

INTRODUCTION

The Charpentier River is a southern tributary of Lac Minto and the Leaf River (official name: "rivière aux Feuilles"). It is rarely if ever paddled. There is a trip report on the internet (Tim Kunin, August 1998) where a party of 3 paddled only the last 24 km of the river. The Charpentier runs through exceptionally beautiful treeless country, with many hiking opportunities.

The Leaf River was known by the Inuit as Kuugaaluk, the large river. Another name the Inuit used is Itinniq (where there are spring tides). At the end of the 19th century, the river was known by the name Leaf River. One source suggested it could have got its name from the willow and birch growing on its banks, or from the shape of the bay (Leaf Lake) at the end of the river. The name of this immense "lake" in Inuktitut is Qasigialik (The place where there are bearded seals).

The Inuit village Tasiujaq, population about 280, was built between 1966 and 1971 on the shores of Leaf Lake at the head of Deep Harbour on the Finger River. It lies a few kilometres north of the tree line. Here, the shrub tundra finally gives way to the arctic tundra. Tasiujaq, which means "resembling a lake", actually refers to the whole of Leaf Basin: Leaf Lake, Leaf Passage and Leaf Bay. Leaf Basin is renowned for its high tides, which regularly exceed 15 m.

Tasiujaq region is very rich in marine mammals (seal and beluga), fish (arctic char, Atlantic salmon, trout), ducks (particularly eider ducks) and many seabirds. As well, close to 1000 musk ox roam the surrounding area. Gyrfalcons and peregrine falcons are commonly found nesting on the islands of Leaf Basin and surrounding cliffs.

WORD OF CAUTION

These maps were created based on notes taken during our canoe trip in August 2007. We marked maps according to what we saw, 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 numerous errors, whether made by me personally or by the bugs in the software I 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 & time from help etc) Moreover, the class of rapids depends on the water level and that can change immensely through the season. At the time of our trip, the Leaf River was running almost 1 m higher than is the average for that time of year. There was no water level information about the Charpentier River available to us. 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 & reconnaissance. I am not taking any responsibility for the information provided here or for your safety.

TRANSPORTATION

See "Route Description".

PORTAGES

(Coordinates in UTM WGS 1984)

- Map 6: 662 m; start 18 V 613783 6368511; end 18 V 613619 6367910
- Map 8 & 9: 80 m; start 18 V 601442 6364834; end 18 V 601447 6364749 (it may be possible to paddle around)
- Map 8 & 9: 336 m; start 18 V 601318 6364526; end 18 V 601394 6364258 (it may be possible to paddle around)
- Map 9 & 10: 936 m; start 18 V 594563 6360116; end 18 V 594330 6359319
- Map 12: 473 or 675 m; first takeout 18 V 586081 6353749; second takeout 18 V 585913 6353772; end of portage 18 V 585473 6353793
- Map 12: 54 m; start 18 V 578983 6356859; end 18 V 578998 6356904
- Map 13: 631 m; start 18 V 575645 6362869; end 18 V 575121 6362969
- Map 15 & 16: 186 m; start 18 V 566448 6372809; end 18 V 566458 6372945
- Map 15 & 16: 228 m; start 18 V 566477 6373240; end 18 V 566553 6373439
- Map 50: 842 m; start 19 V 440782 6493677; end 19 V 440578 6492964

NAMING

This part of the world is rarely travelled, whether by canoe, foot, motorboat or snowmobile. Thus, very few places (rivers, lakes, hills, etc.) have names. For the purpose of canoe travel I chose to give certain places my own names as I saw fit, and marked the map accordingly. Feel free to use these names, or ignore/reject them.

CAMPSITES

Campsites are plentiful. There are very few trees around Lac Nedlouc and Charpentier River so campsites are available everywhere. The Leaf River is more sheltered, with steeper banks and more trees and bush along the river. Still, it was not difficult to find campsites for the night. Initially I was not sure whether to mark campsites on the map. Eventually, I decided to mark only the campsites we camped on or the places we portaged through or paddled beside that I considered beautiful spots for camping.

RAPIDS

I used the scale of rapid class from 1 to 5 (not 1 to 6 as some other paddlers use). Rapid class is marked as "R1" - "R5". Our classifications did NOT take into account the remoteness of the region. Normally an extra level is added for this factor. Ledges are marked between L1 and L5. I also used "sw" for swift (moving water) and "wf" for waterfall.

CREDITS

Description and maps

Lester Kovac and Lynette Chubb

- Were dropped on Lac Nedlouc on July 29, 2007.
- Reached Lac Minto on August 8, 2007.
- Finished in Tasiujaq on August 18, 2007.
- Got to Finger Lake and flew from there on August 20, 2007.

Adaptation/packaging

Charles Leduc, 2007, 2017

Contributors

Jean-Francois Jobin, corrections, 2017.

Distribution

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Available from www.cartespleinair.org.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Lac Nedlouc is situated on a high plateau in tundra. We used a plane from the Air Saguenay base on Lac Pau (Caniapiscau) to get there, however, there are other options as well. In addition to different flight starting points, it is possible to ascend to Lac Nedlouc from Lac Morrice on the southeast (you could get to Lac Morrice from the M  l  zes River by ascending up another small river). To get the most from our journey, we wanted to land on the very south east end of Lac Nedlouc, however, our pilot preferred to land on the deeper main body of the lake beside Duck Island (km 453).

Navigation in the featureless landscape of Lac Nedlouc plateau requires constant attention to maps, compass, GPS etc.

The Charpentier River starts as a small current in narrow rocky places overgrown by willows at about km 444. It joins Leaf River/Lake Minto at km 320, thus making its overall length 124 km. At km 442 you will find another rocky shallow place overgrown by willows. This one is much harder to push your way through.

At approx. km 416, a long "boulder valley" begins; impossible to paddle through. However, you can easily portage over the hill on the left side. The Portage is 662 m long & nicely maintained by caribou (as all the portages in this area are).

In the area between km 404 and 400 we chose to paddle the right (north) channel. It is wide and deep enough to paddle. The center channel appeared to be too shallow. We didn't see the left (south) channel.

The route between km 398 and 395: As the current topo maps don't show any direct pass through, it seemed to us that the Charpentier does a long (~20km) detour with a big U-turn on the west side. Consequently, we decided to portage the most direct route. First portage is 80m, second 336m. To our big surprise, we found the river flowing just beside us - a nice R2(?) rapid with a shallow & rocky end (be careful there). This section of the river is not marked on the topo maps nor on Toporama. I fixed it on the provided map and contacted MNR to fix the problem. It may be possible to paddle this section without portaging as we did.

Caribou Rapids (past 385 km mark) are one of the most beautiful places on the Charpentier River. It is a long set of drop & pool rapids, consisting of anything from R1 to waterfalls. It would be possible to paddle some of these rapids and portage or line the others, however, it would not be easy. The River valley here is sheltered and the banks overgrown by bushes. Some partial

portaging could be very difficult. We portaged the whole set via a nice 936 m long portage on caribou trails.

Wolf Rapid (km 380) is divided into two channels by an island in the middle. The left channel is a waterfall, but the right channel is R3-4 (scouting is a must!). It is possible to portage the island.

R3-4 at km 372: it is possible to portage on river left.

Between Caterpillar I rapid and Chute Bleu lies another exceptionally beautiful & spectacular part of Charpentier River.

Caterpillar I consists of R2 and R4 rapids with extremely rocky, unpaddleable run-out. There is no pool between these two rapids, nor are there eddies. A flat portage with difficult bouldery section is on river left. If you portage the whole rapid, portage is 675m long. If you decide to paddle R2 (scout first!!) make sure you know what you are doing & exercise extreme caution. Portage around R4 is 473 m long. There is a beautiful campsite at the end of the portage.

Caterpillar II starts with an R1 rapid, after which the river splits into two channels. The left channel leads into a waterfall. The right channel is shallow & ledgy, but it is possible to line & carry over. After the two channels rejoin, an R2 continues and increases to an R3-4. It is possible to line on river right.

Caterpillar III is a beautiful R3 rapid which becomes an R2 at the bend. Scouting is a must!!

At about km 357.5 there is a small lake where Beaud   River joins from the left. In front of you is a flat-forested island. The channel on the left side of the island is too rocky & impassable. The right side of the island is a narrow channel with a steep R3 rapid and rocky run-out. It is possible to paddle the left side over the run-out (ledge?), however, you have to exercise extreme caution.

Caterpillar IV consists of a waterfall, Ledge 4 and class 2 rapid immediately following each other. It is possible to line on river right. Both banks are overgrown here.

Chute Bleu is accessible & portageable (54 m portage) on river left. It is possible to camp here on the flat rocks, but space is limited. It may be possible to pitch the tent also in the forest above or across the river.

Caterpillar V consists of 2 R4-5 rapids, with a short pool in between. Portage 631 m is on river right, and it is the hardest portage of the whole trip. Even the access to the shore is difficult due to rocky shallows. There are almost no caribou trails here, only short parts here & there. The landscape is covered by huge boulders, some of them loose. Some areas are overgrown by willows, and even though they are not too dense, you cannot see where to put your feet.

R3-4 at km 334.5 - it is possible to sneak and line on river left. There could be a better route on river right, but it is very hard to scout.

Canoeslide Falls - this is a beautiful but serious waterfall with a huge flat rock in the middle. We were able to land on the rock and slide the canoe with our ropes down the rock and continue on. This is very difficult & potentially dangerous, especially on wet, slippery rock - be very careful if you decide to do the same. Also, in higher water level rock may be submerged completely. Portaging would be probably be on river left.

Caterpillar VI (R5) - line left.

Caterpillar VII (R5 consisting of 4 ledges) - line right.

R5 + Chutes de Burin - gorgeous place on the river. Portage is a nice caribou trail on river left (186 m). Chutes de Burin are two

waterfalls with a short pool in between. The second waterfall has two drops.

R3-4 on km 326 - we chose to portage on river left, via an easy caribou trail through a cloudberry field (228 m). It may be possible to run this on river right, but it is very hard to scout. Whatever you do here, be very careful.

Caterpillar VIII (R5) - line or portage left (at the water level we had, it was easy to line).

At km 320 you are on Lac Minto. This area is officially marked as Leaf River, however, until km 310, the area has a very lake-like atmosphere, so I decided to call it Lac Minto.

The first discernable current on the Leaf River appears at km 288. The Leaf is a big, high volume river and so are the rapids. The second part of Welcome Rapids (R3) is a serious rapid and requires scouting.

At km 273 there is a beautiful and really big camping spot called (and marked as) Pointe Charley.

At km 245 is located the Leaf River Outfitter's Camp. This camp operates 4.5 months/year and they expect to see their fishing boats between Welcome rapids and approximately km 185. The Leaf River Outfitters could be an excellent spot for a food drop (?!).

At km 265, in the bay on river right, there is a cabin that serves as a shelter for Leaf River Outfitters.

At km 57.5 there is an Inuit hunting cabin located on river left (19 V 413687 6497539). The cabin has two units, left and right (i.e. south-west & north-east). In 2007, the right side was severely damaged by bear(s), but the left side was in excellent shape and we used it for the night. Roof was in good shape.

There is another Inuit cabin at about km 52 on the river right. However, it seems very small. But there is plenty of space around the cabin for camping.

Goodbye Rapid is place where the river meets the (15 m!) tide. The Rapid is an easy R1-2 at high tide and a scary R4-5 at low tide. You have about a 2-hour window at high tide to get through this rapid. It is possible to camp here on river left between the boulders, but you will need to clear a spot for your tent(s). Unless you have unusually good weather, it doesn't make sense to paddle from here against the tide. The view of the bay (Leaf Lake) from here is beautiful. Unfortunately, the very picturesque waterfall on Fanfan River (tributary from the north) is not visible from here.

The Leaf River Estuary Lodge (19 V 432567 6515250) is located at km 26.5 on river right. These cabins are used only on demand (& are accessible only at high tide), so - at least according to our experience - don't expect to find people here.

Bottleneck Rapid (reversible waterfall, as some people call it in their trip report) is located at about km 22 (i.e. 11 km from Goodbye Rapid). It crosses the entire Leaf Lake; there is no sneak route through here. It is a raging R4-5 rapid/ledge at lower tide levels and barely a ripple (not even swift) at high tide. According to the other trip report on Leaf River I read, it is possible to camp here on river left. Logistically, I think this would be the best plan: pass through Goodbye Rapid at high tide and paddle to Bottleneck Rapid (or to Leaf River Estuary Lodge). Camp there for the night. Next day, pass through Bottleneck Rapid at high tide again.

Leaf Lake is really big and in bad weather it would be dangerous or impossible to paddle through. If you have a satellite phone, you could call Tasiujaq Municipality (819 633-9924) and ask them to arrange a water taxi/shuttle. You could be picked up at Leaf River Estuary Lodge (at high tide).

If you paddle to Tasiujaq, passing through Bottleneck Rapid at high tide will get you to Tasiujaq on the receding tide (against the current). The low tide shores are very rough there. However, Tasiujaq now has a low-tide harbour on Rowe island (km 5; 19 V 448378 6511584). Rowe Island is not really an island; rather, it is a peninsula with a nice access road. You could even camp (nice parking lot) there (19 V 448332 6511650), or arrange a vehicle shuttle from here to the Iqalupik Hotel.

There are many excellent hiking opportunities around Tasiujaq. The most exciting and most difficult one is Rowe Island, although it is more climbing than hiking. The easiest way to reach the summit would be from the north, however, if you don't want to paddle you can hike from the low-tide harbour's parking lot northeast along the shore, then up the steep ridge. Other places to see are Qarqaguluk Hill (start from the quarry) and Qamanialuk Hill. All these mountaintops are marked by Inukshuks. Another very interesting area is along the Finger River south of Tasiujaq.

At the time of our trip, our pilot (water-landing aircraft) refused to pick us directly from the (salt & tidal) Leaf Lake at Tasiujaq. He was uneasy about the tides, weather and big waves. He asked us to travel to Finger Lake where he could pick us up at Finger Lake Outfitters. I personally don't think it would be too difficult to land on Leaf Lake, especially at the low-tide harbour. However, if you need to be picked up from Finger Lake, find someone from the village to drive you to the edge of Finger River where the road ends. This is a very rough road, requiring a 4-wheel-drive vehicle. The bridge over the Phoques River was newly rebuilt (in 2007). The road does not continue past the point where it touches the Finger River, even though it is drawn on topo maps. You can paddle from here easily up the Finger River until you reach a shallow rocky boulder garden rapid. You can see arctic char everywhere around you in the river. From this point you have to take an 842 m portage up to Finger Lake. It is not an easy portage, & includes several creek crossings.

Finger Lake Outfitters' camp consists of several buildings & appears not often used. A bear had laid claim to the kitchen cabin.

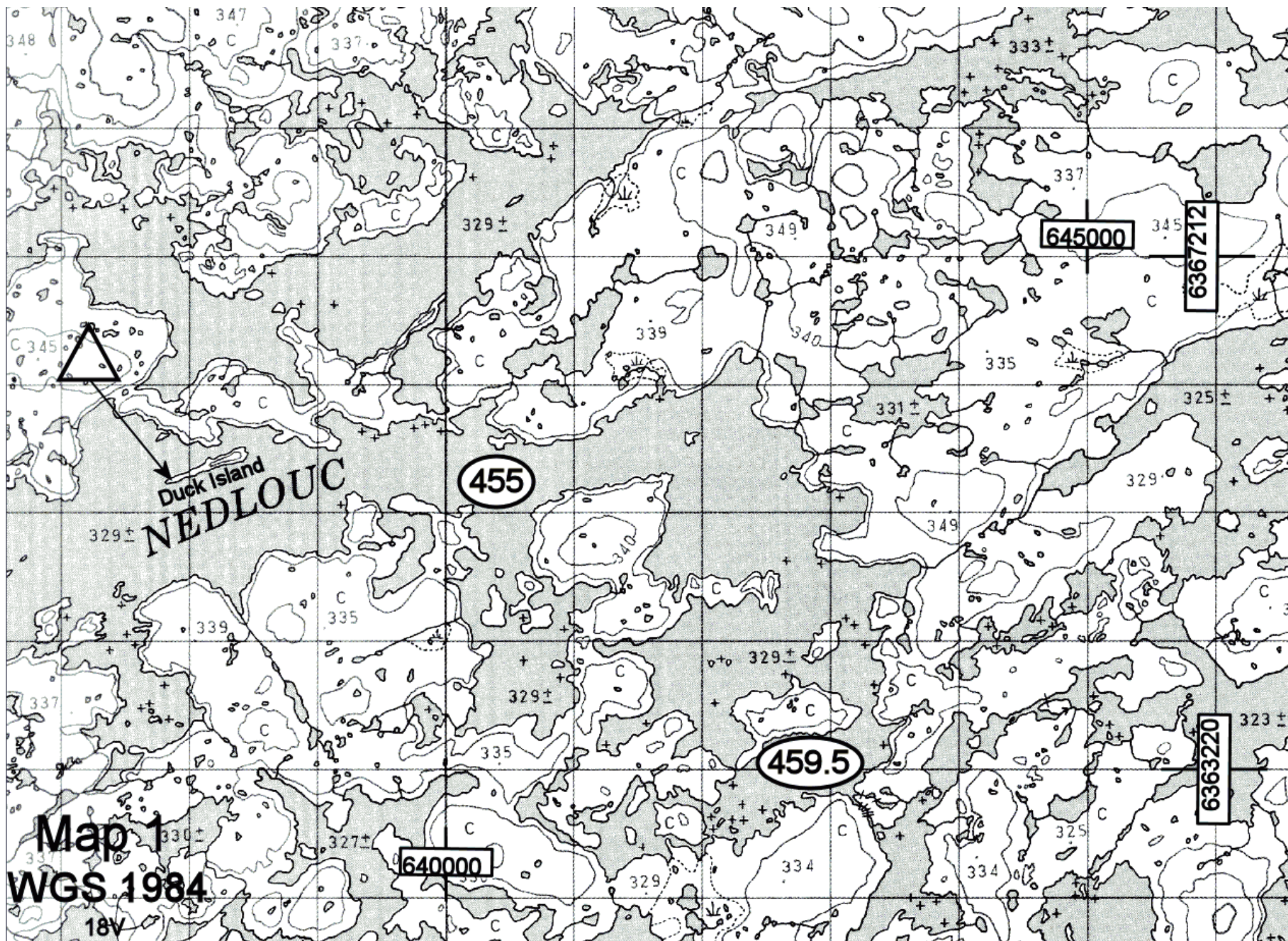
FINAL WORD (CONCLUSION)

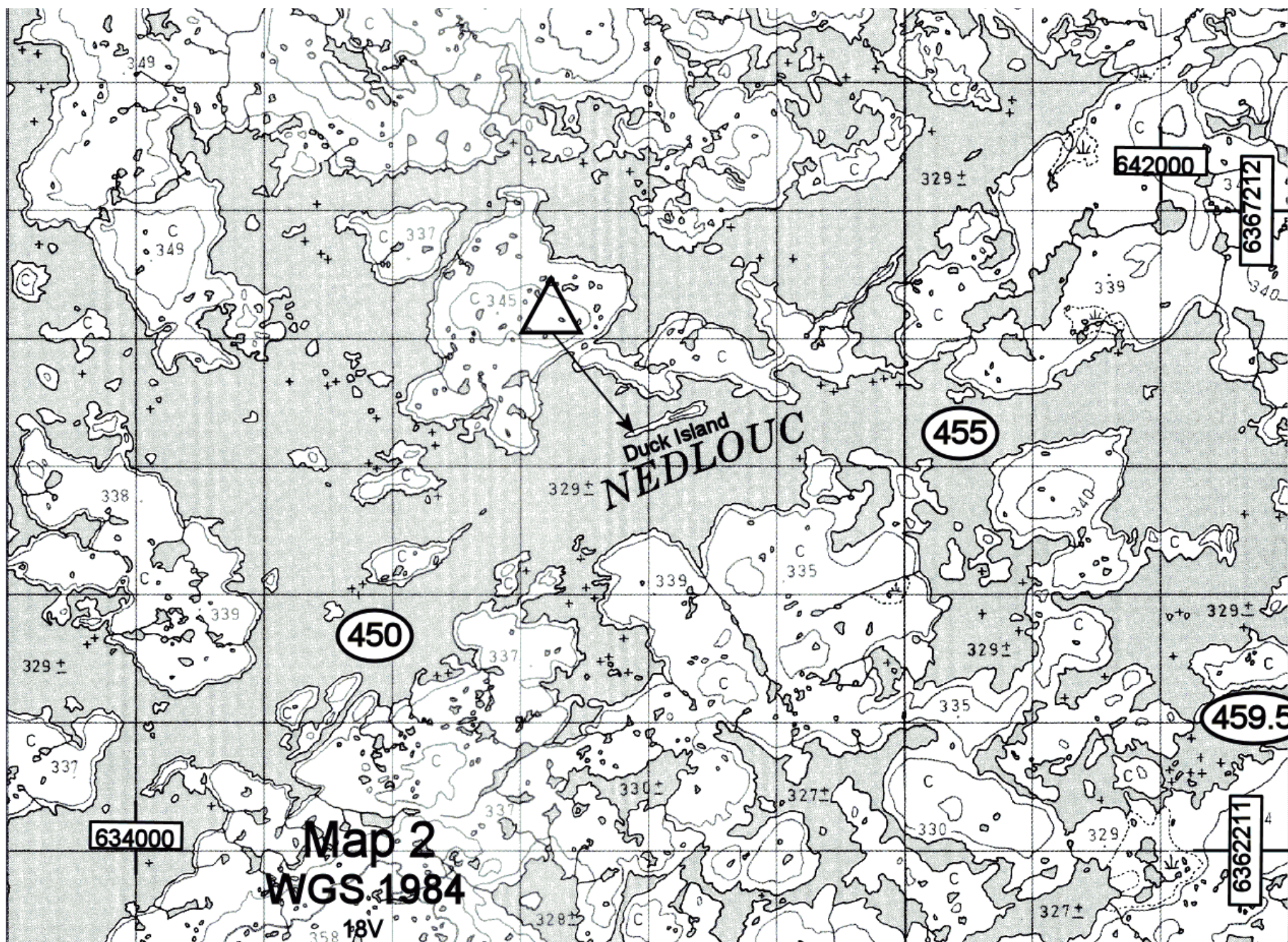
All portages and roads in & around Tasiujaq marked on these maps were extrapolated from a GPS track (i.e. they are as exact as software & GPS precision allows).

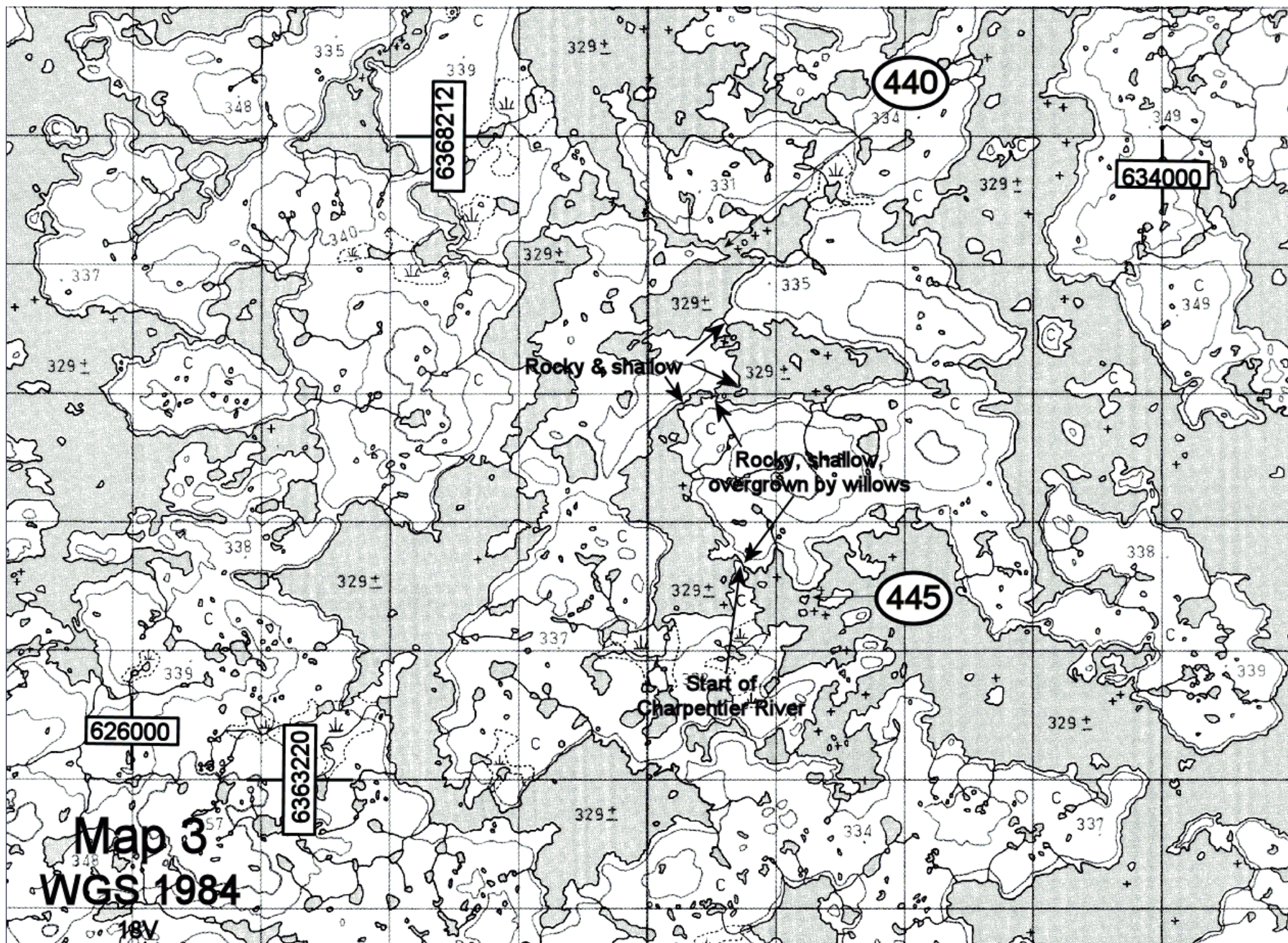
In August 2007 it took us (group of 2 people, 1 tandem canoe) 12 days to paddle down the Charpentier and 8 days on the Leaf River (plus 1 day to reach Finger Lake). If you want to do more hiking or paddle at a slower pace, you will need more time.

Trip report is available at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/landltrips/Trips/Leaf2007>







Map 4
WGS 1984
18V

6374221

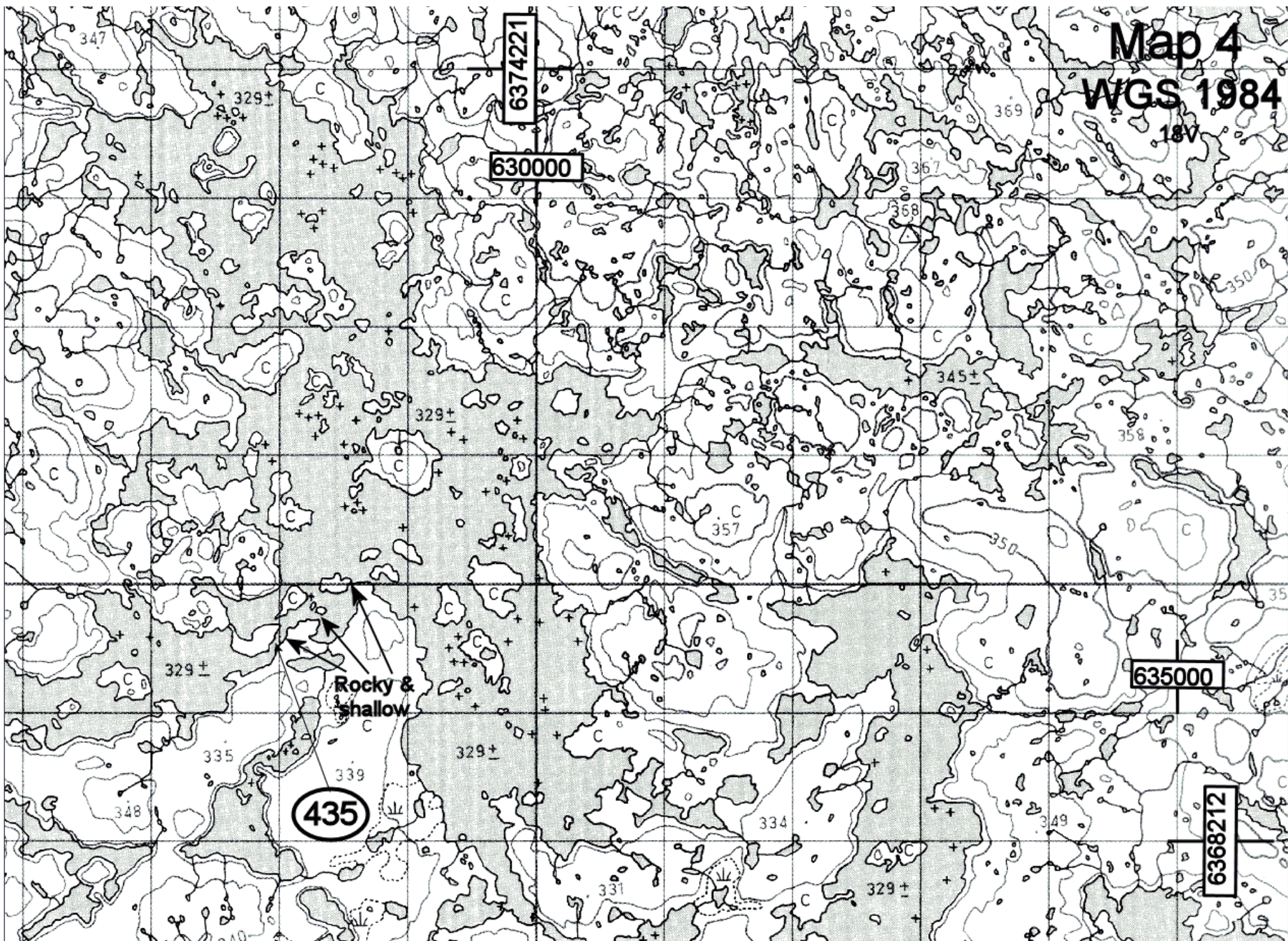
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635000

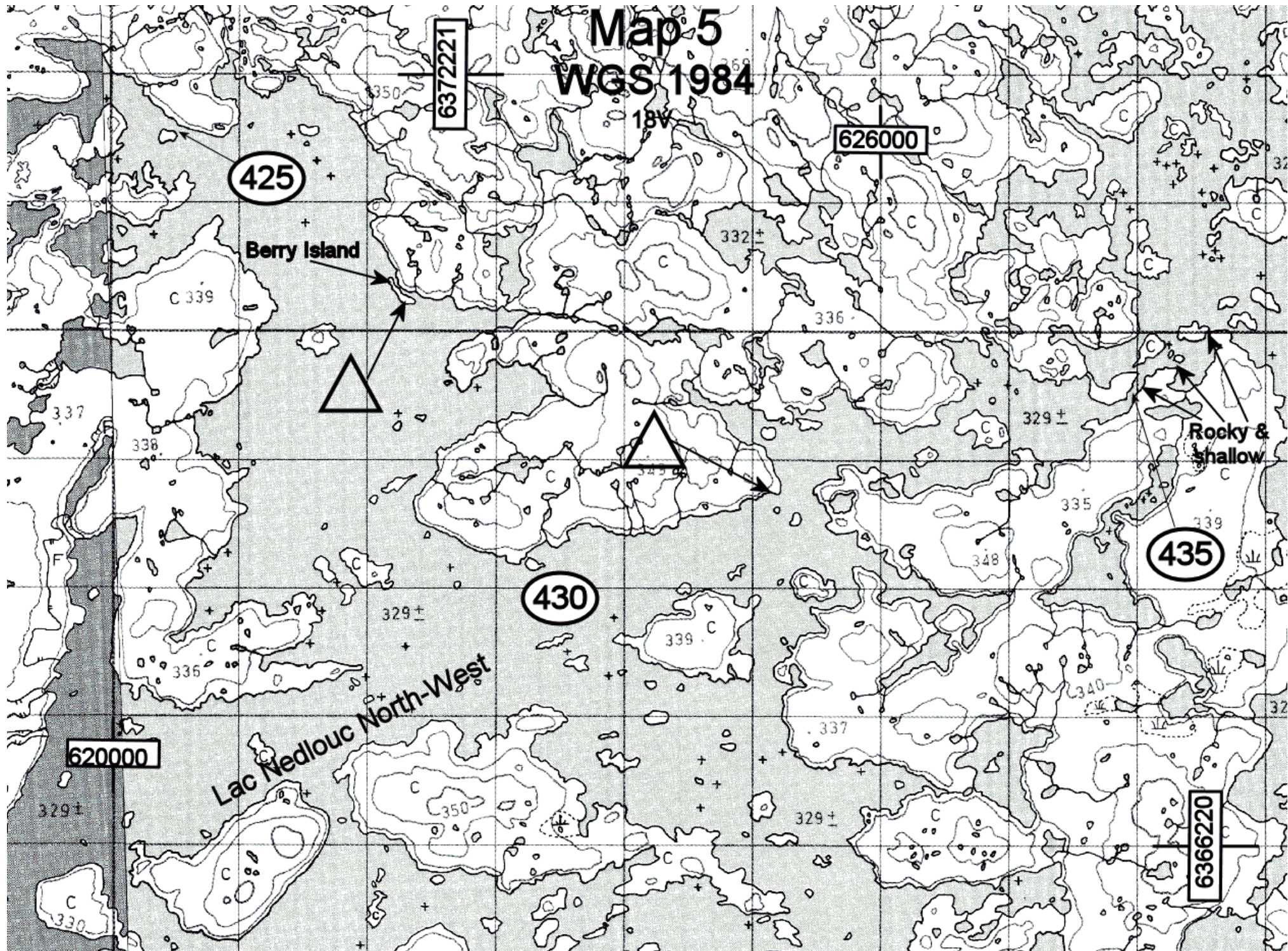
6368212

Rocky &
shallow

435



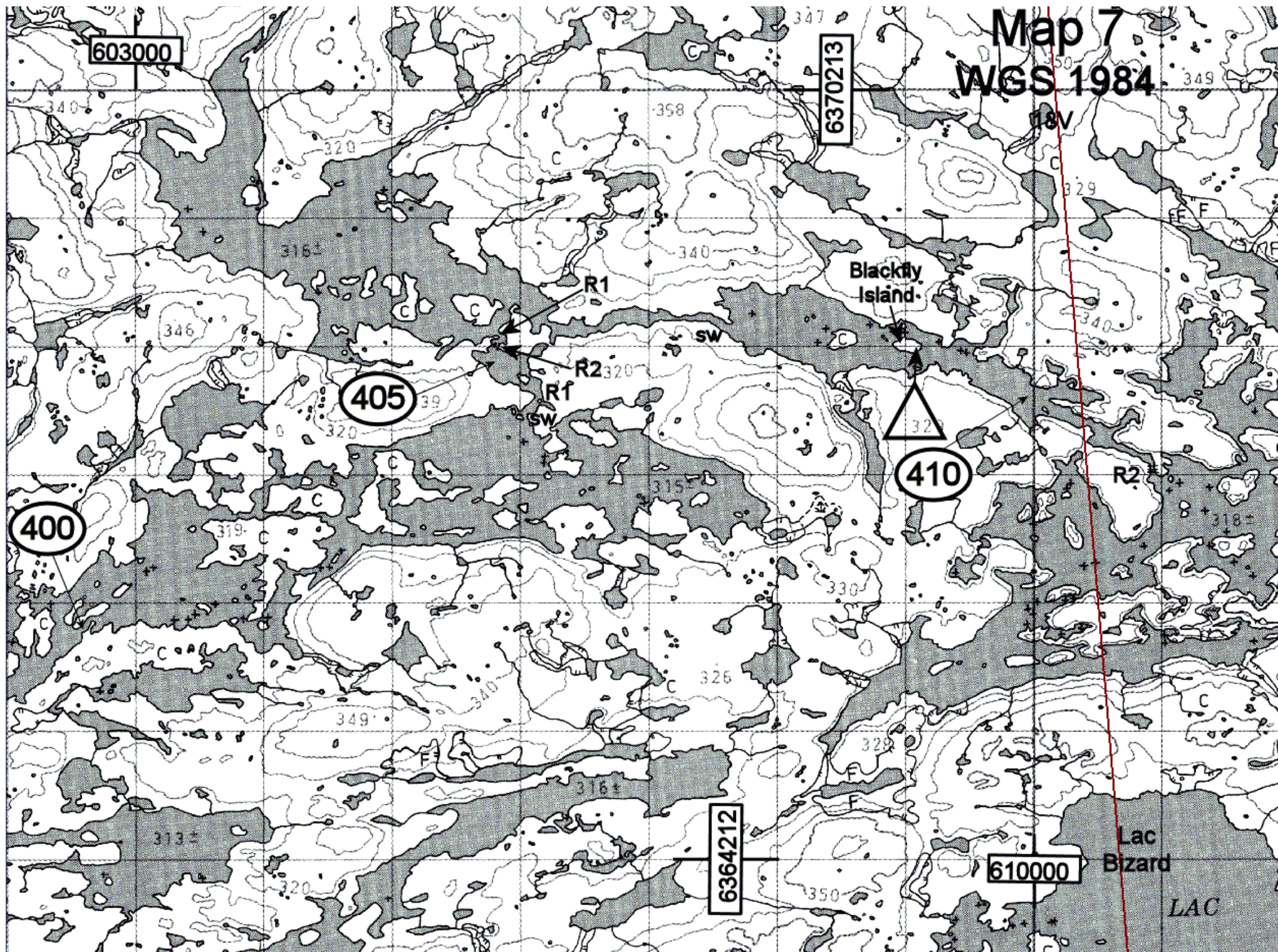
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WGS 1984



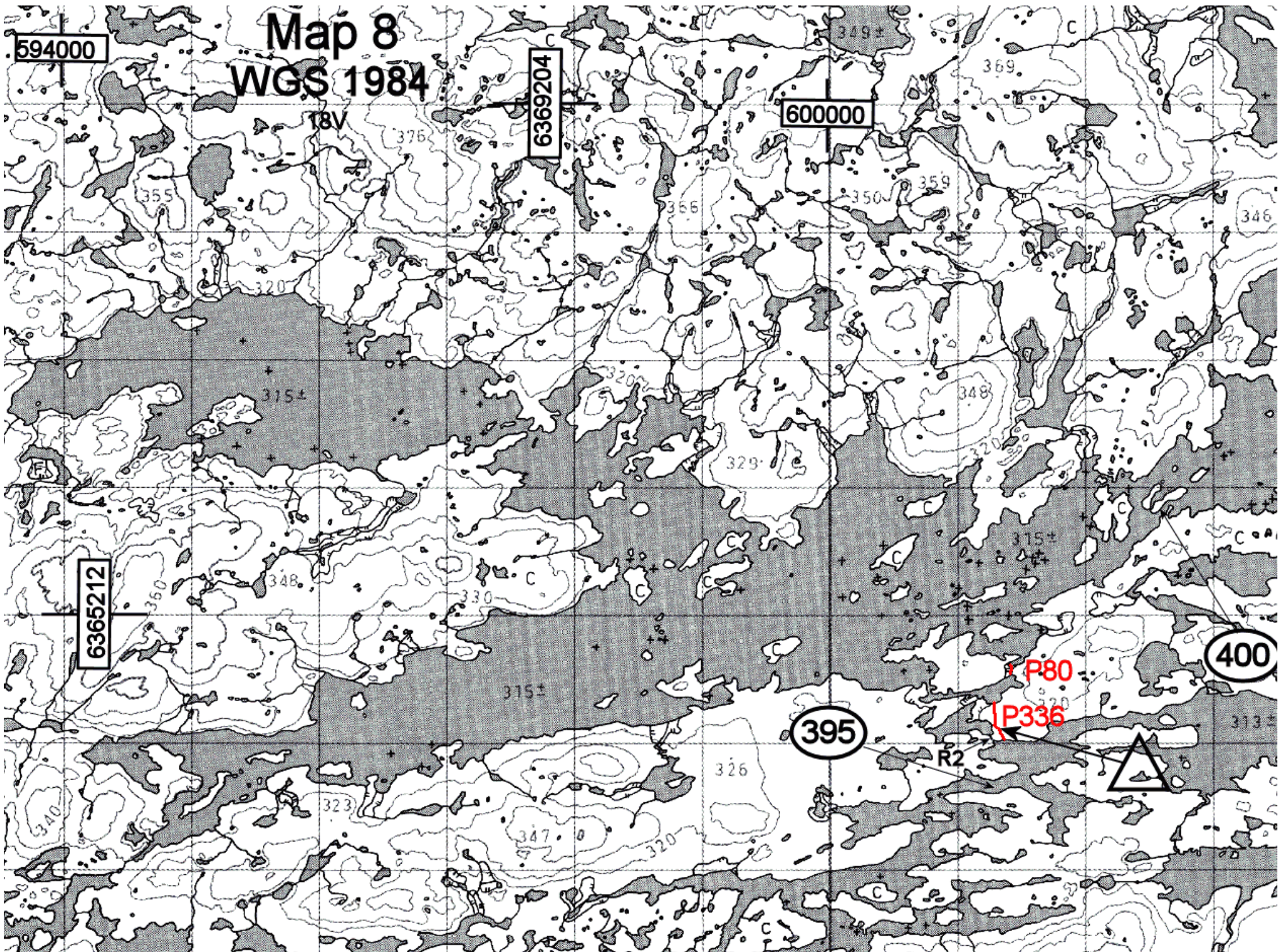
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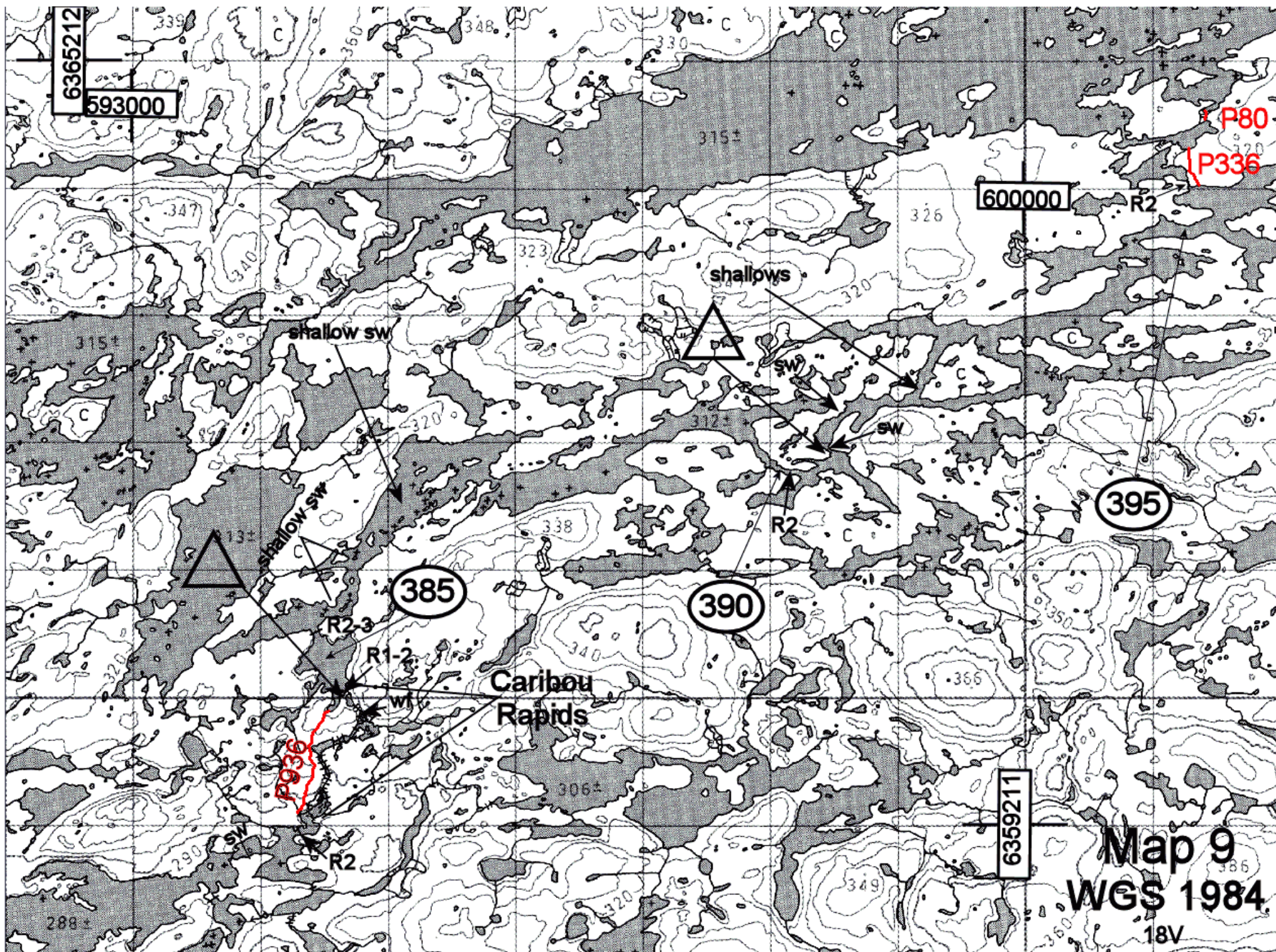


Map 7
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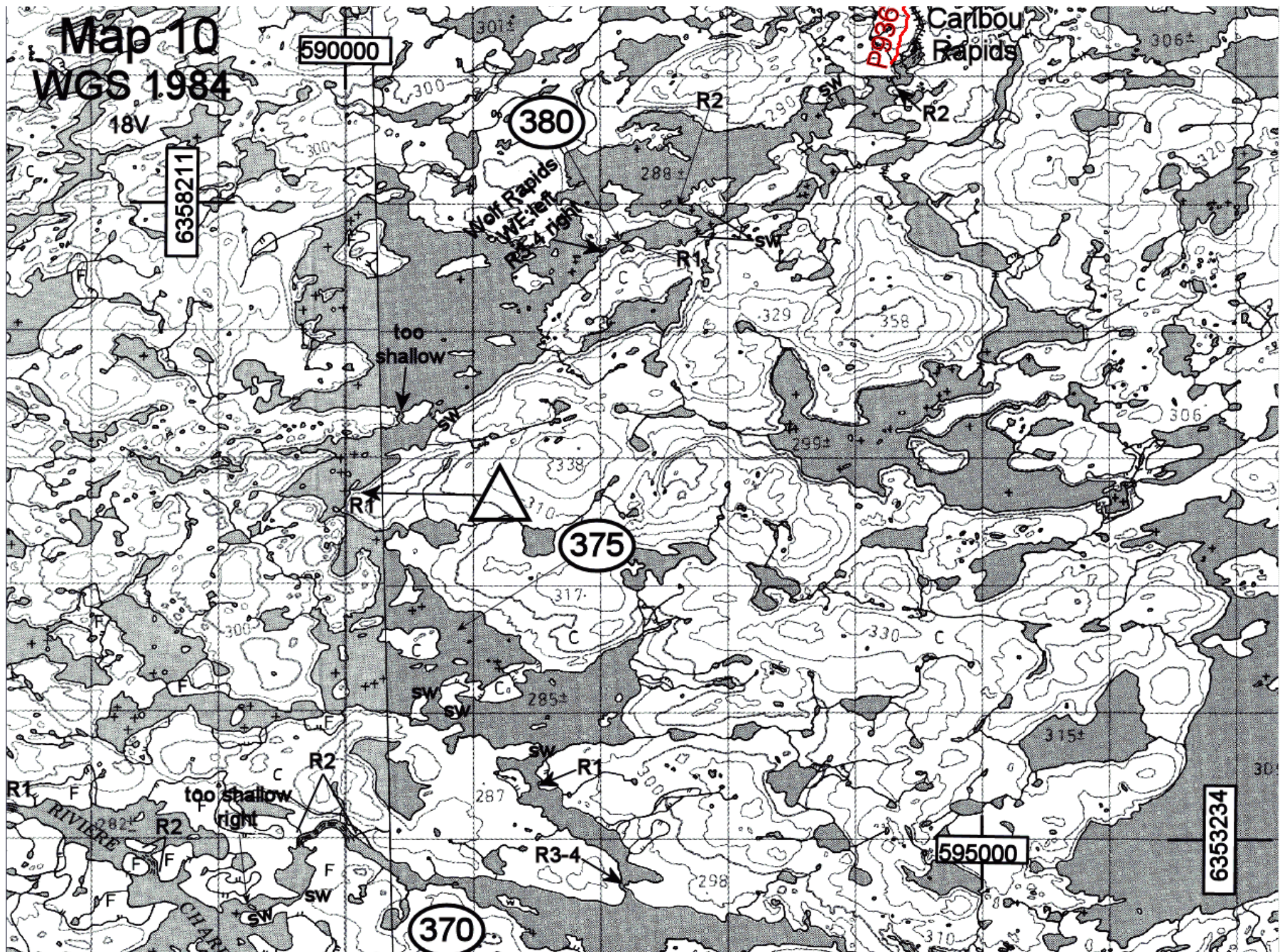


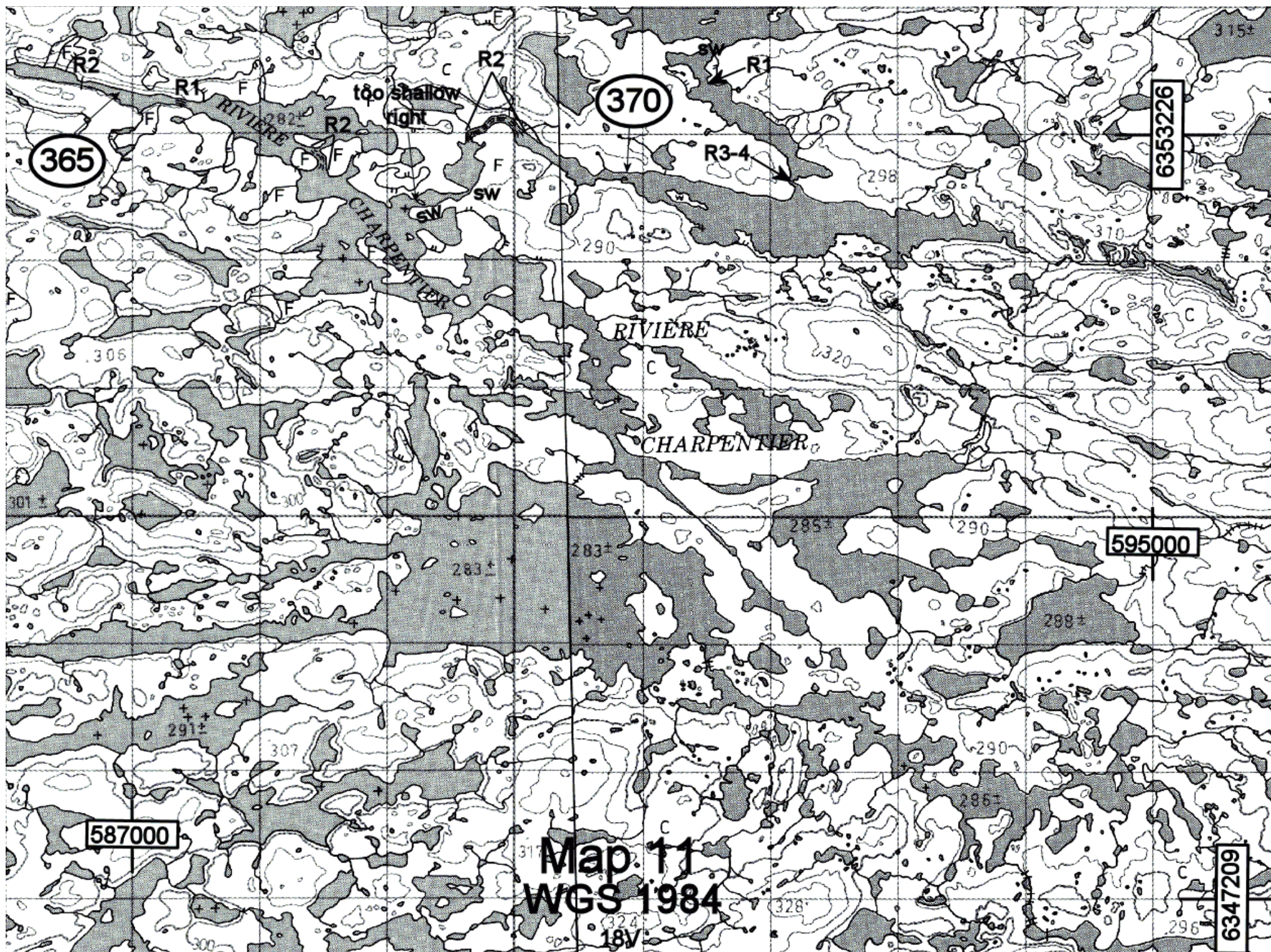
Map 8 WGS 1984



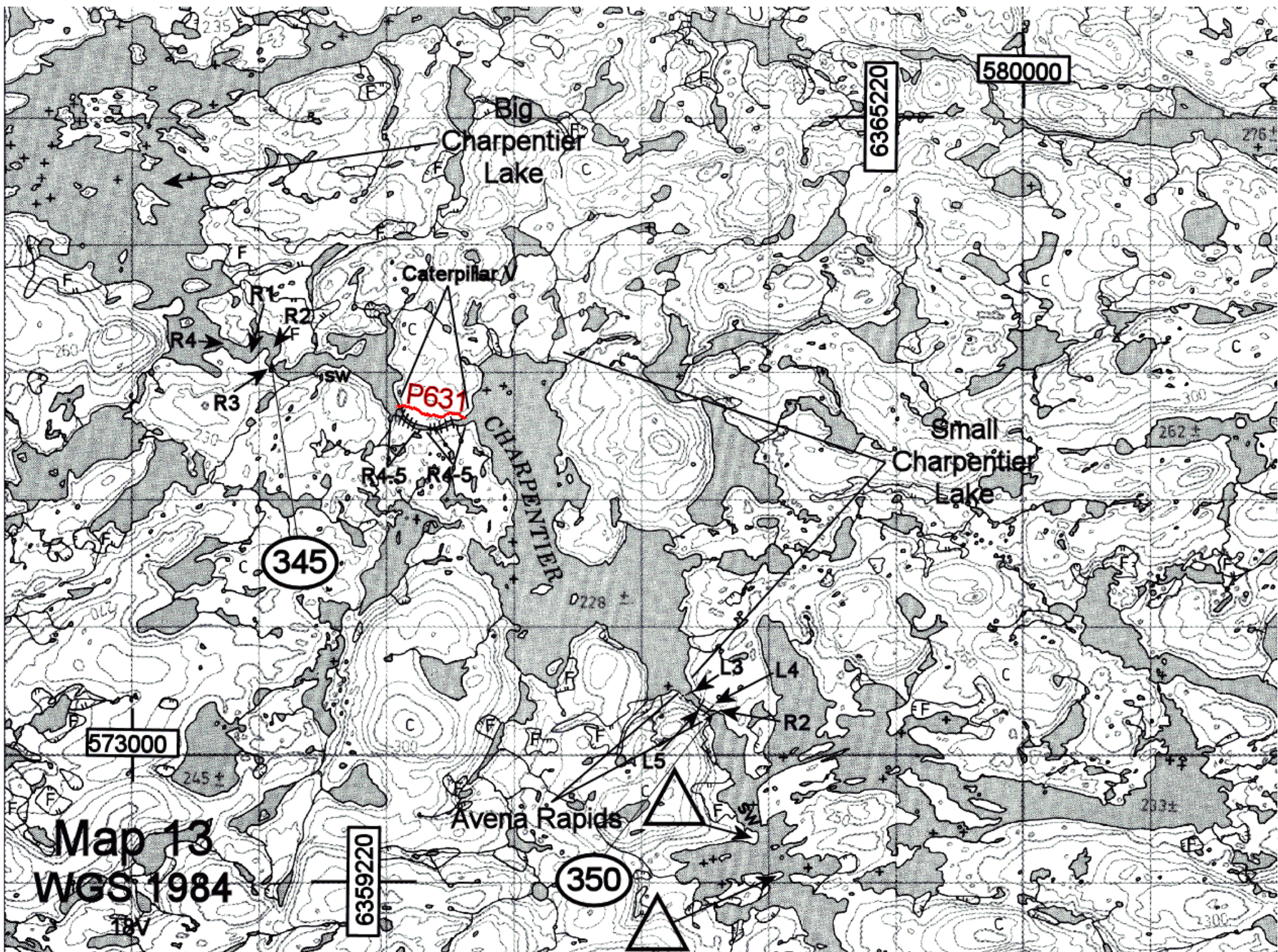


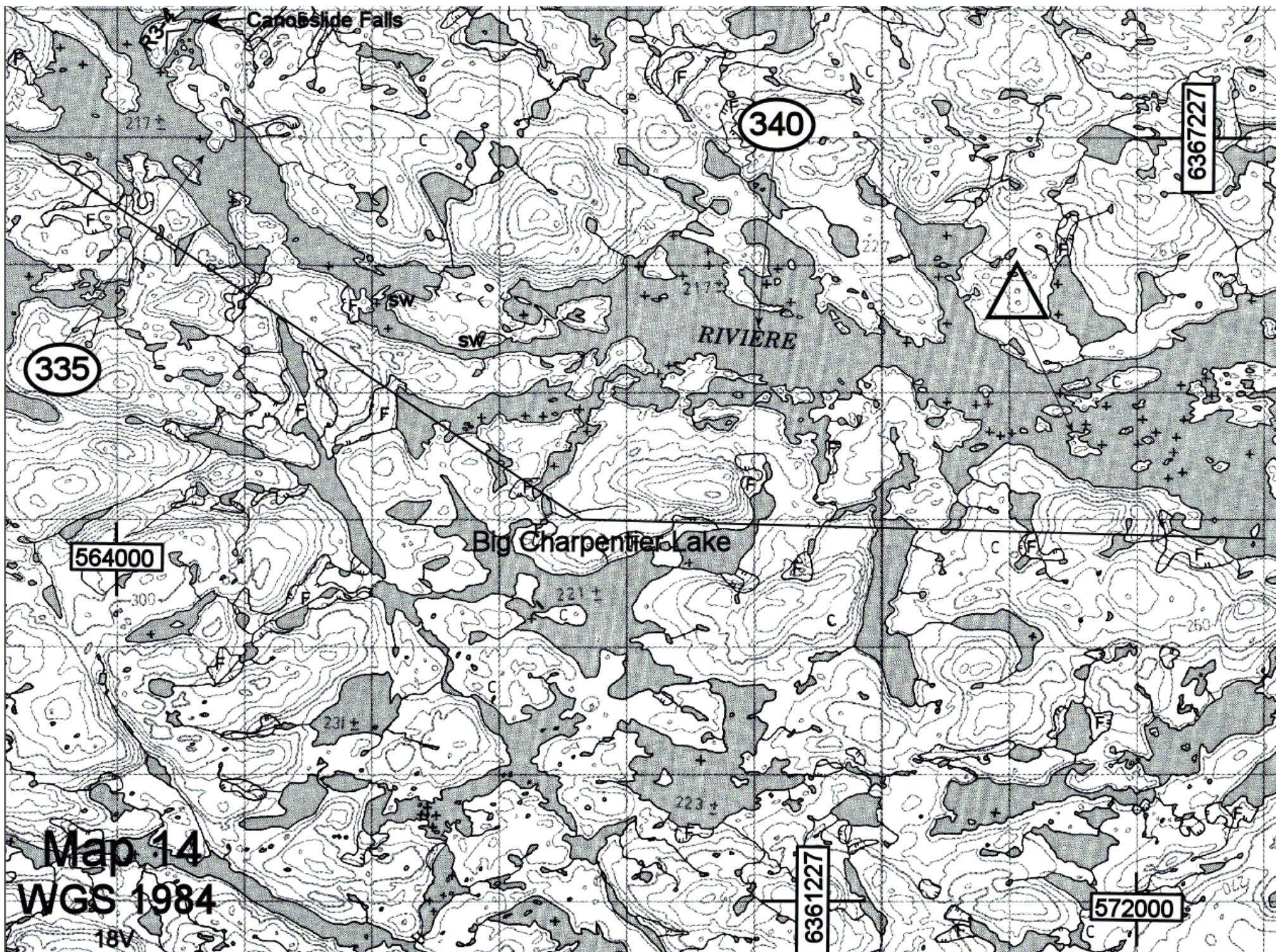
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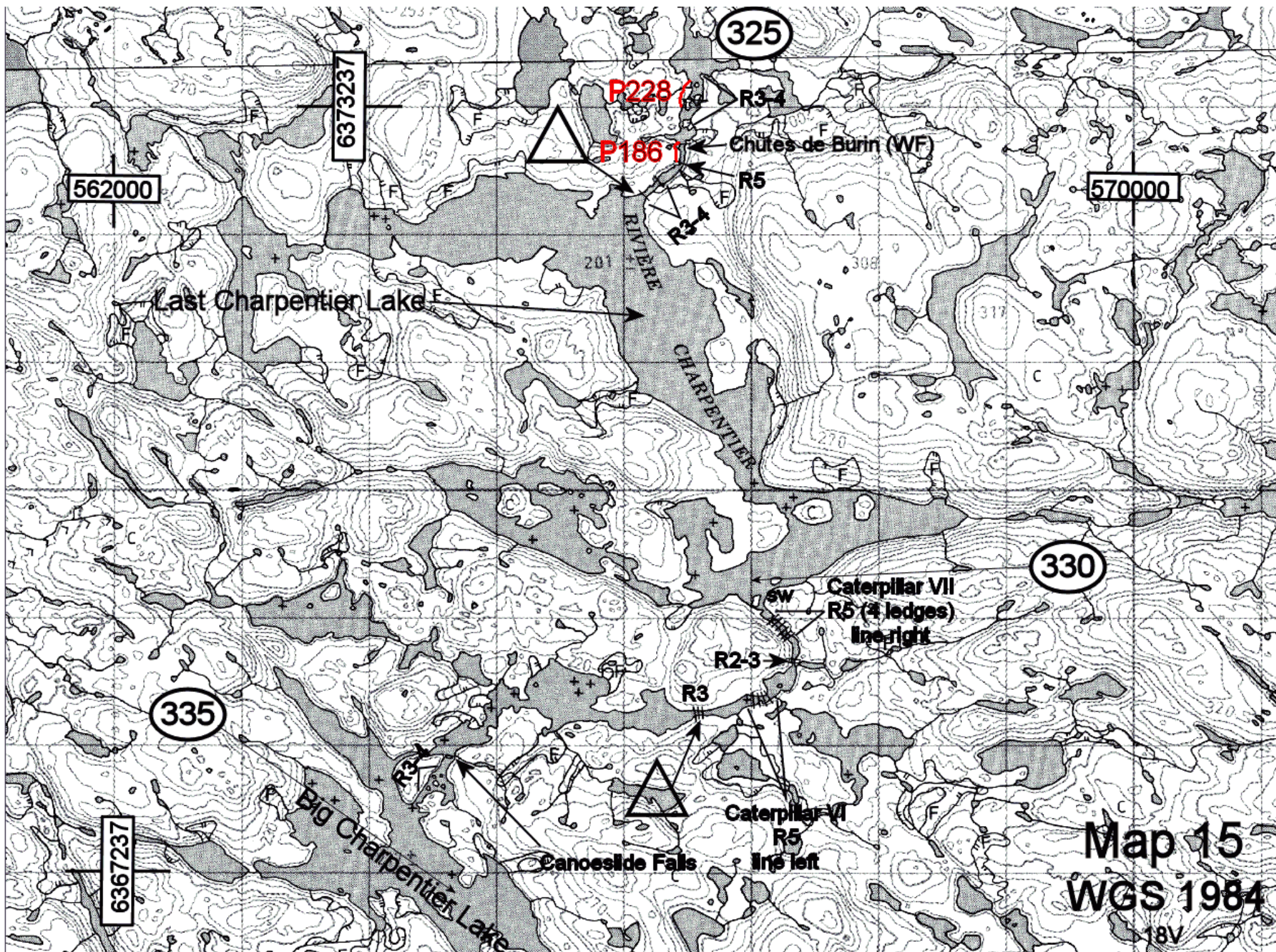


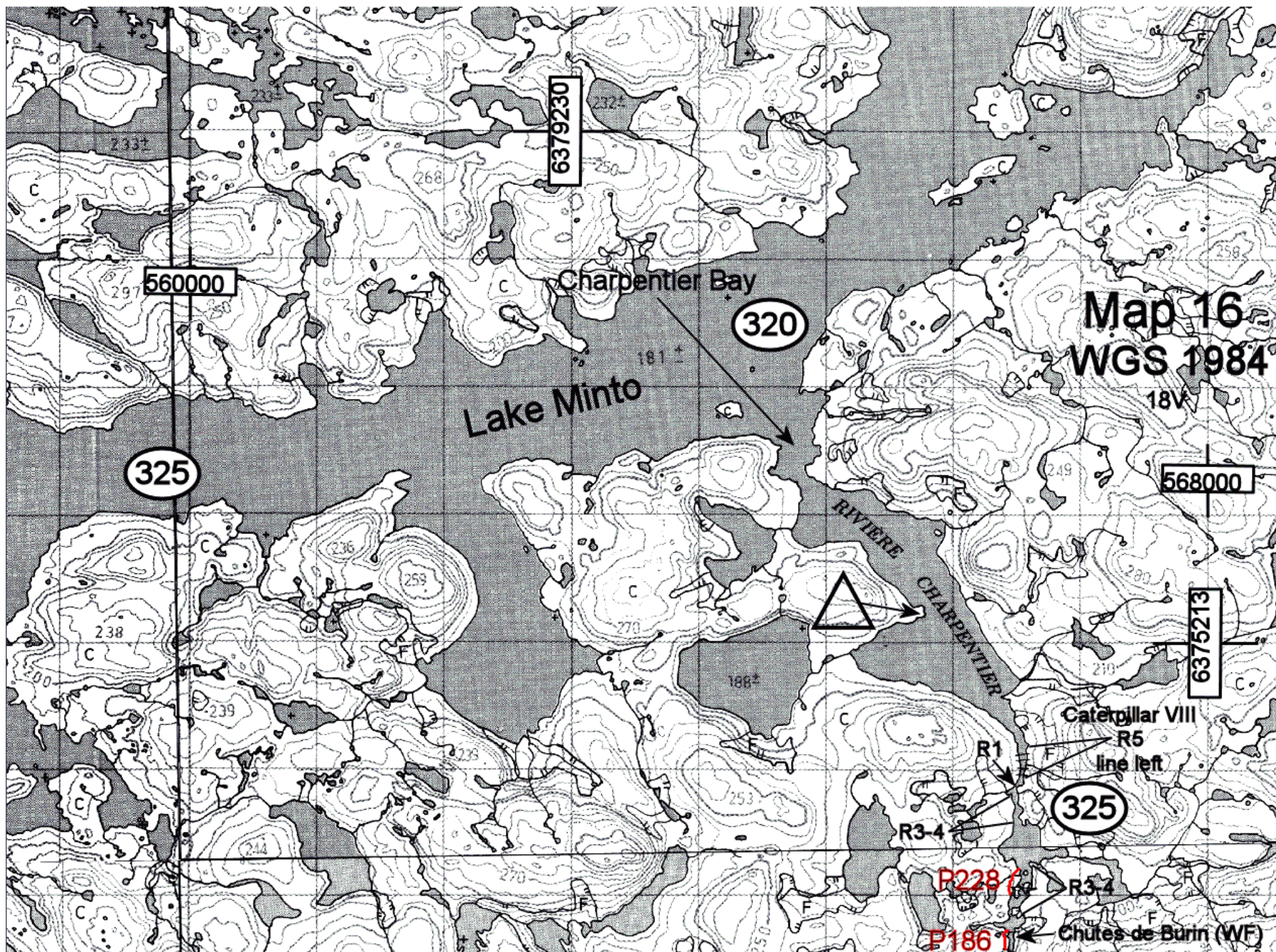


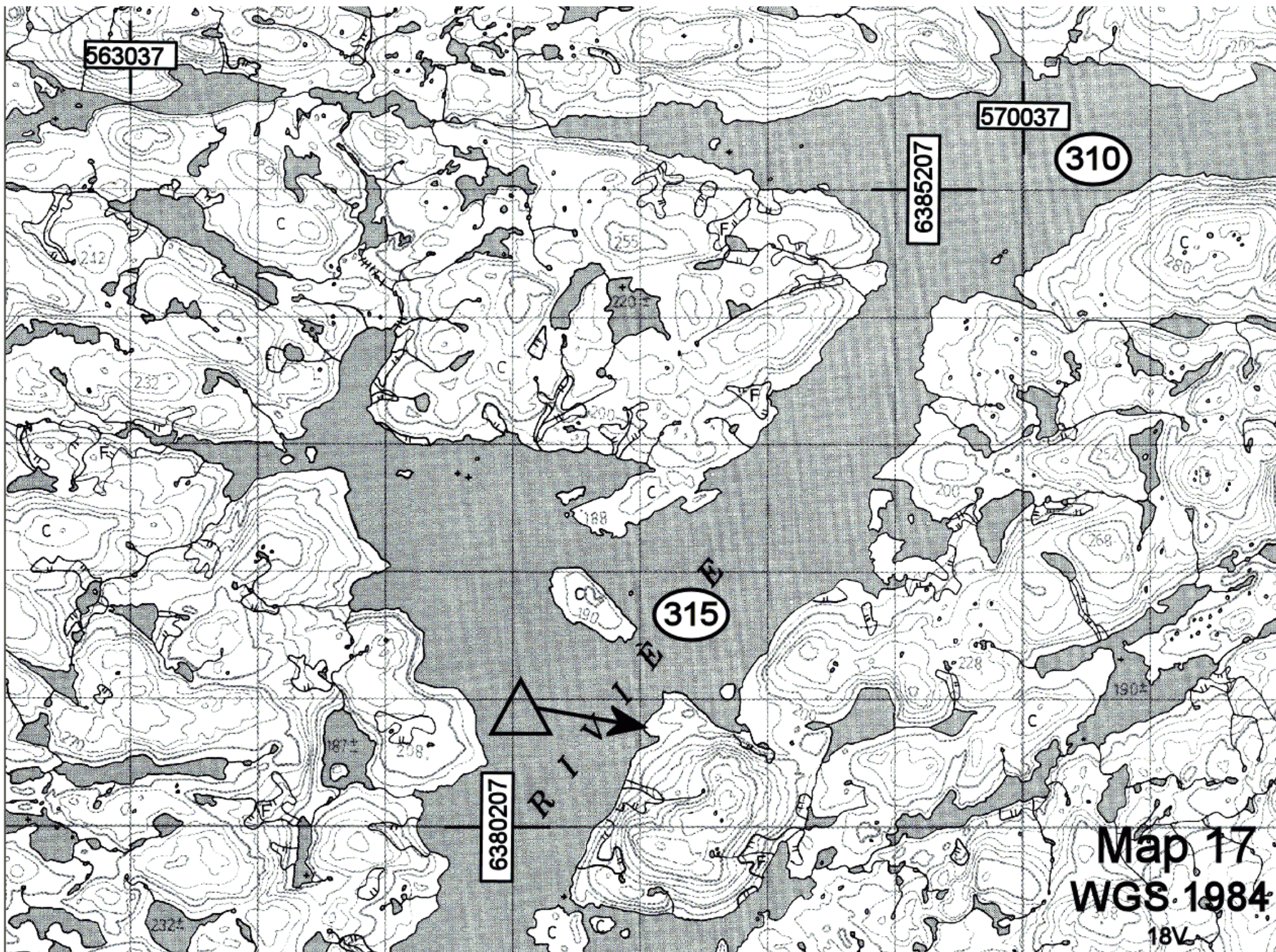












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6389207

300

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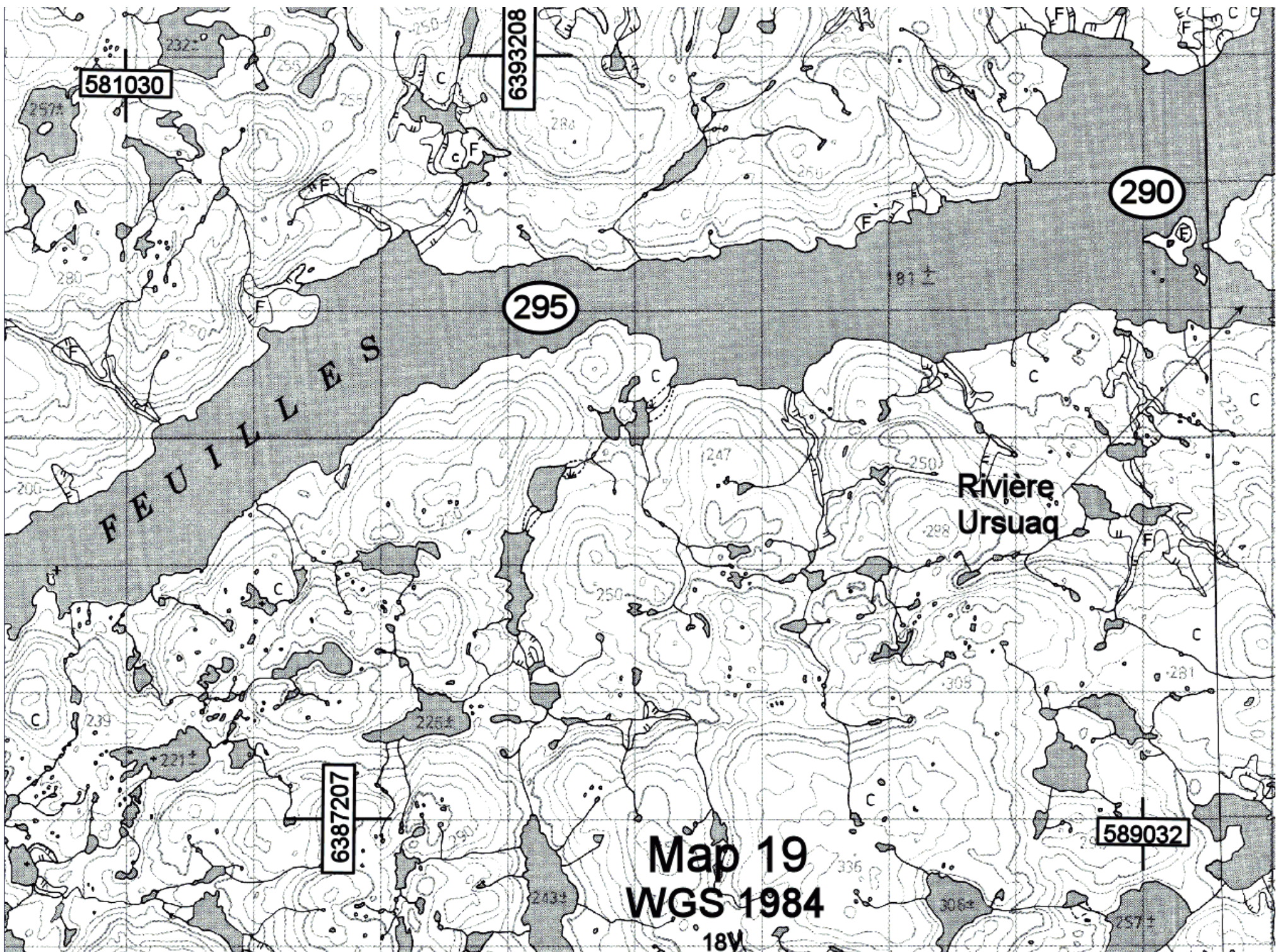
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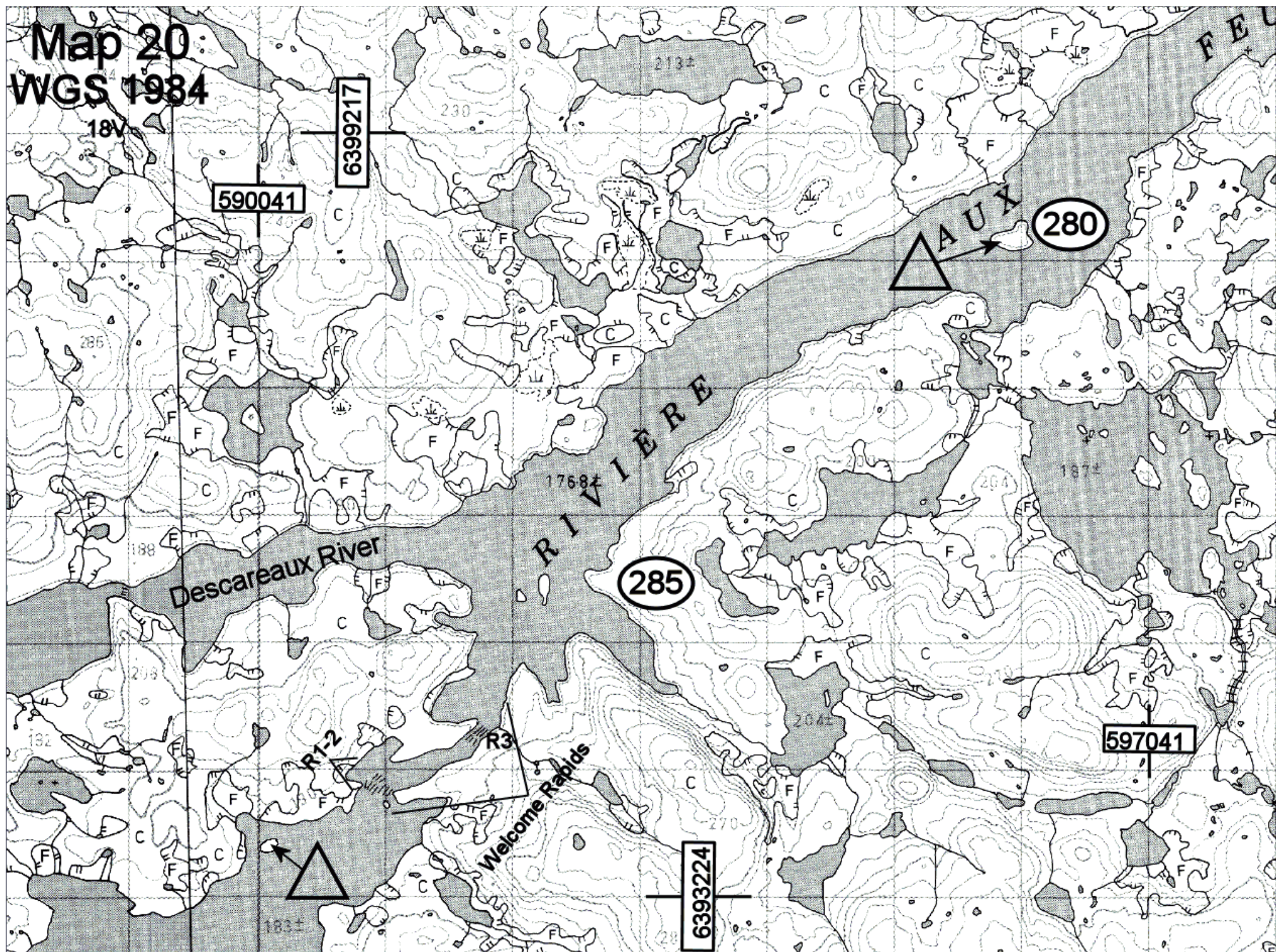
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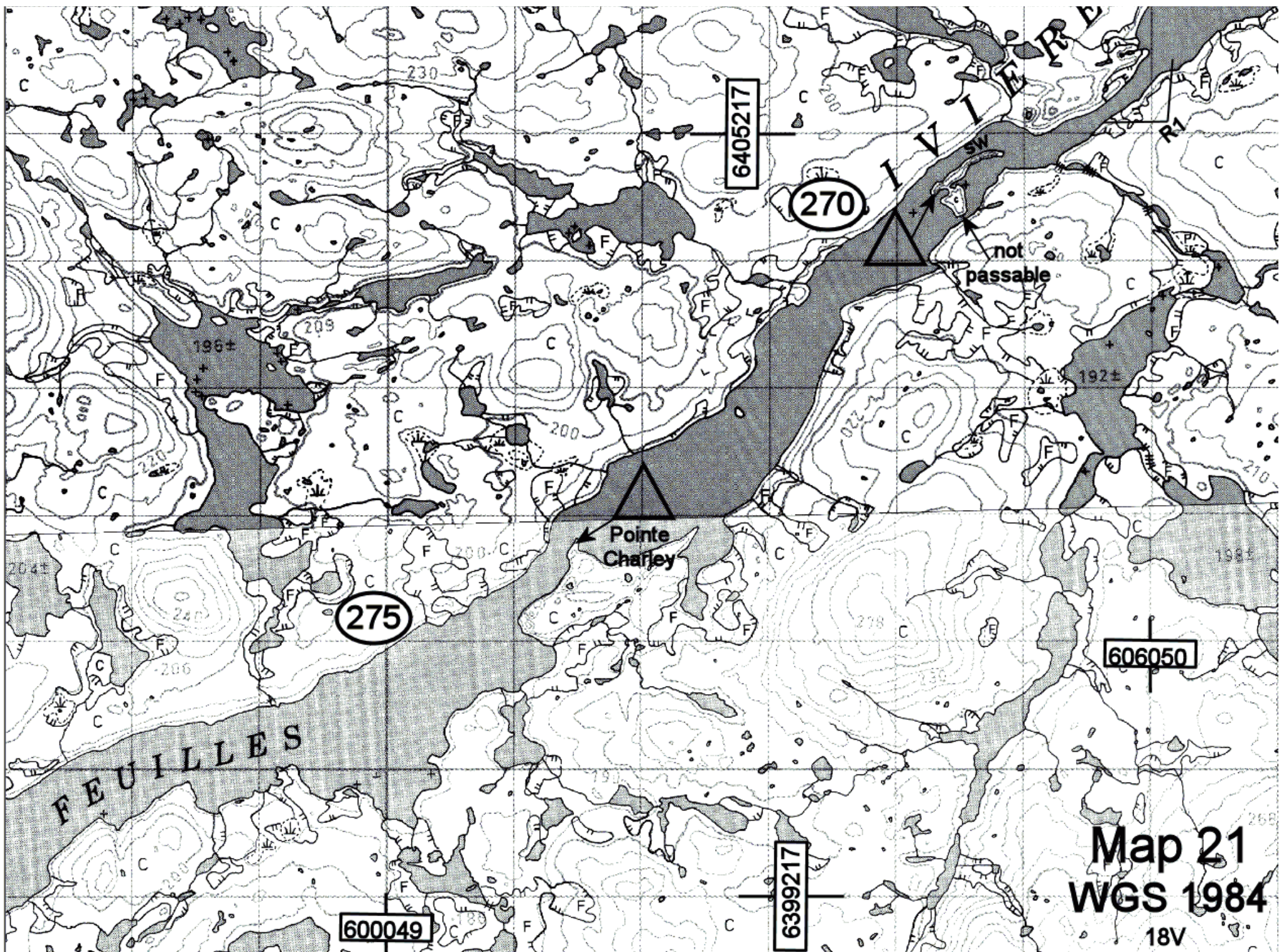
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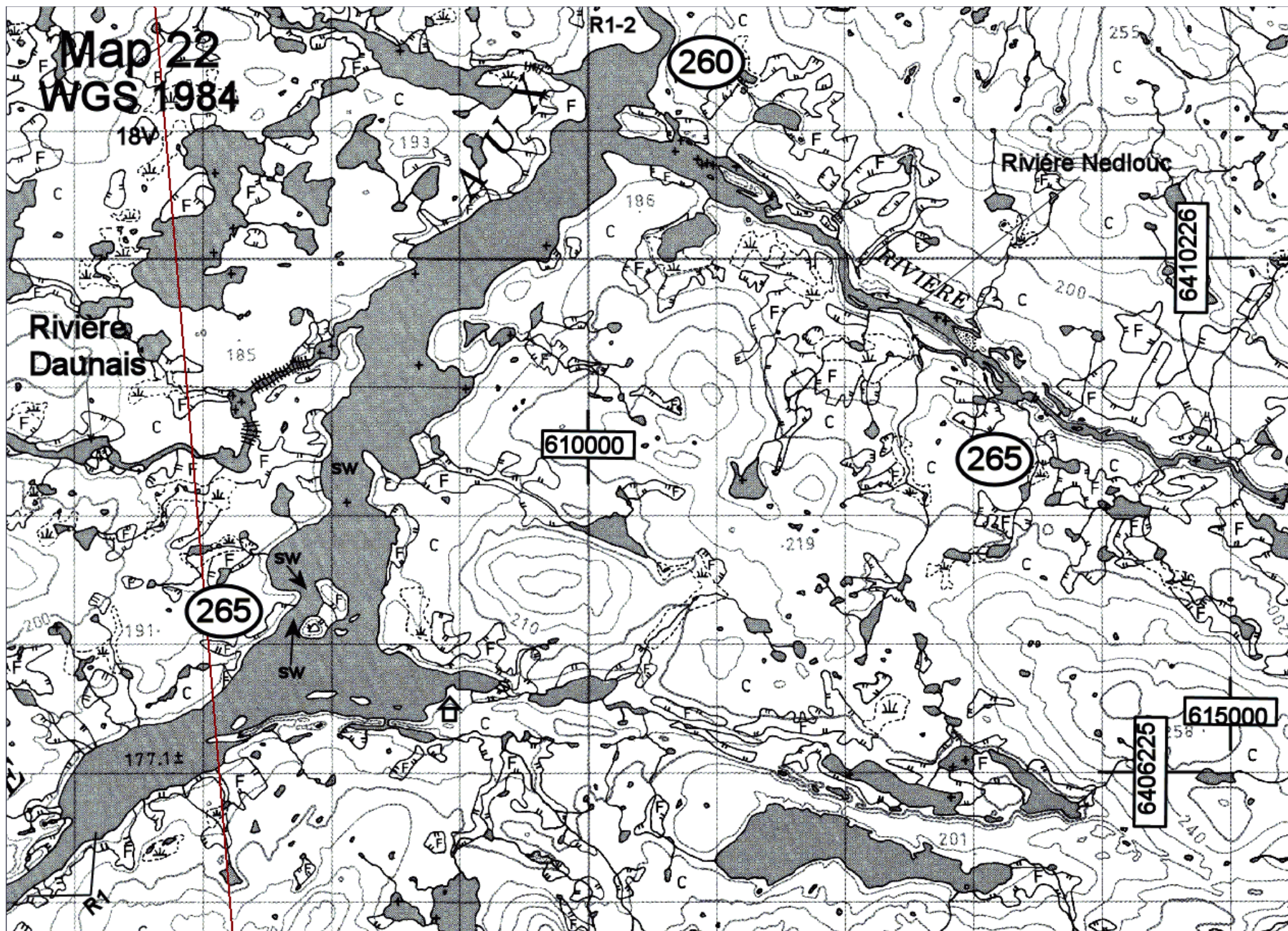


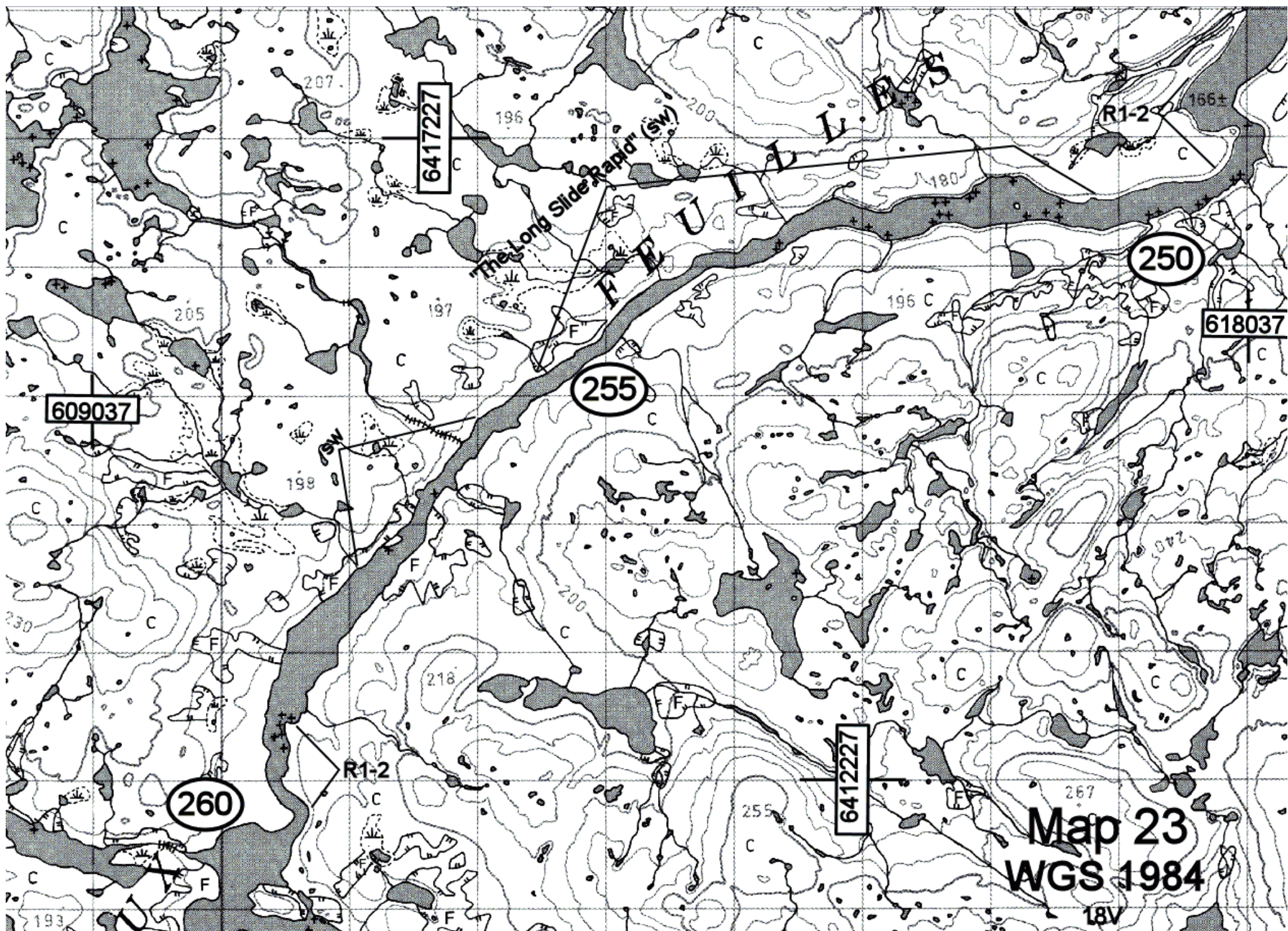
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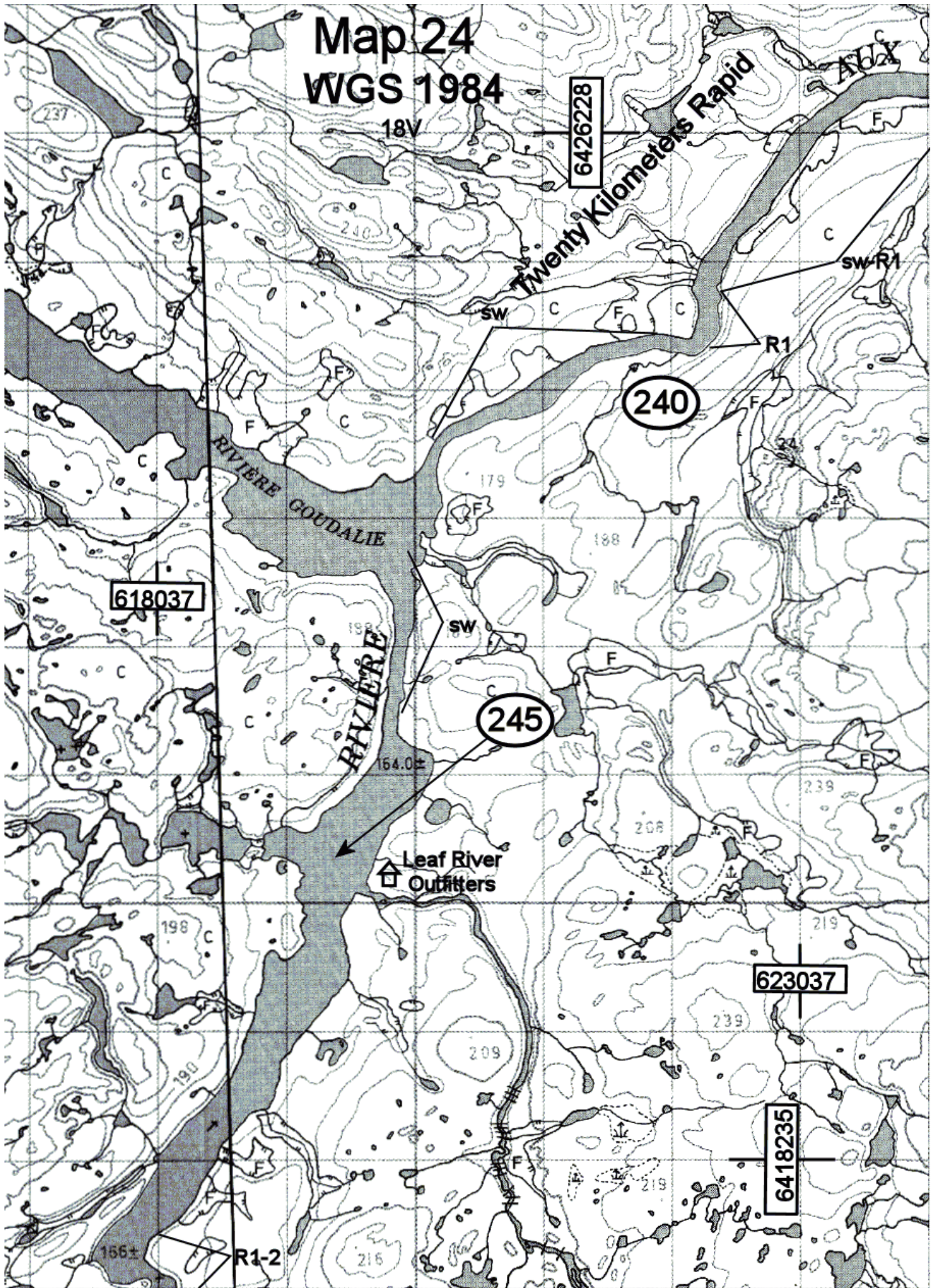
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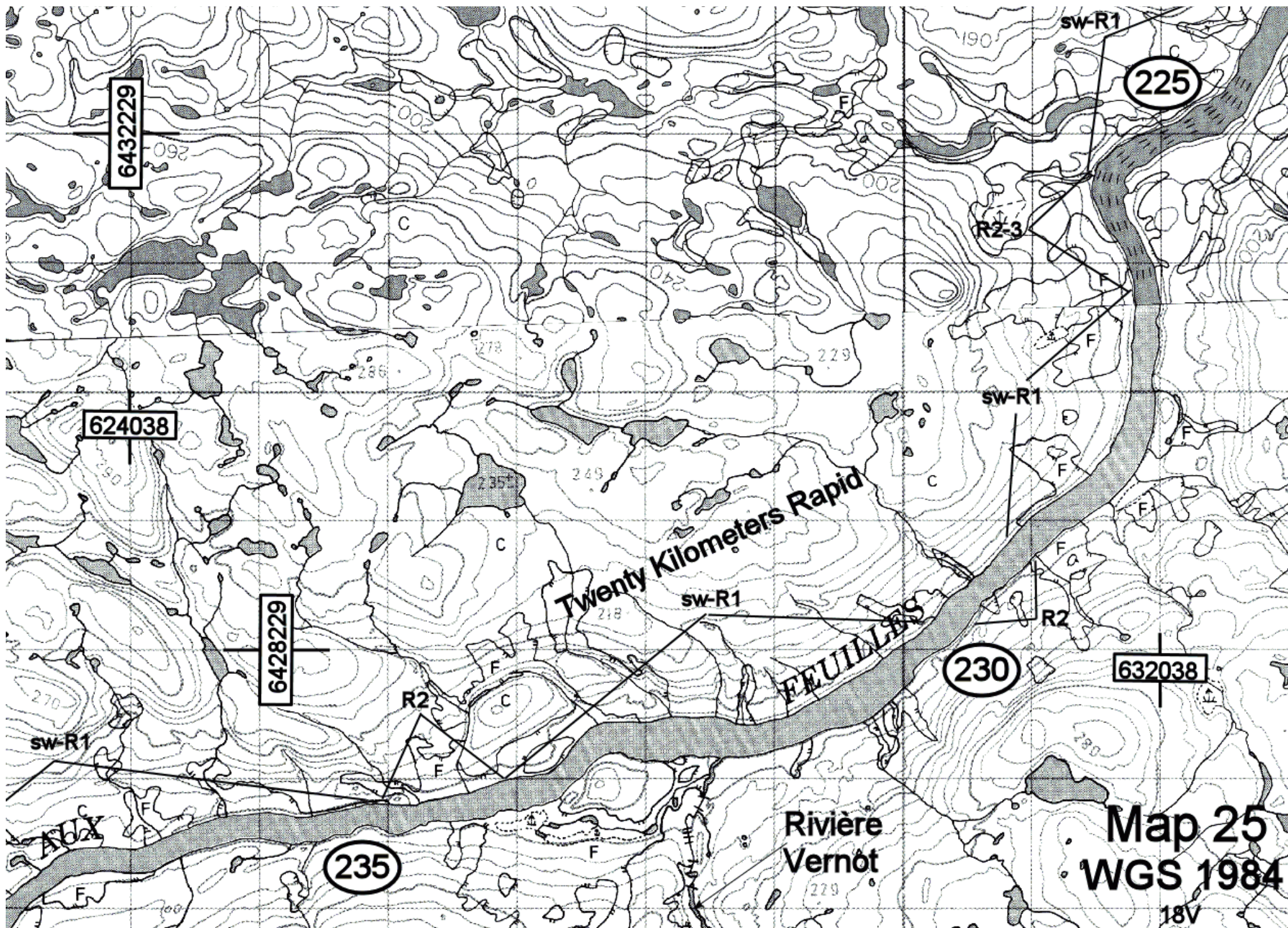




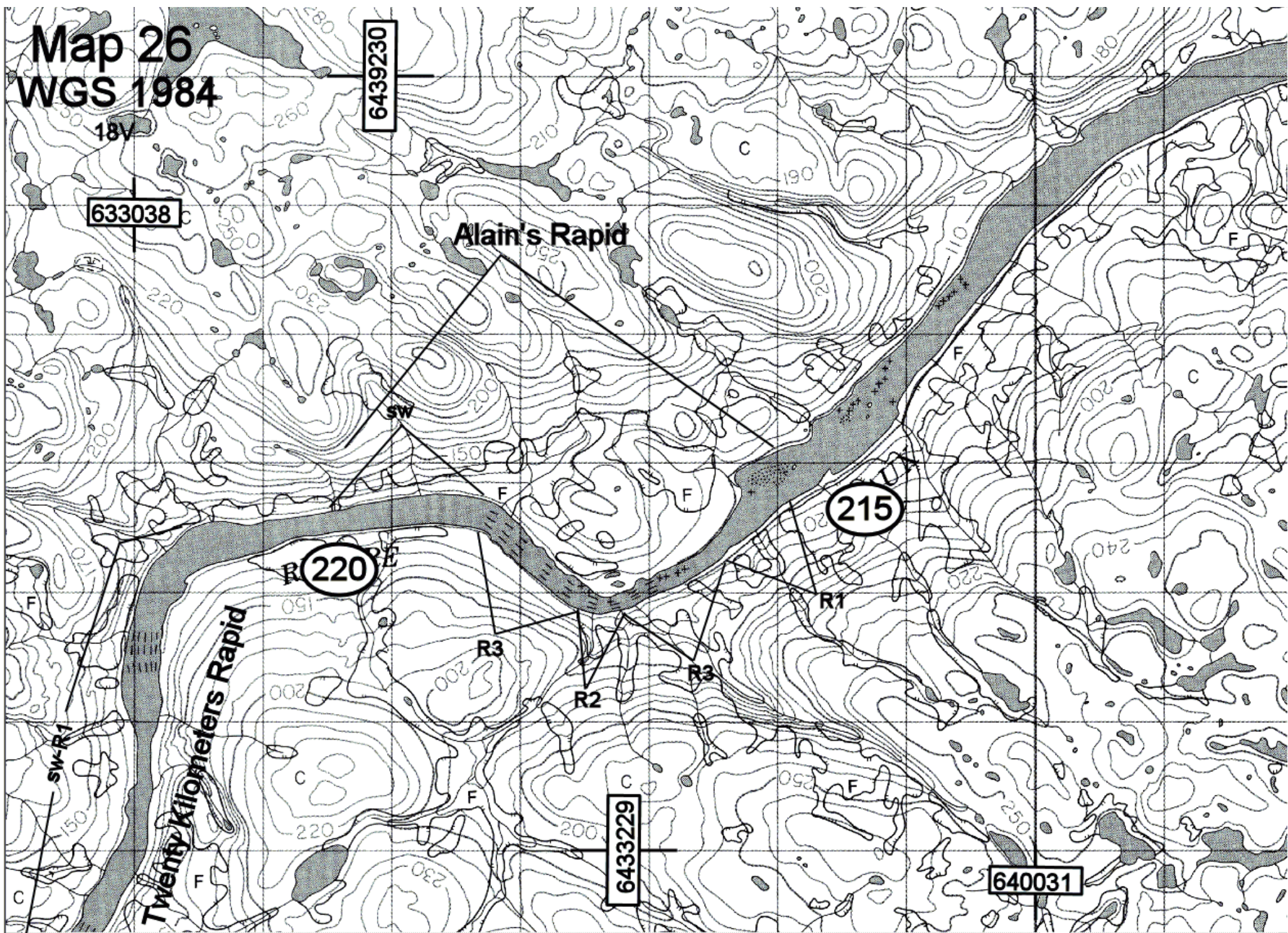
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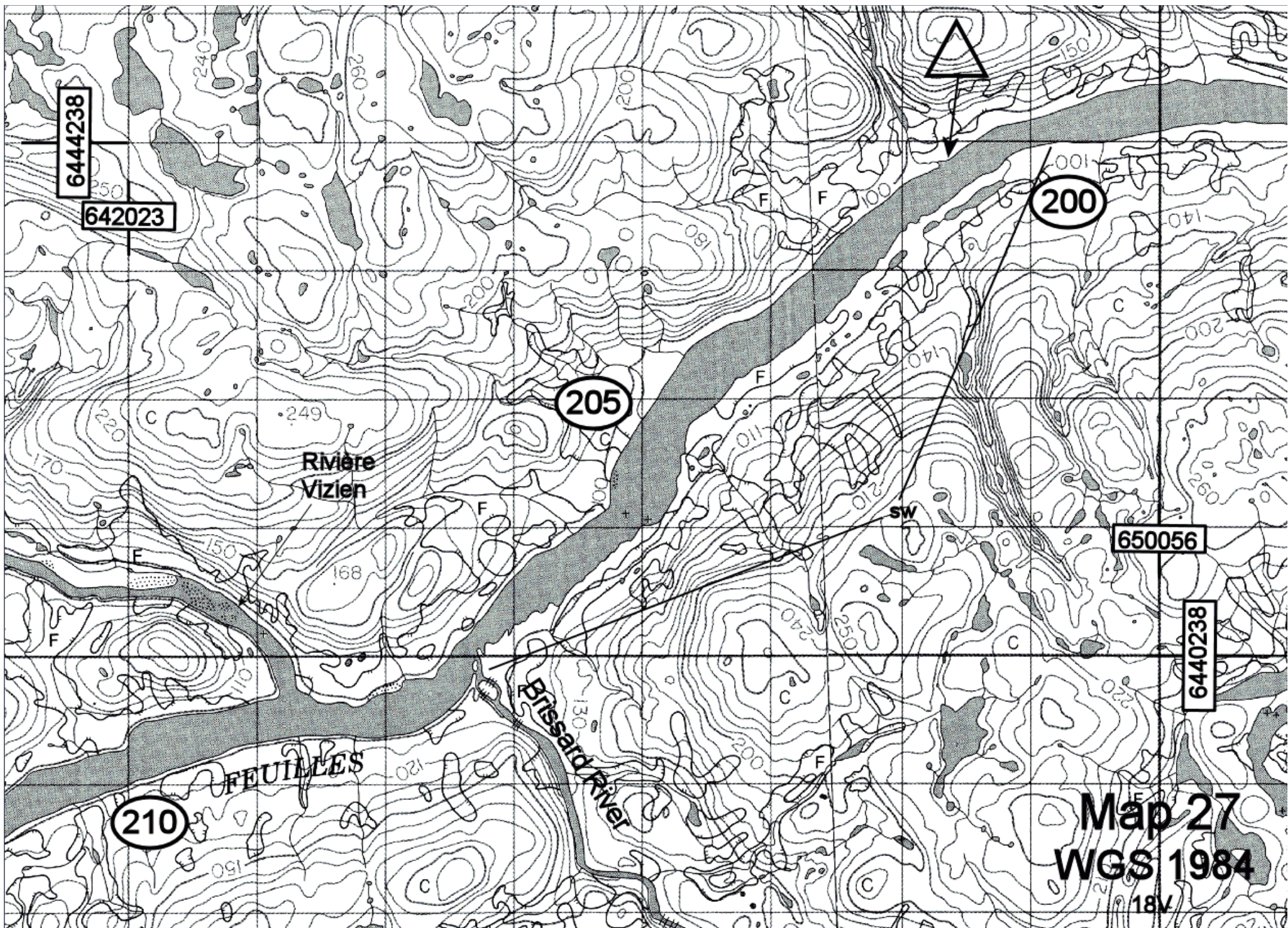
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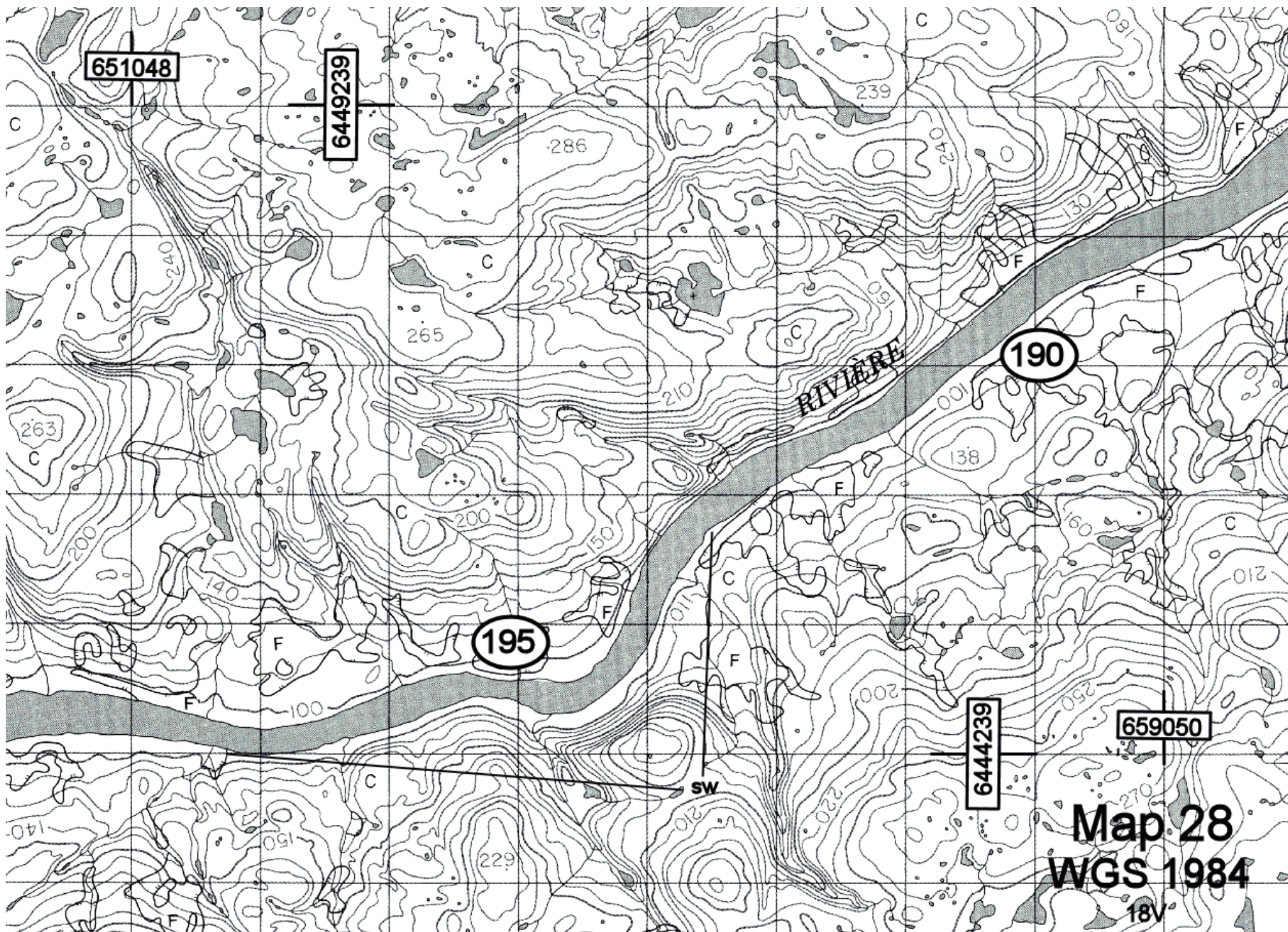


Map 26
WGS 1984





Map 27
WGS 1984

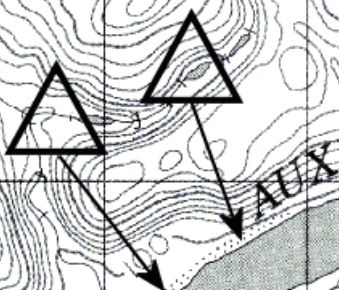


Map 29 WGS 1984

18V

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660050

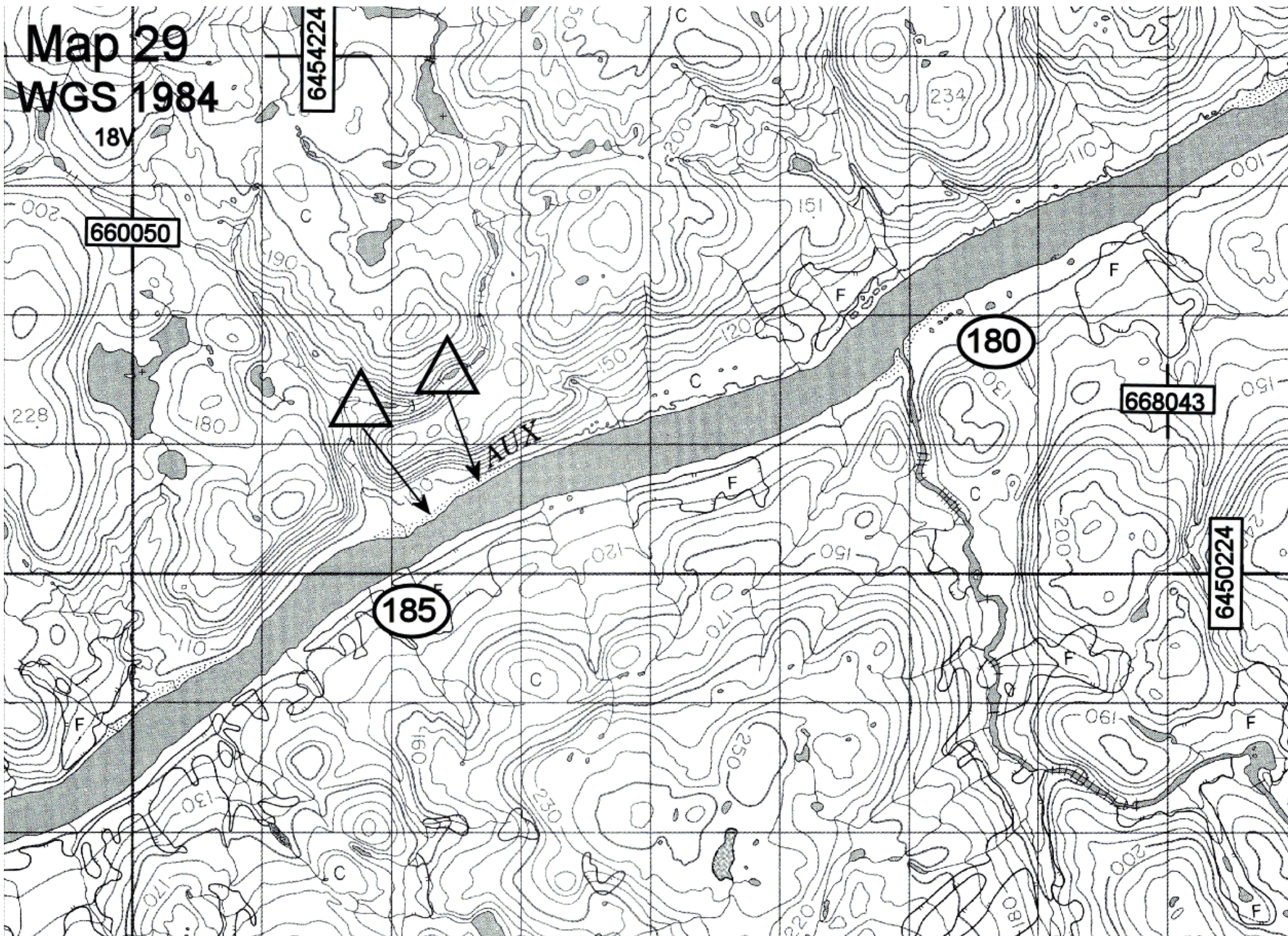


180

668043

185

6450224



Map 30
WGS 1984

18V

6459240

170

175

670051

676044

6454224

FEUILLES

R. CORPORA

R. GOUTIER

R1

R1

SW

SW

SW



Map 31 WGS 1984

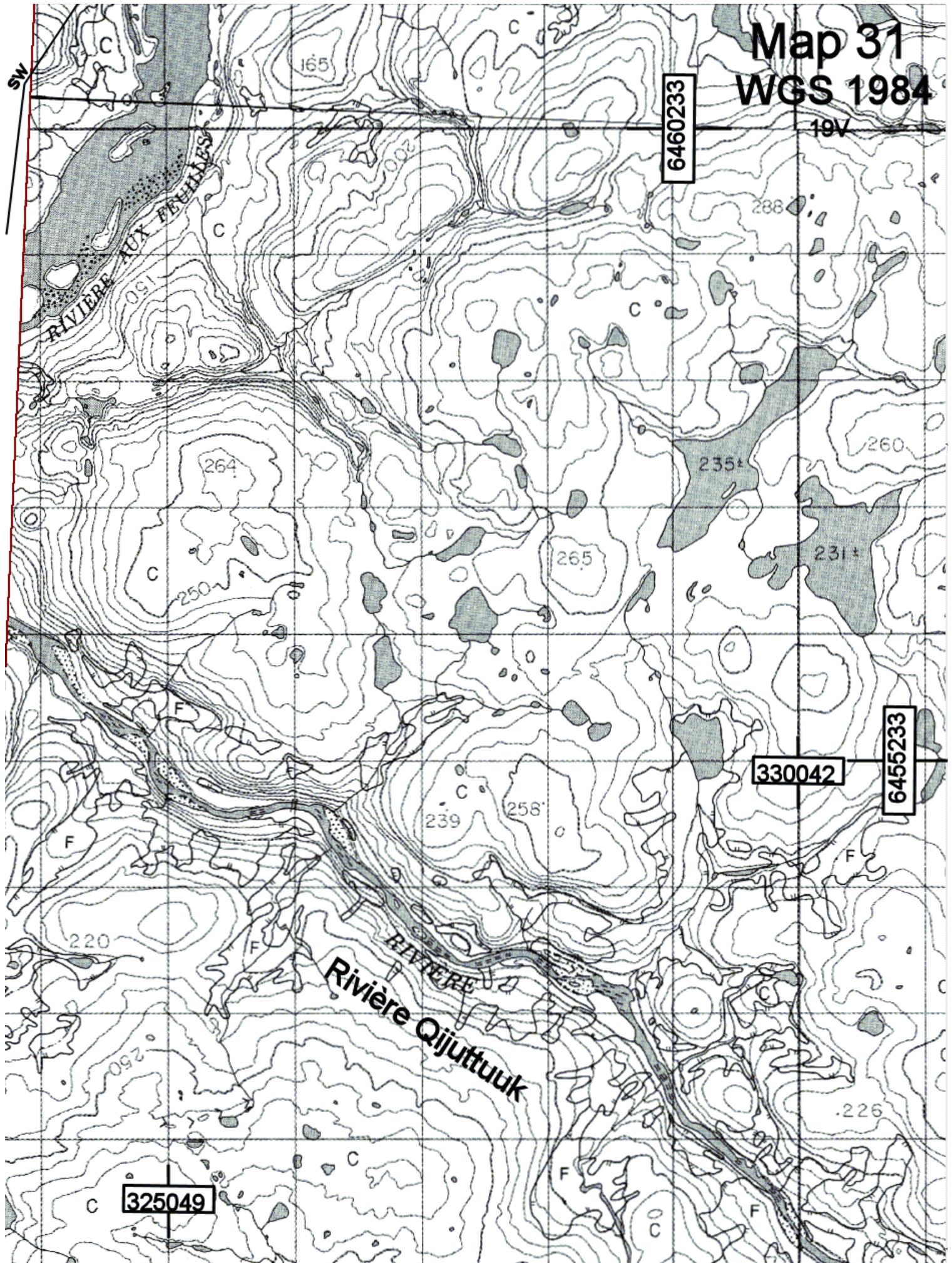
19V

6460233

6455233

330042

325049



Map 32
WGS 1984

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19V

278

325049

RIVIÈRE

155

160

SW

220

R1-2

152

165

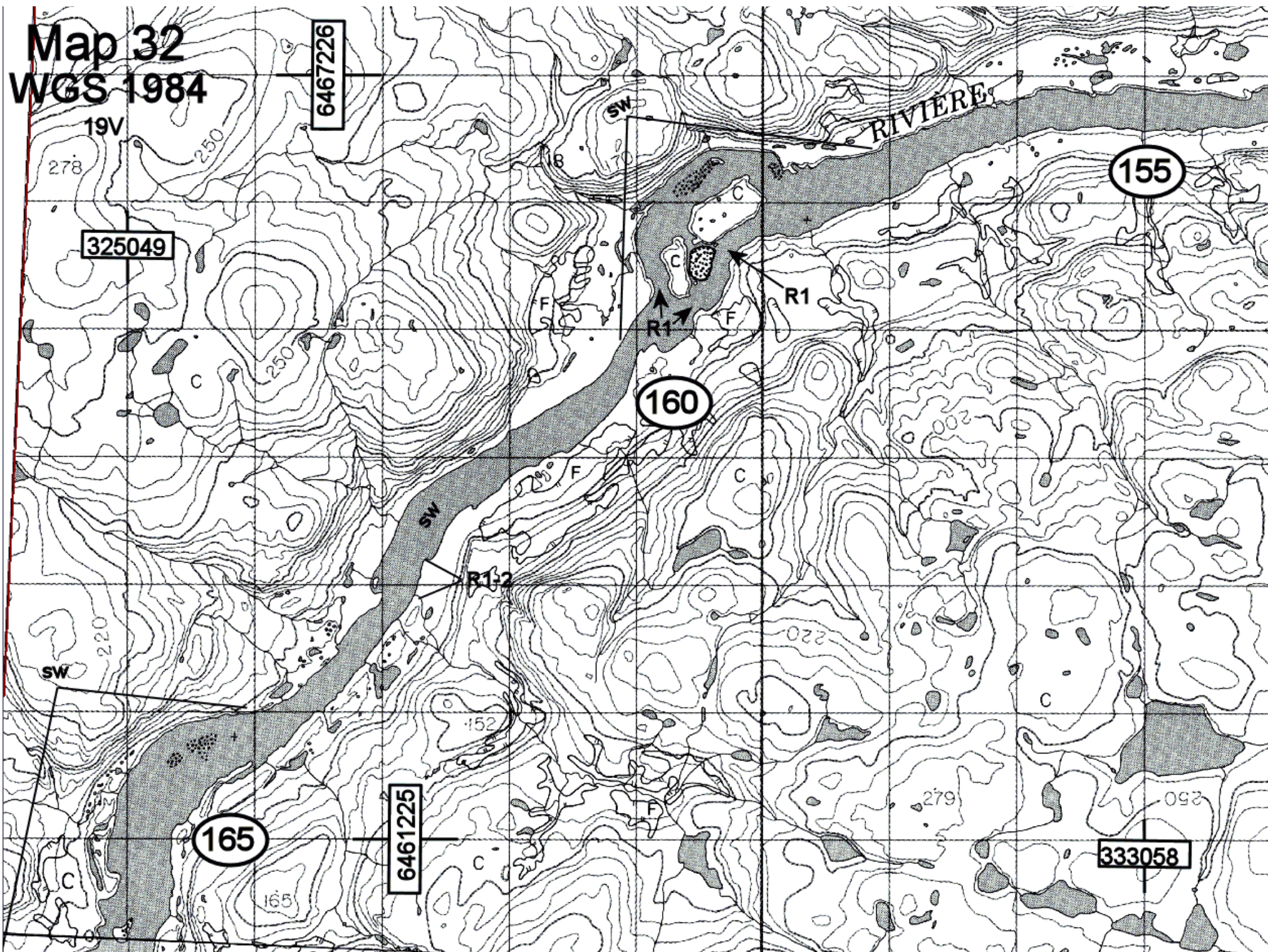
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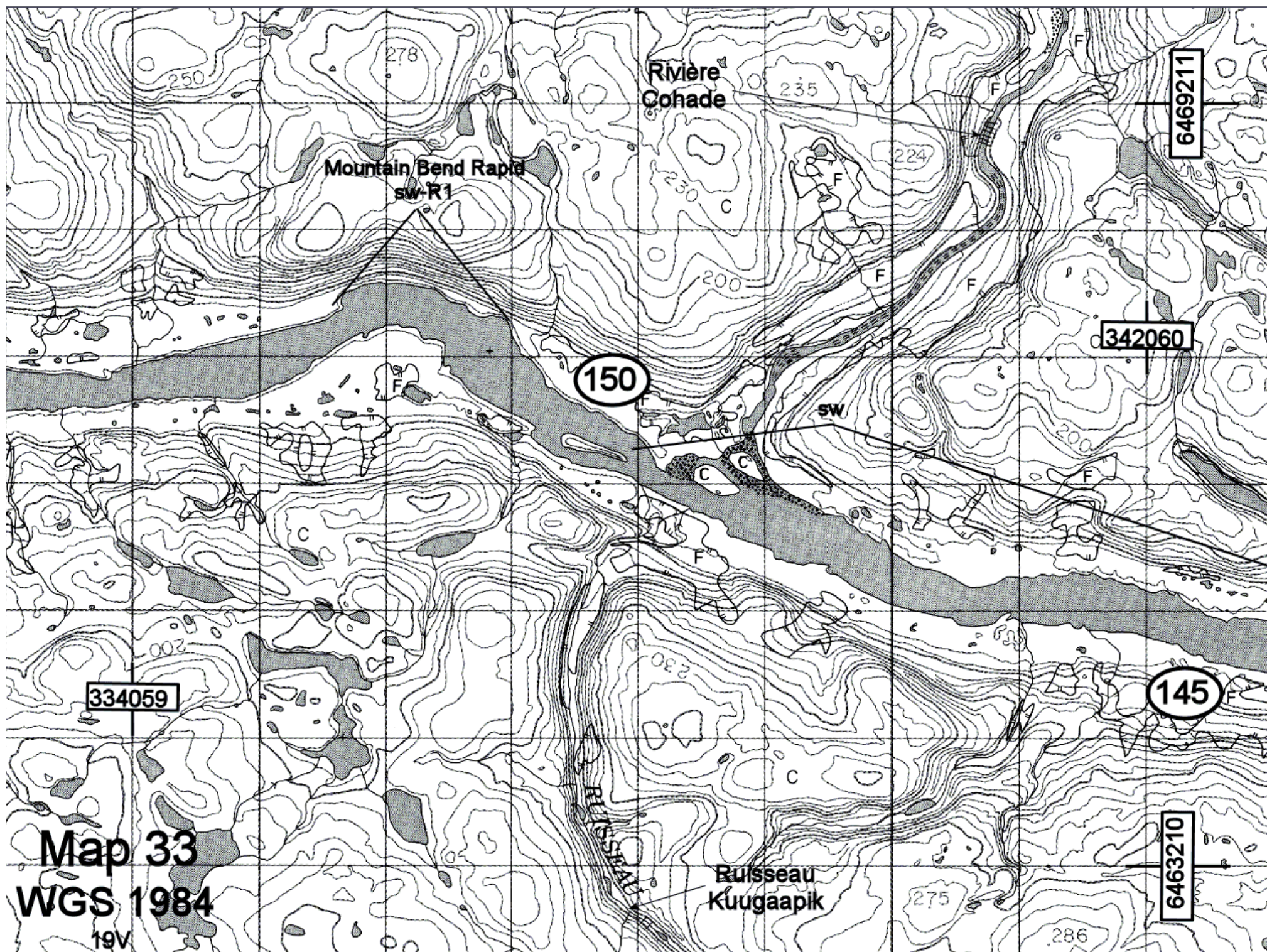
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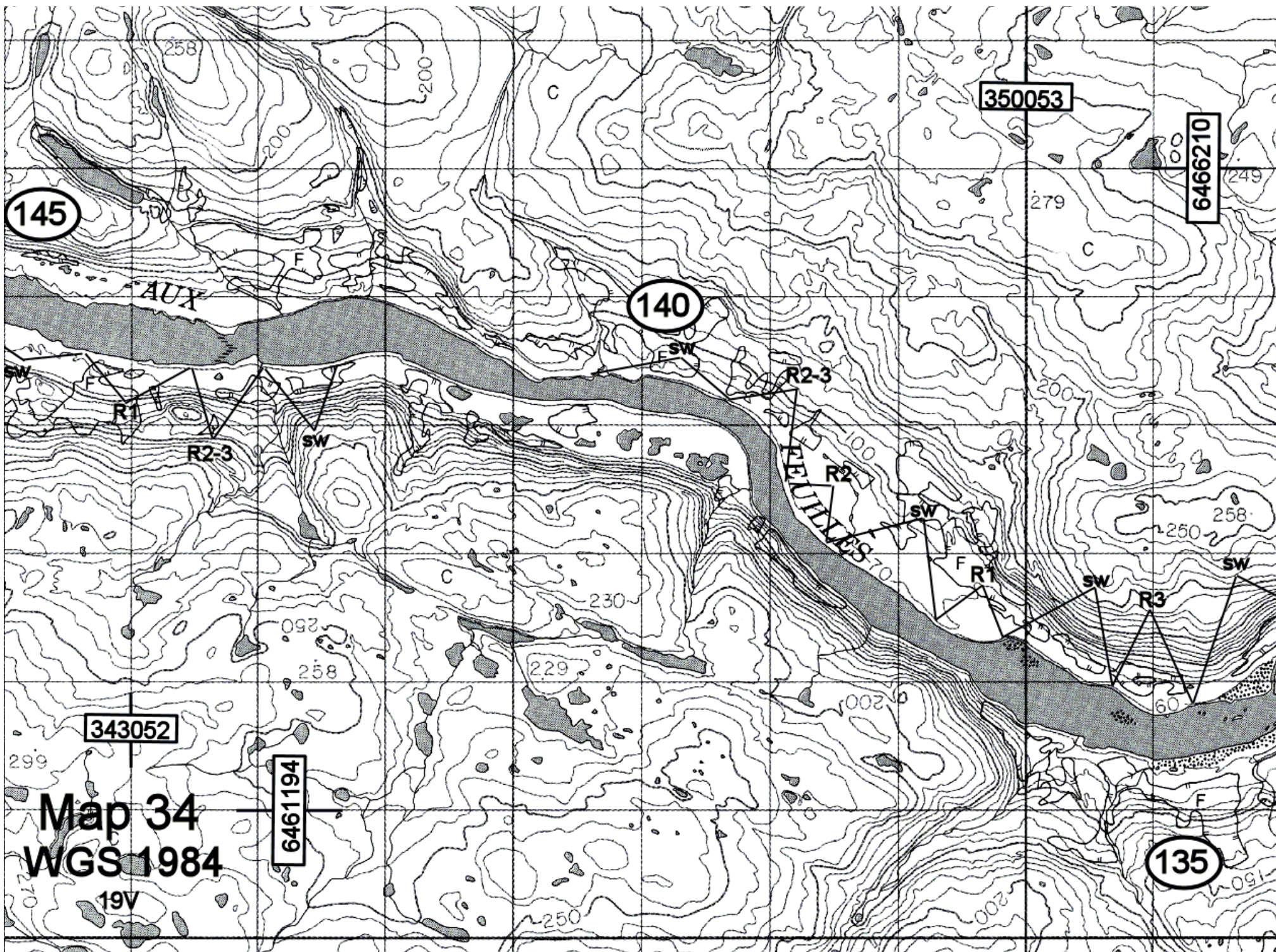
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165



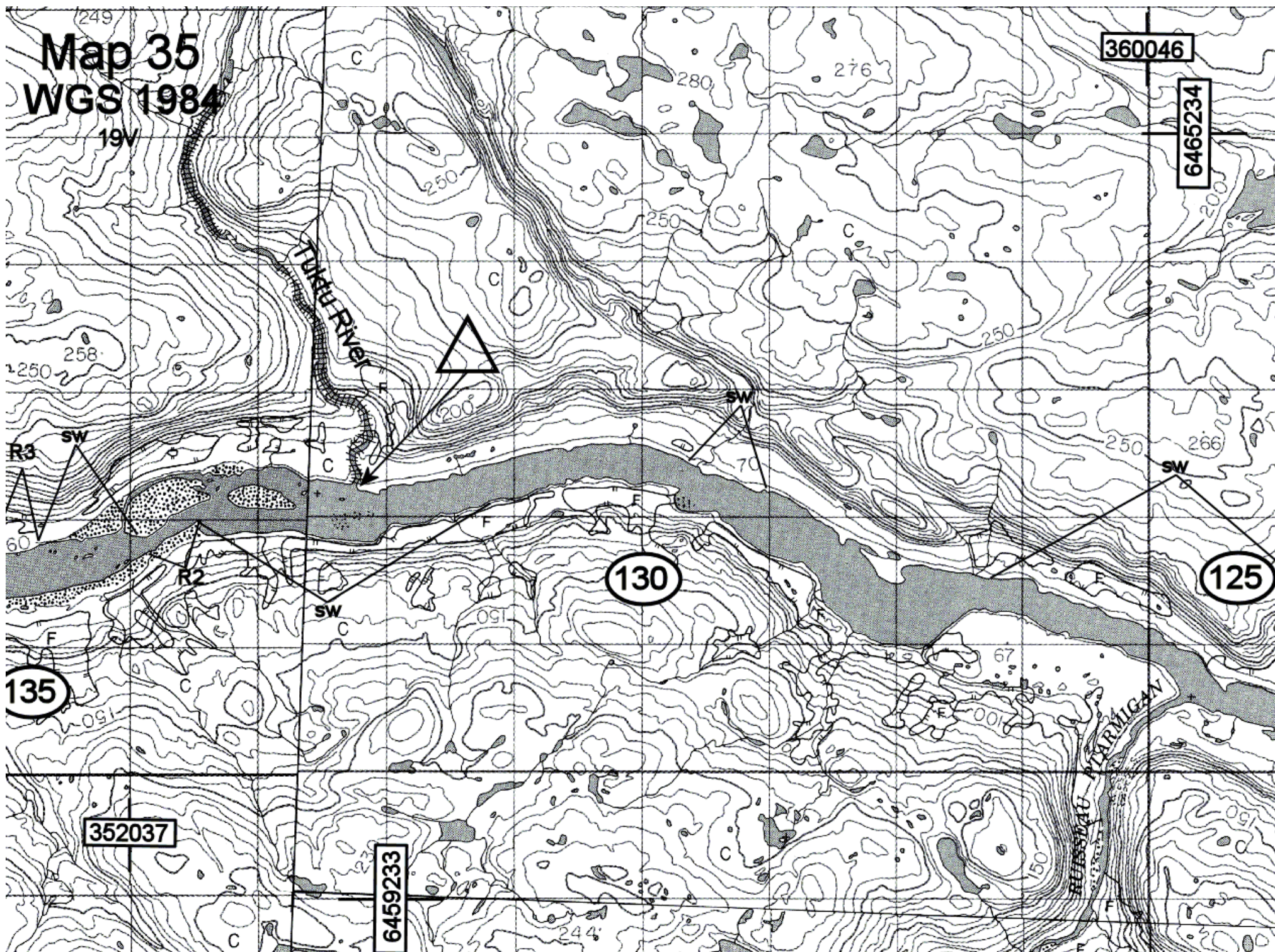




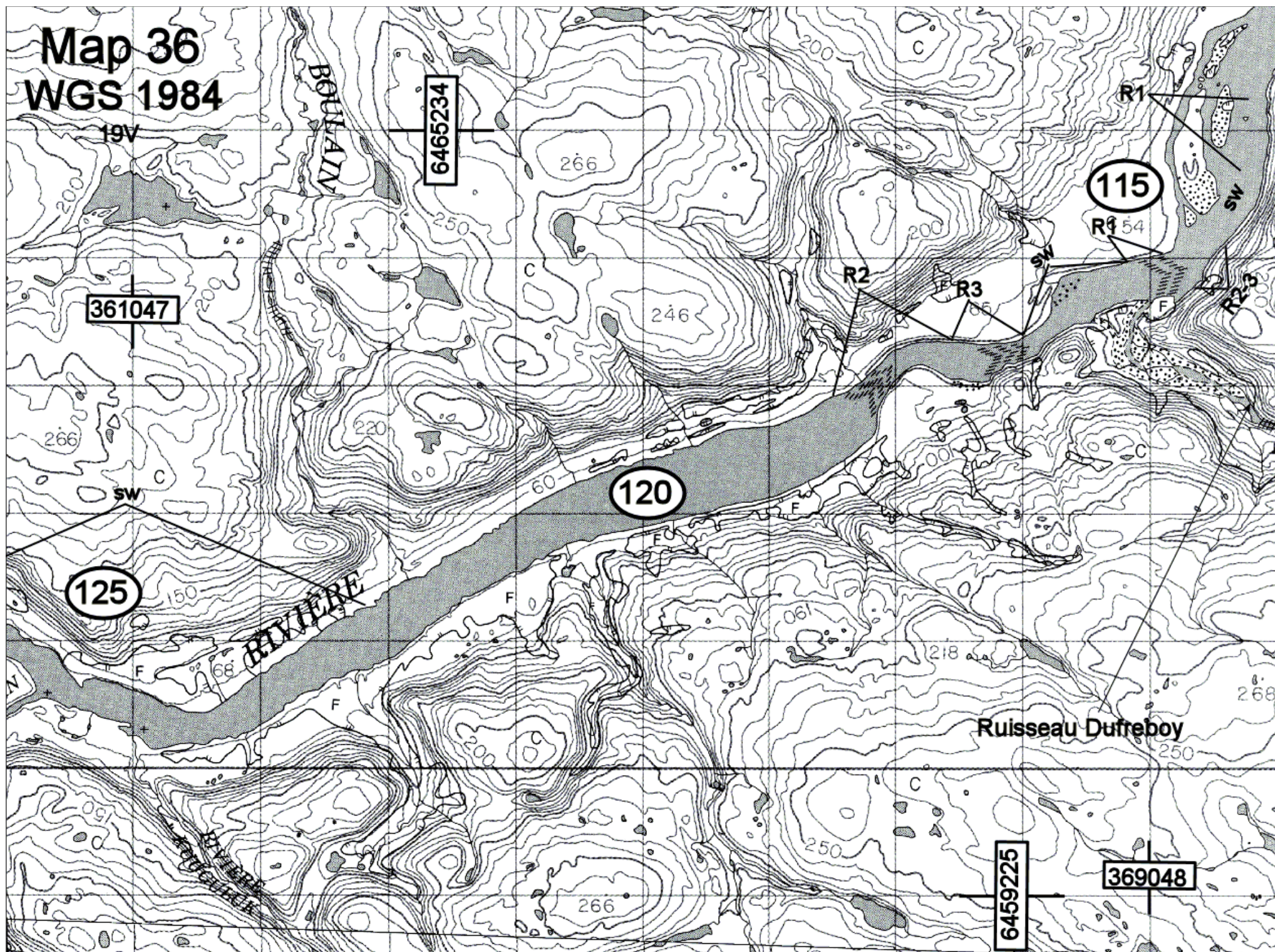
Map 34
WGS 1984

19V

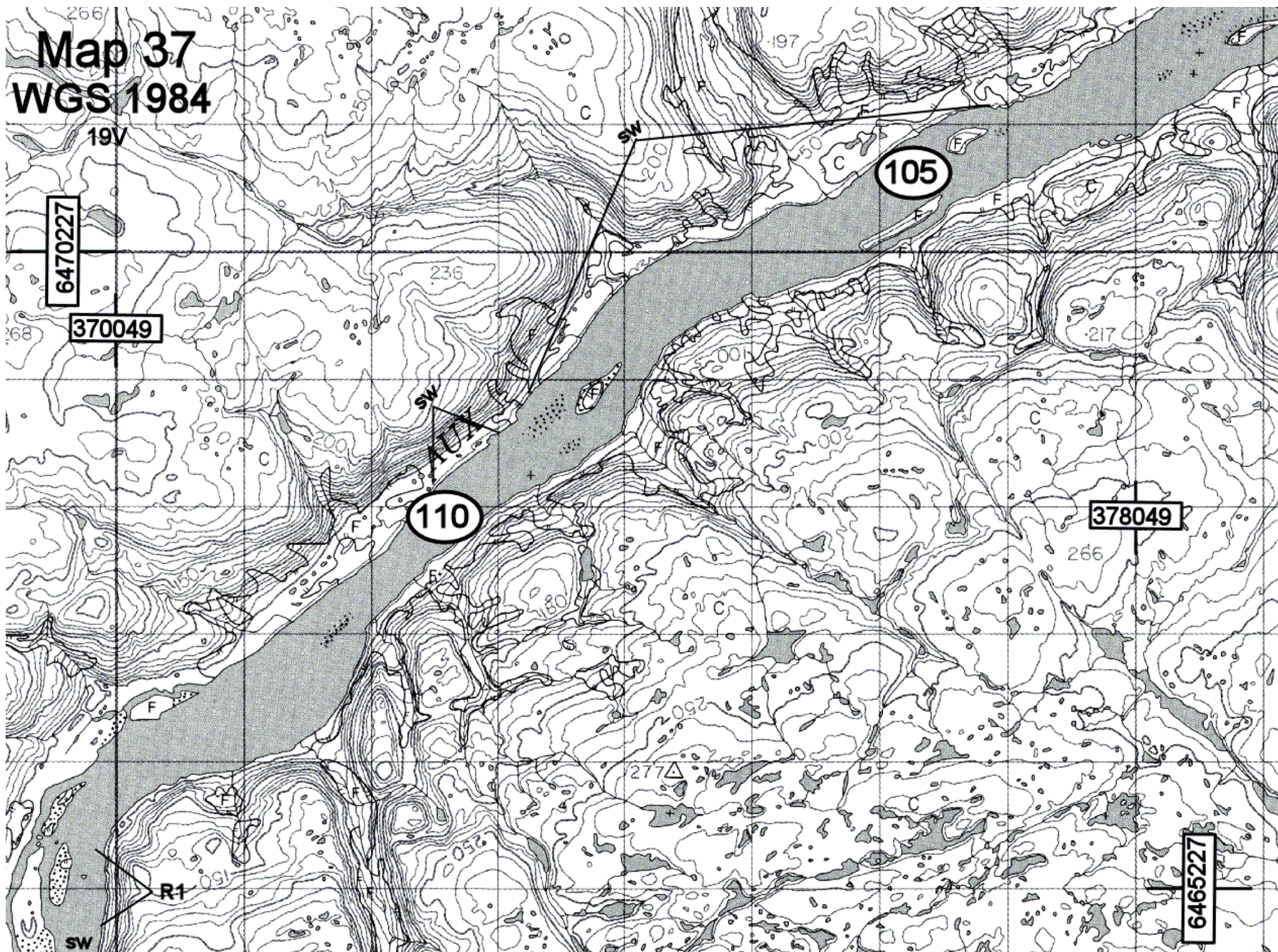
Map 35
WGS 1984



Map 36
WGS 1984



Map 37
WGS 1984



Map 38
WGS 1984

19V

380043

100

95

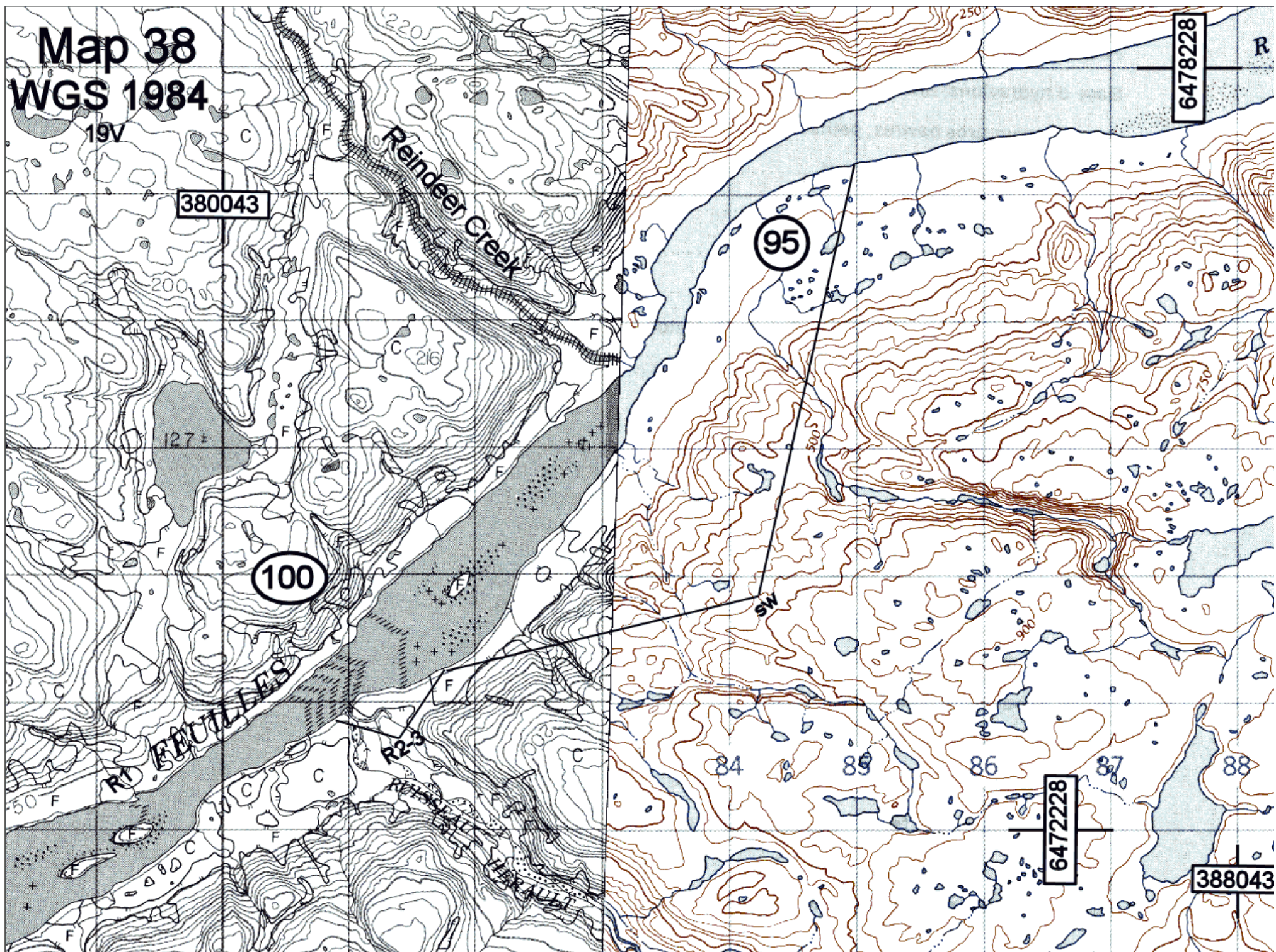
6478228

R

SW

6472228

388043



Map 39
WGS 1984

19V

6483220

396044

R3-4 on the right
R2-3 on the left

R2

SW

SW

85

R2-3 R1

SW

500

RIVÈRE

90

80

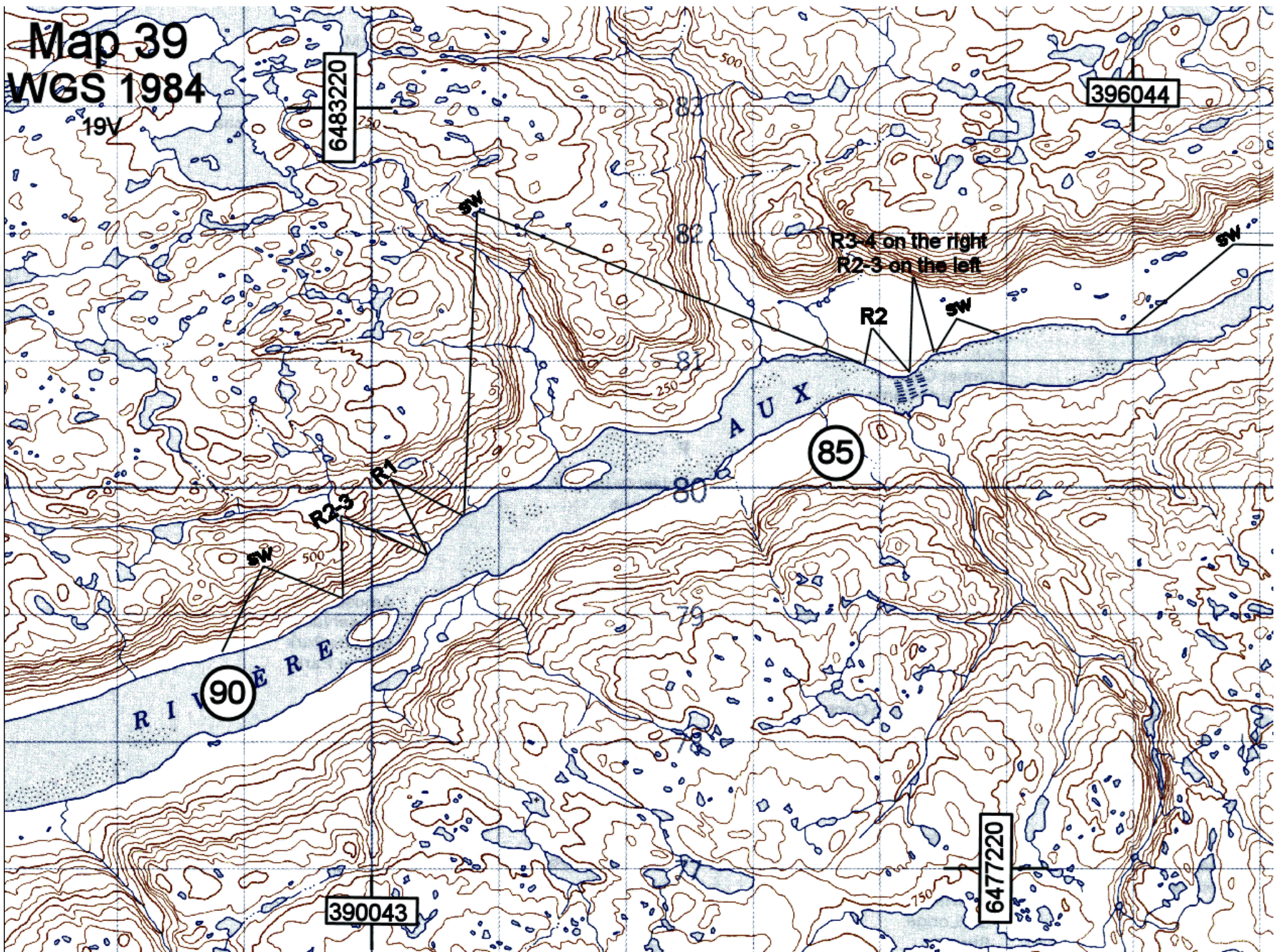
79

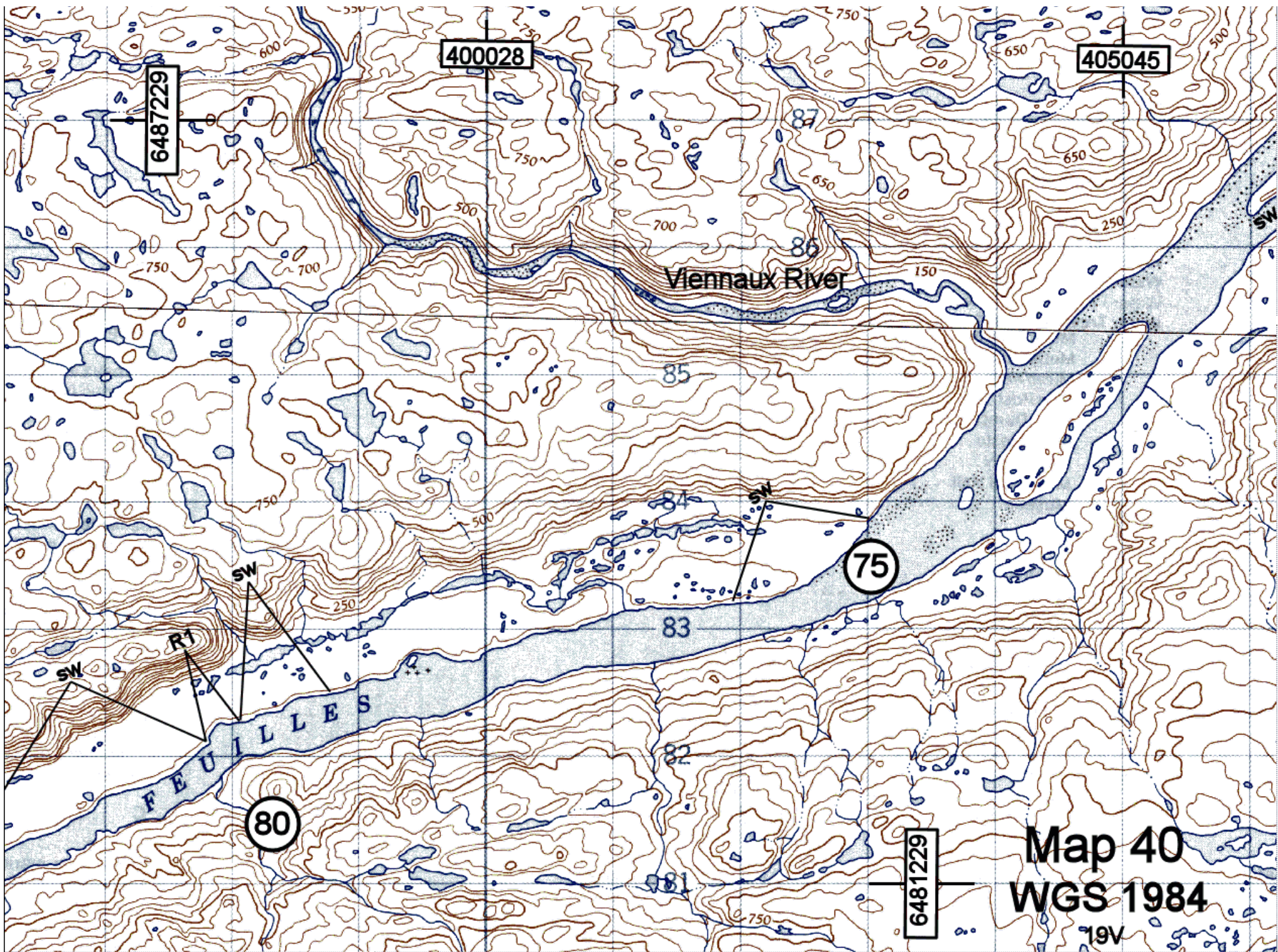
AUX

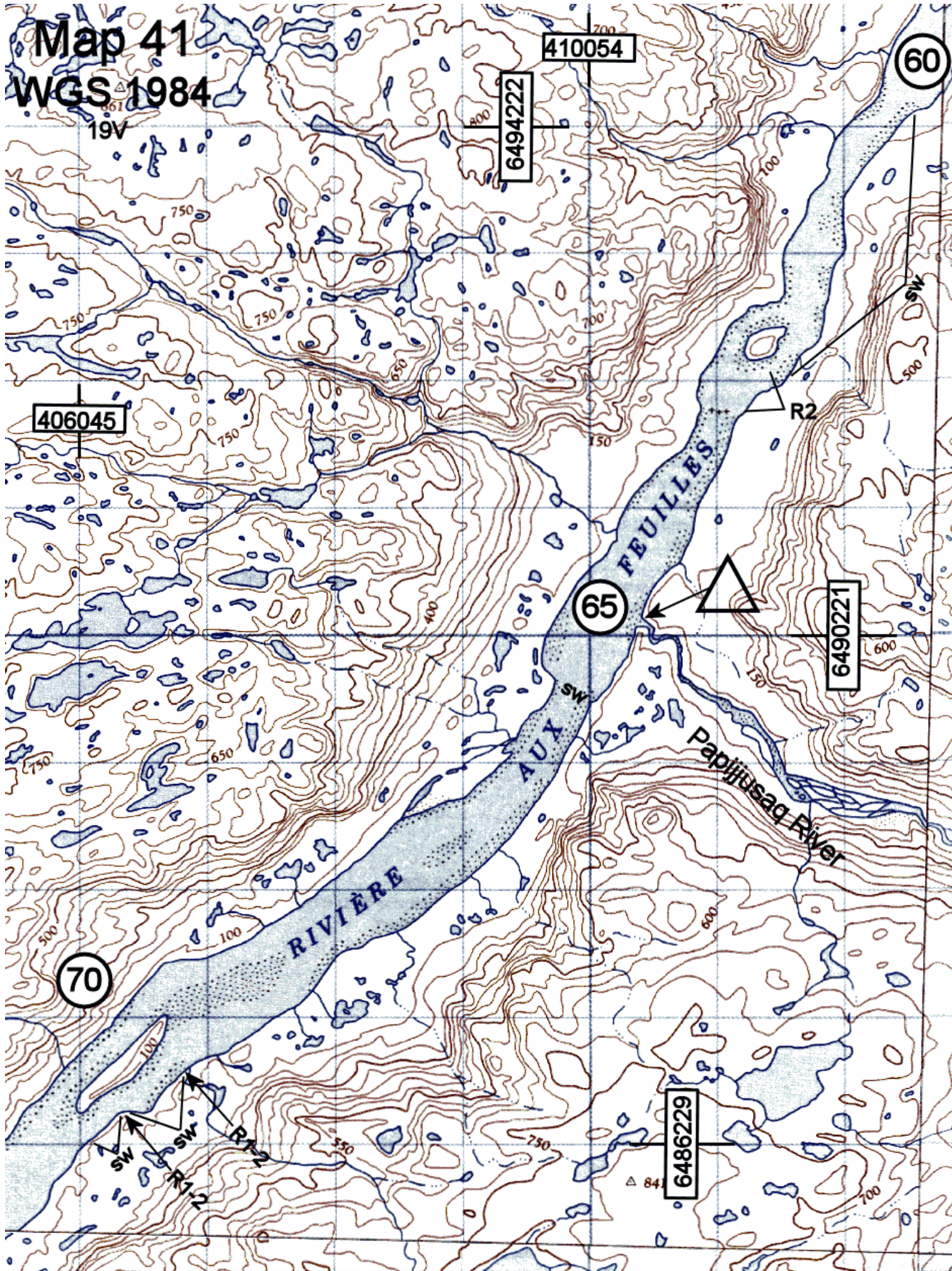
390043

6477220

750







Map 41
WGS 1984

19V

410054

6494222

60

406045

65

6490221

70

6486229

△ 84

SW
N
RTN

RIVIÈRE

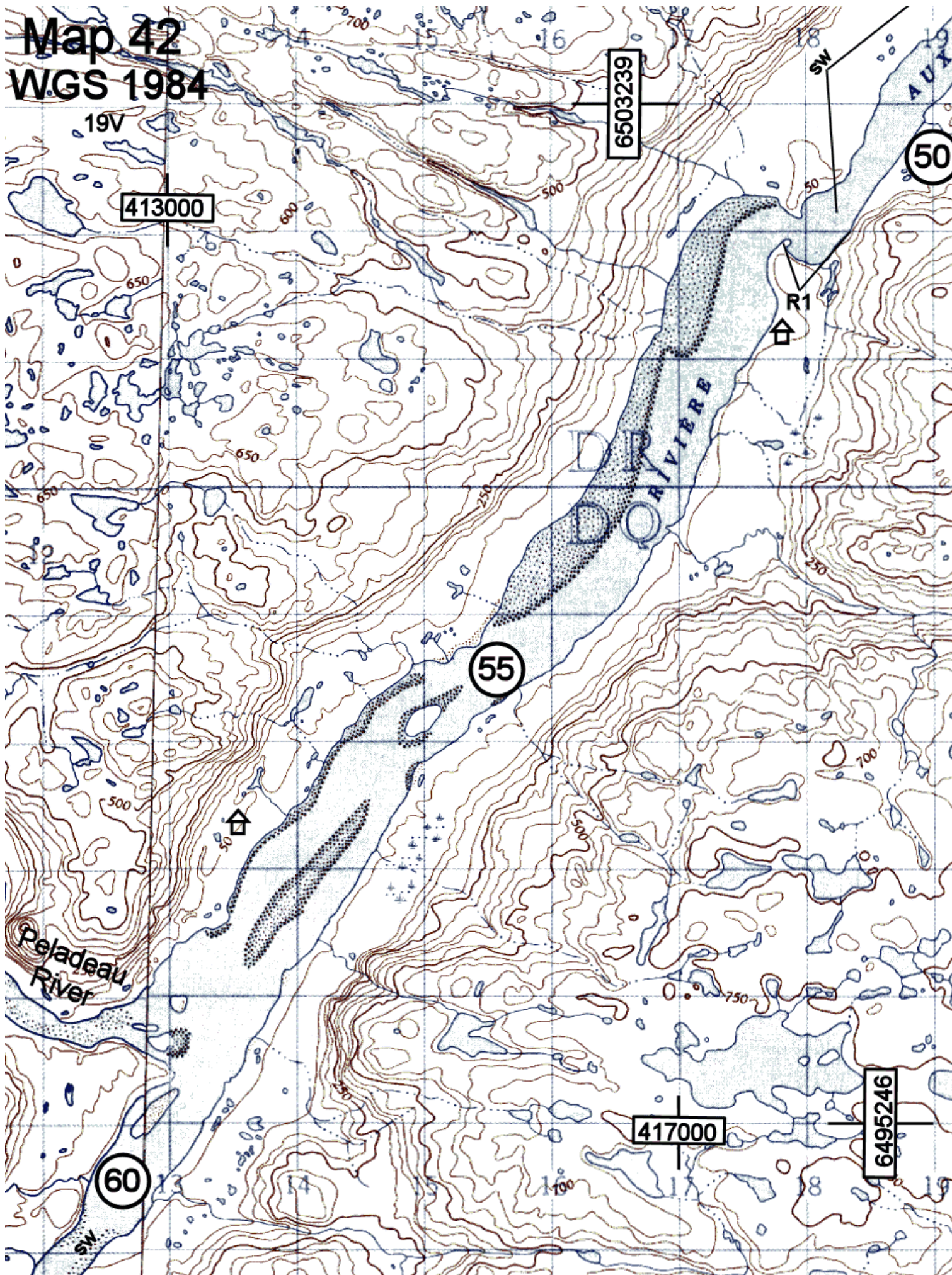
FEUILLES

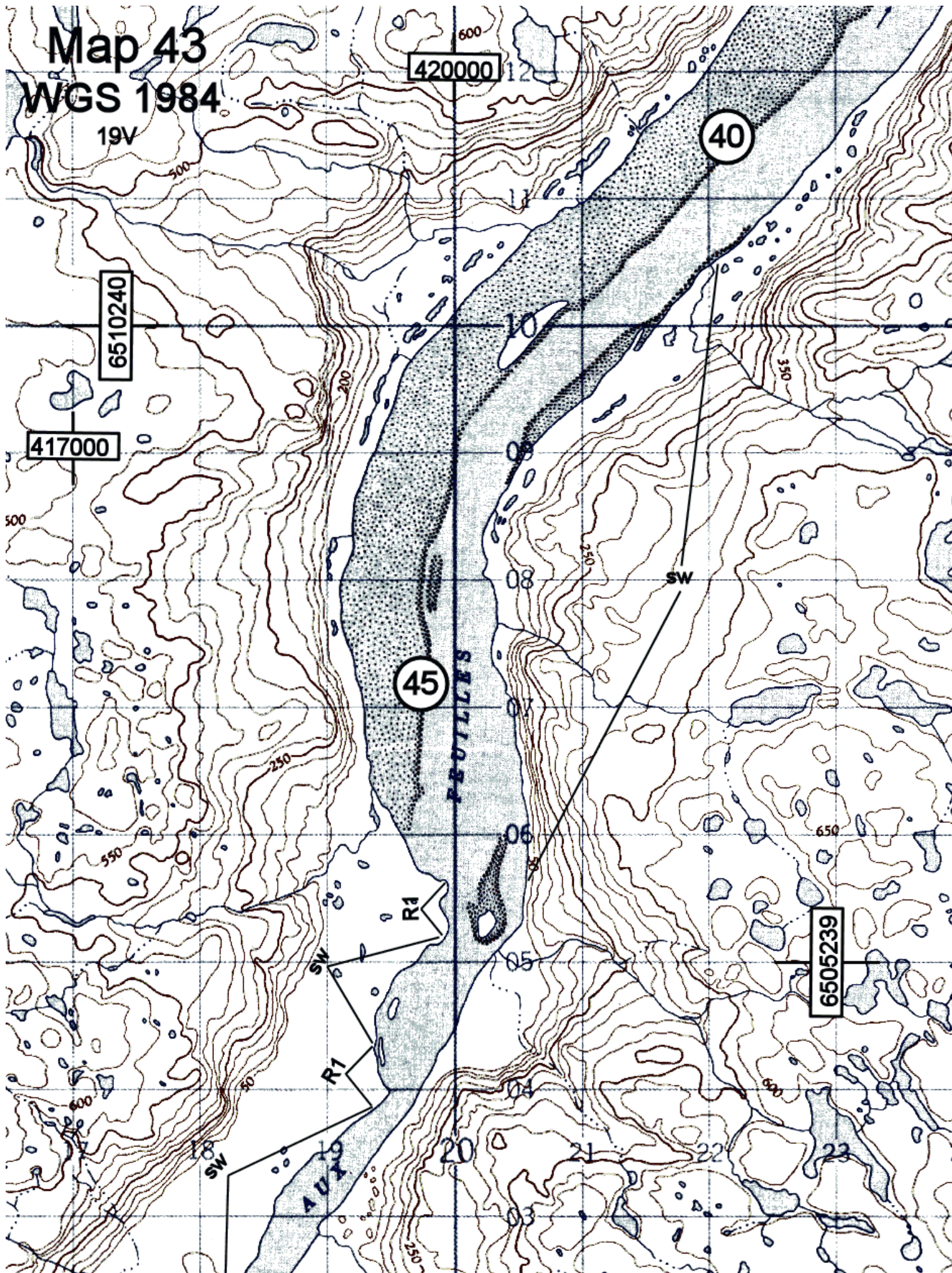
Papijusaq River

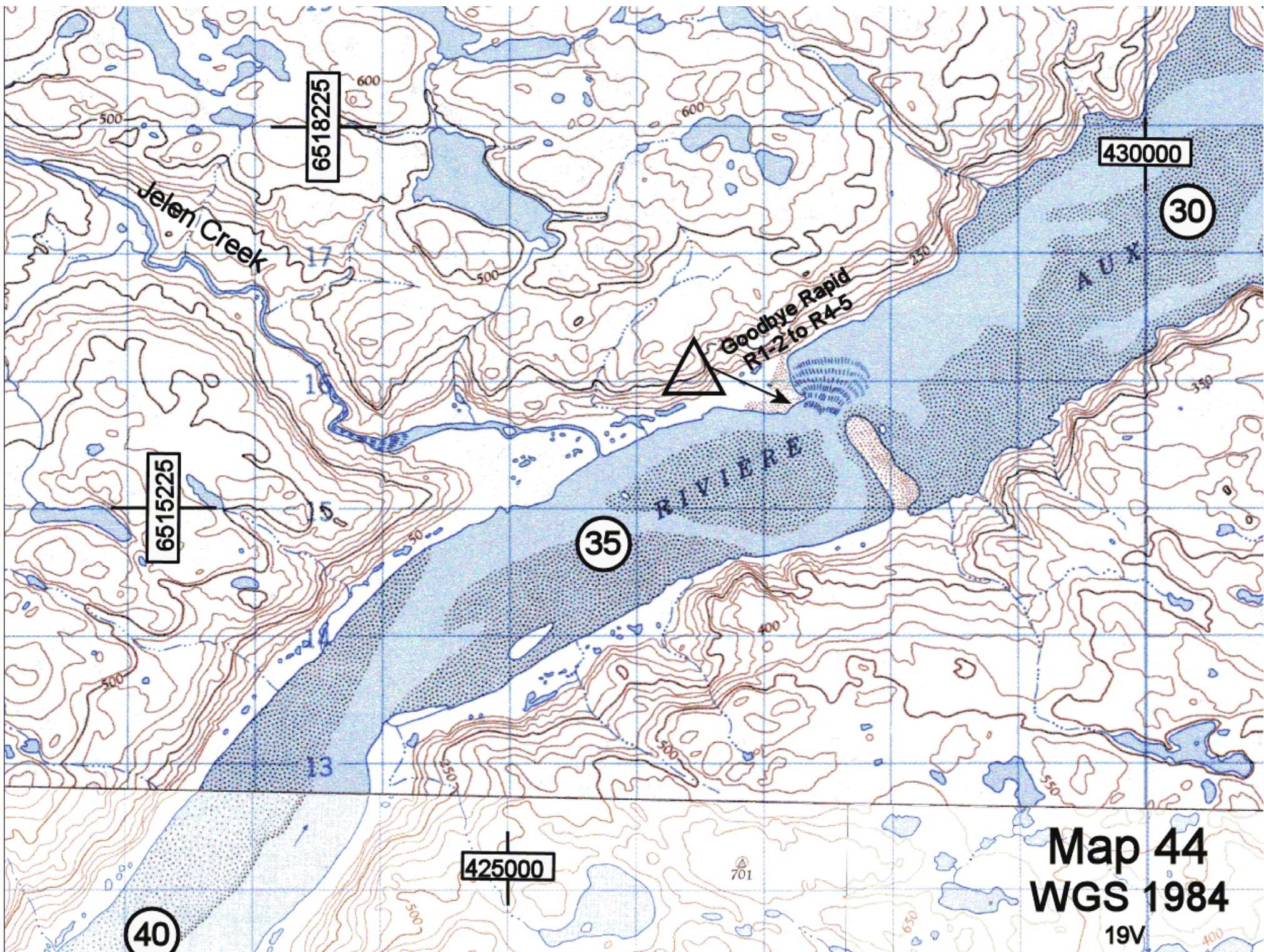
R2

SW

Map 42
WGS 1984







Map 45 WGS 1984

19V

Fanfan
River

Montagne
Irravituag

1234

435000

6517233

439000

30

17
FEUILLES
16

20

AUX

25

6515233

Bottleneck Rapid
(reversible waterfall)

Leaf River
Estuary Lodge

431000

Montagne
Tunnutuag

1184

13

14

15

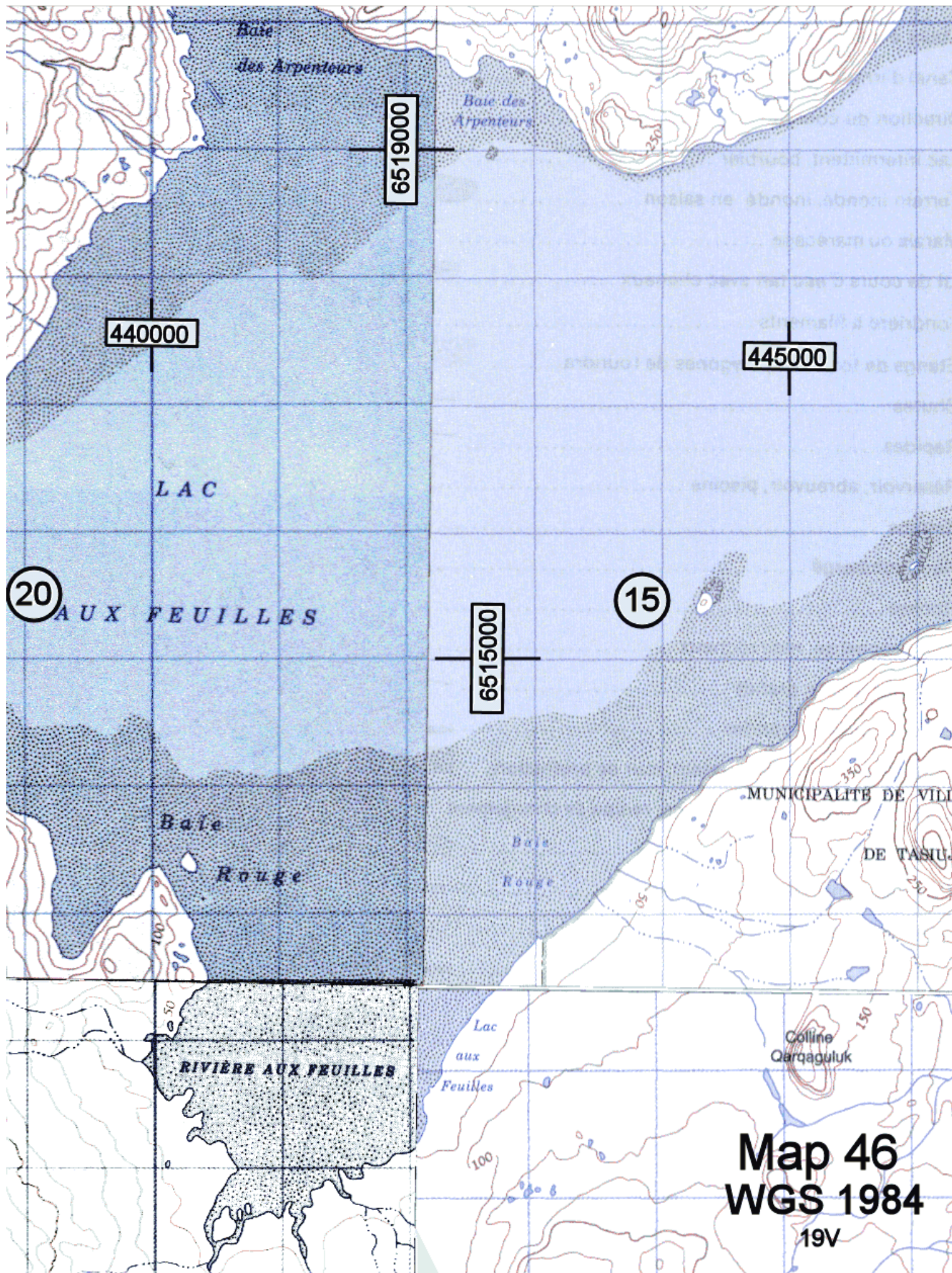
16

17

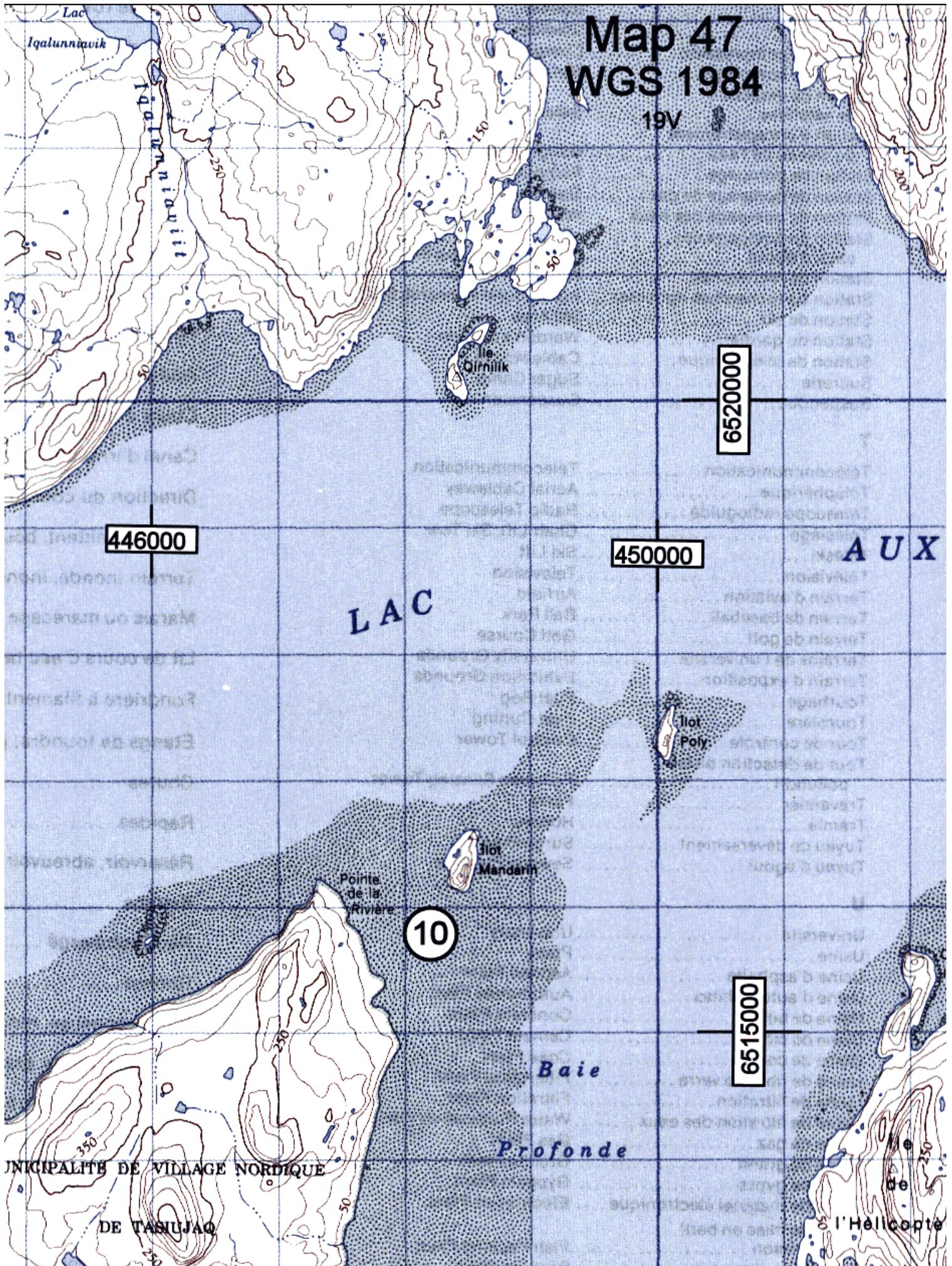
18

19

20

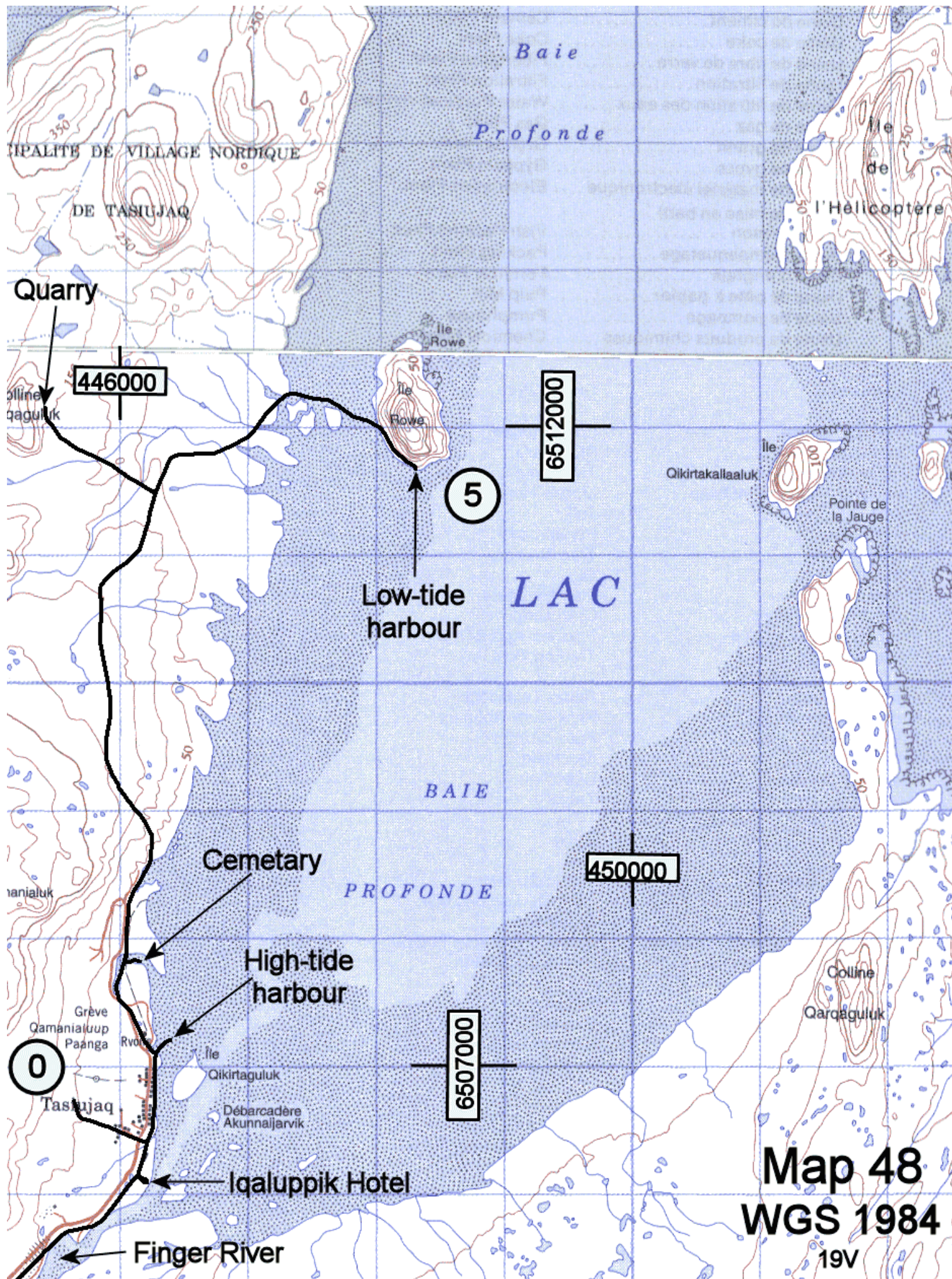


Map 47
WGS 1984
19V



Municipalité de Village Nordique
de Tasujak

de l'Helicopte



19V

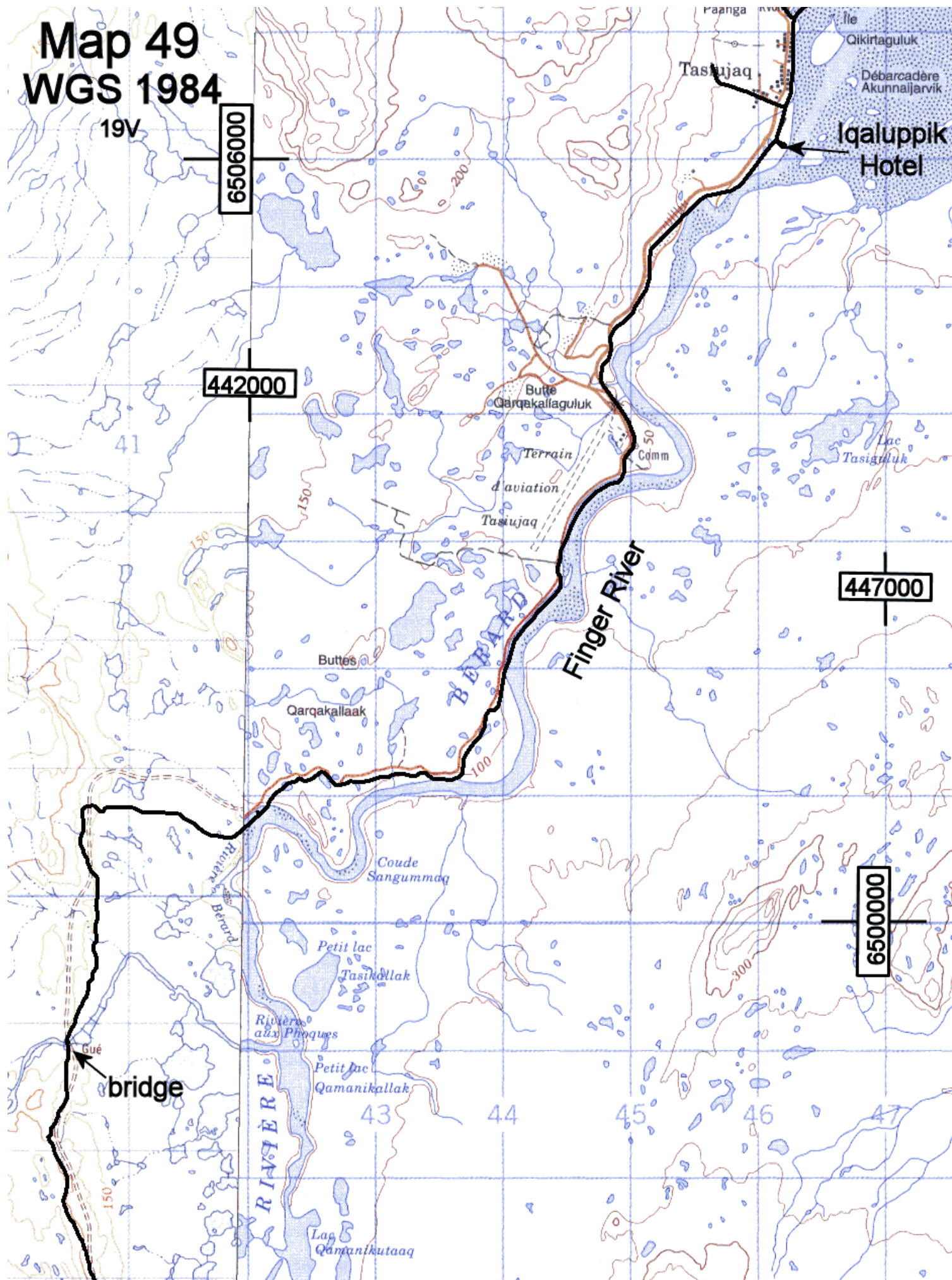
6506000

442000

447000

6500000

bridge

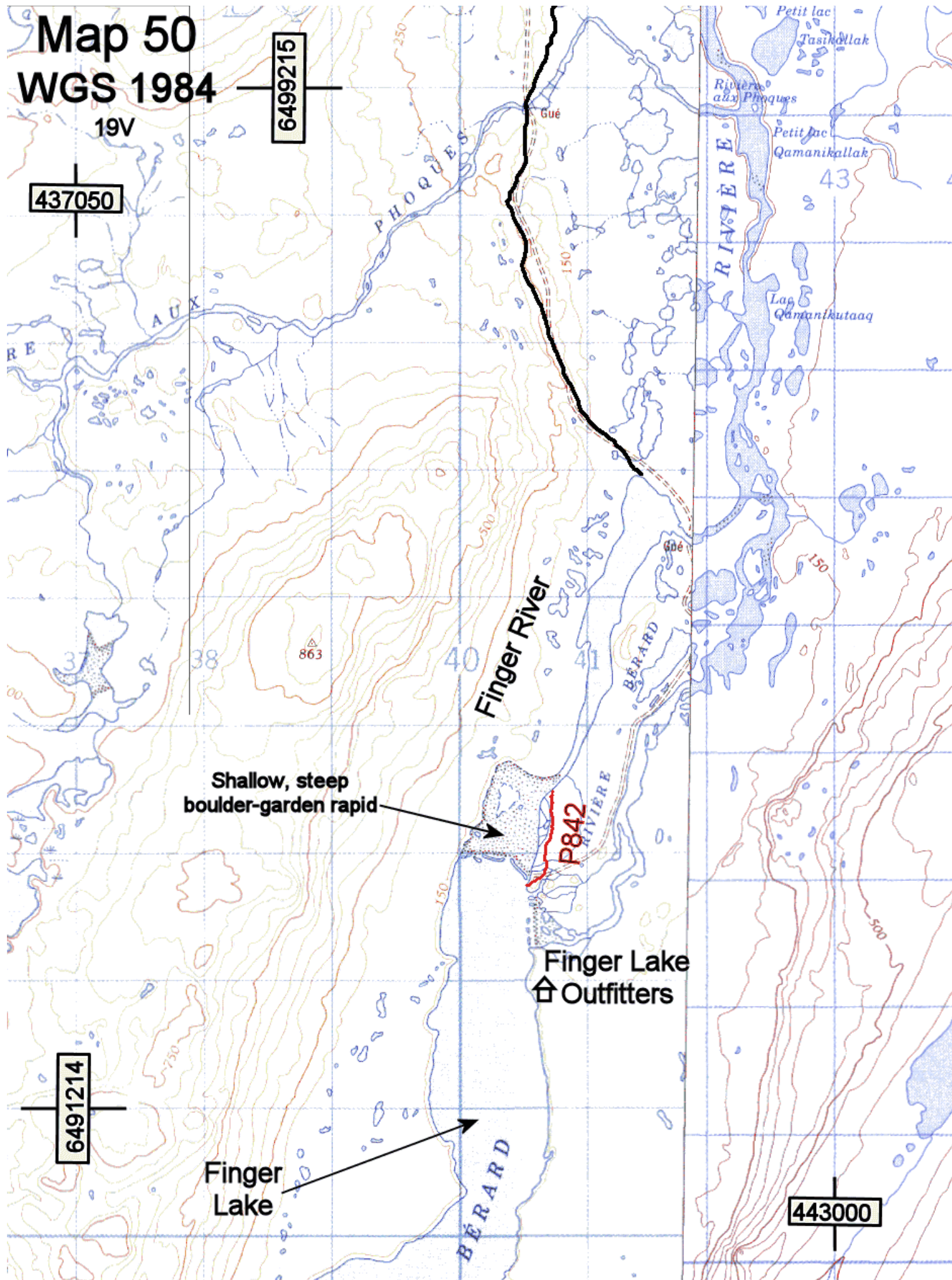


Map 50 WGS 1984

19V

6499215

437050



Shallow, steep
boulder-garden rapid

Finger River

Finger Lake
△ Outfitters

Finger
Lake

6491214

443000