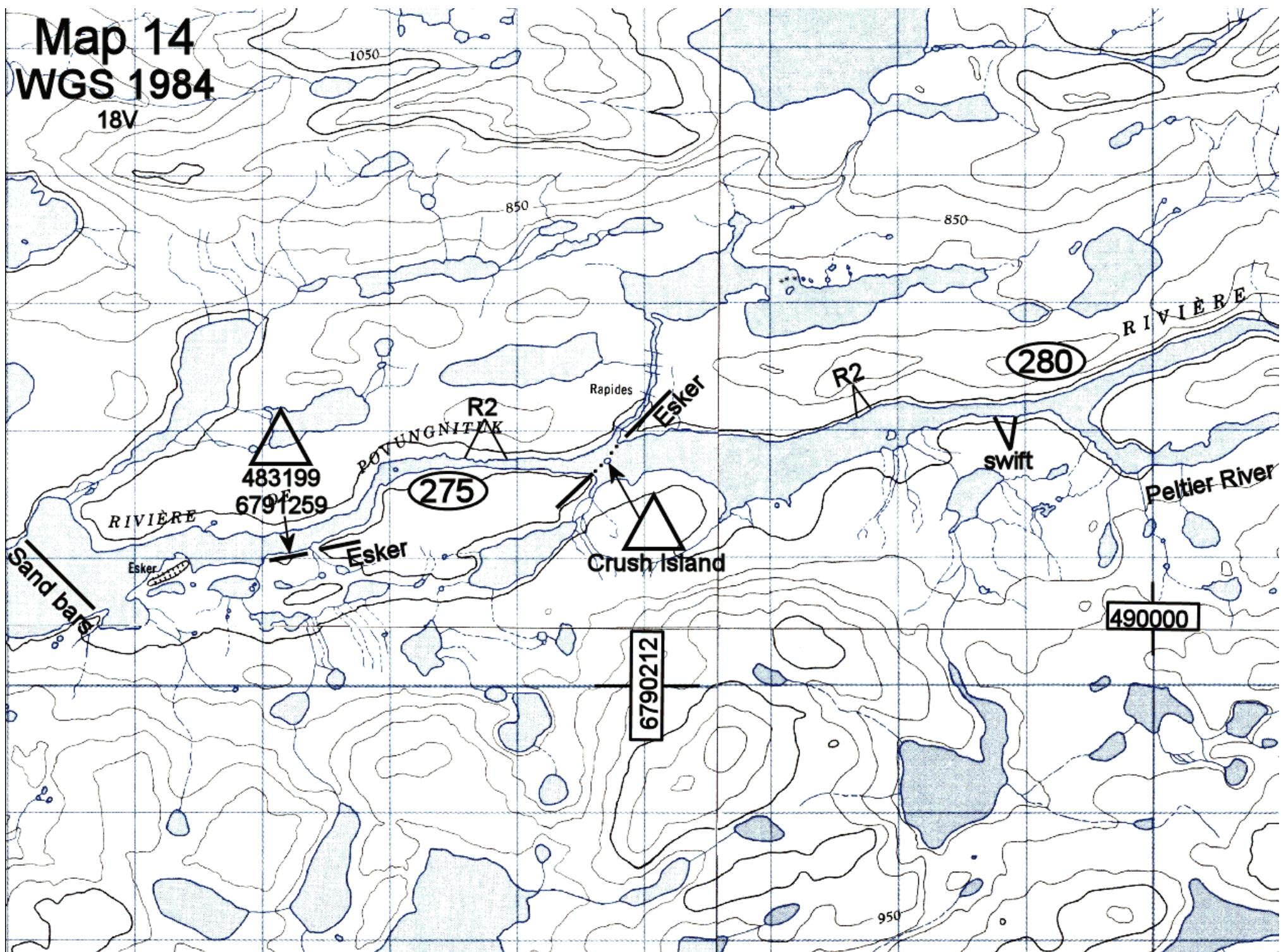
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Pallid Creek

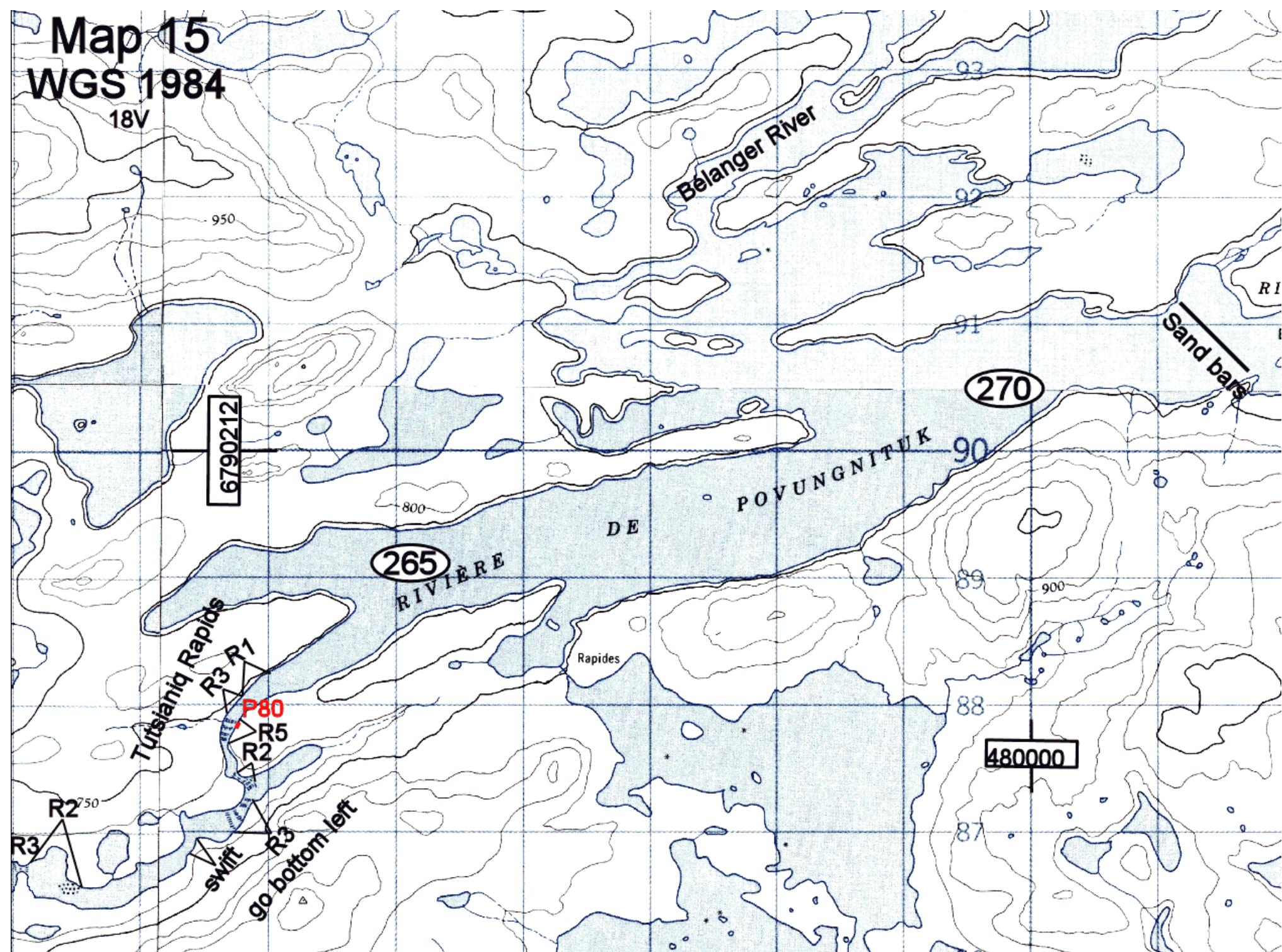
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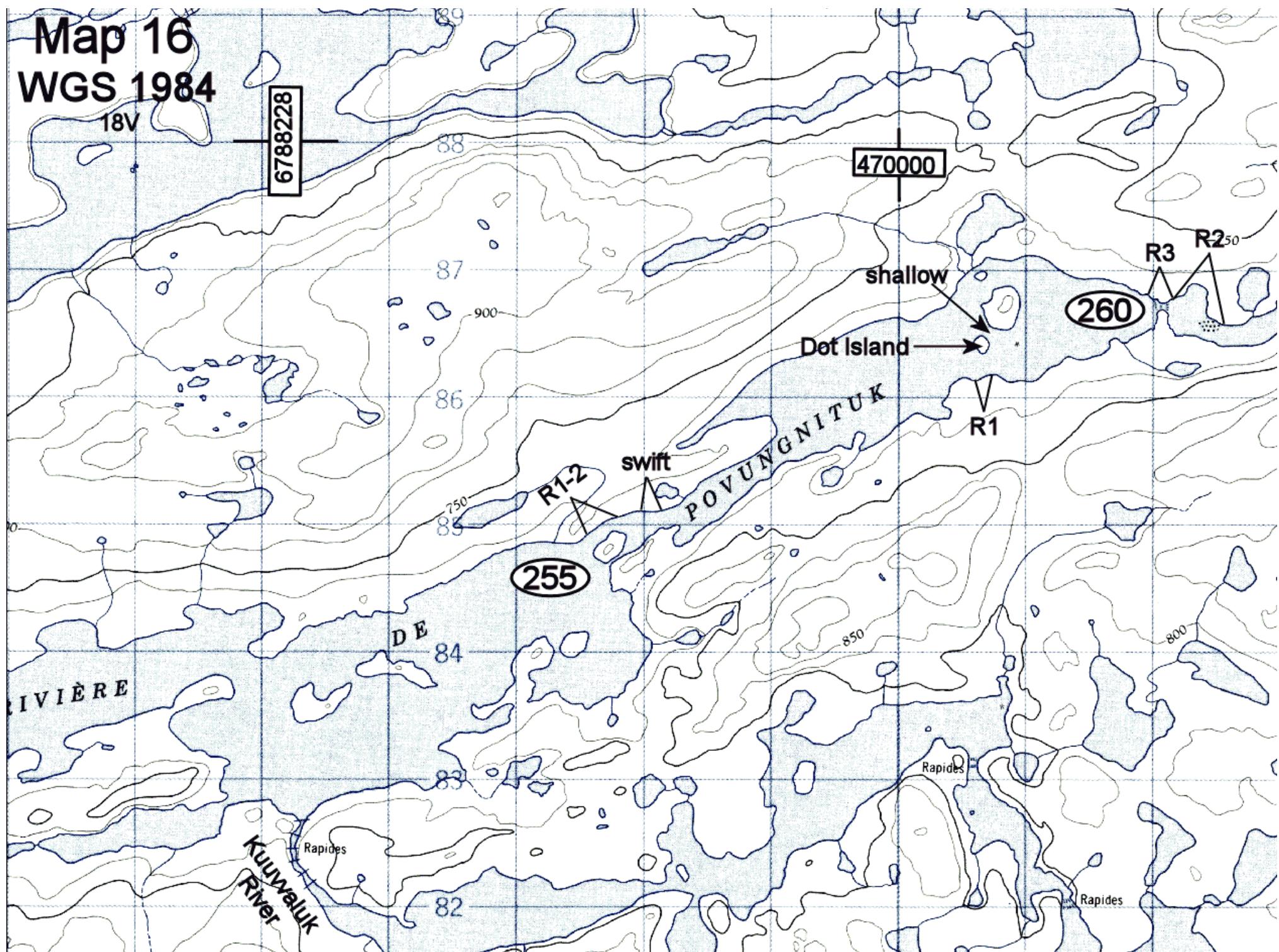
Map 15 WGS 1984

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Map 16

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Map 17 WGS 1984

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Little Puvirnituq
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Chubb Island

ALLEMAND

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190
180
170
160
150
140
130
120
110
100
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0

Map 18 WGS 1984

18V

ALLEMAND

230

225

Allemand Chute

R4

good camping both sides

P25

R3-4 in high water

dry in low

460000

6760216

220

215

210

swift

swift

SWIFT

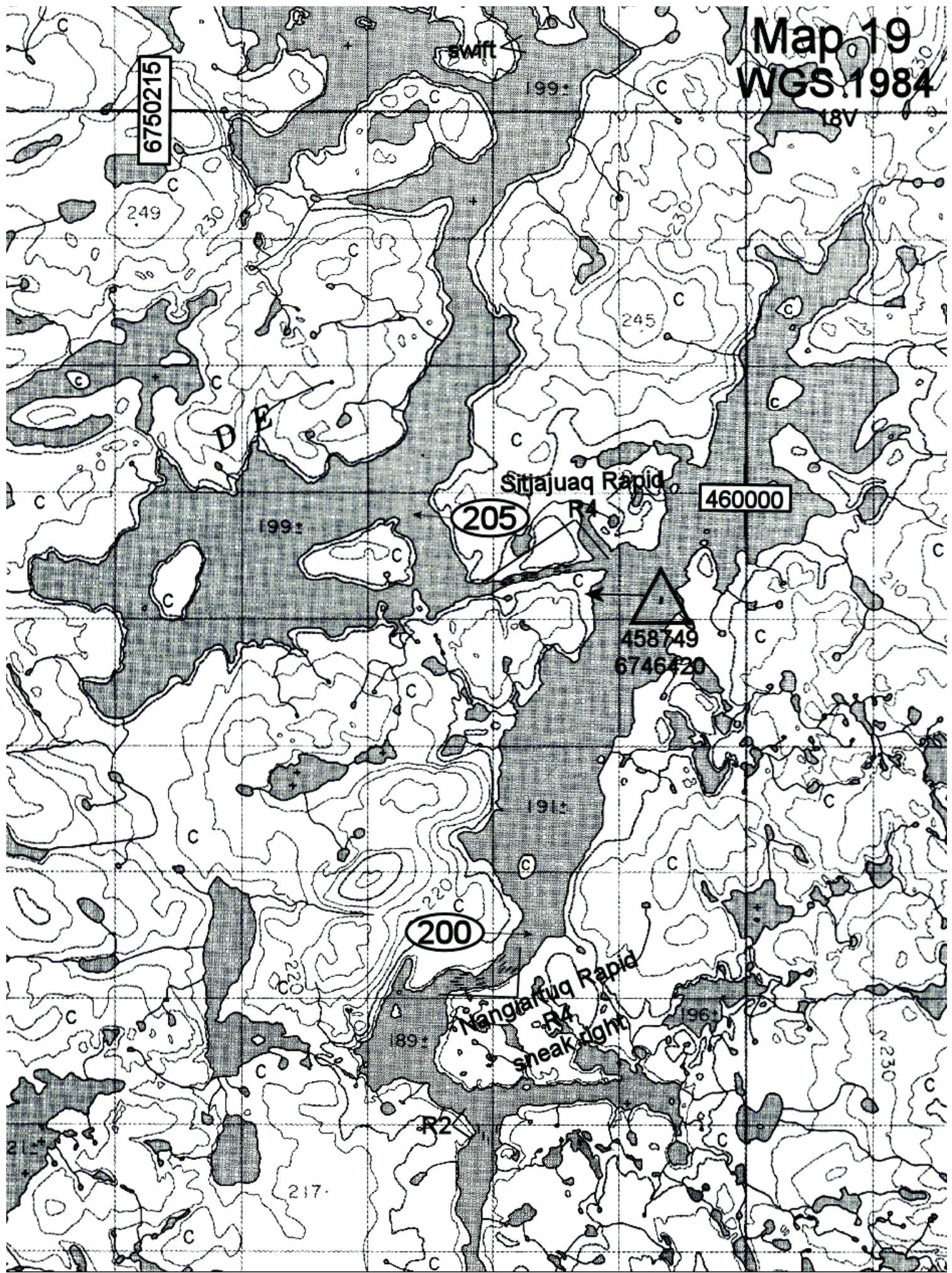
458268 6751494

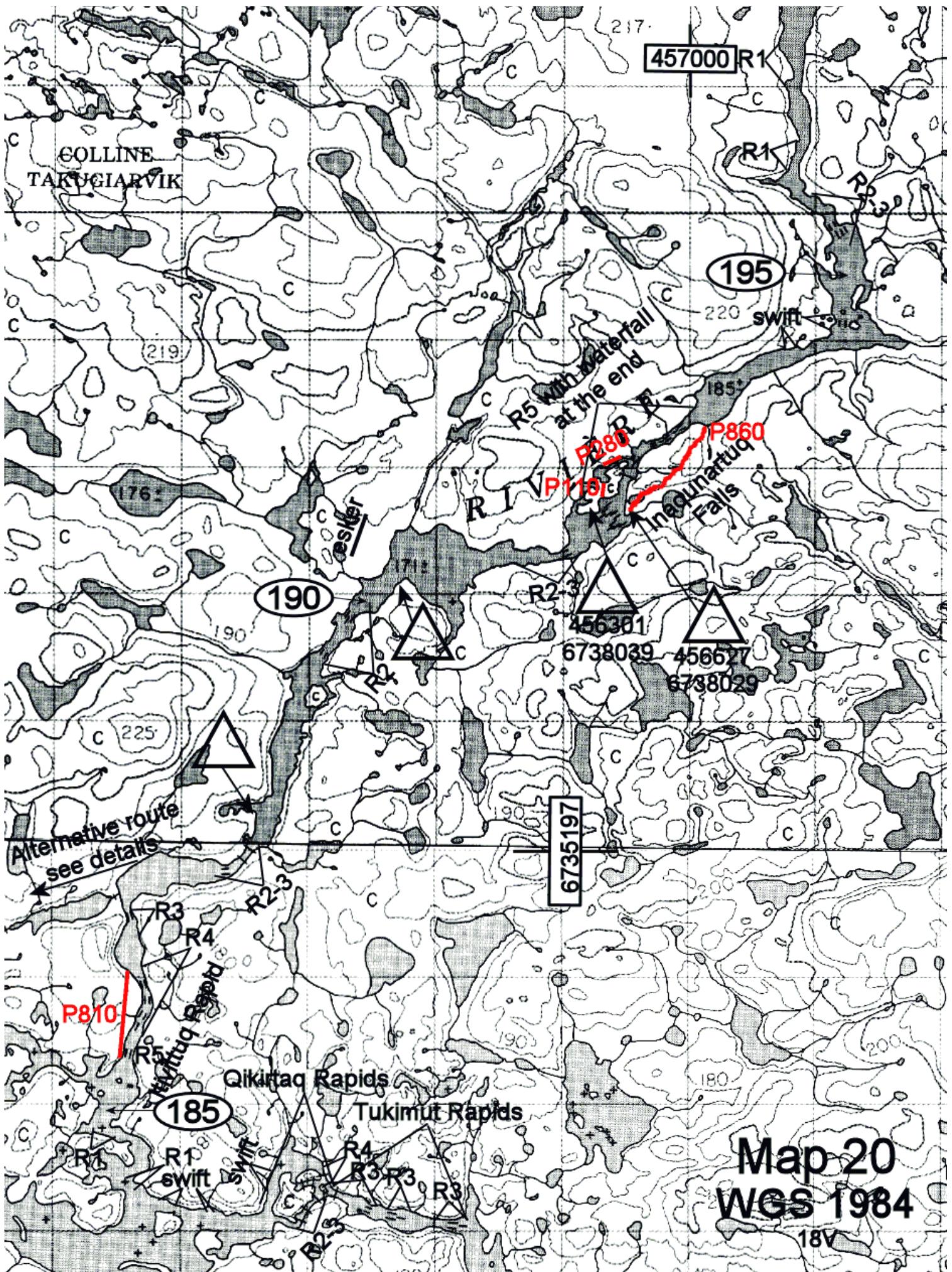
cabin
esker/runway

shallow R3
RIVIERE
Allemand
Rapide

Allemand
R3
Rapide

Map 19
WGS 1984

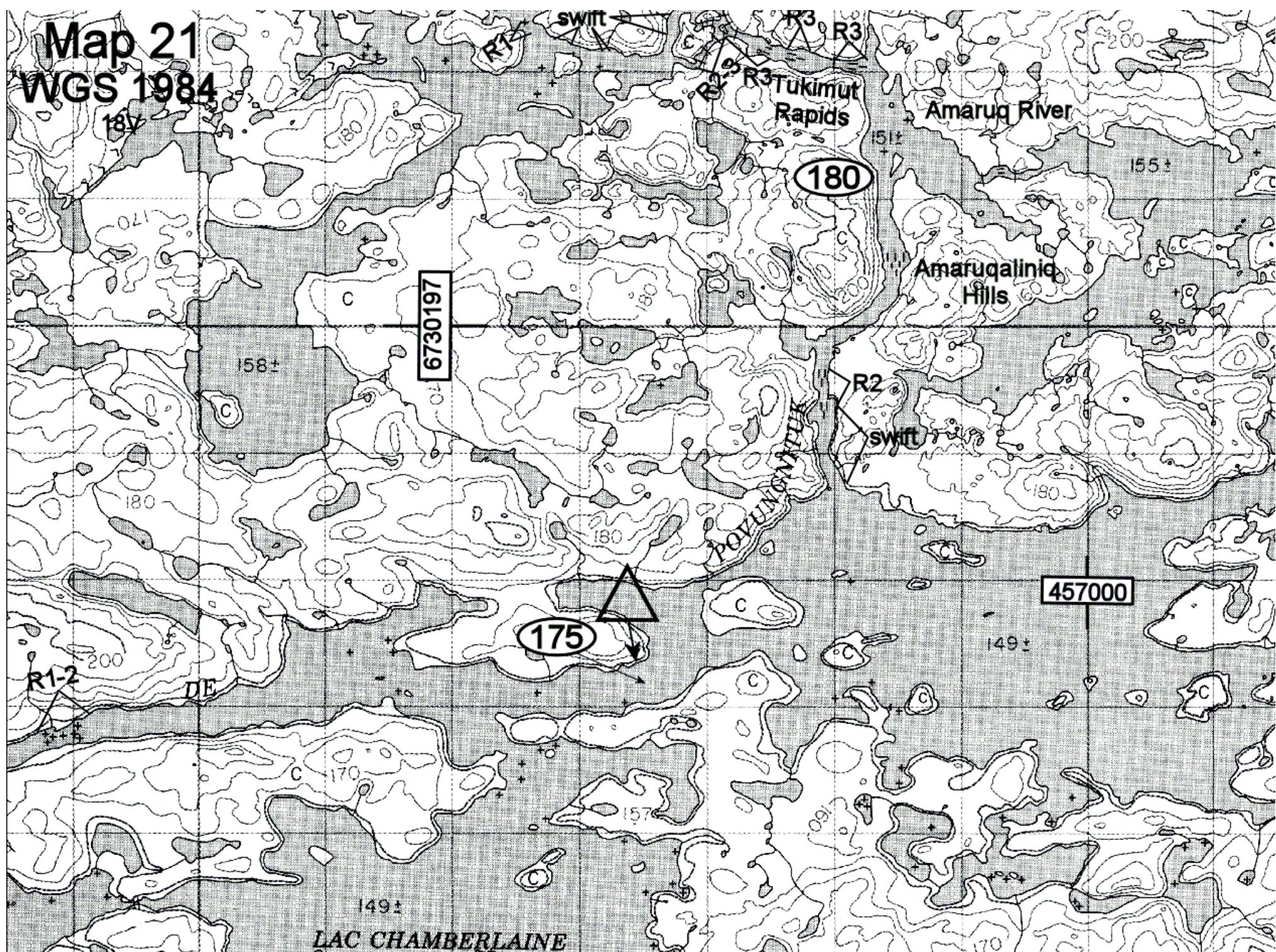




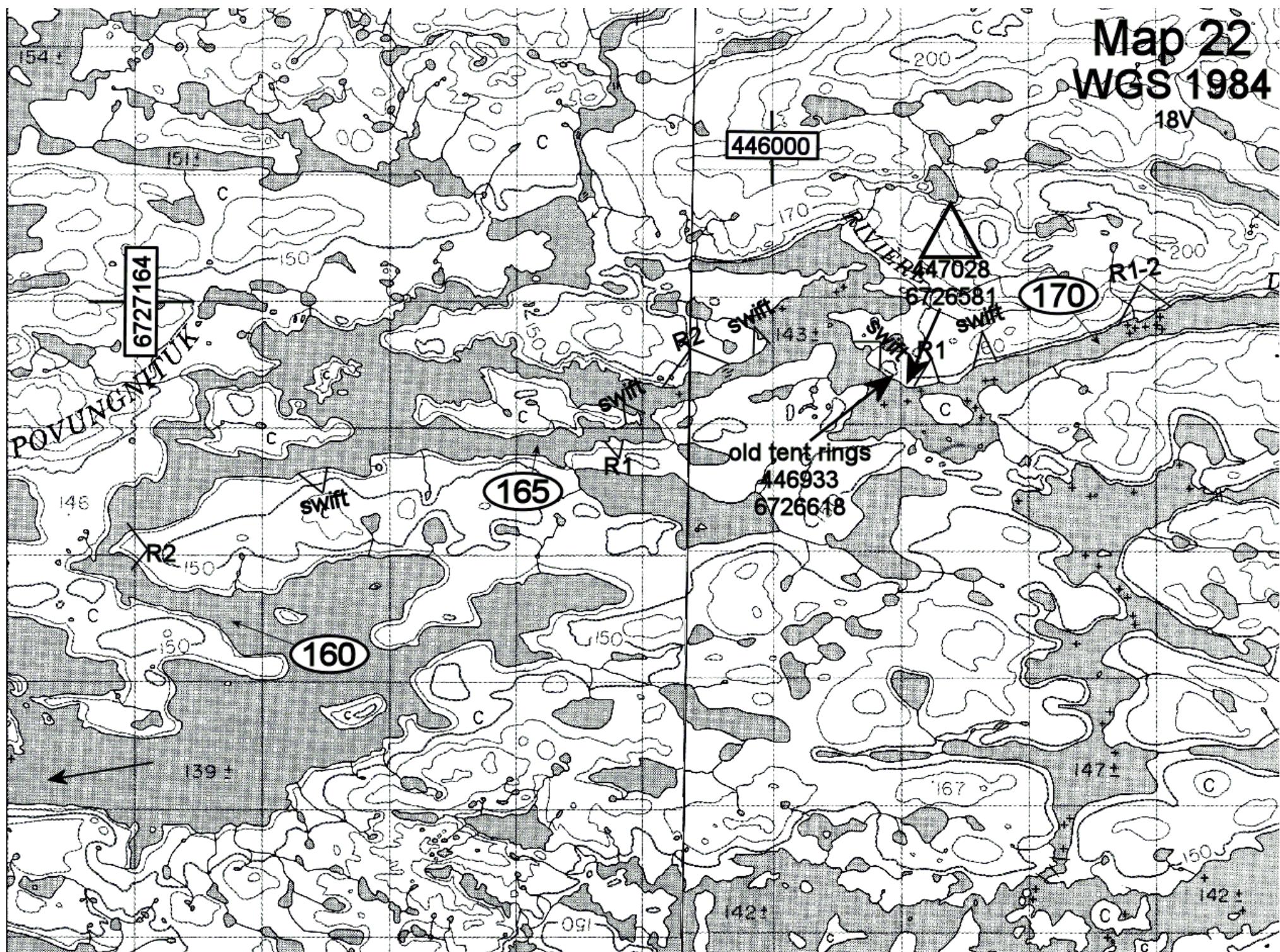
Map 20
WGS 1984

Map 21

WGS 1984



Map 22 WGS 1984



Map 23
WGS 1984

18V

445000

R2

160

155

R3
keep left

R1

6720164

150

SWIFT-R1

139

138 ±

147

146

142 ±

150

150

150

150

150

439845
6723631

139 ±

160

18V

150

150

150

150

142 ±

150

150

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142 ±

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142 ±

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150

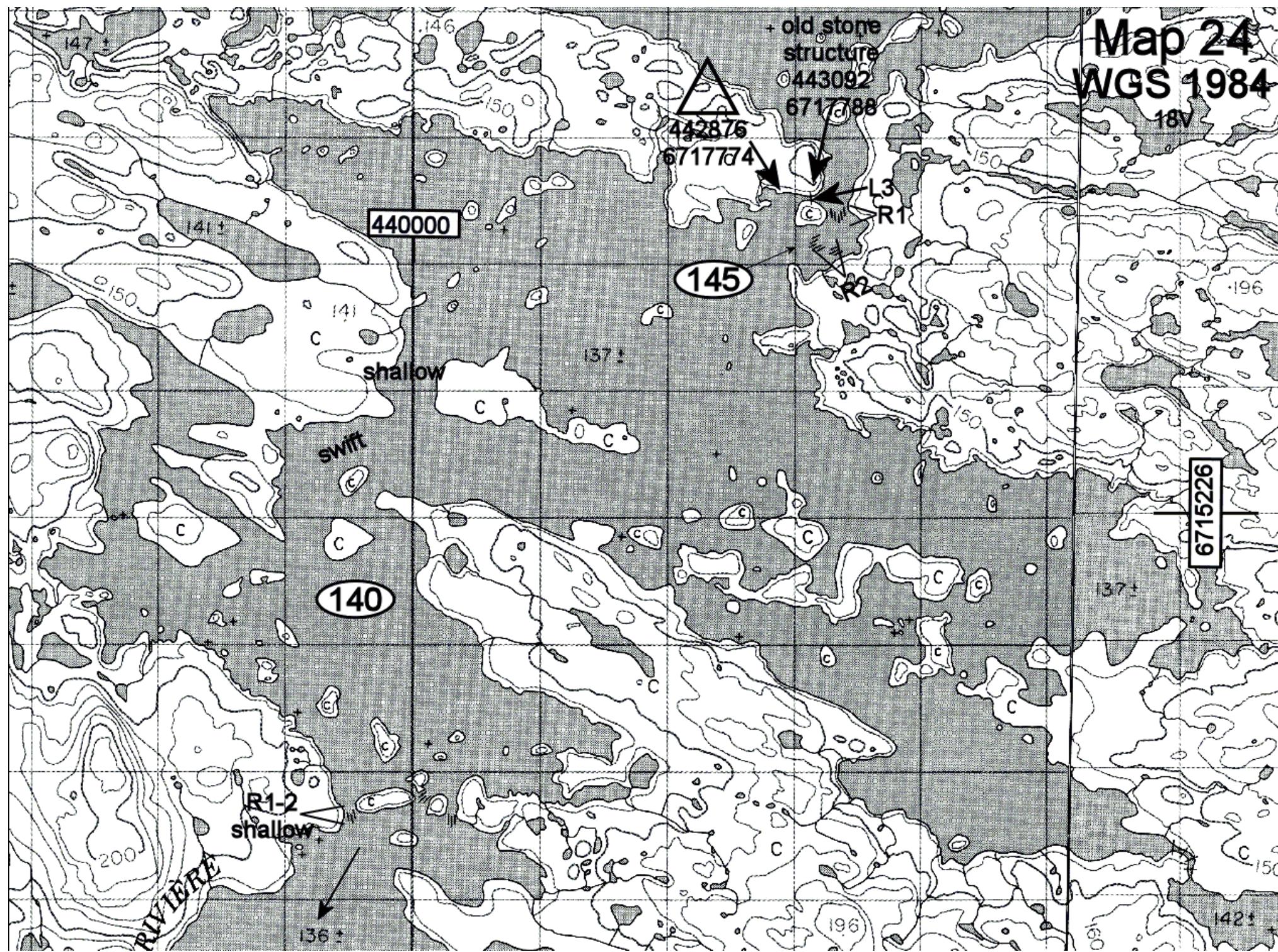
150

150

150

<p

Map 24
WGS 1984



Map 25

WGS 1984

18V

436000

437988
6711601

135

6710178

Inuit stone ring

Immitut Falls

swift

437853
6708231

R1

R2

R3

R4

R5

R6

R7

R8

R9

R10

R11

R12

R13

R14

R15

R16

R17

R18

R19

R20

R21

R22

R23

R24

R25

R26

R27

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R270

R271

R272

R273

R274

R275

R276

R277

R278

R279

R280

R281

R282

R283

R284

R285

R286

R287

R288

R289

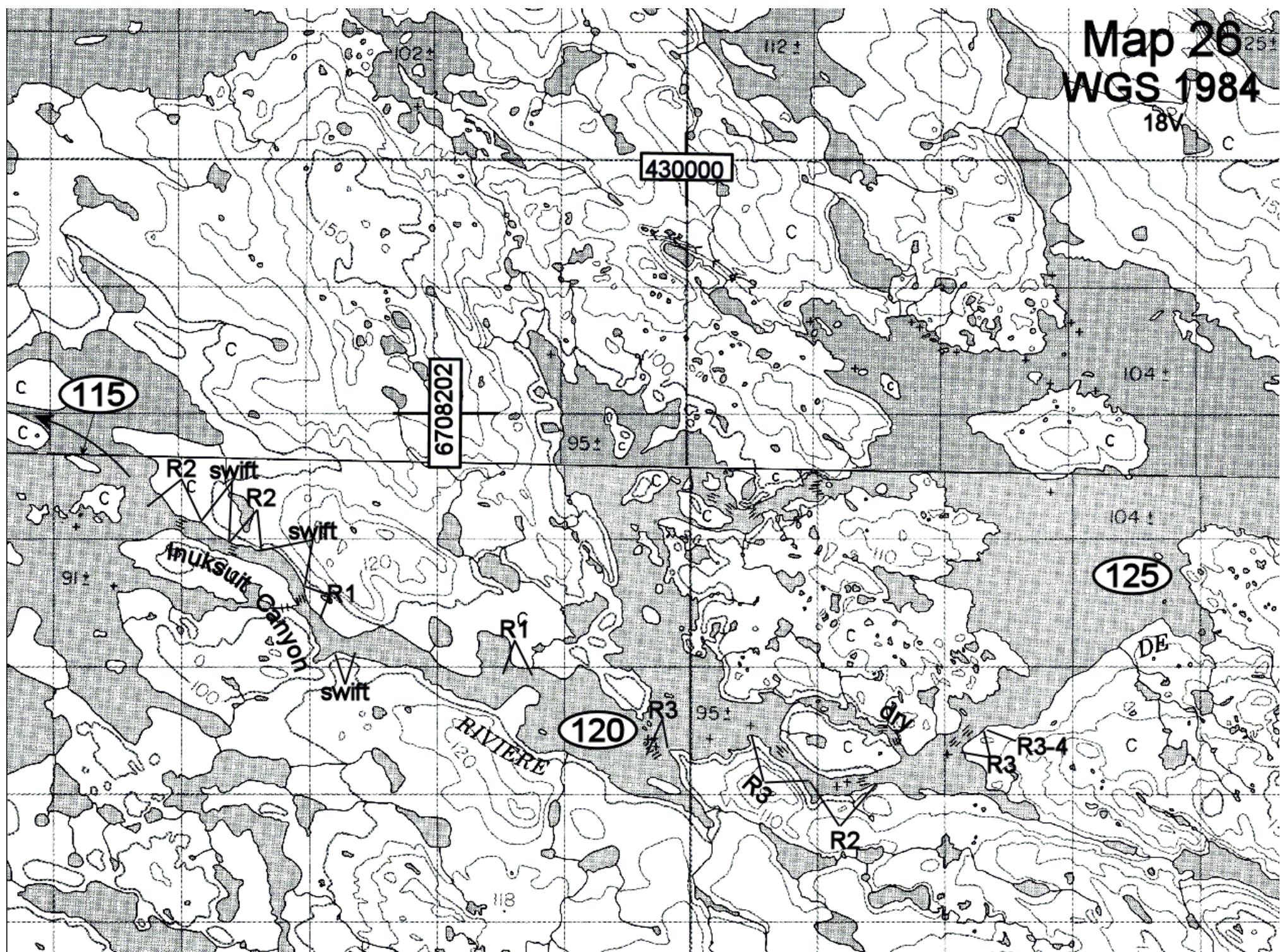
R290

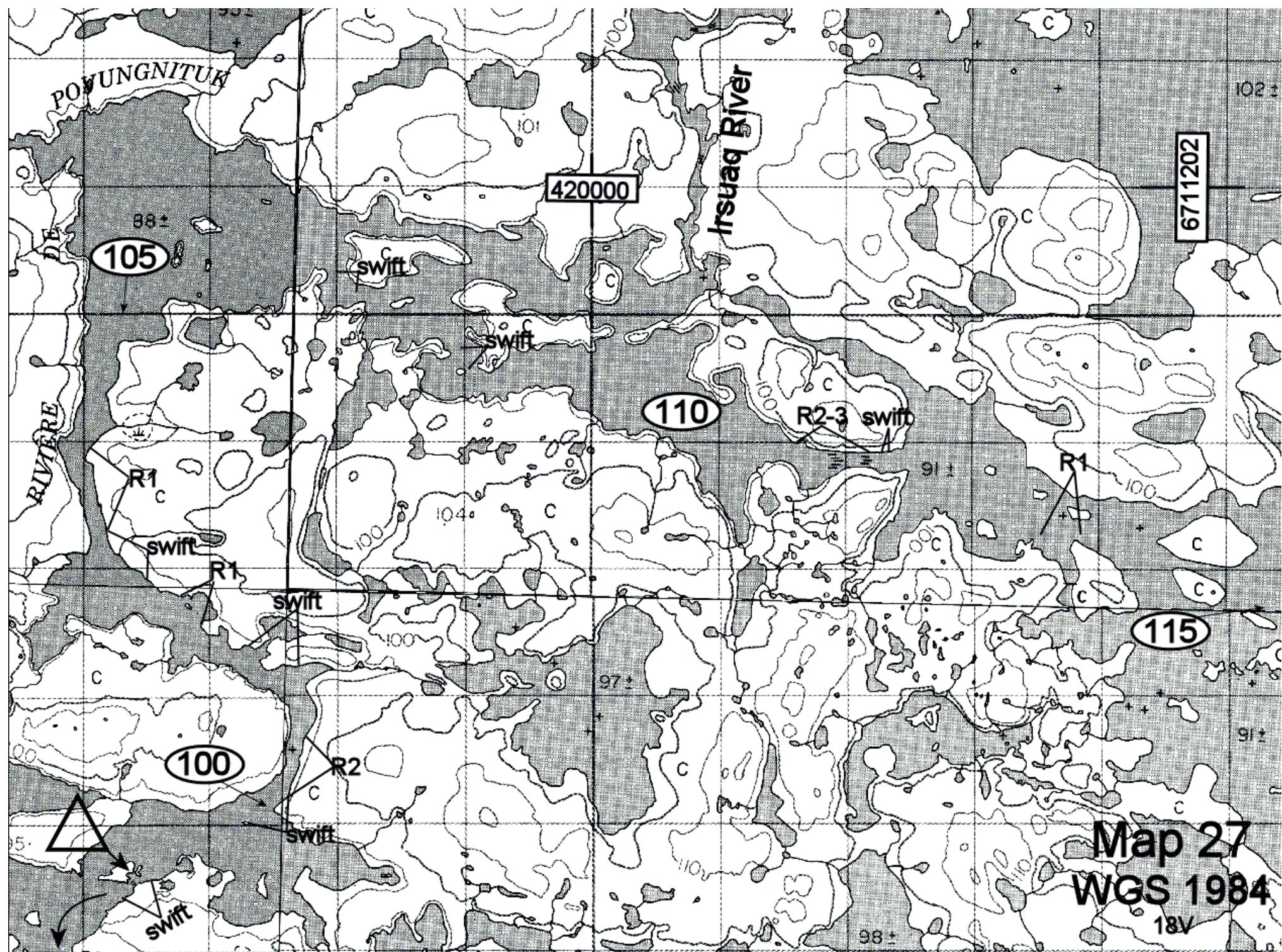
R291

R292

R

Map 26
WGS 1984





Map 27
WGS 1984

Map 28

WGS 1984

18V

89°

95°

6705201

100

R2

swif

swif

417000

R2-3

R3 technical

95

very
shallow

R4

dry

Tukalak

cabin

414588

R1 6699407

swif

R1

Nunivakkaq
Falls

swif

waterfall

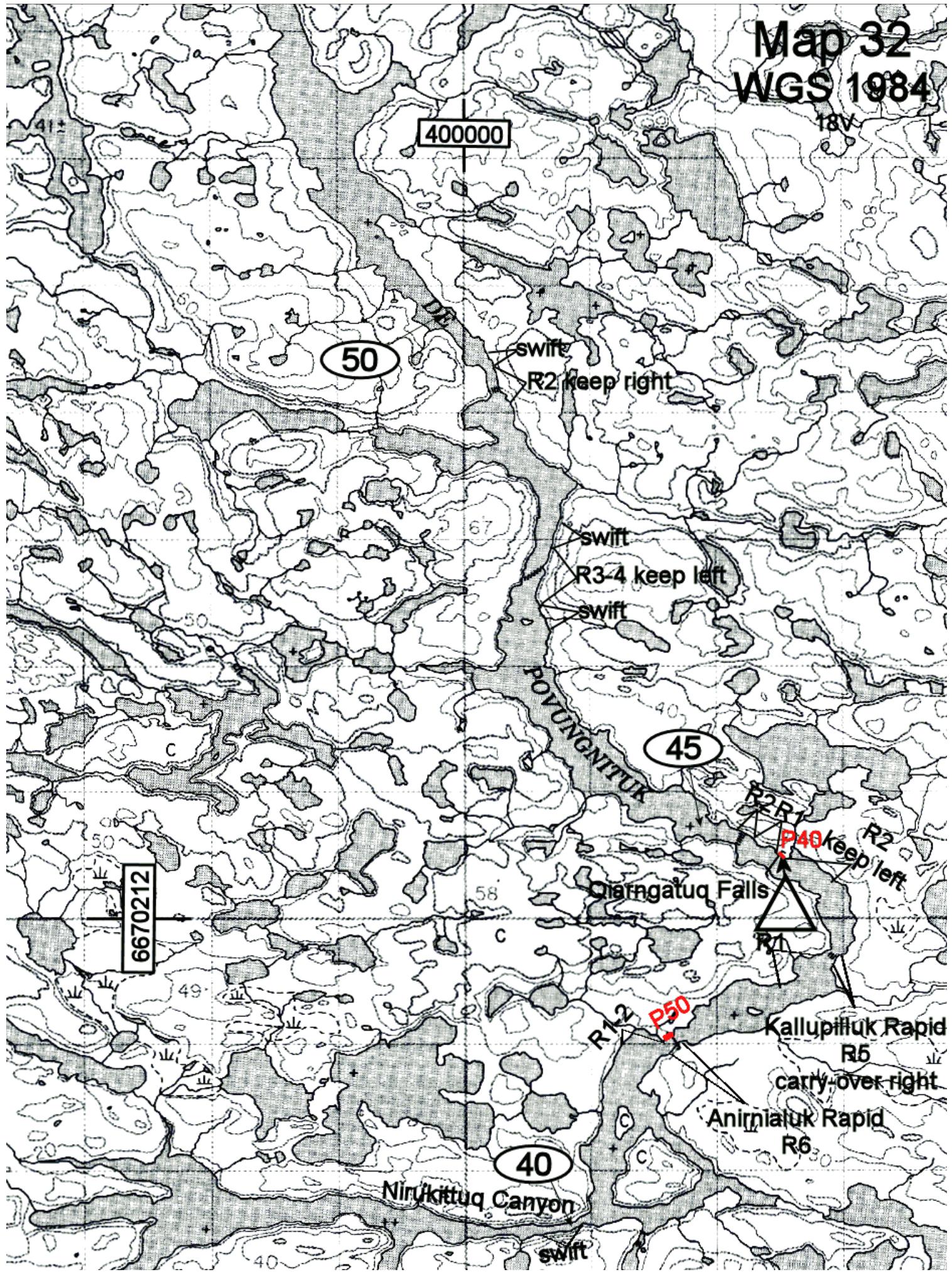
■ Qalingo cabin

414695

6698985

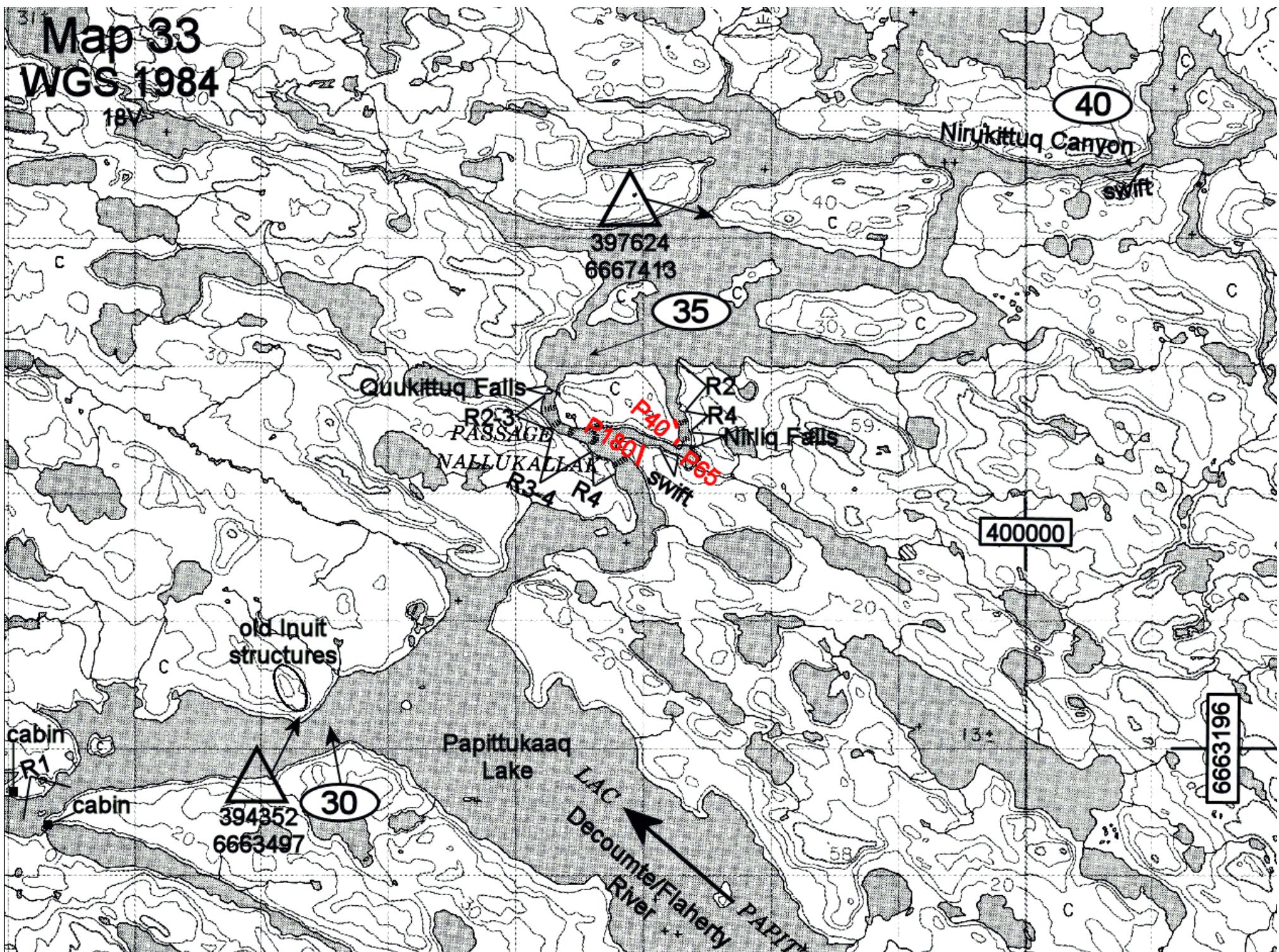
R2 R3 With R3-4 on the left

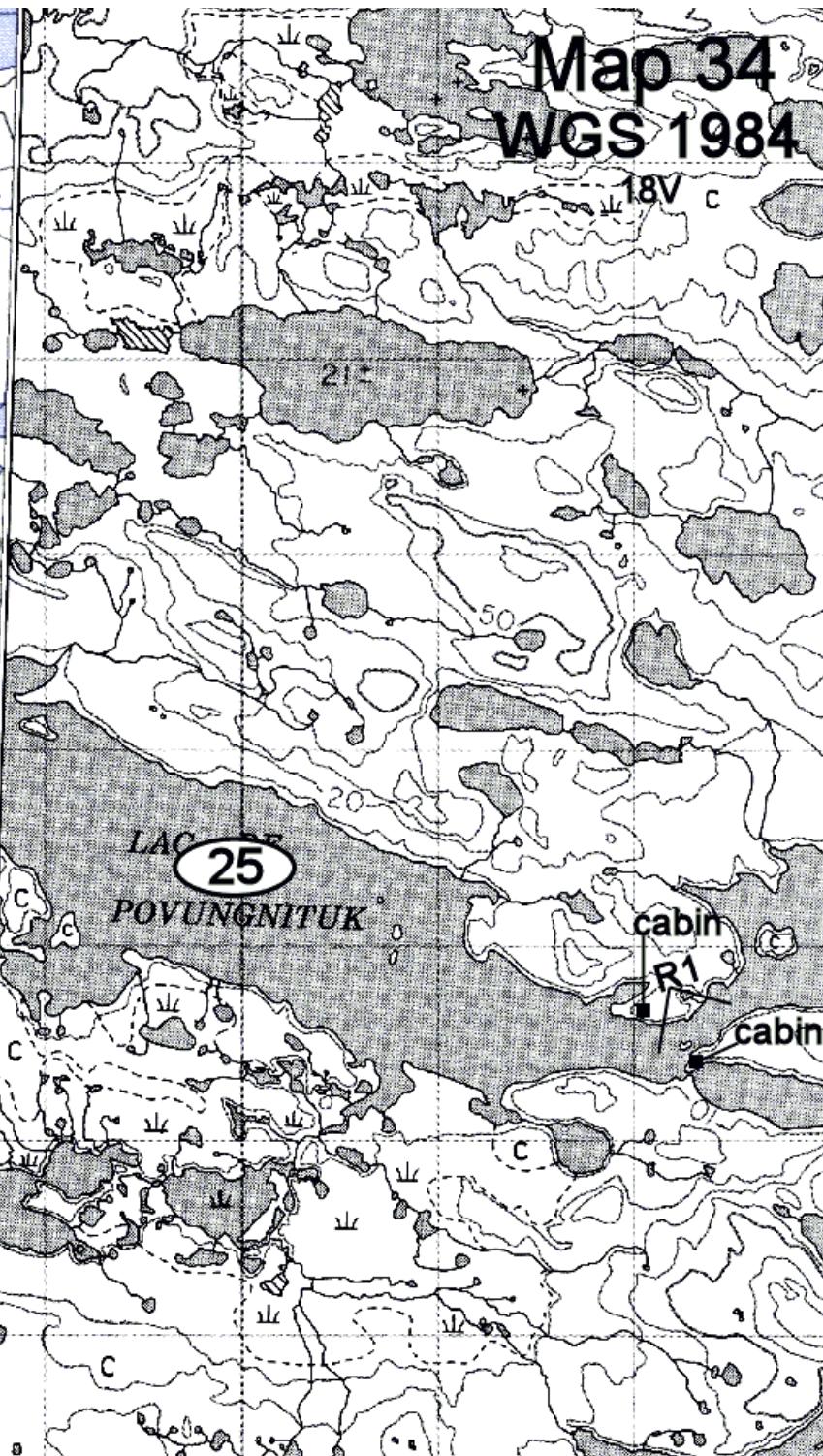
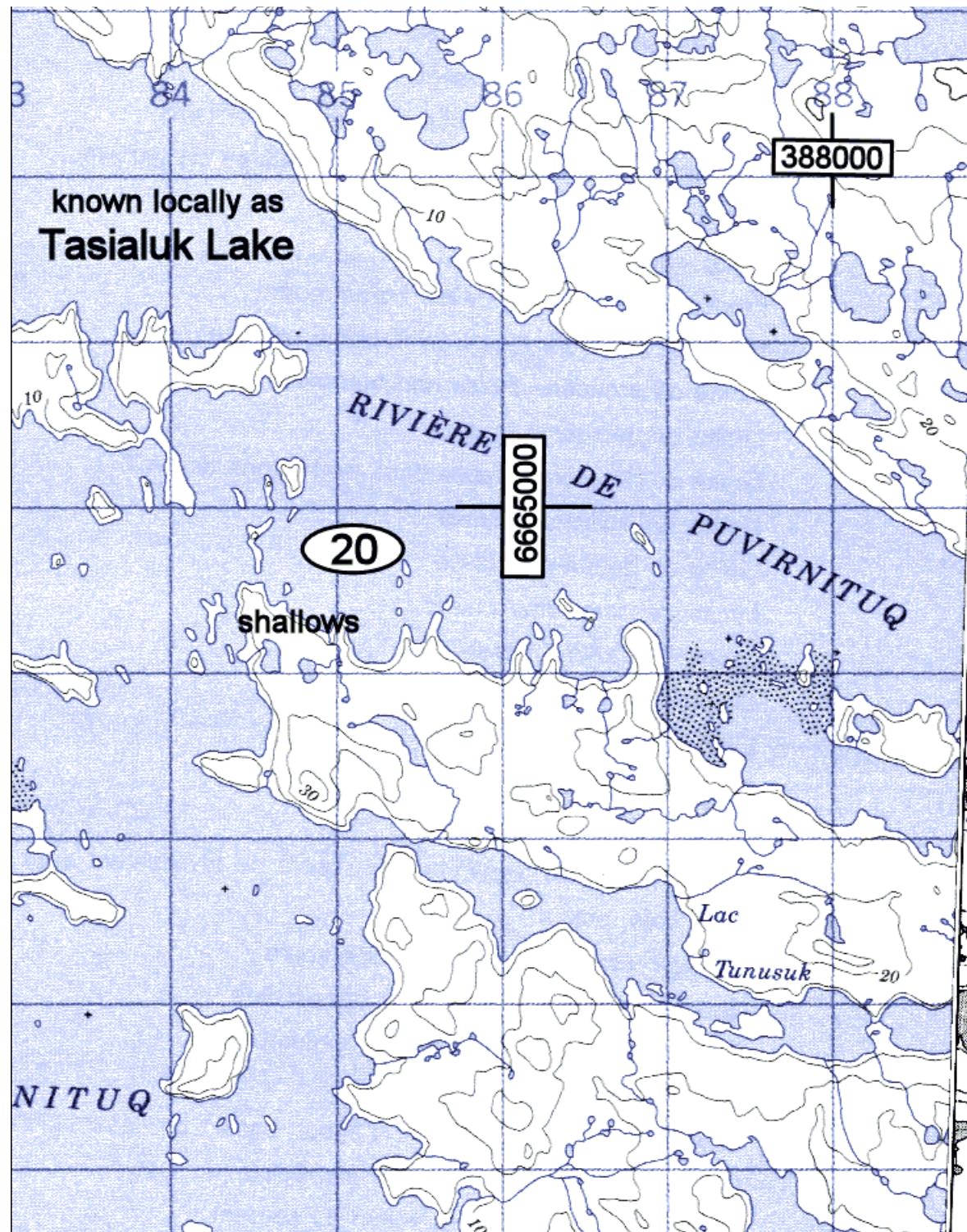
Map 32
WGS 1984



311
Map 33
WGS 1984

18V



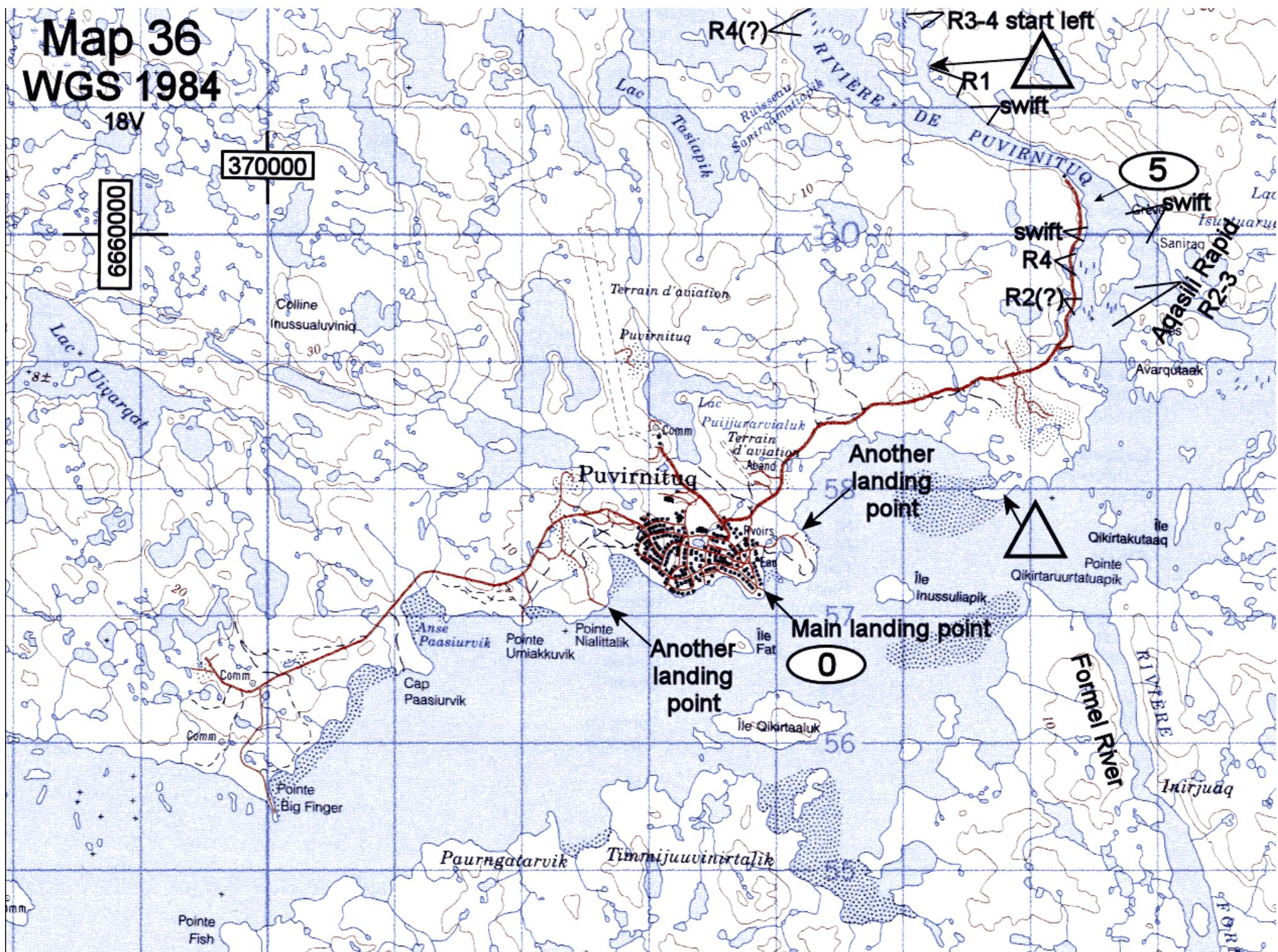


Map 36 WGS 1984

18V

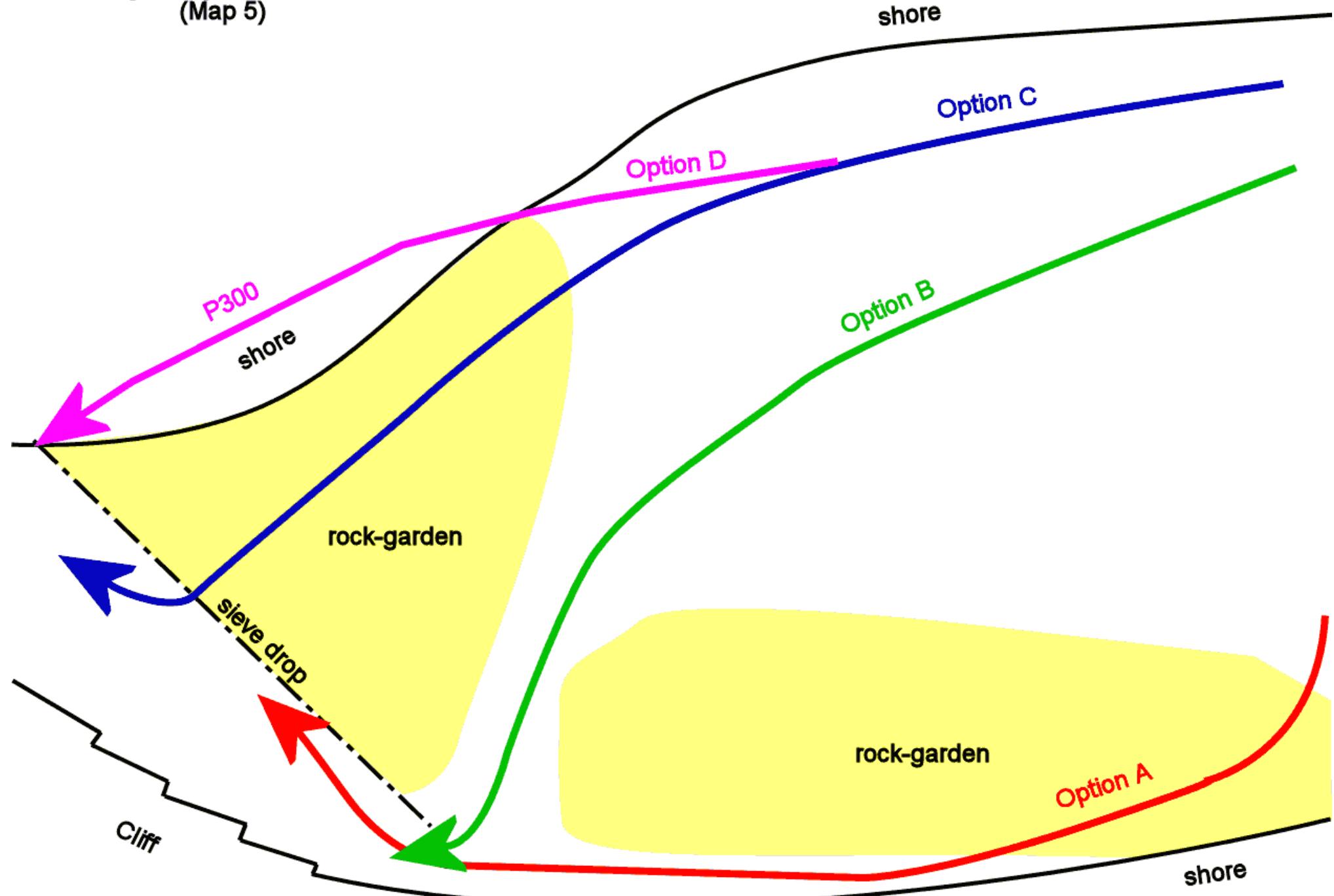
370000

6660000



Innaq Rapid - details

(Map 5)





Views of Innaq Rapid from above & below



Alternative route around Itivittuq Rapid

(map 20)

