



Puvirnituk River

River Map

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**Prepared for : Nunavik Parks and Nunaturlik Landholding
Corporation of Kangiqsujaq**

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General Information

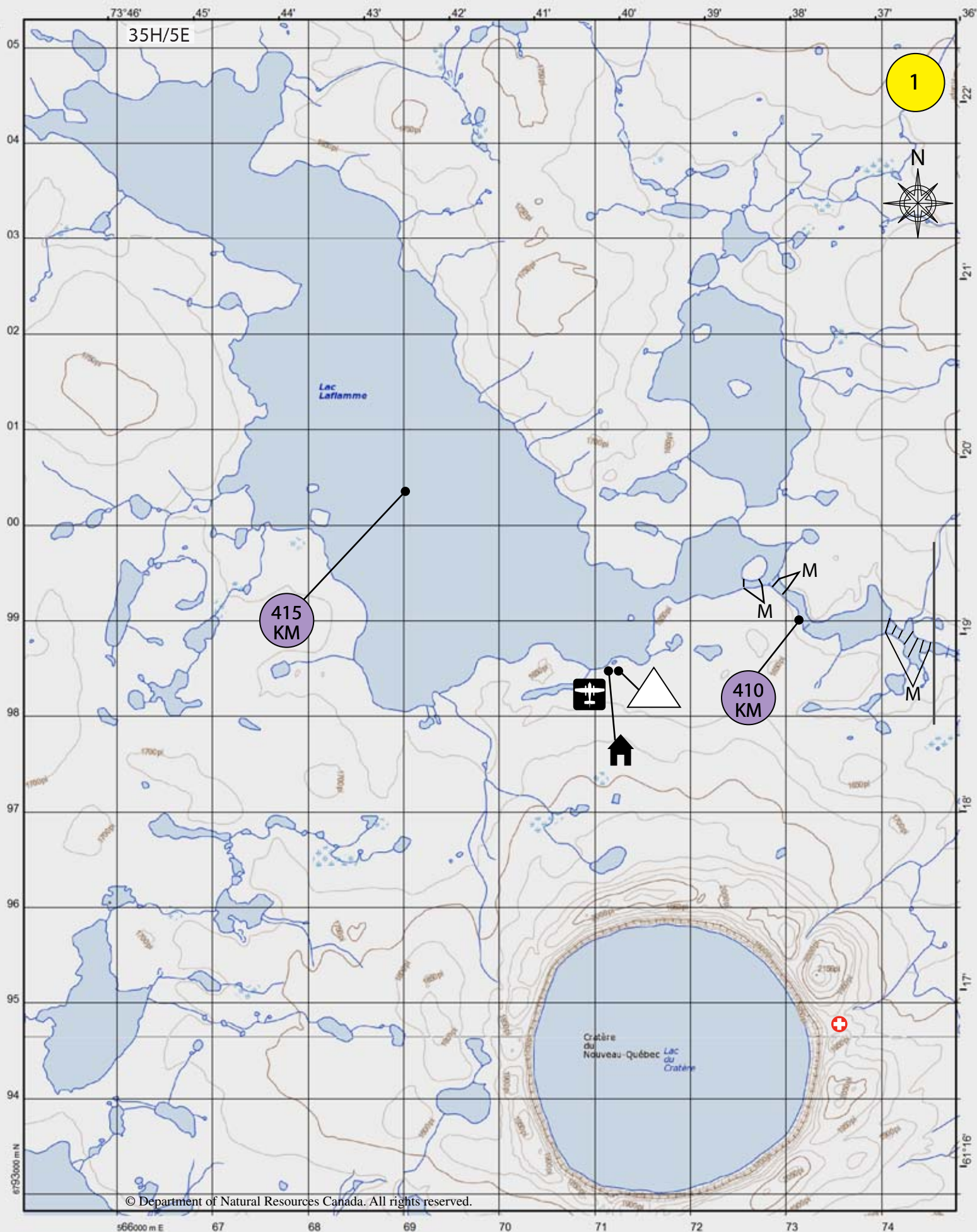
The Puvirnituk River is the northernmost river in Nunavik and flows in a territory of ice, rocks and lichens. This river offers a direct contact with the raw power of elements. With a 30 000 km² watershed, the Puvirnituk River is a big river, especially downstream of Allemand Lake.

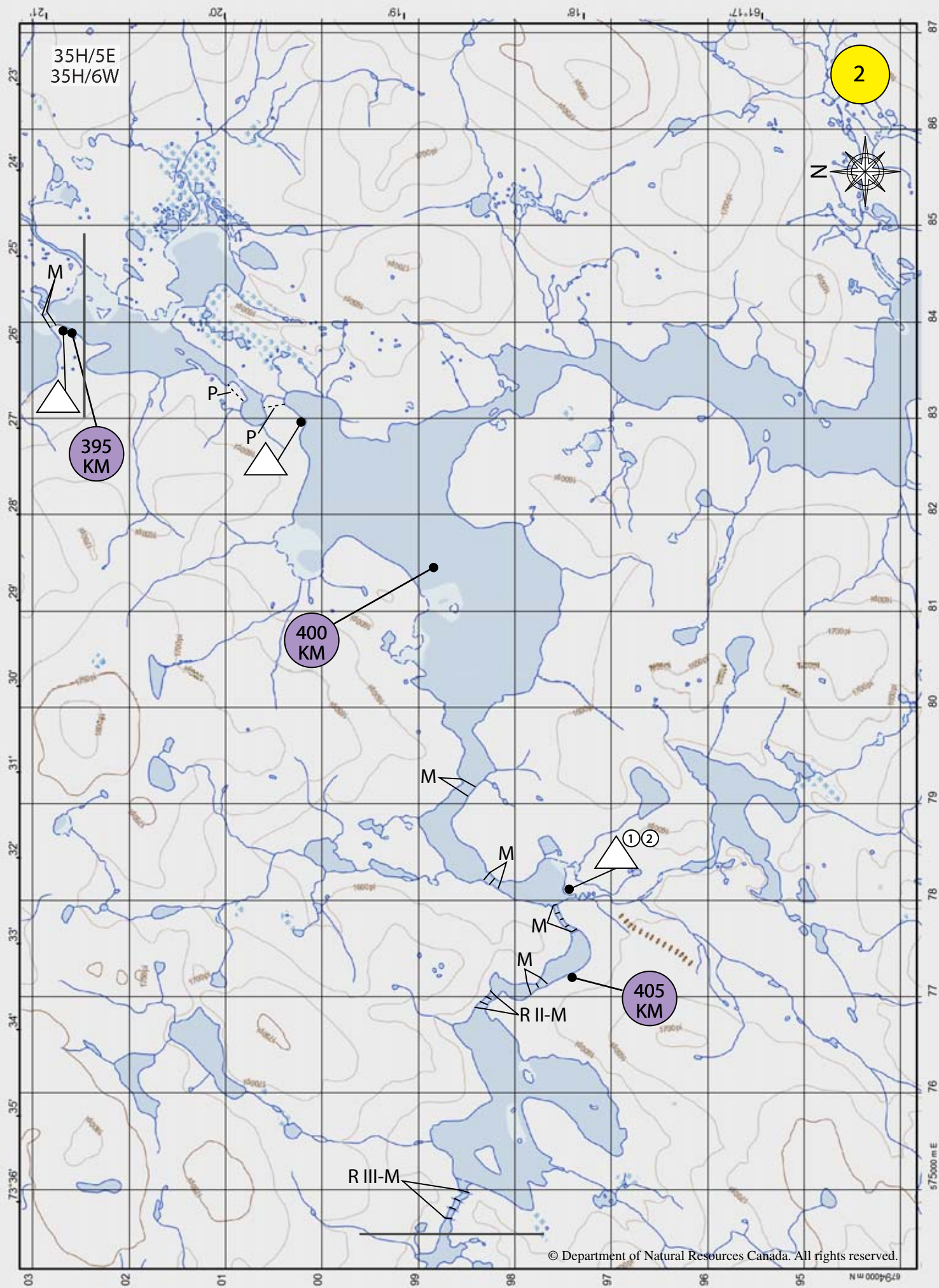
Starting at the base of Pingualuit Crater, this 412 km expedition on the Puvirnituk River can be divided into four sections. The first section (30 km) consists in crossing a series of lakes in Pingualuit National Park. The first half of the second section (122 km) presents an average slope of 0.3 % which translates into an almost continuous class I+II rapid all the way down. However, between km 364 and km 356, the river gradient is 0.6%! The third section (56 km) is the flat waters of the lake Allemand area. The fourth section (204 km) consists of lakes, interspaced with big and powerfull rapids, ledges and falls. Despite its gentle slope (0.1%) this last section is not to be underestimated. You can end up windbound for many days on the wide sections and every time the river bed narrows, the constricted current creates impressive and huge rapids that require extreme care if you choose to run the « chicken lines », which are often RIII-IV.

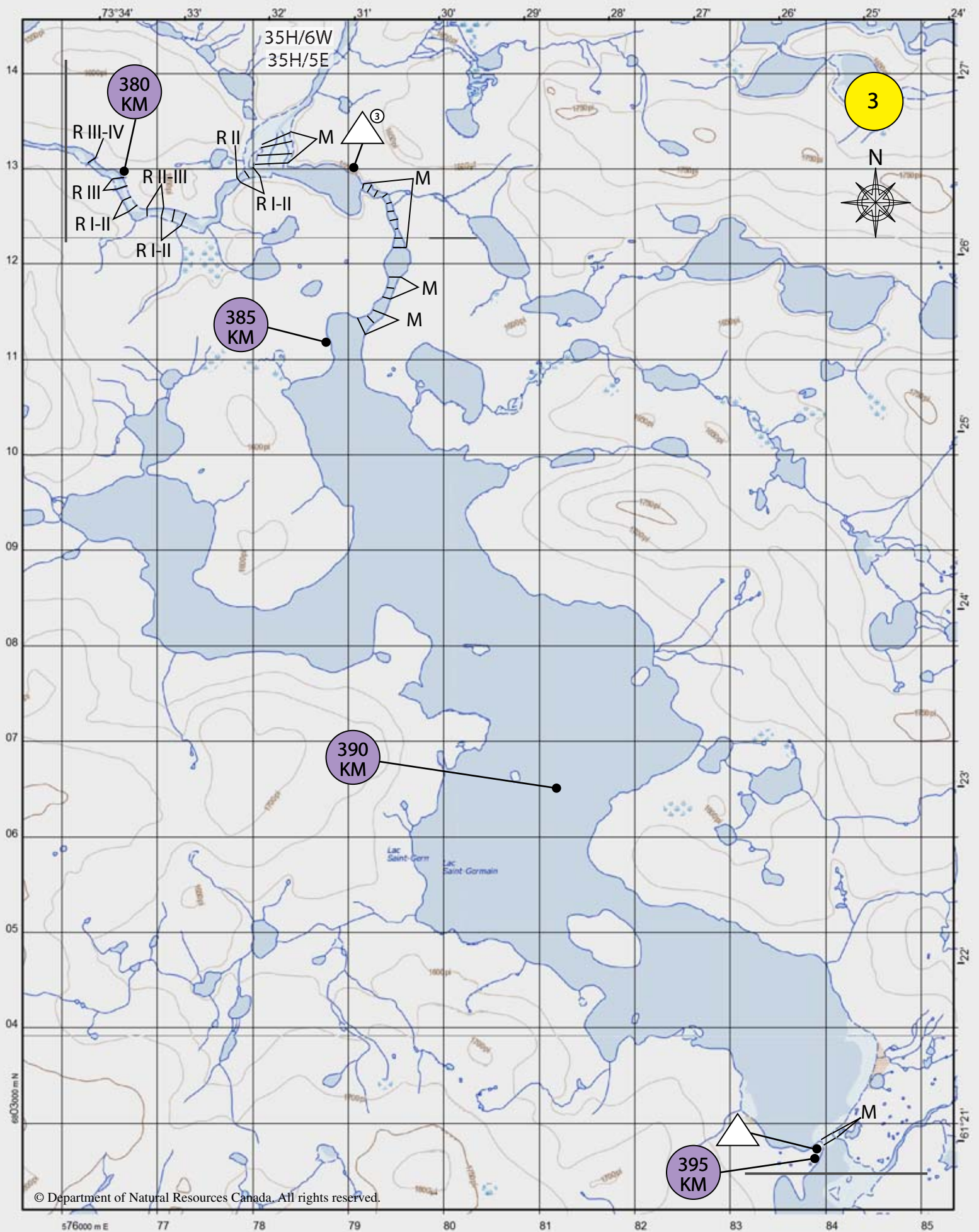
The time frame to paddle the Puvirnituk River is very short. The volume in the first 42 km of river (km 382 to km 340) quickly becomes too low during summer time, but if you leave too early, the lakes in Pingualuit National Park might still be ice covered. The Puvirnituk can be in flood anywhere from mid June to the end of June. The best period to paddle the Puvirnituk River is July and you should plan 3 weeks for the expedition itself. **The put-in date should be in the first two weeks of July.** However, there is a 8 km portage from Lake Laflamme, that allows to reach the Puvirnituk on km 358 and therefore skip 24 km (of the total 42 km) of problematic water levels. Using this old Inuit portage and provided you don't mind some lining and hauling, you will be able to travel and enjoy the beauty of the Puvirnituk in August or even September.

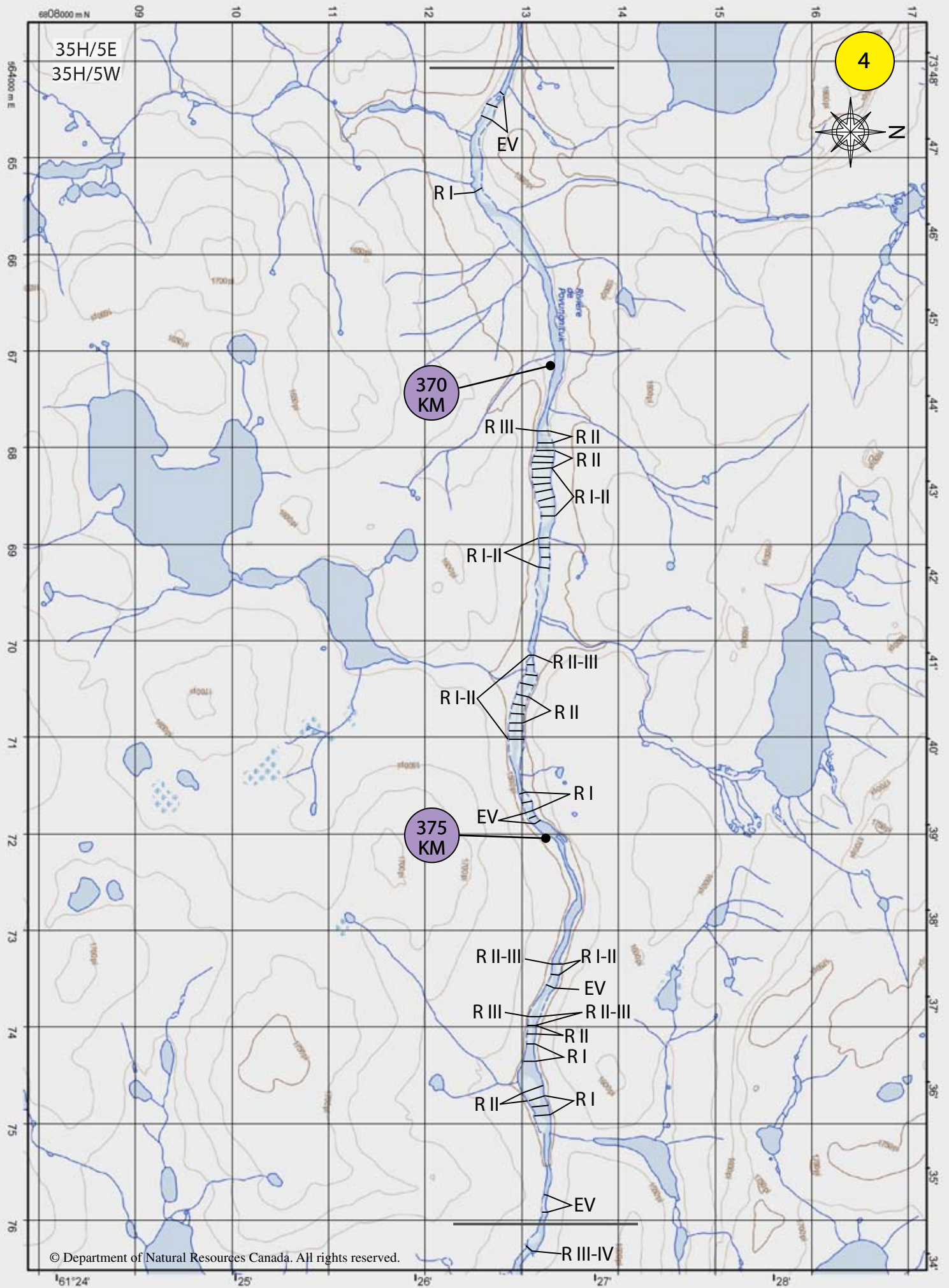
The survey has been completed between July 3rd and July 21st 2011. **The second river section (km 382 to km 260) was paddled at a medium water level and the fourth river section (km 204 to km 0) at medium to high water level.** The river map, and the recommendations in the Safety Protocol that must be used with it, has been made at those particular water levels and are very accurate at those particular water levels. But on the Puvirnituk, especially between km 382 and km 296, the water level can come down quite fast, therefore changing drastically the conditions. Good scouting is always advisable!

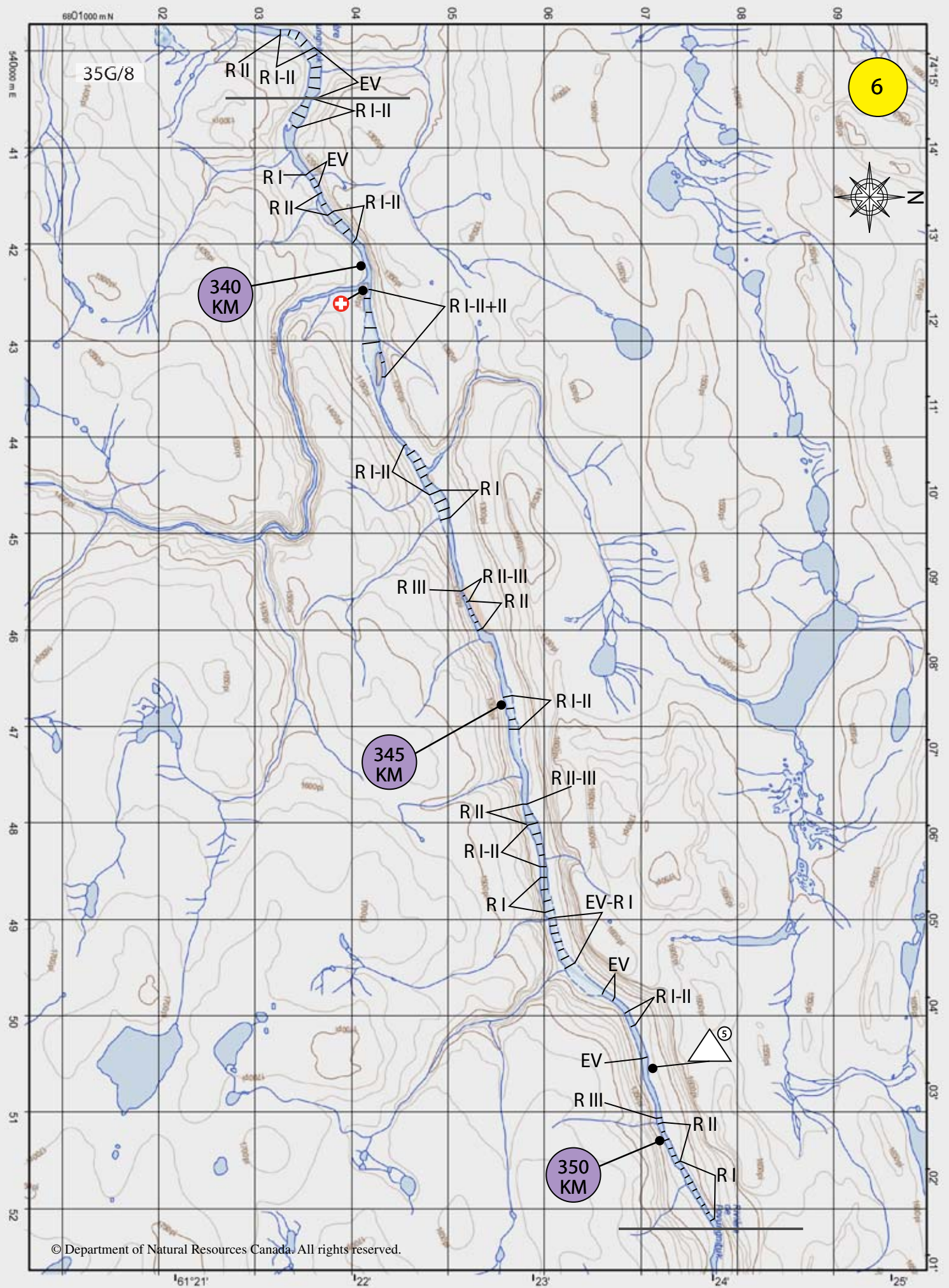
The Puvirnituk River is open to advance paddlers (RIII) or novice paddlers (RII) under the supervision of two experimented guides in remote areas. Remember that the Puvirnituk River is a big river and flows in an exceptionally wild and harsh environment. But this majestic river is also one of the only three rivers in Nunavik which earned a 5 star rating for its beauty. The FQCK *Guide des Parcours Canotables du Québec* definition of 5 stars scenery is : « Scènes grandioses, parmi les plus belles du territoire québécois. Des paysages exceptionnels qui inspirent le respect et suscitent l'émerveillement ».

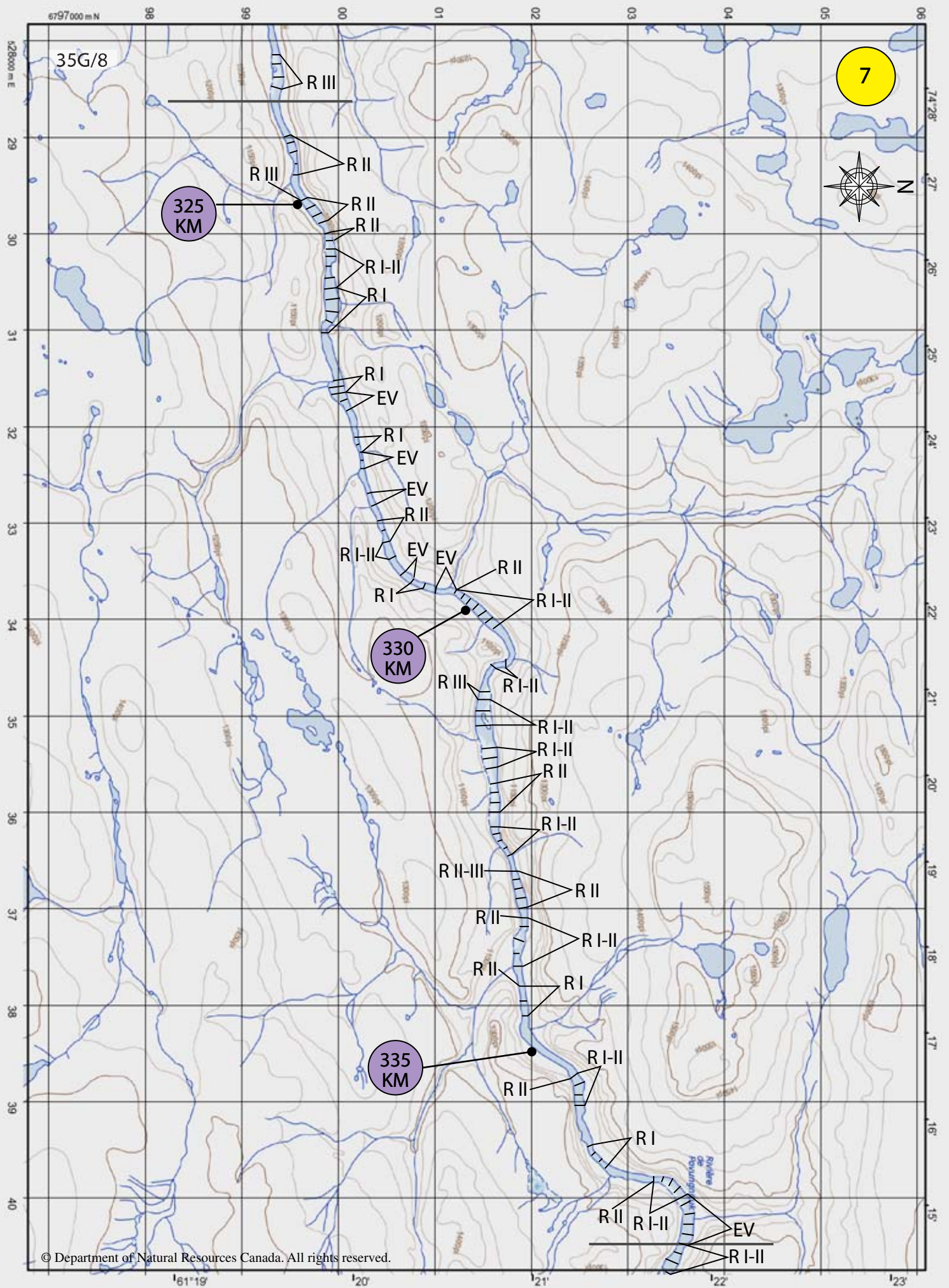


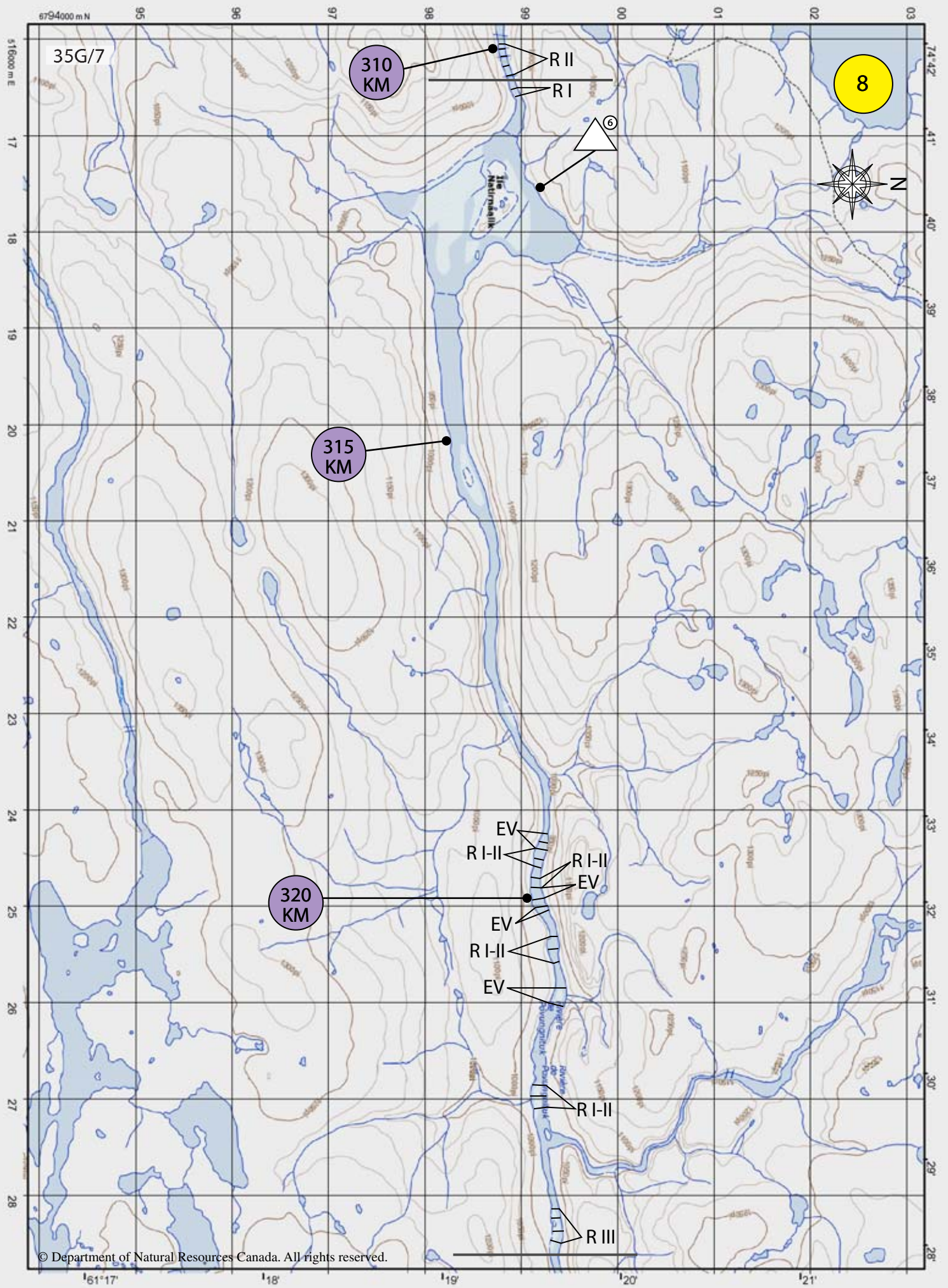


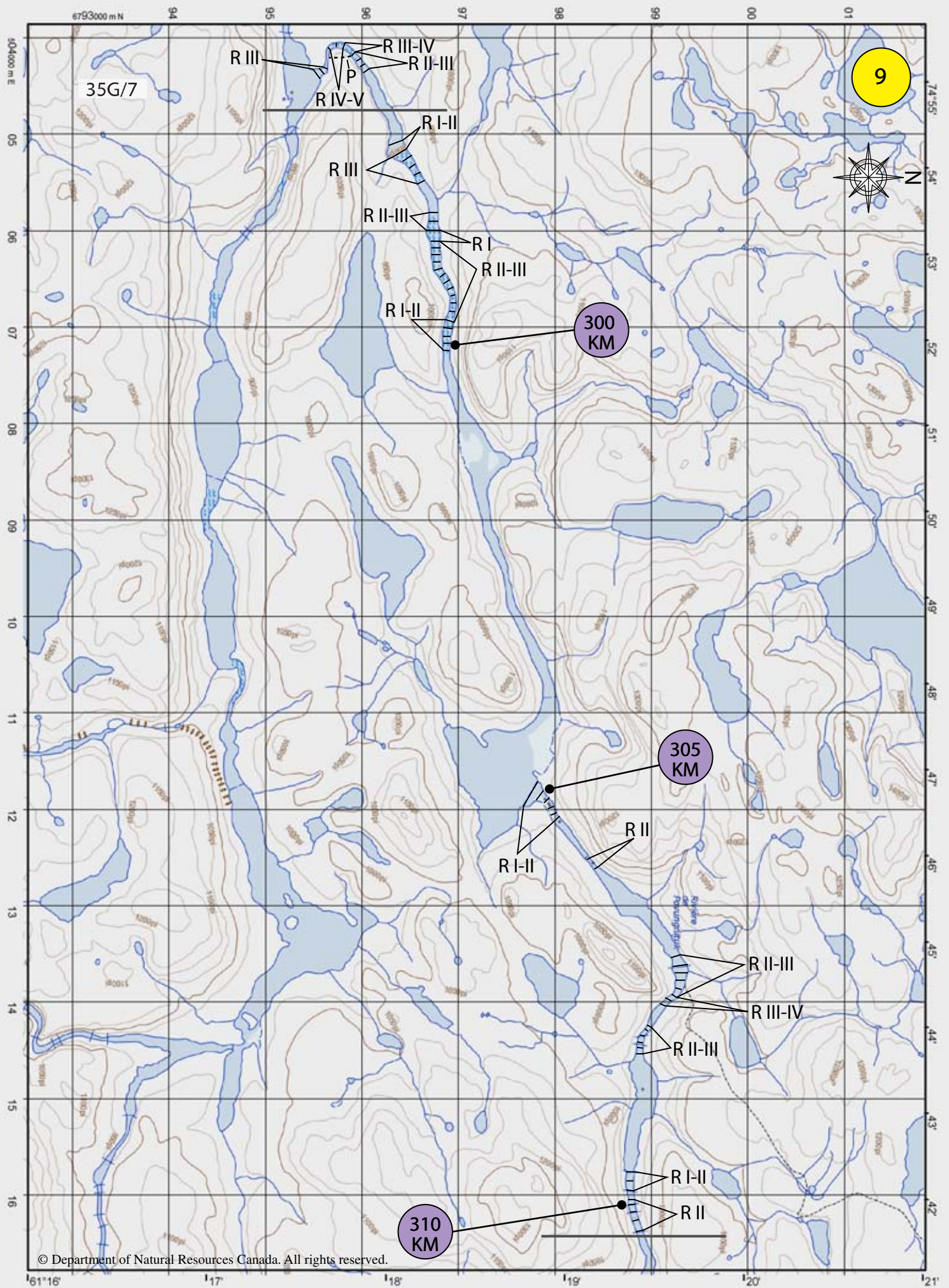


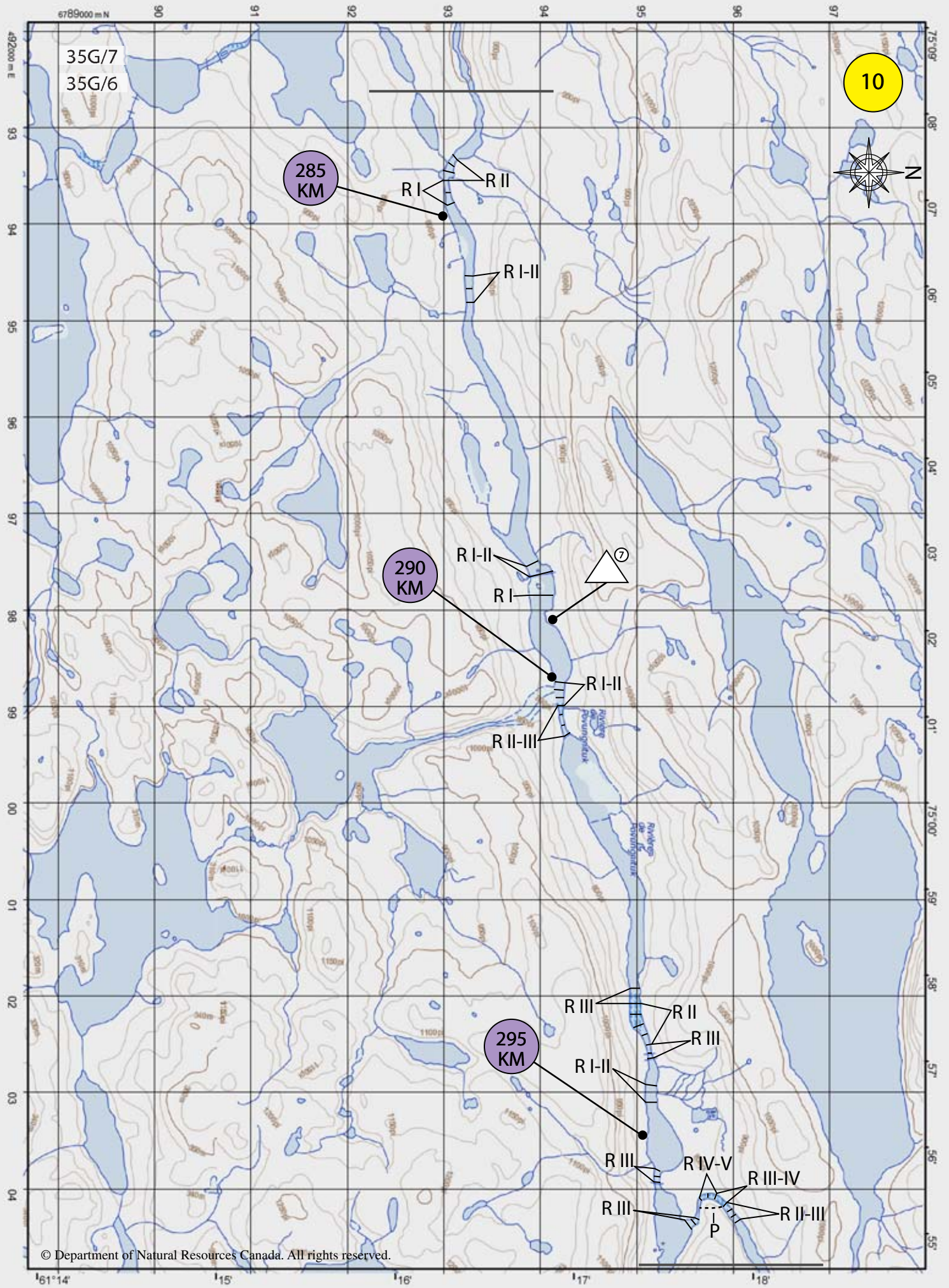


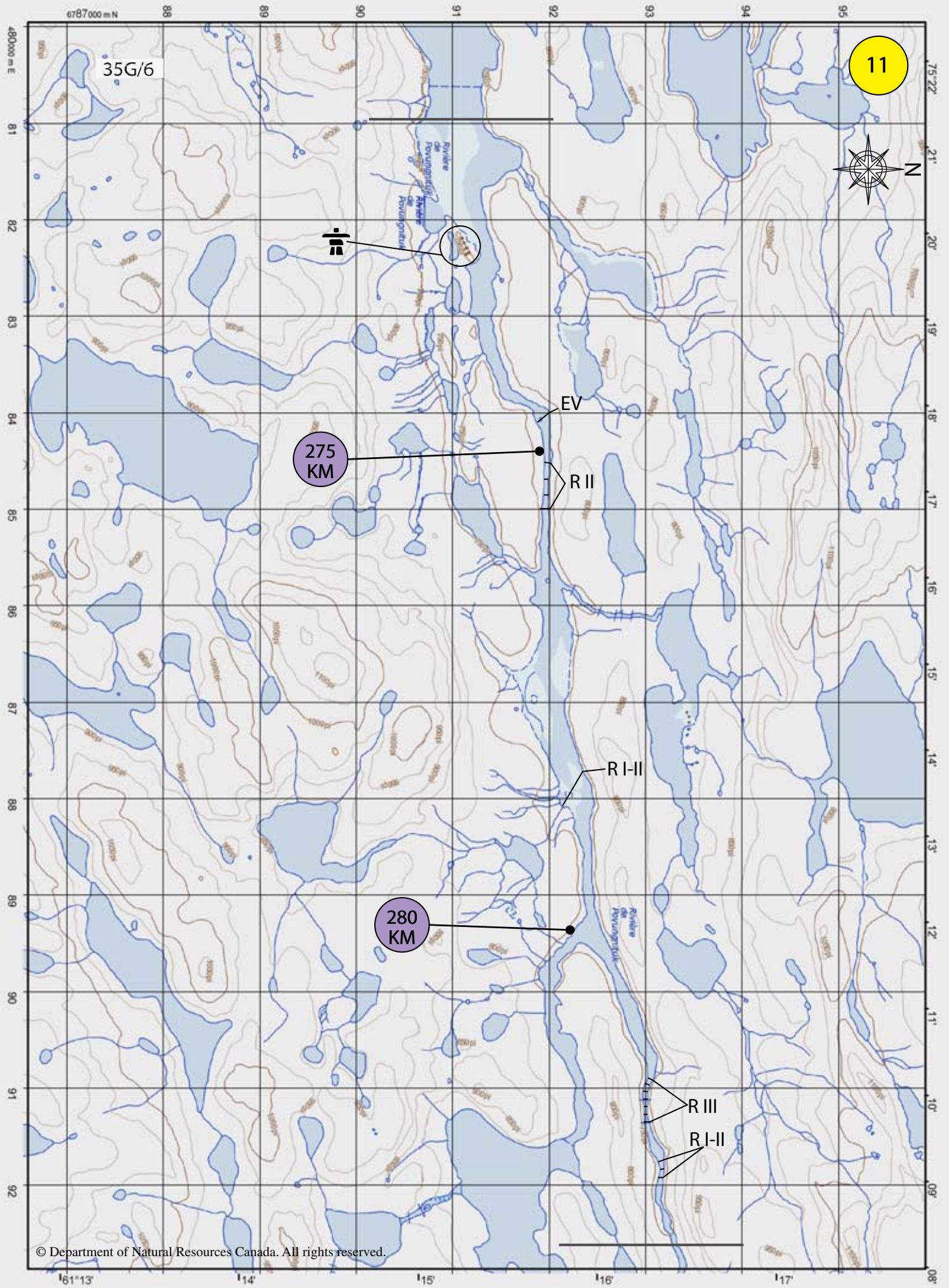


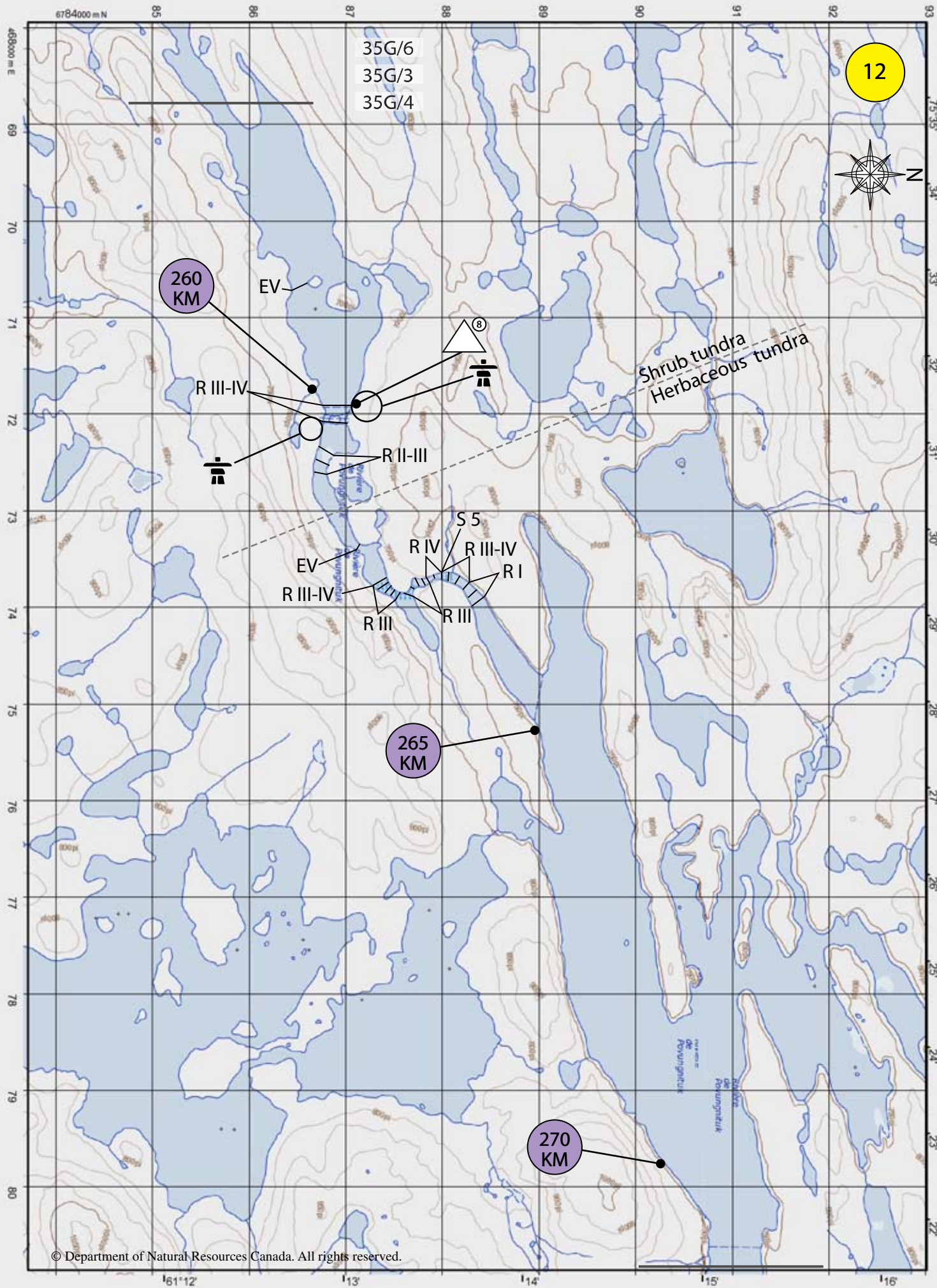


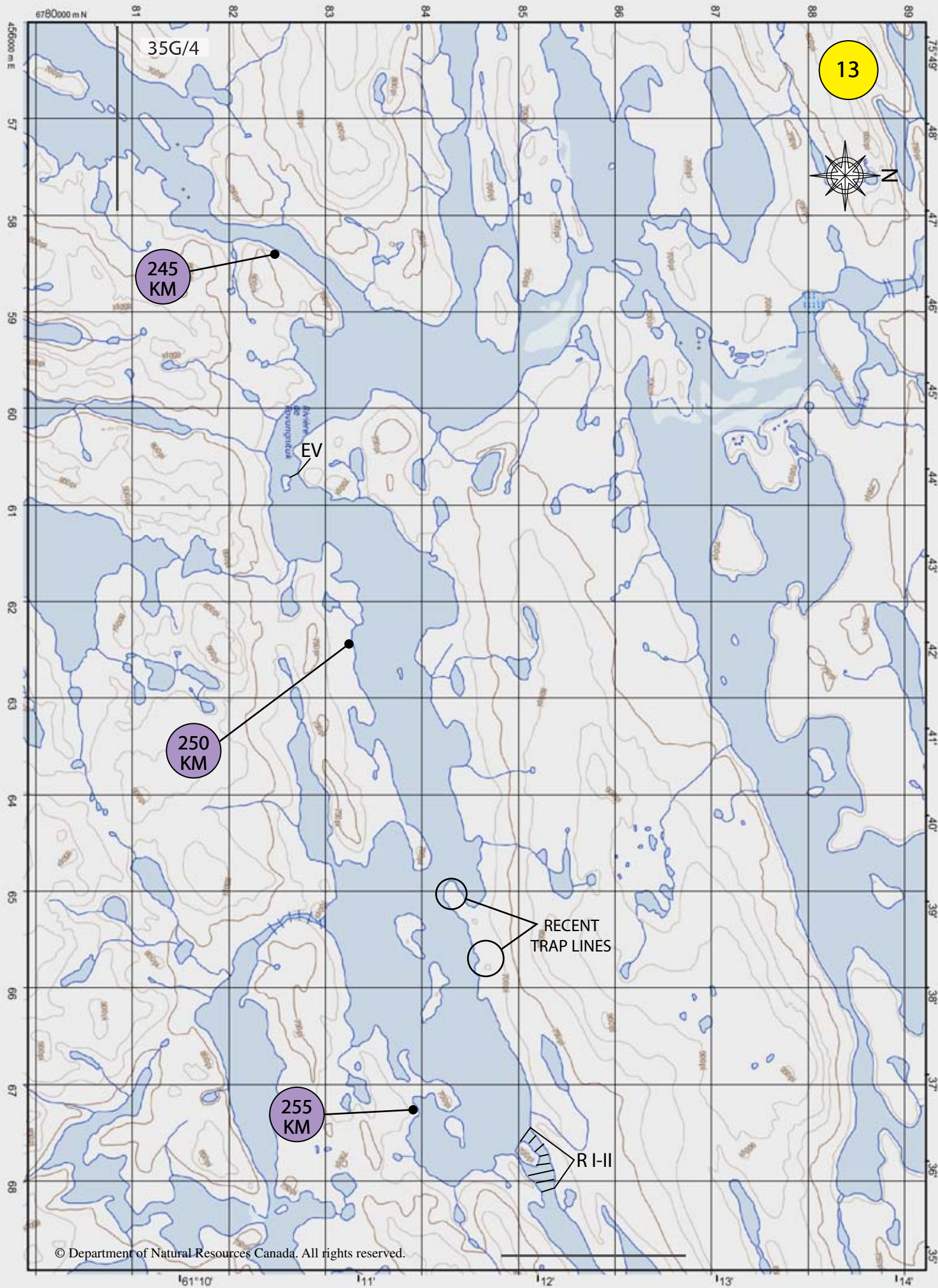


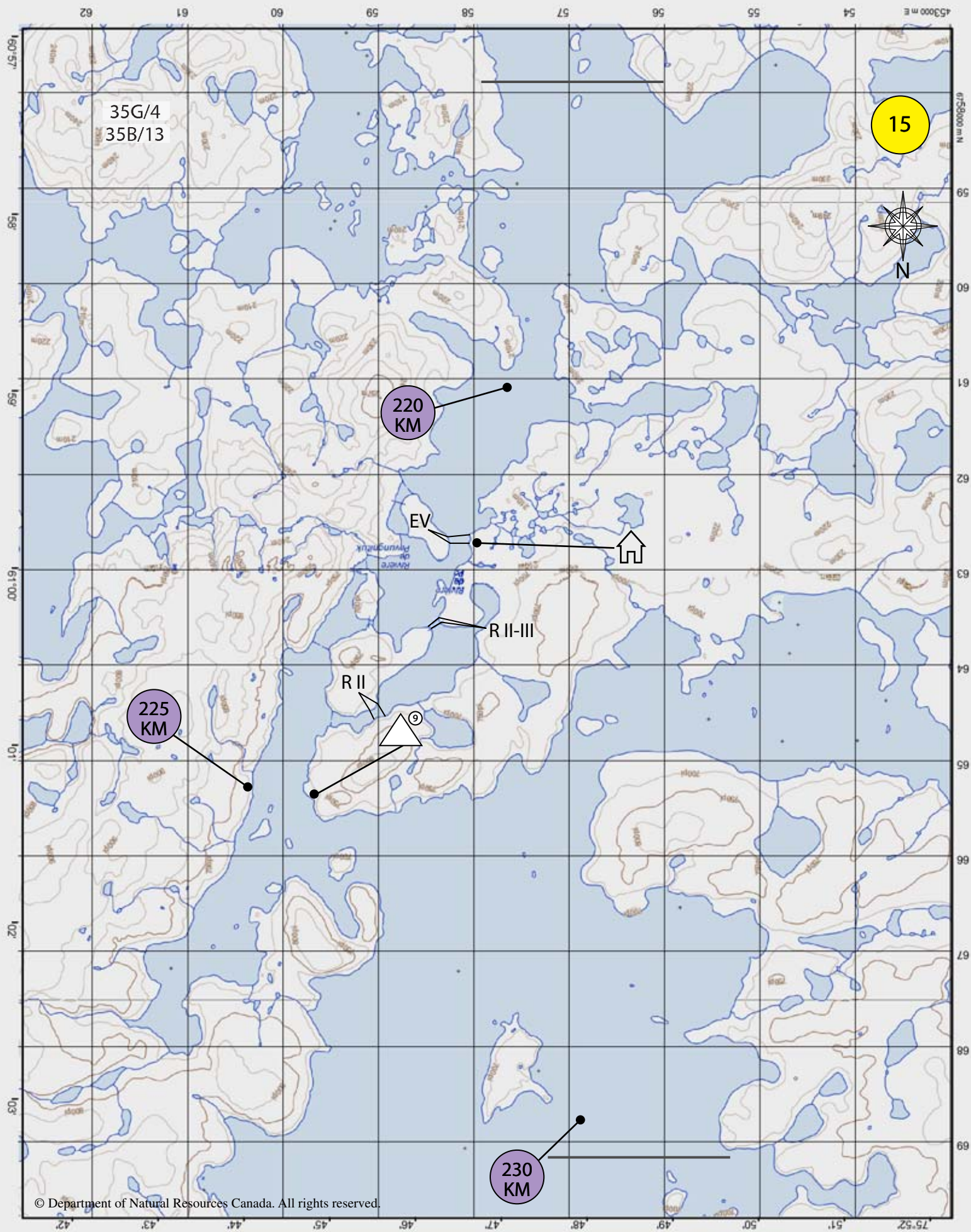


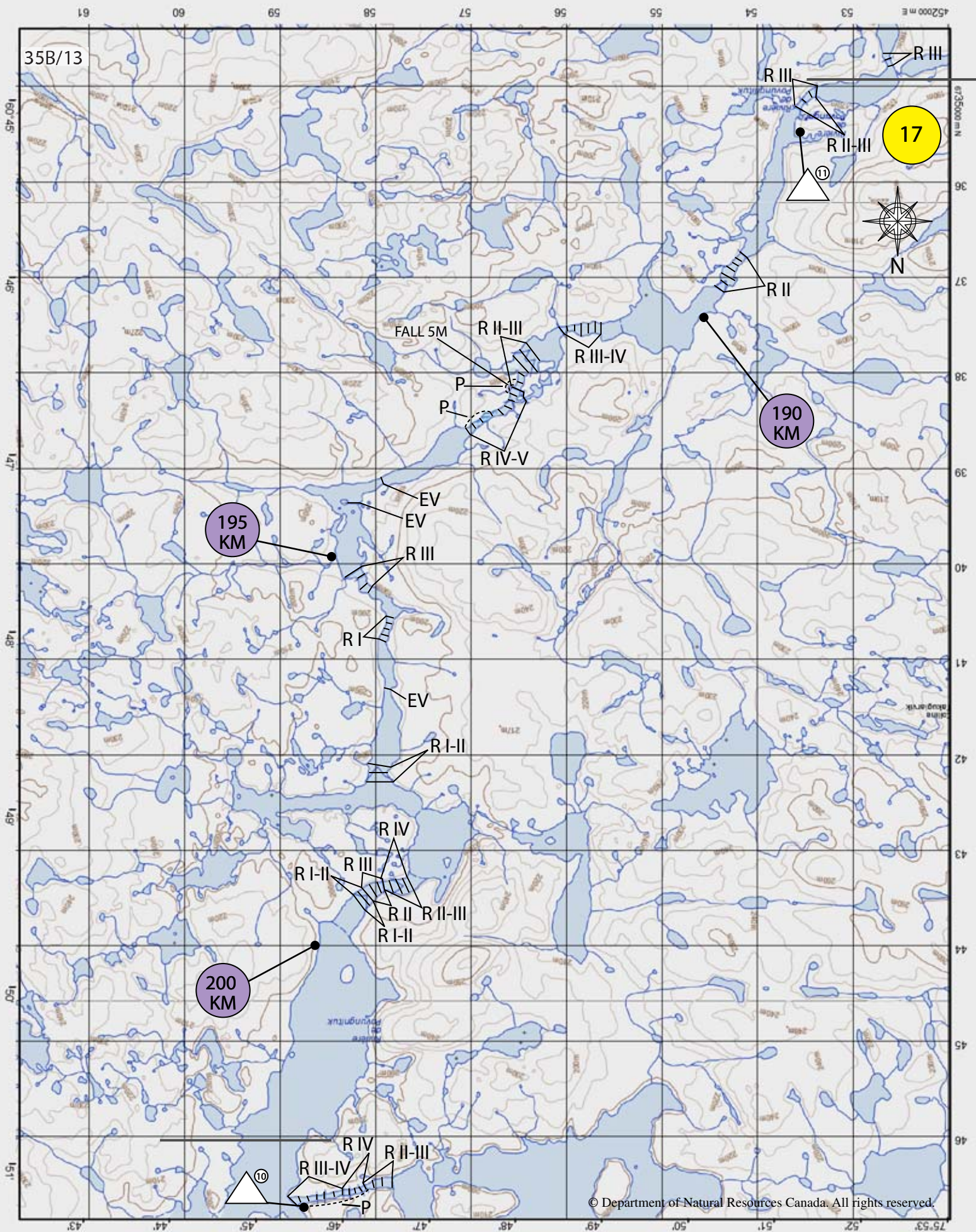


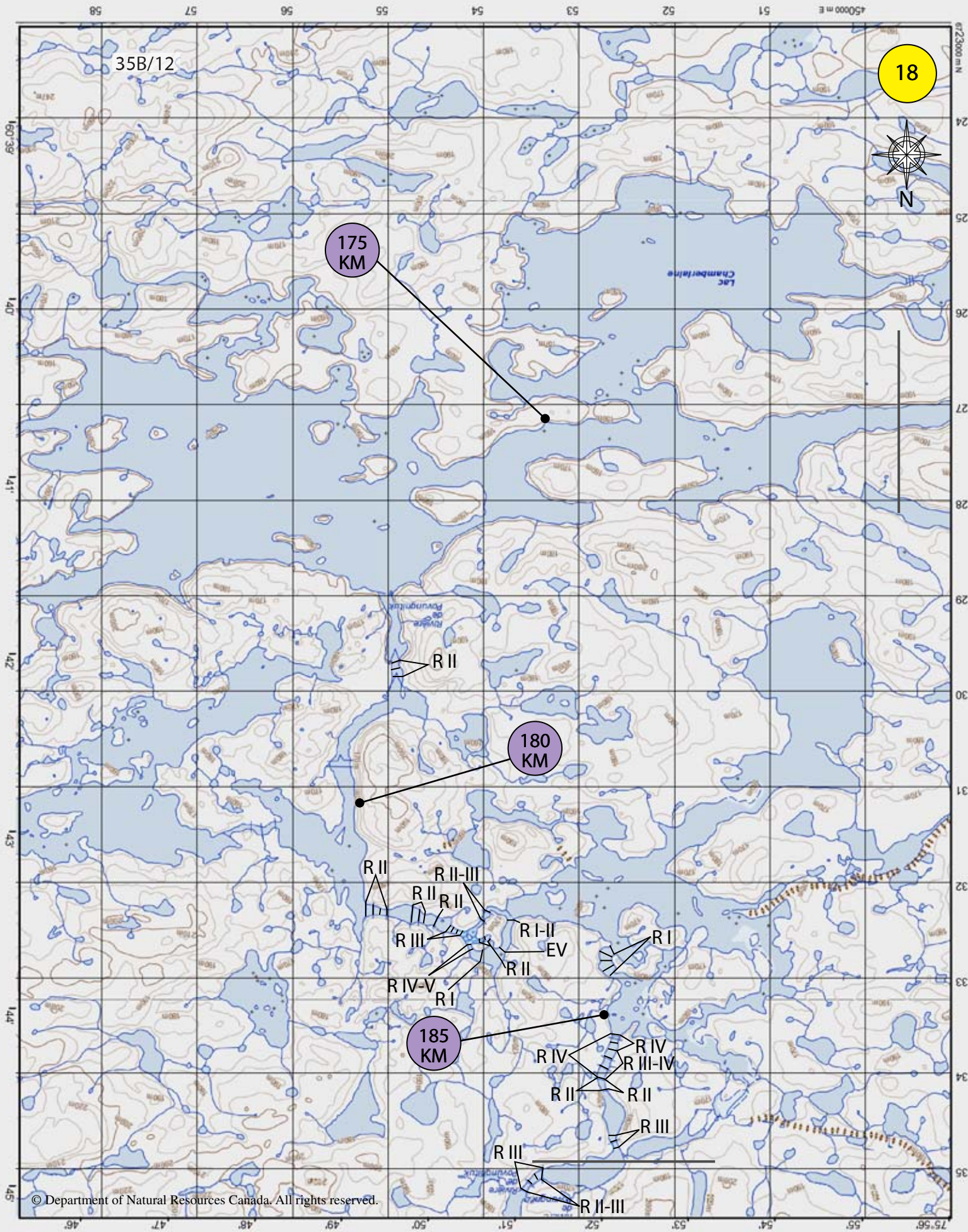


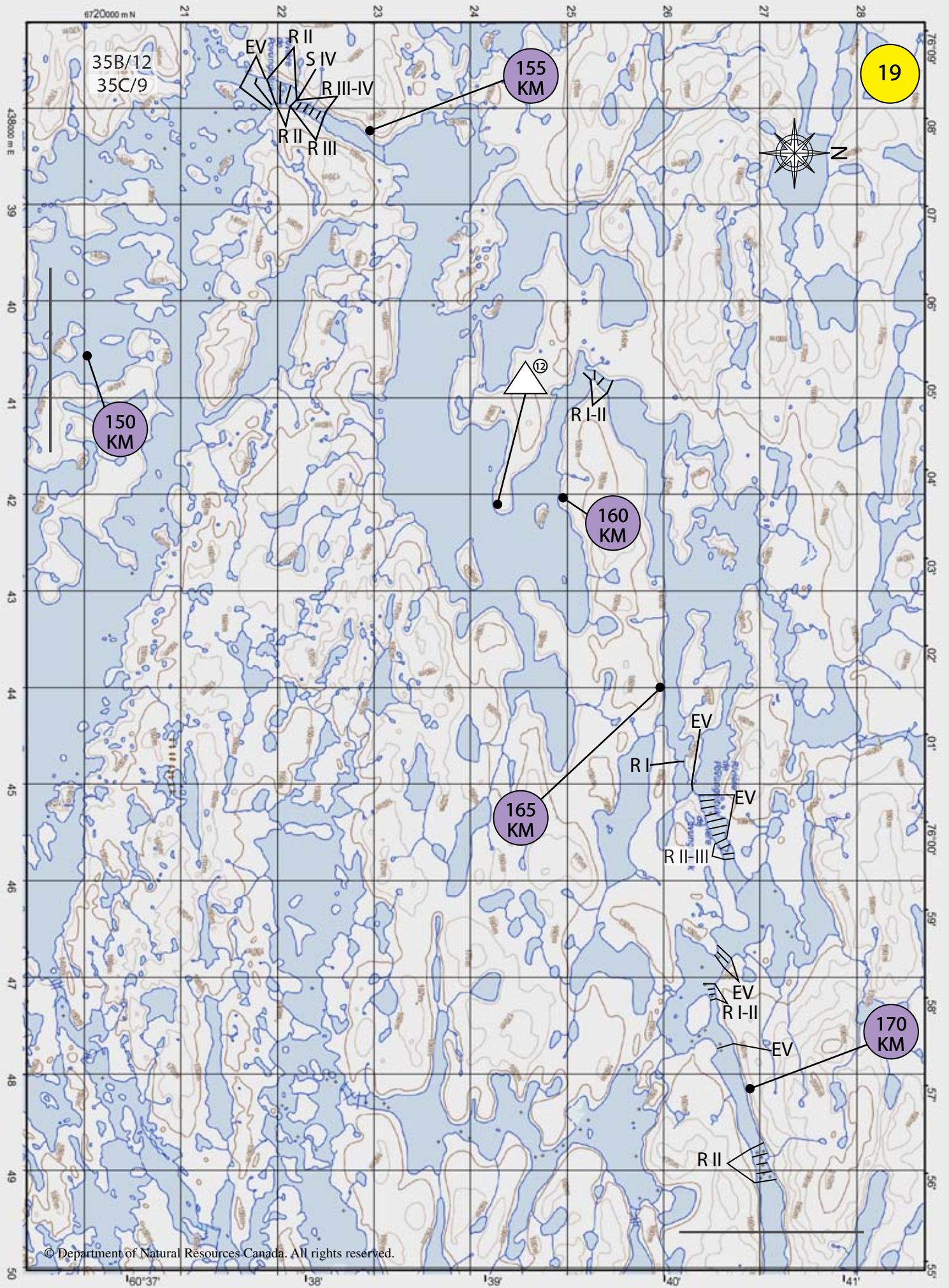


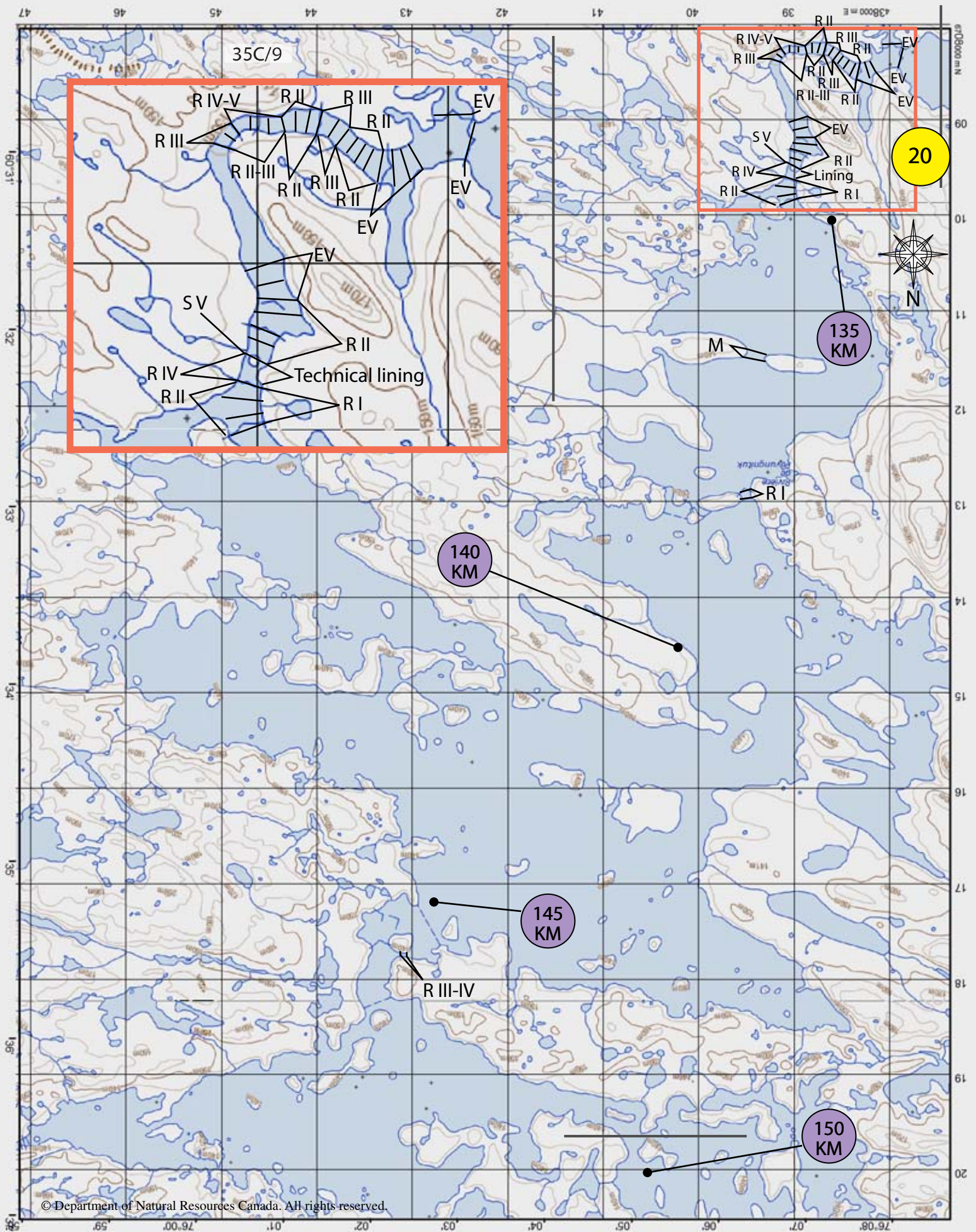


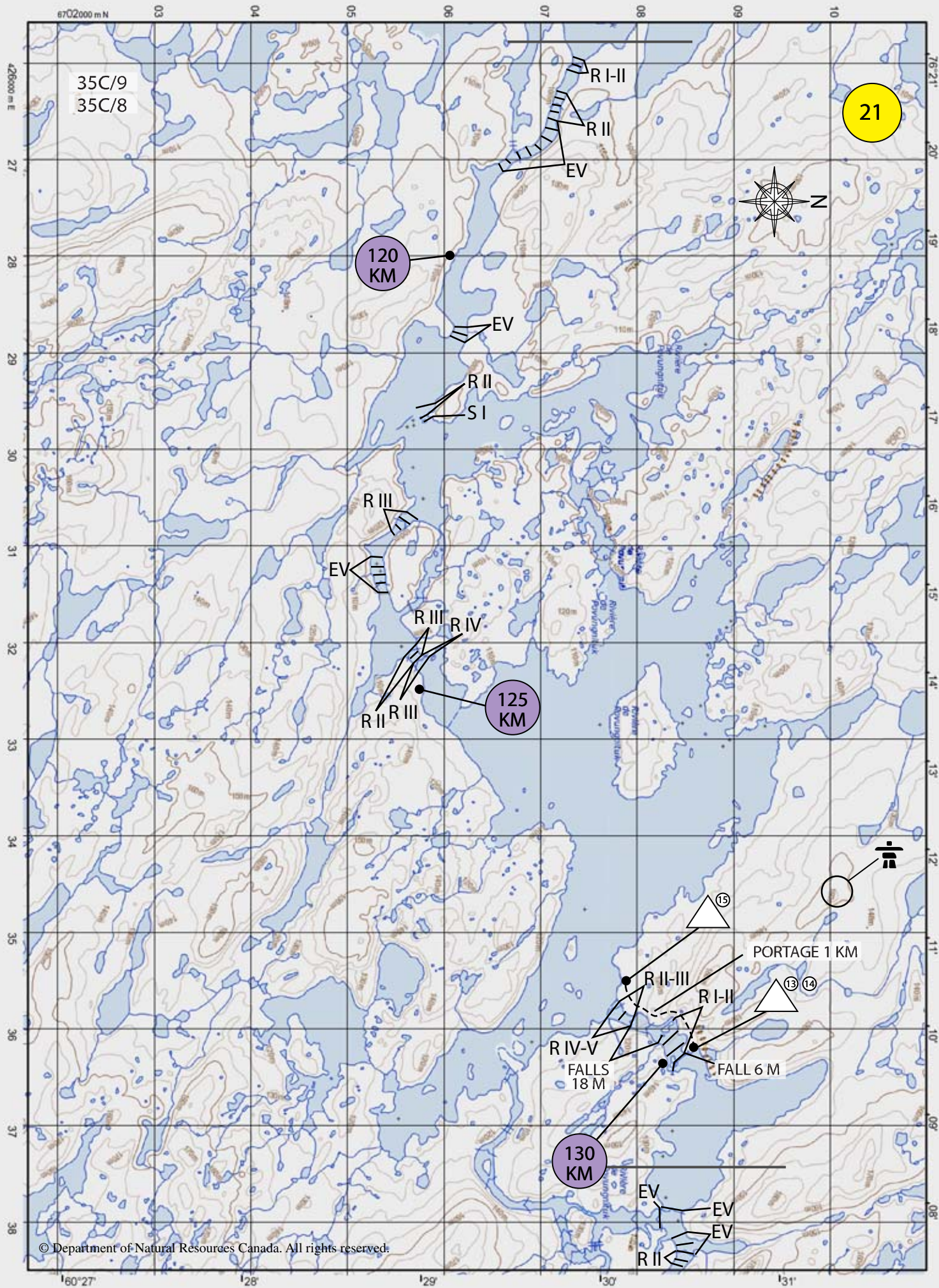


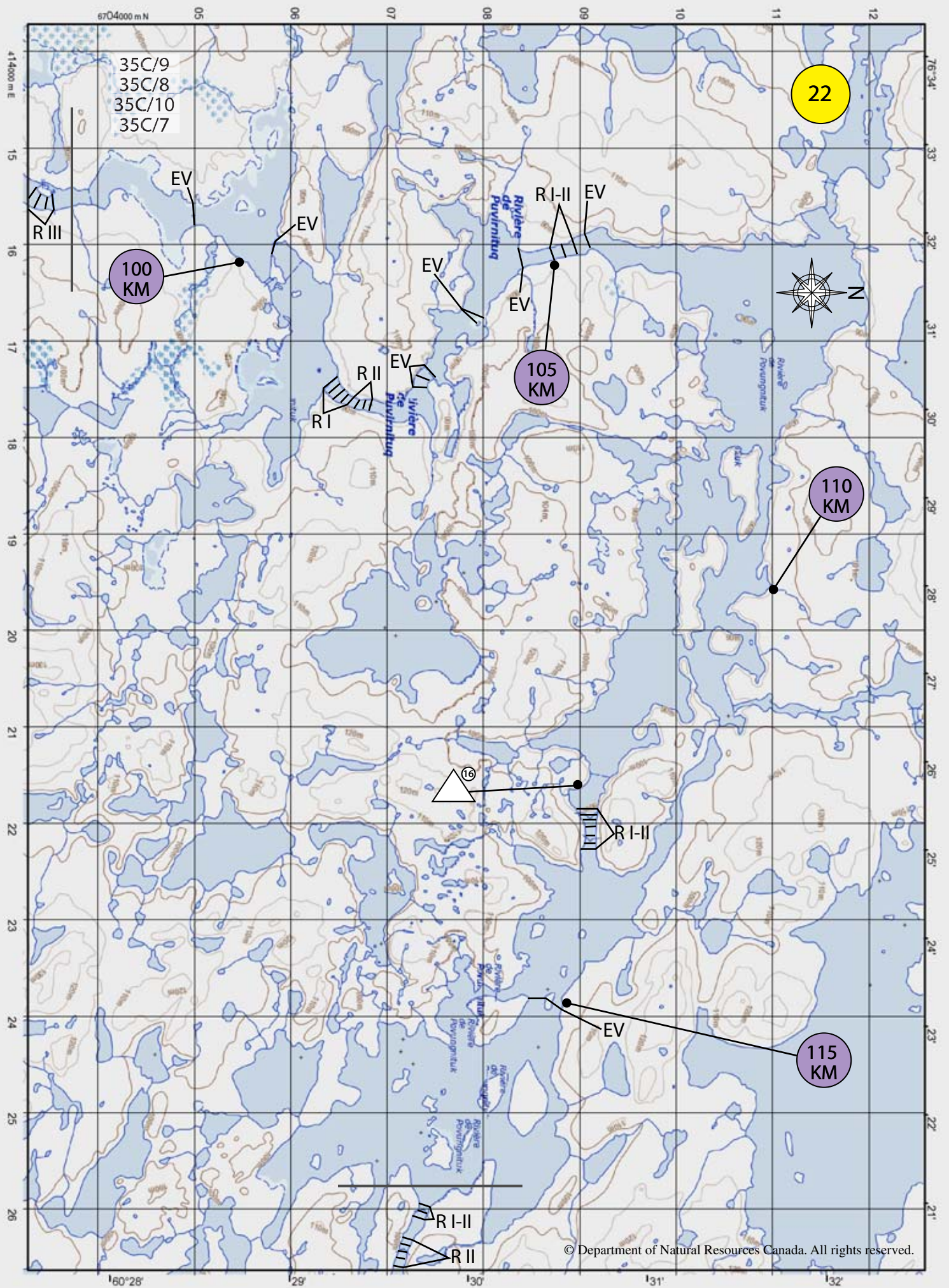


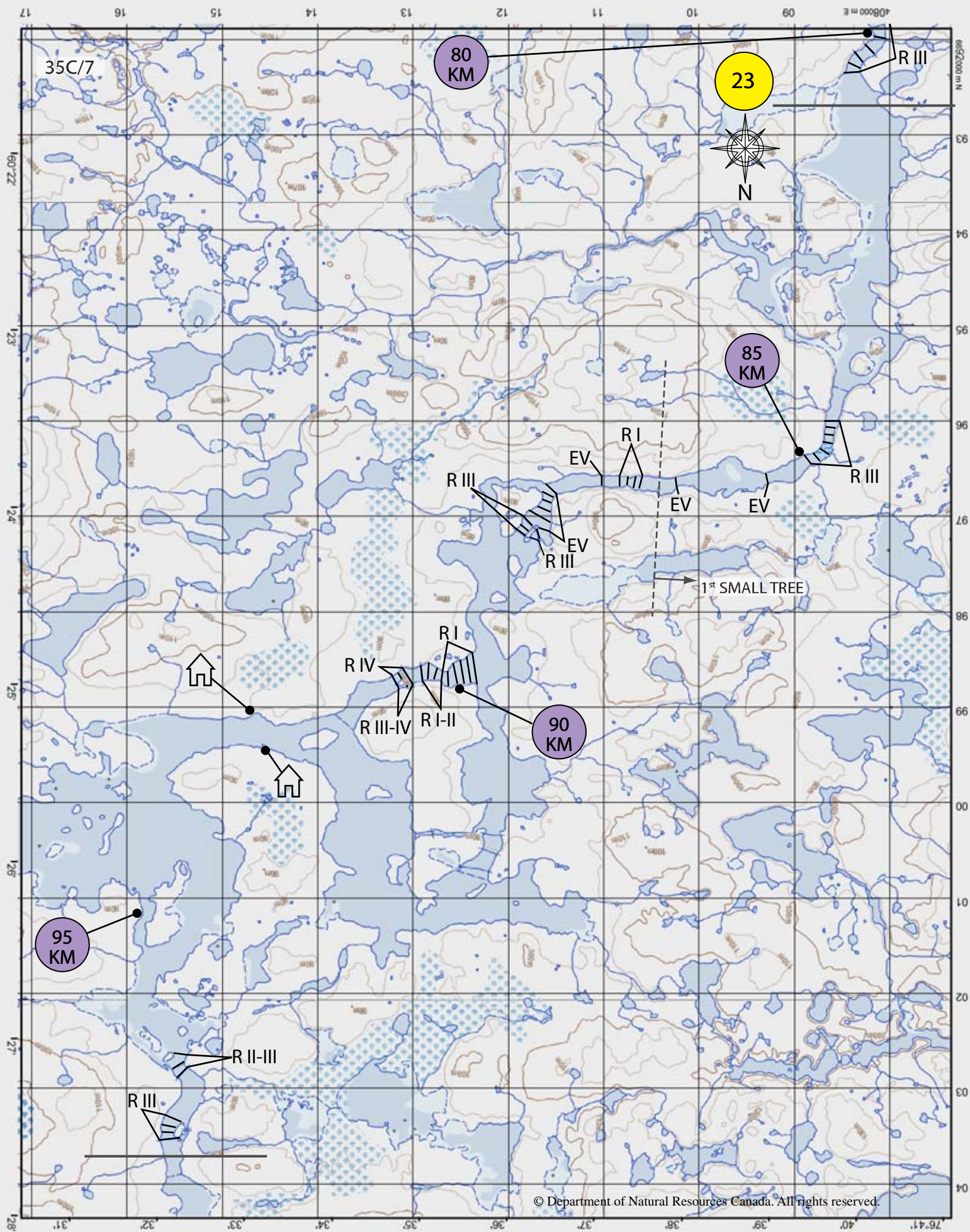


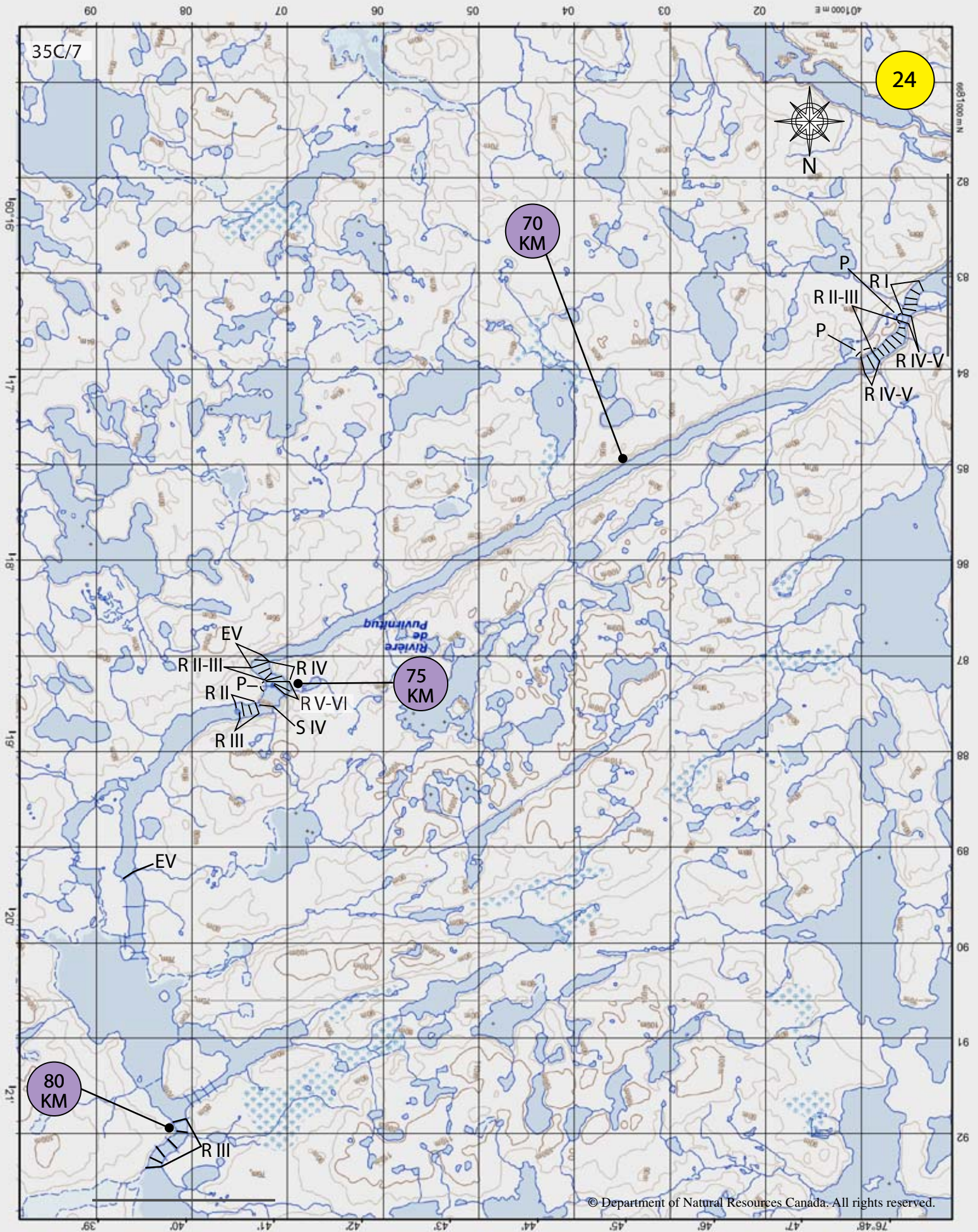


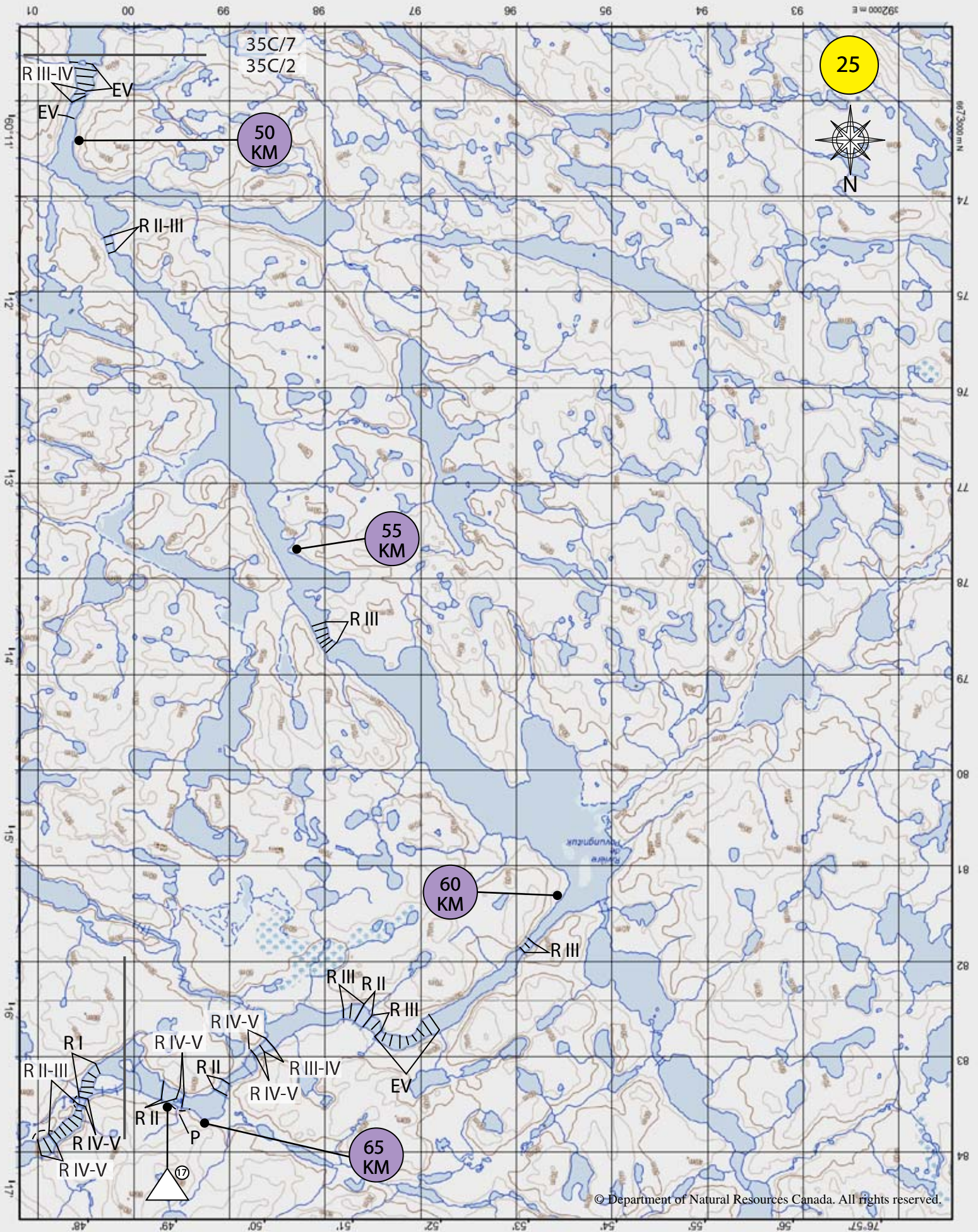


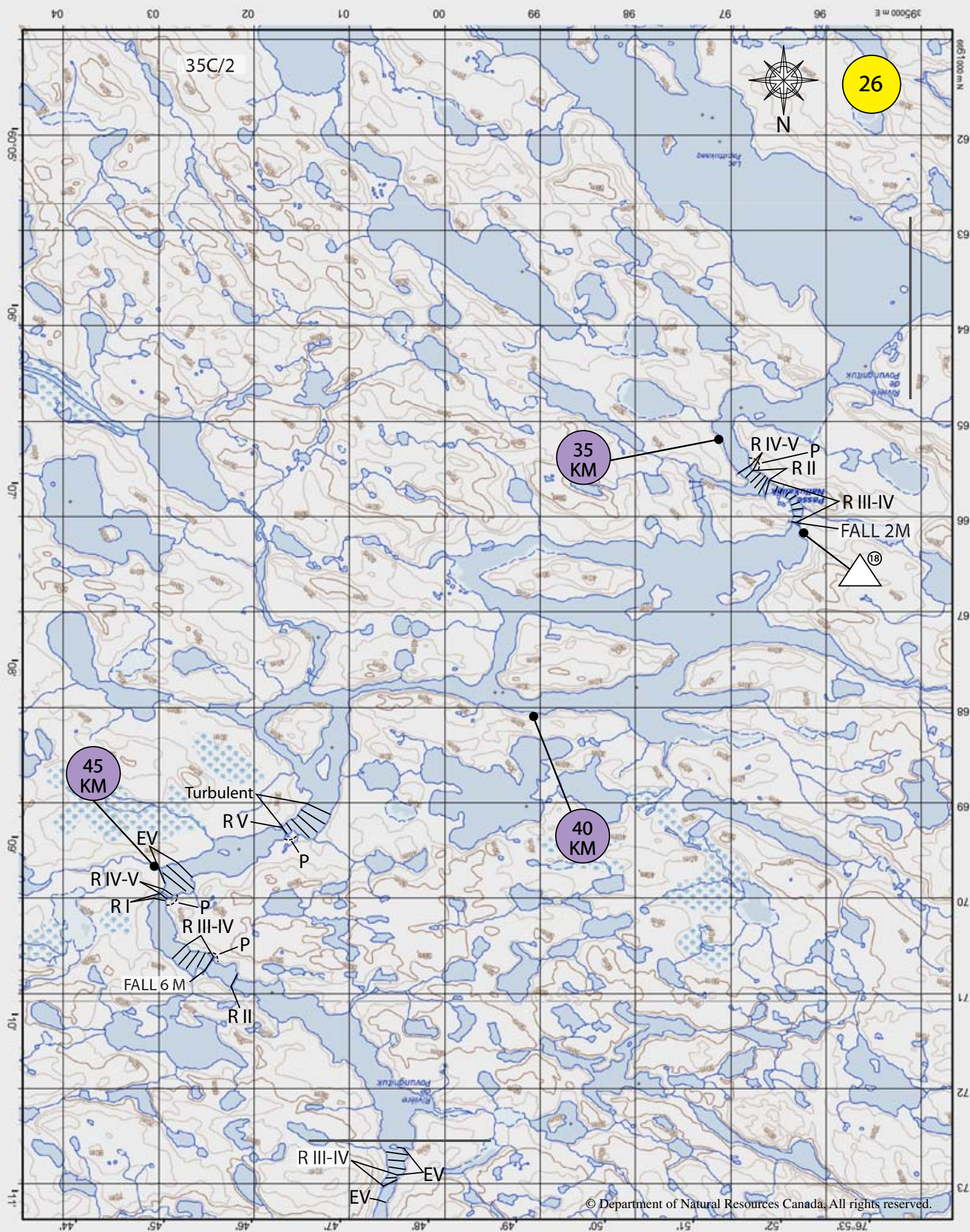


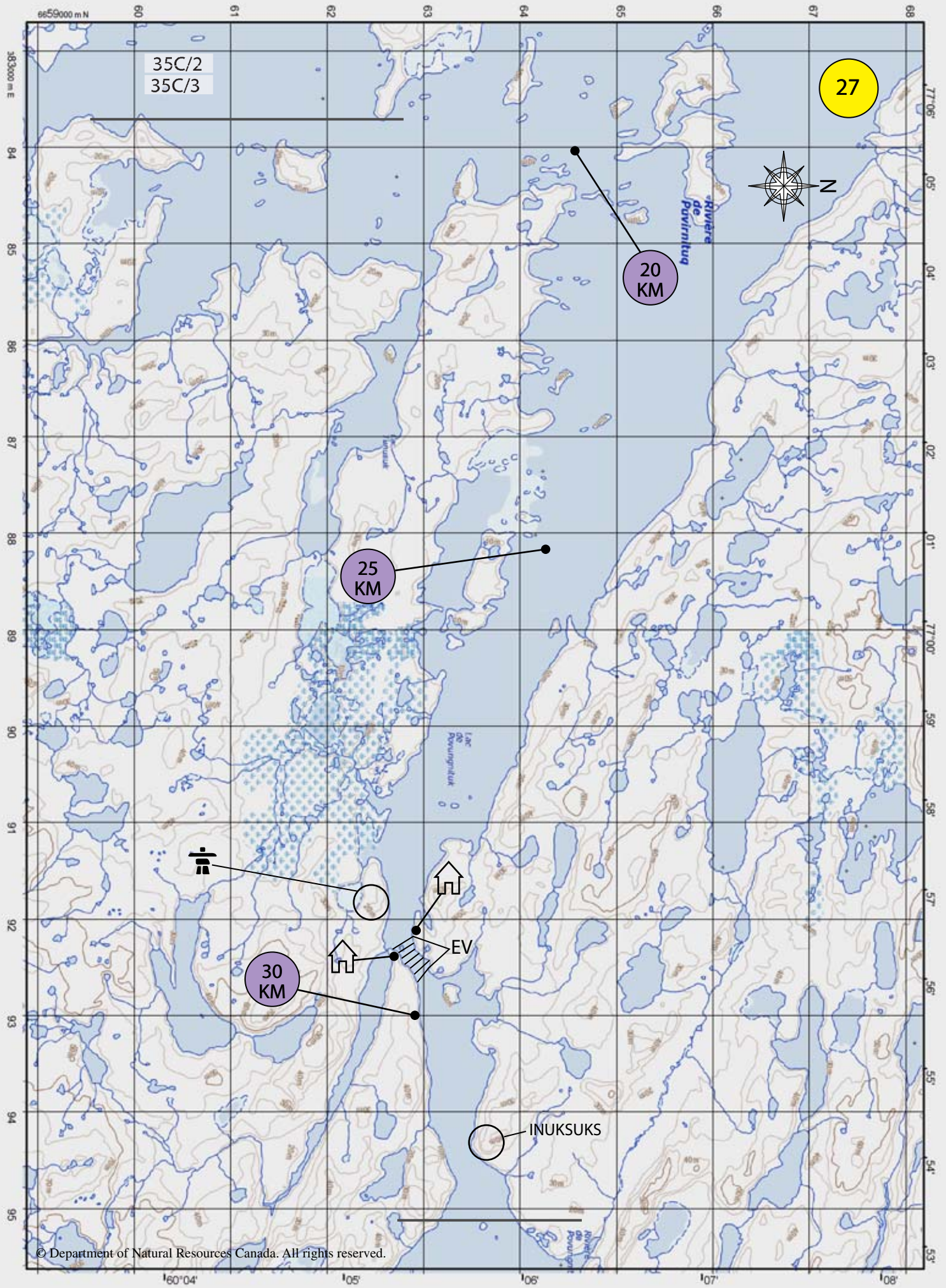












River Map Legend

The river maps are made from top to bottom. As a result, when you look at them while going down the river, what is on the right on your river map, is also on the right in front of you. All the corresponding topographical maps numbers (1: 50 000) are written on the top end left of the map. The scale of the river maps are identical to the topographical maps and is 1 : 50 000.

When switching maps, you can refer to the wide grey line that crosses the river, which is at the exact same location on both maps. The overlapping distance on each map is approximately 1 km.



The numbers in the purple circles indicate the number of kilometers to reach Puvirnituk.

R II - III The definition of each class of rapids is done in detail in the following page.

P The letter P indicates a portage.



Cabin (often in poor condition).



Archeological site (do not touch anything!).



Indicates where we camped and which day it was. But there is many more opportunities.

Important Notice: This river map is to be used with the Puvirnituk Safety Protocol. Detailed technical information is provided for each section of this river, including specific information about which line is best to run, which side is easier to line or carry your boat and so on, for each tricky section or rapid. You will also find in this Safety Protocol information about group safety, emergency phone numbers, evacuations, logistics, equipment etc. You should have a look at it!

Rapid Ratings

General Ratings

R I : Easy. Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.

R II : Novice. Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers. Swimmers are seldom injured and group assistance, while helpful, is seldom needed.

R III : Intermediate. Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required; large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on large-volume rivers. scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Injuries while swimming are rare; self-rescue is usually easy but group assistance may be required to avoid long swims.

R IV : Advanced. Intense, powerful but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. Depending on the character of the river, it may feature large, unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages demanding fast maneuvers under pressure. A fast, reliable eddy turn may be needed to initiate maneuvers, scout rapids, or rest. Rapids may require “must” moves above dangerous hazards. Scouting may be necessary the first time down. Risk of injury to swimmers is moderate to high, and water conditions may make self-rescue difficult. Group assistance for rescue is often essential but requires practiced skills. A strong Eskimo roll is highly recommended. Limit of open top canoes.

Intermediate Ratings

R II - III : Variable difficulty depending on water level.

R II / III : The difficulty is in the middle of the two class (2.5).

R II + III : 50% of RII and 50% of RIII.

Note : The letter « **M** » means shallow water (Maigre). The river looks like a rock garden. There is barely enough water to go through without scratching your boat against every rock.

Note : Sometimes the river splits in two or three channels. If no information appear for a particular channel, it is because no scouting has been done for it. Do your own scouting!

Note : On most rapids, especially downstream of Lake Allemand, there is a often a sneak passage on the sides which is easier then the main channel. But if you choose to run this narrow 2 meters passage, be sure to have the skills to avoid being sucked in the main current by the many « défecteurs » which are often present. These small channels are also a good place to line.