



# **Vachon River**

**River Map**

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

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## General Information

Flowing in a territory of ice, rocks and lichens, the Vachon River offers a direct contact with the raw power of elements. Still rarely canoed because of its difficulty of access and the severe climatic conditions, it presents an average slope of 0,2 % which expresses itself by means of long tempestuous rapids.

The Vachon river starts at the base of Pingualuit Crater, located in Pingualuit National Park, about 100 km west of Kangiqsujaq in Nunavik. This 330 kilometers expedition is divided in three sections. The first section of 60 km (km 330 to km 268) consists of crossing a series of small lakes in Pingualuit National Park. The second section of 200 km (km 268 to km 68) is the Vachon river itself. And the third section of 70 km (km 68 to km 0) consists of crossing the majestic fjord of the Payne river to reach Kangirsuk.

In the first section, the time frame that is free of ice is only of 20 days. Add icy winds, a maximal temperature of 7 C, precipitation in snow or in rain almost daily: you are in hypothermia country.

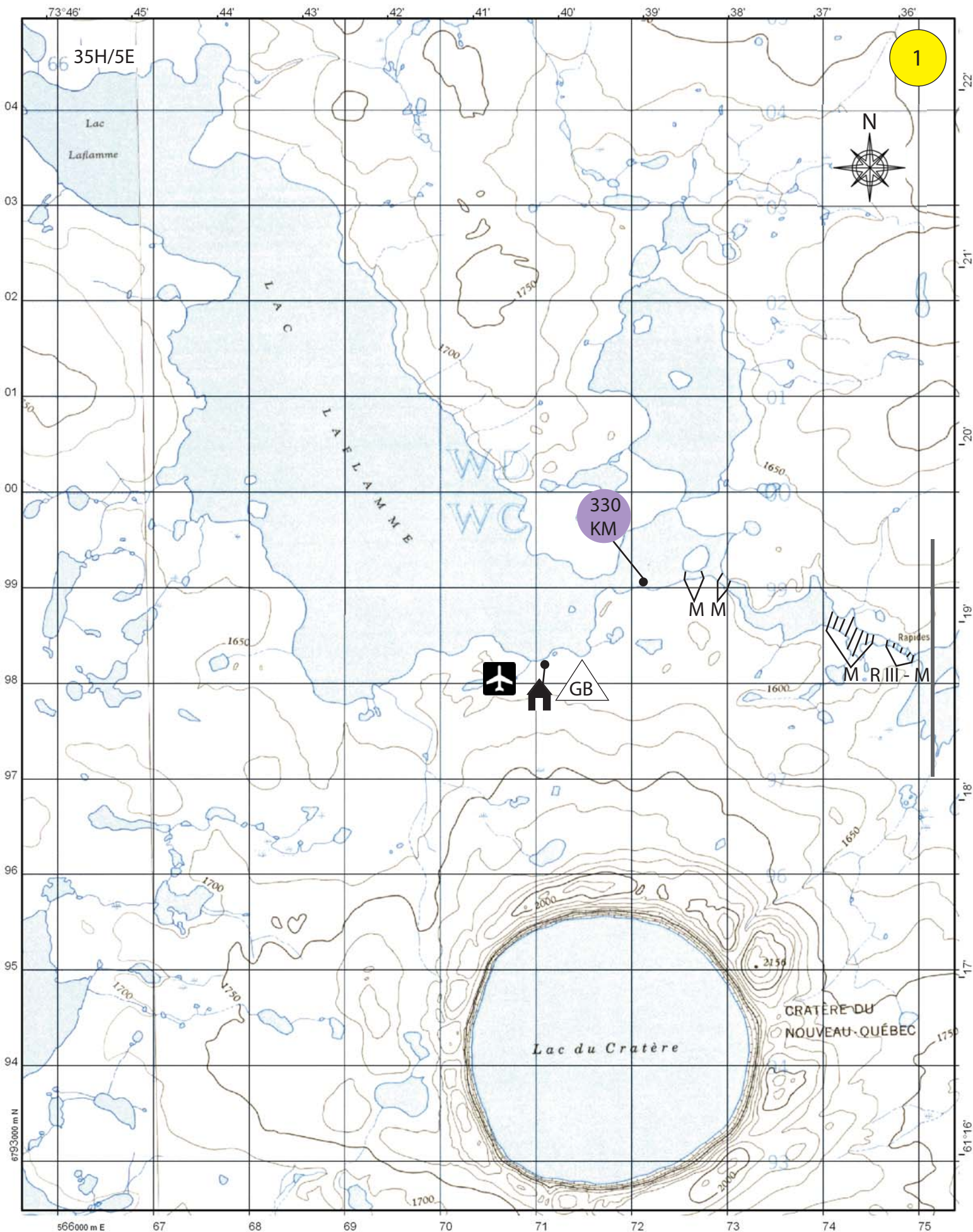
For the second section, most rapids are class II + III and the few class IV that come across, can easily be lined on the side. For most of the way, the river flows in a deep valley, with 500 feet hills on each side that offer awesome hiking opportunities. Two old Inuit campsites can also be found as you go down and the caribou herd that inhabit this area is the largest on earth!

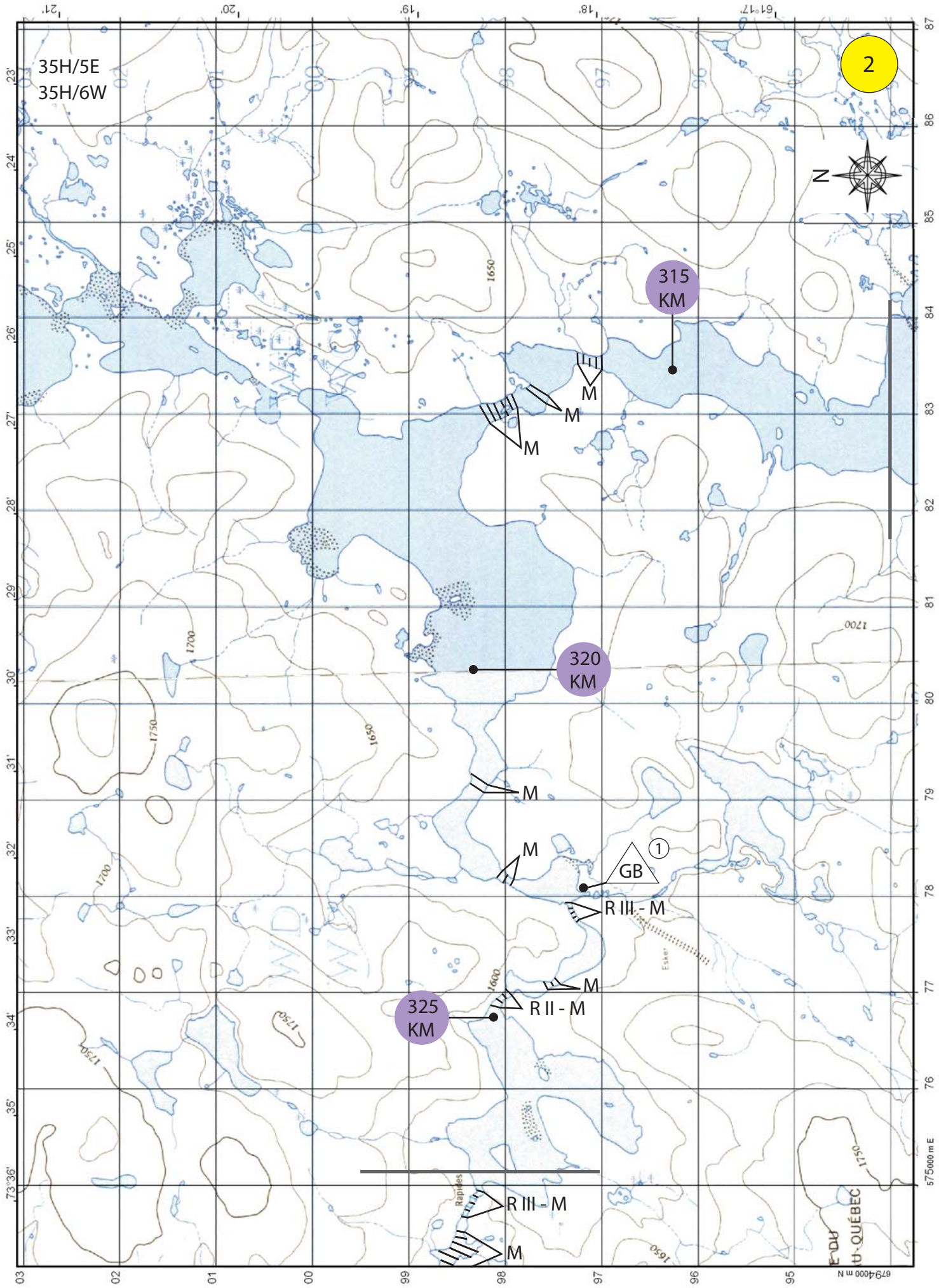
Seventy kilometres of navigation are required to cross the third section and reach the Inuit village of Kangirsuk. Considering Ungava bay has some of the strongest and highest tides in the world, extreme care must be taken when navigating its waters and close tributaries.

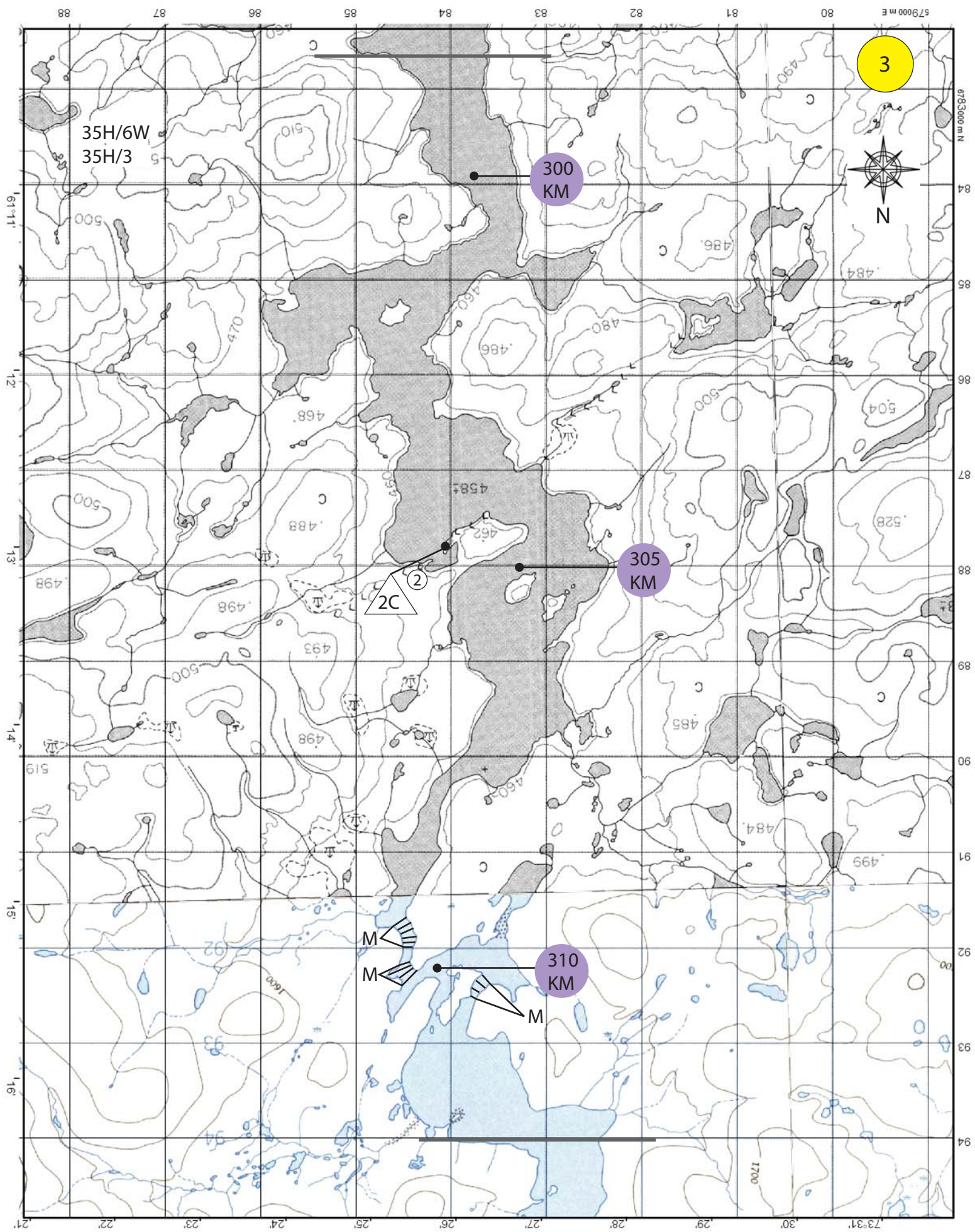
**This survey was taken from July 7th to July 22nd 2009. The first section was done at low water level and the second and third section at an intermediate water level. The best period to paddle the Vachon is July and you should plan 3 weeks for the whole trip, including transportation.**

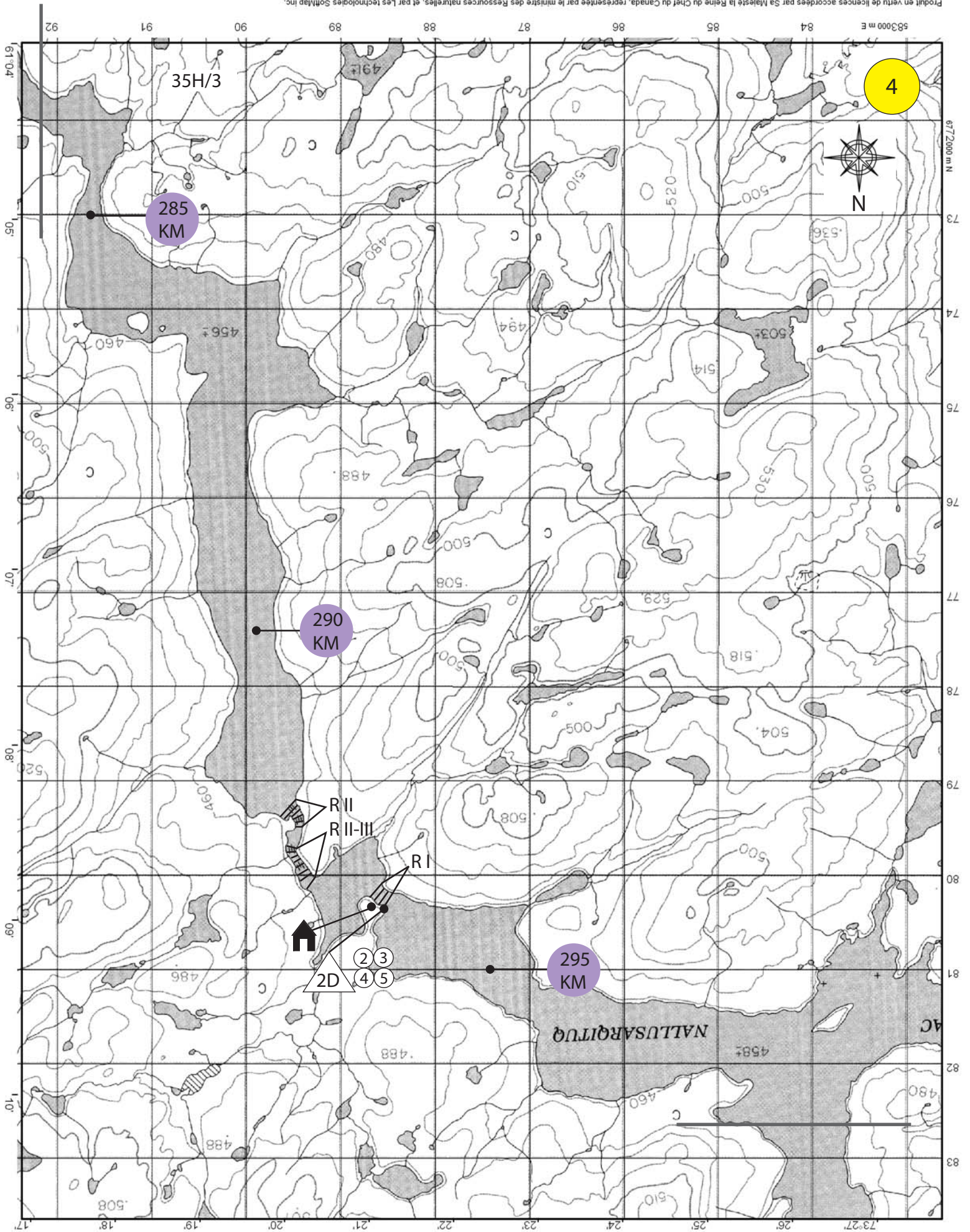
**The Vachon river is open to intermediate paddlers (RIII) or novice paddlers (RII) under the supervision of experimented guides in remote areas.** Remember that the Vachon river flows in an exceptionally wild and tough environment. It is a playground which allows no error, but the Vachon river is also the ultimate destination for a canoe expedition.

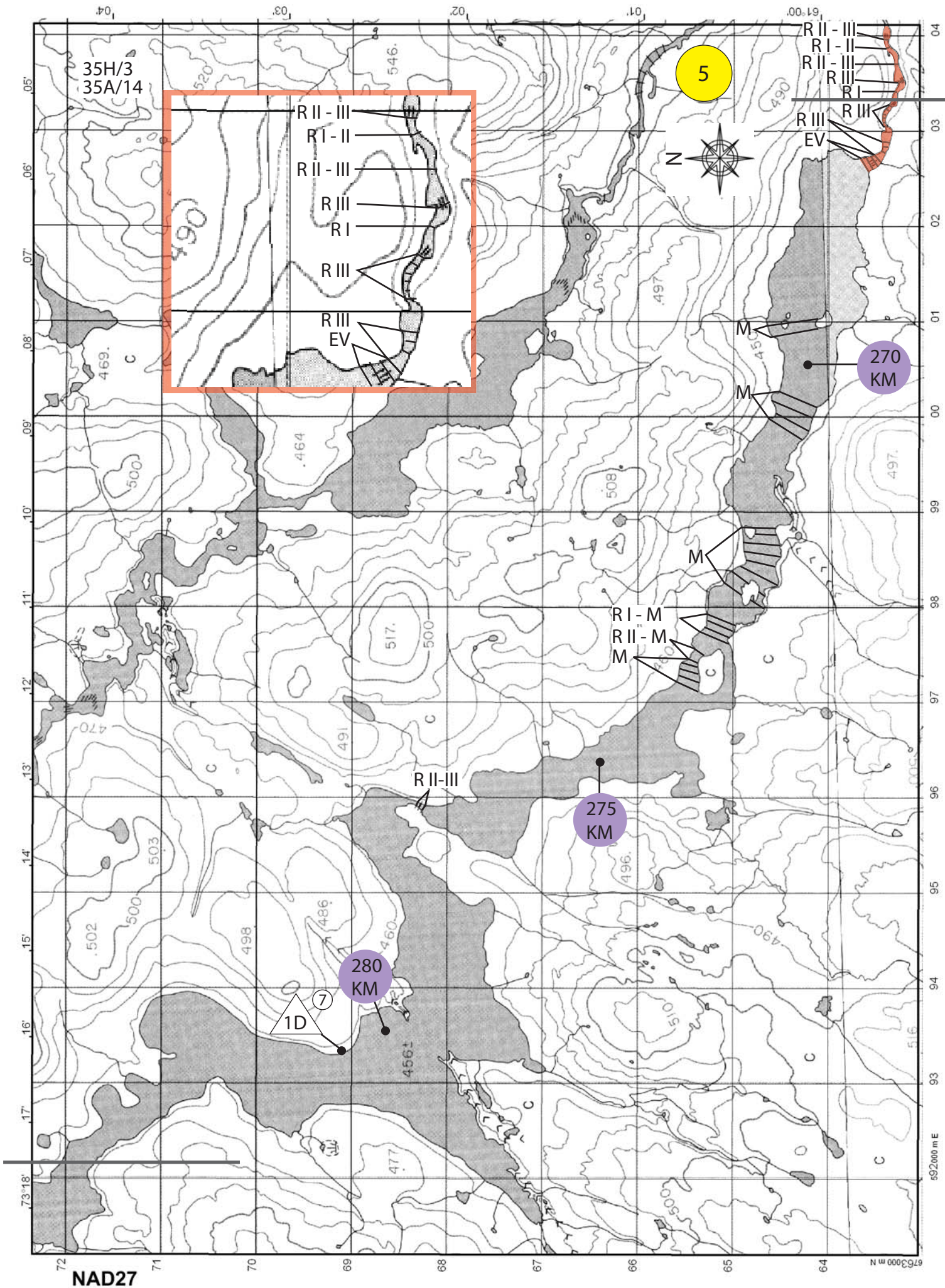
**Note :** This river map is to be used with the Vachon safety protocol produced by Eric Leclair for Nunavik Parks and Nunaturlik Landholding Corporation of Kangiqsujaq. Detailed technical information is provided for each section of this river, including emergency phone numbers and other safety recommendations.

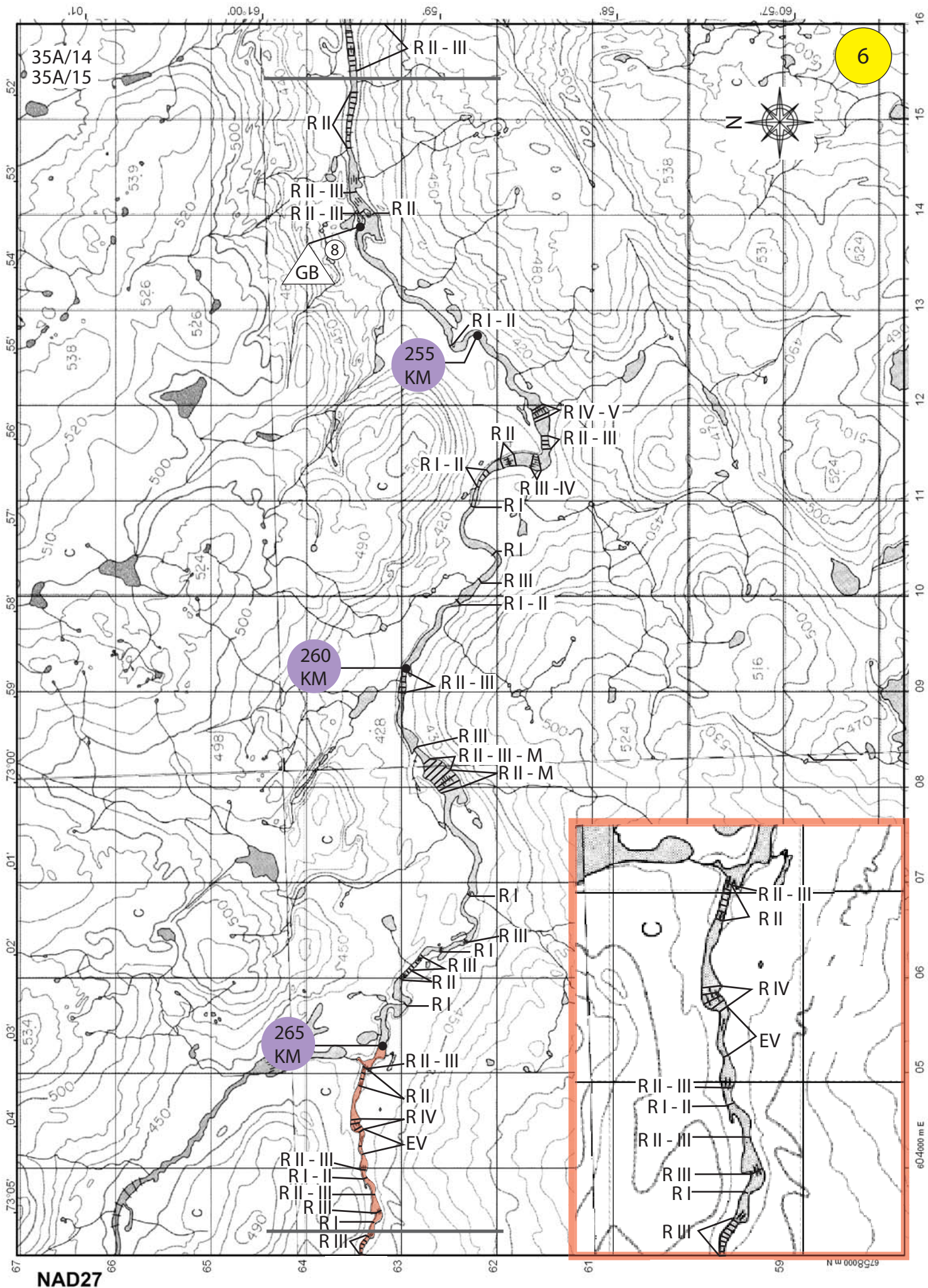




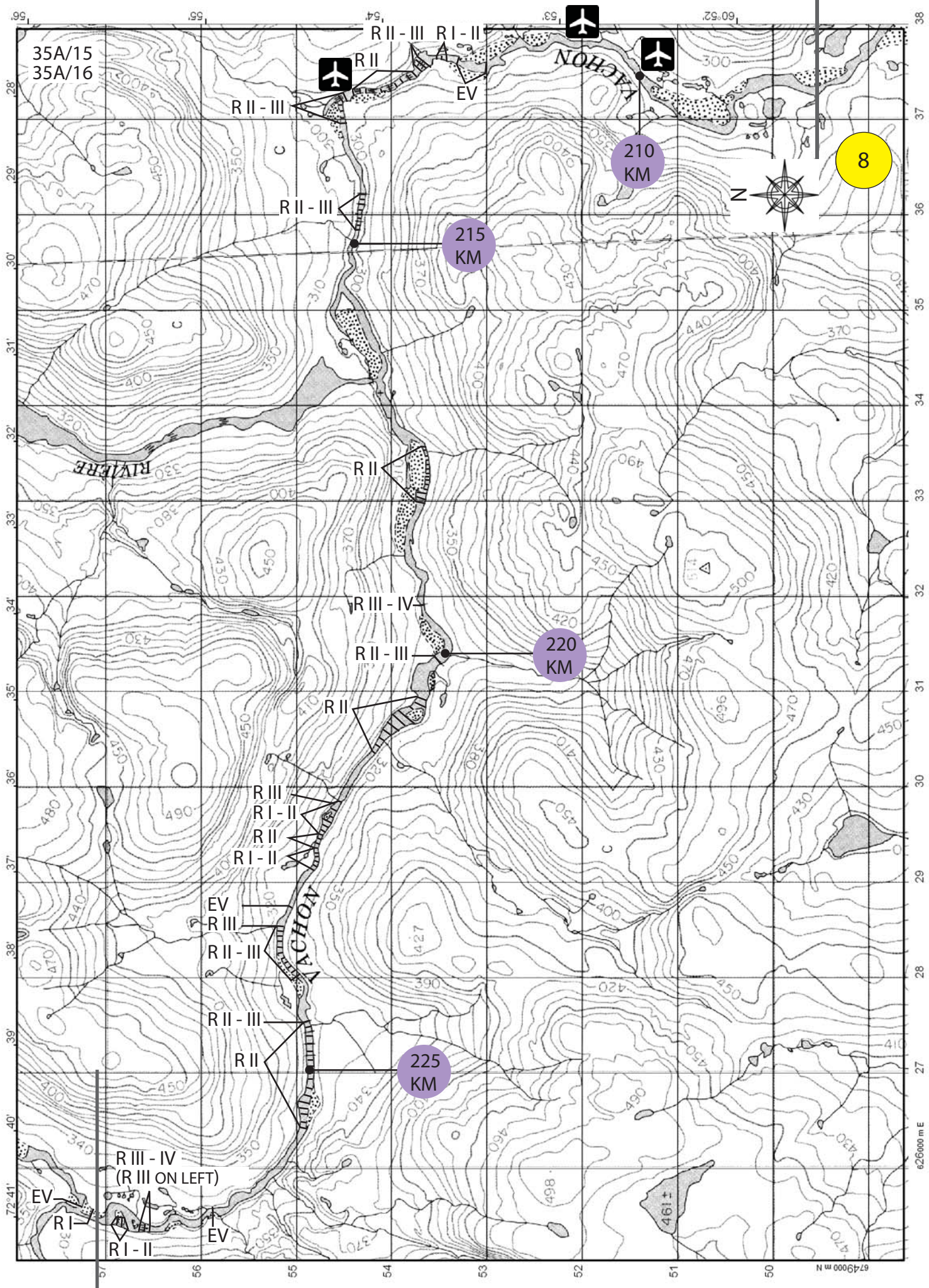


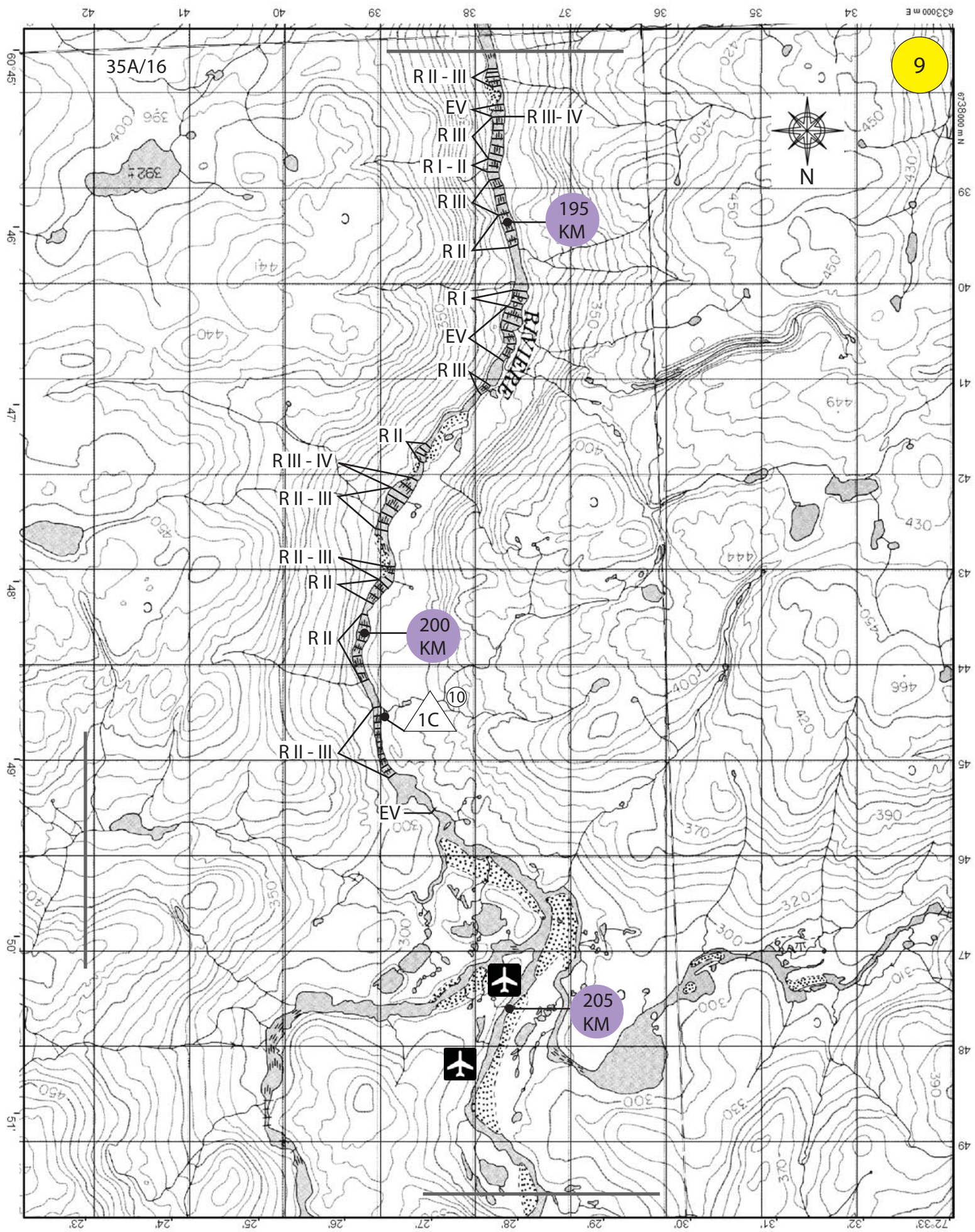


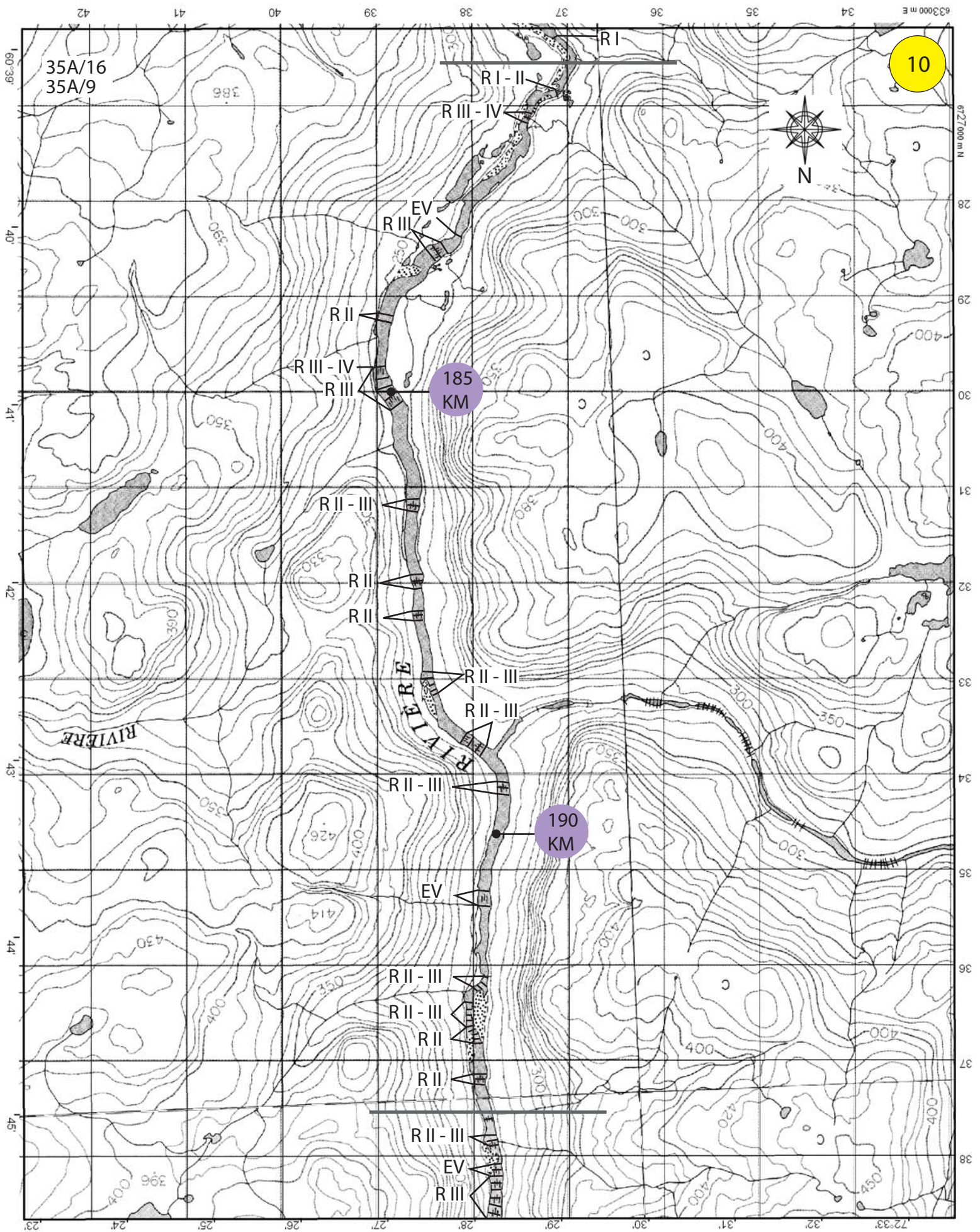


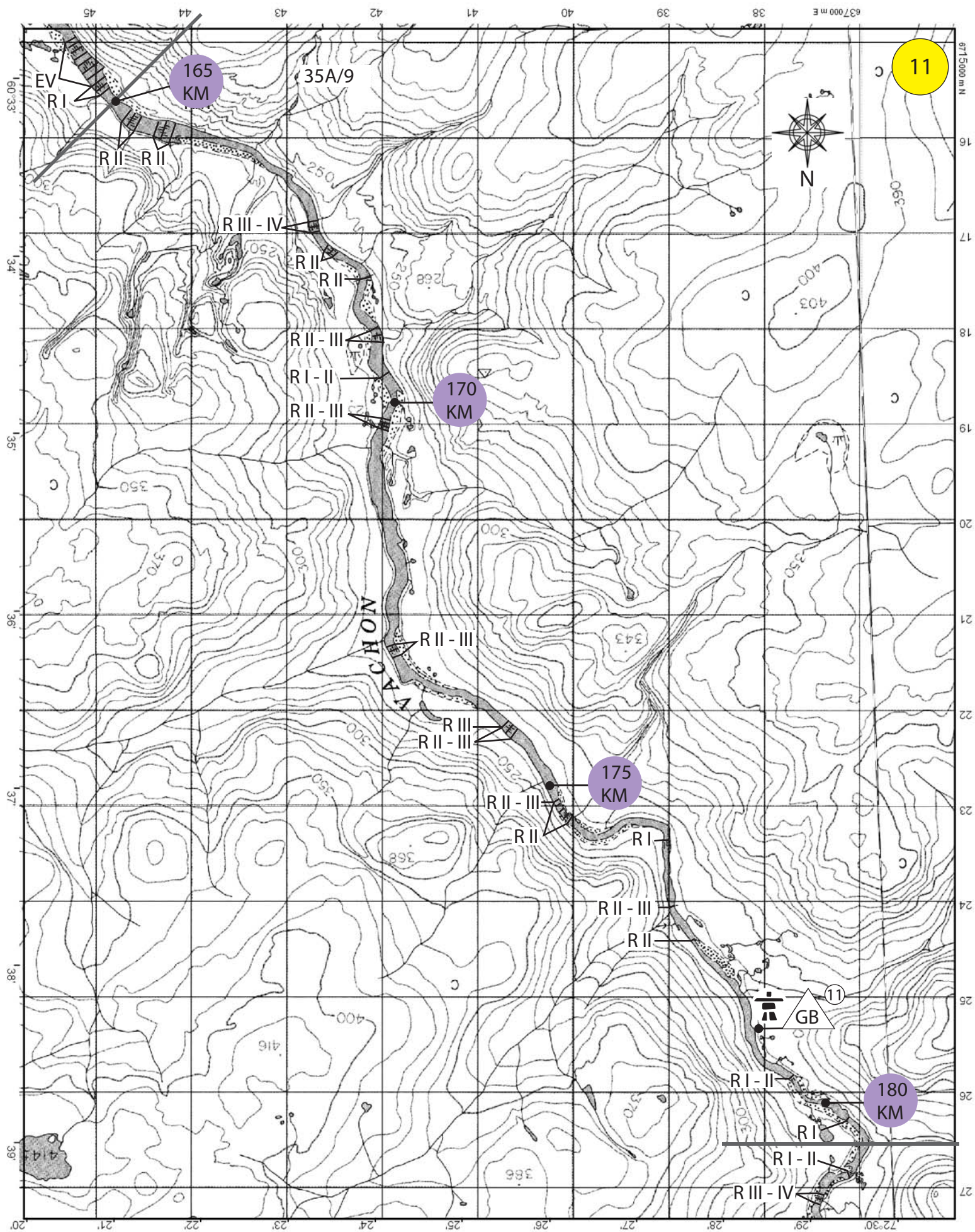


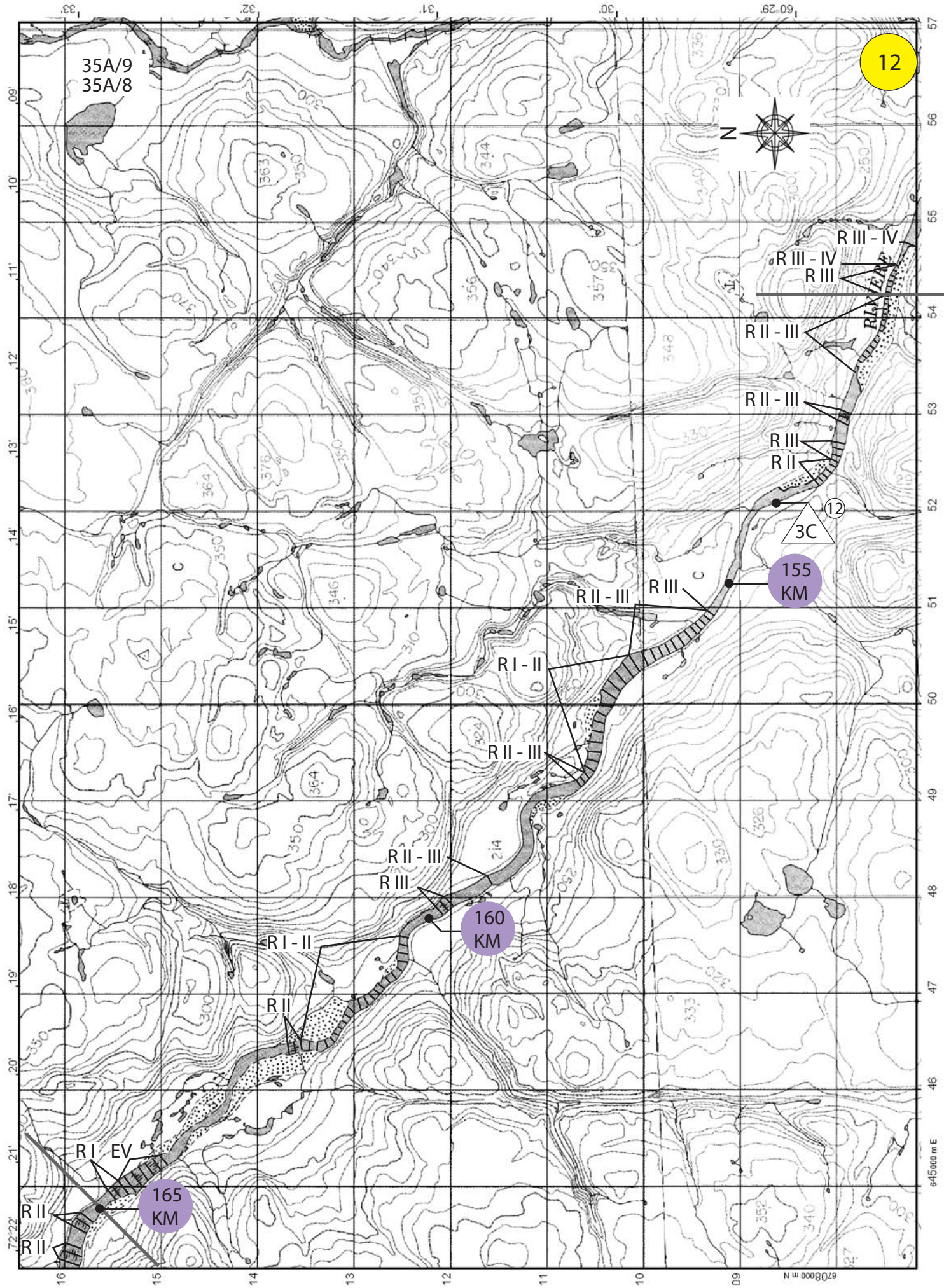


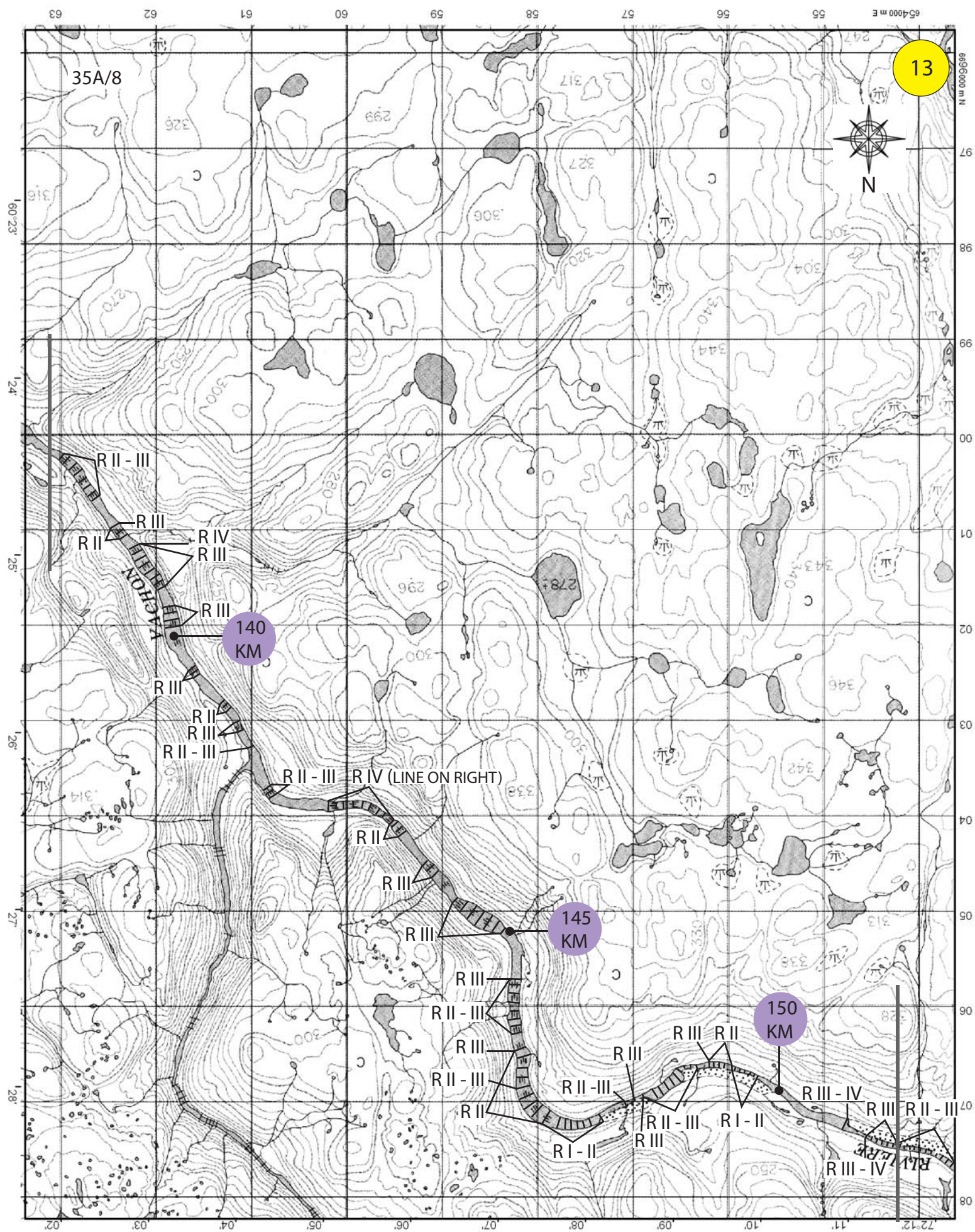


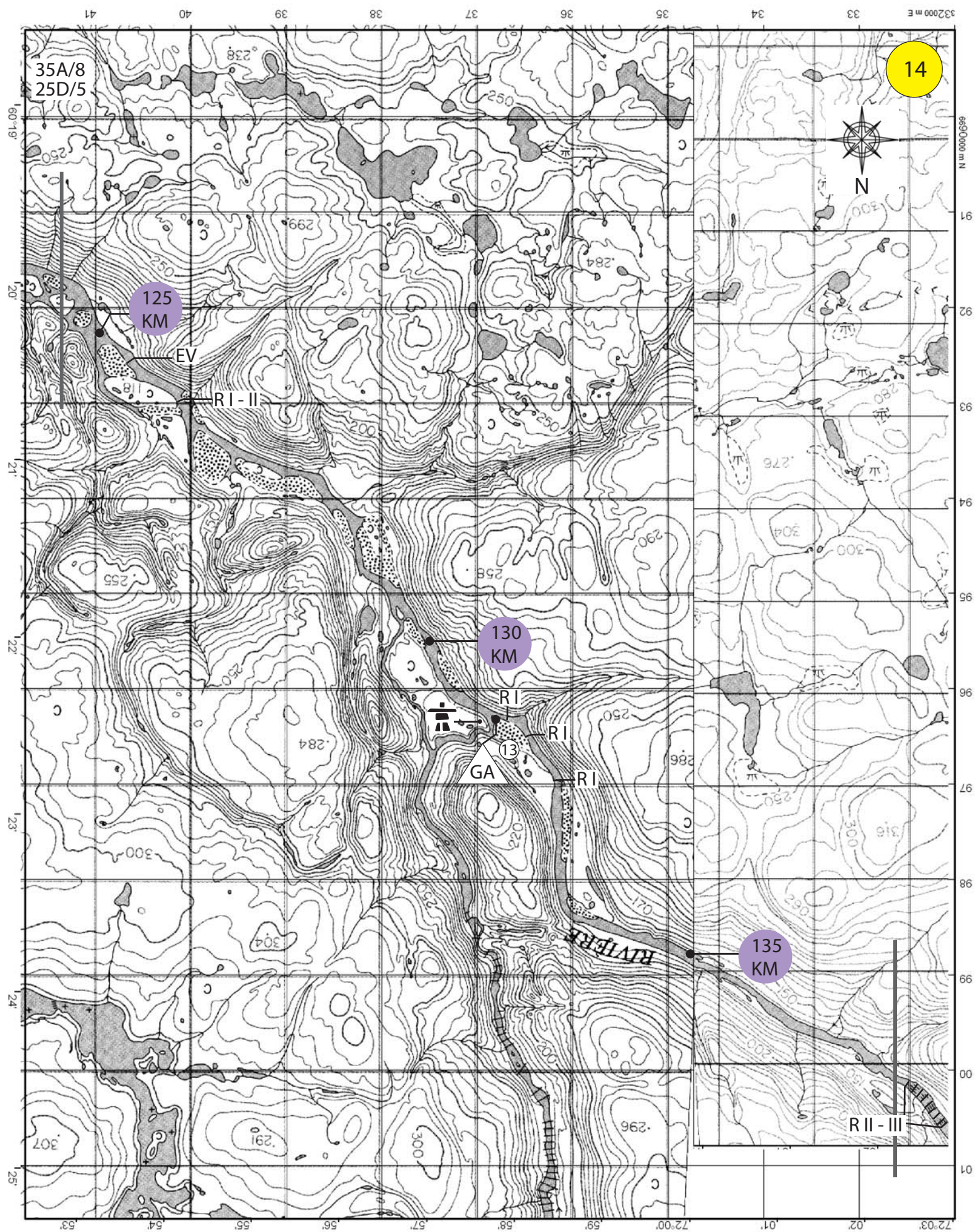


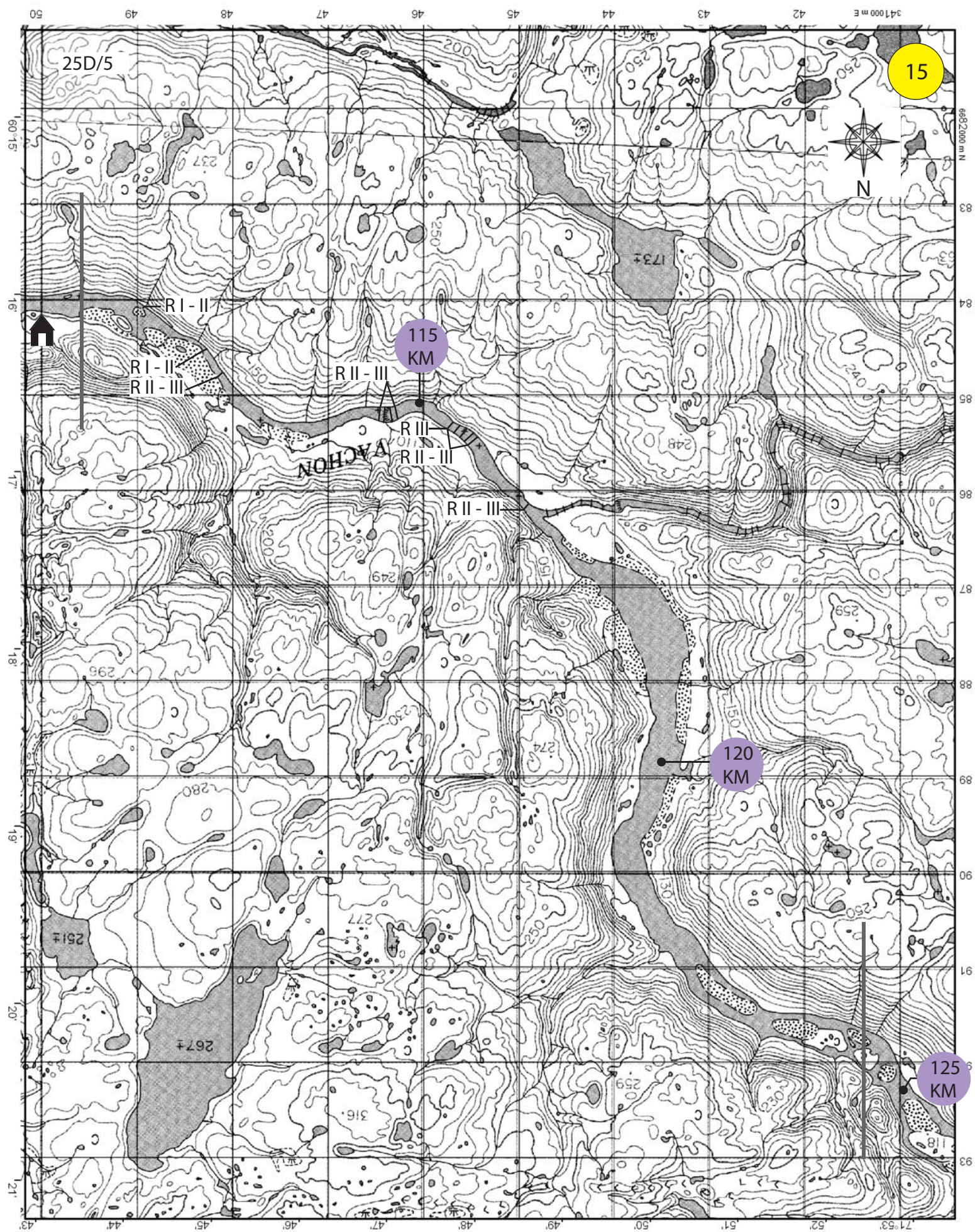


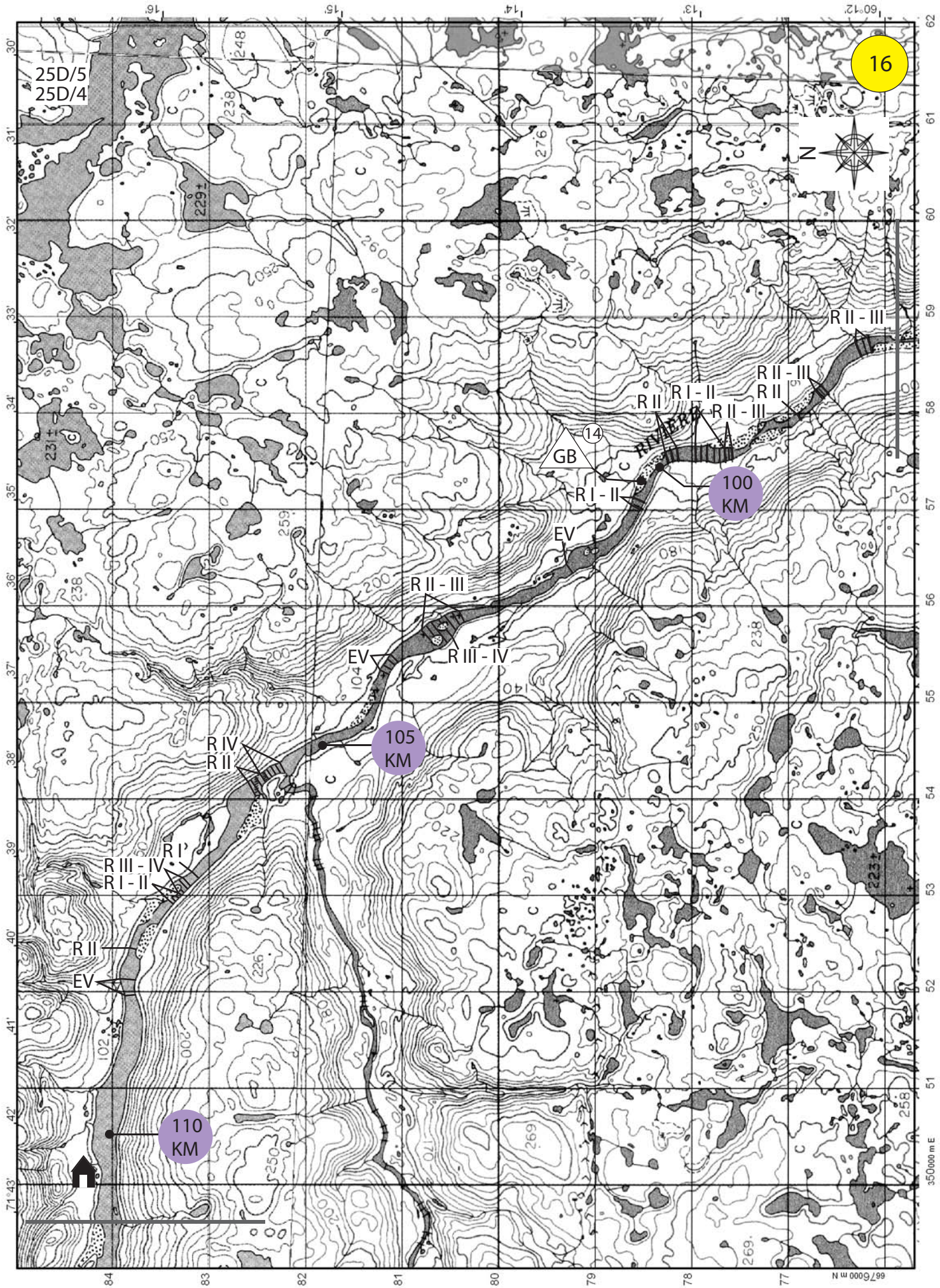


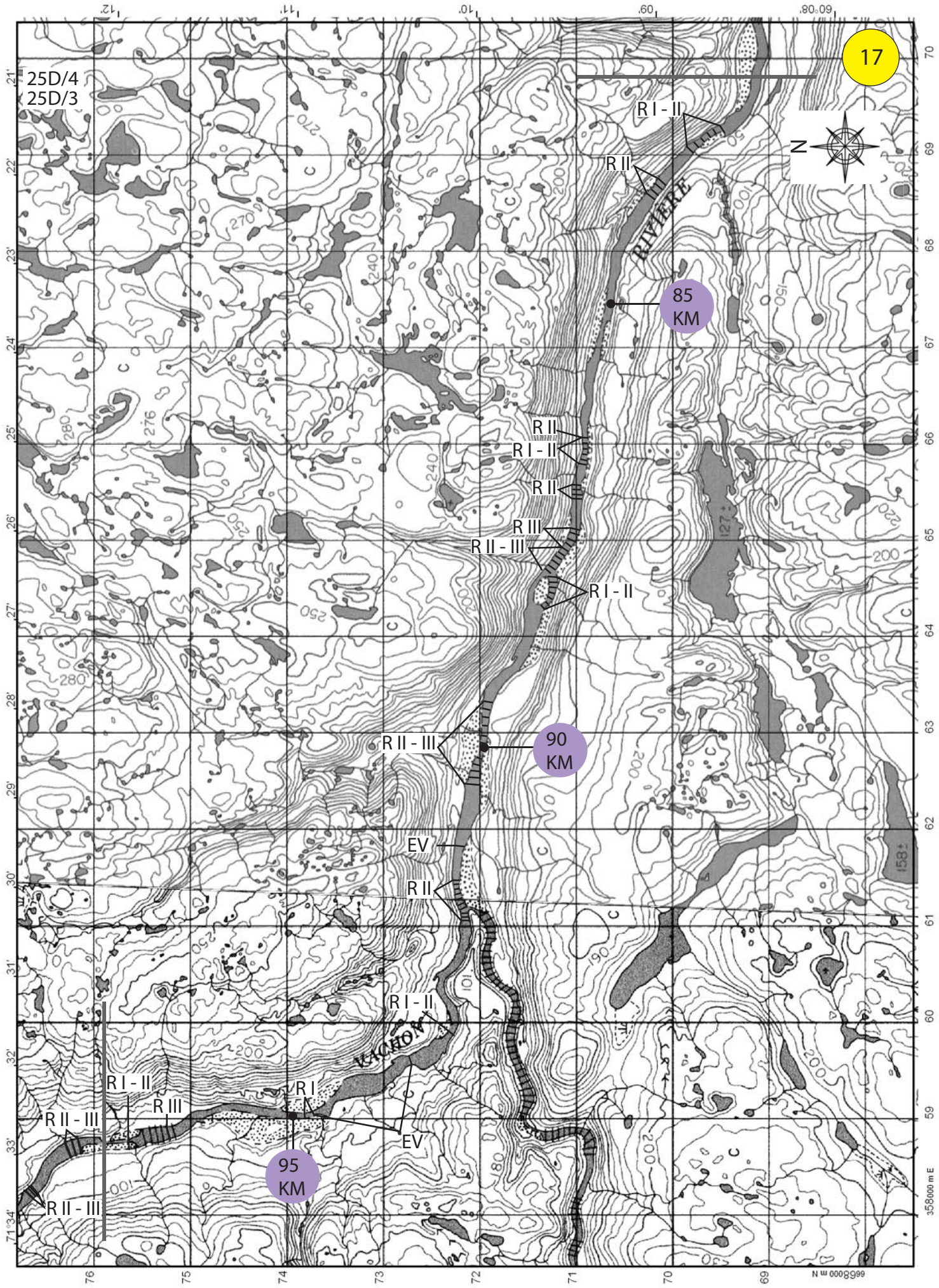




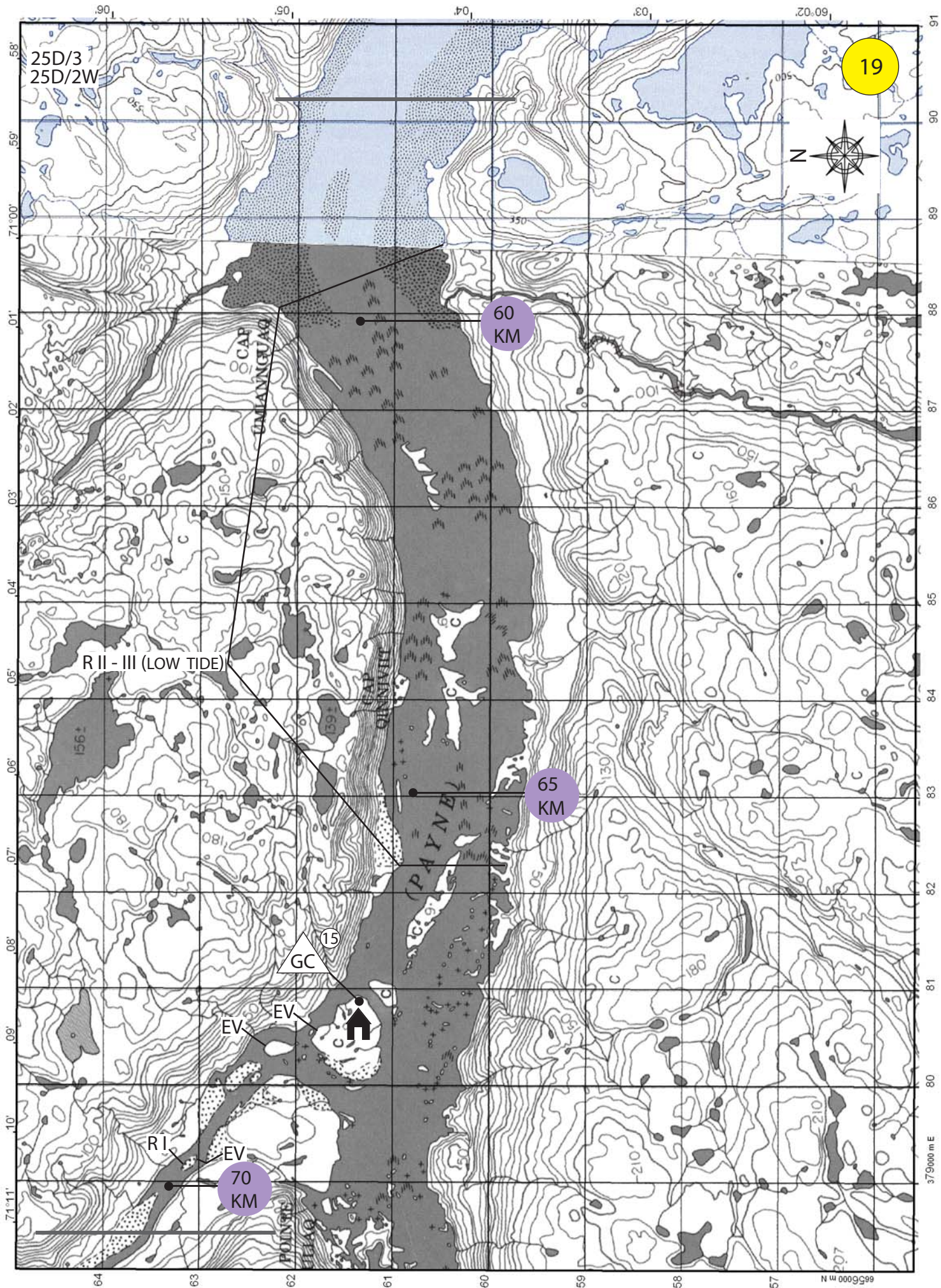


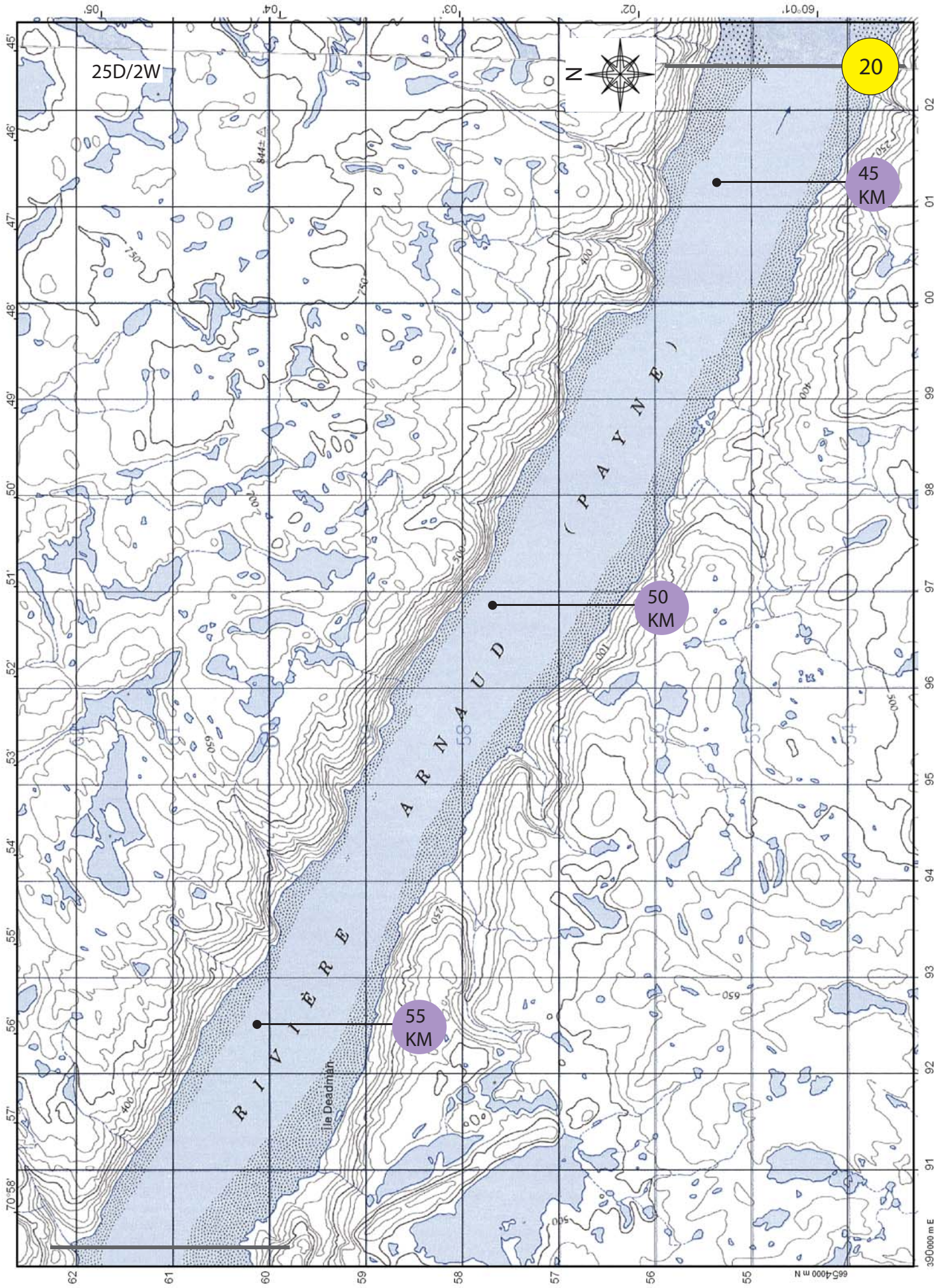












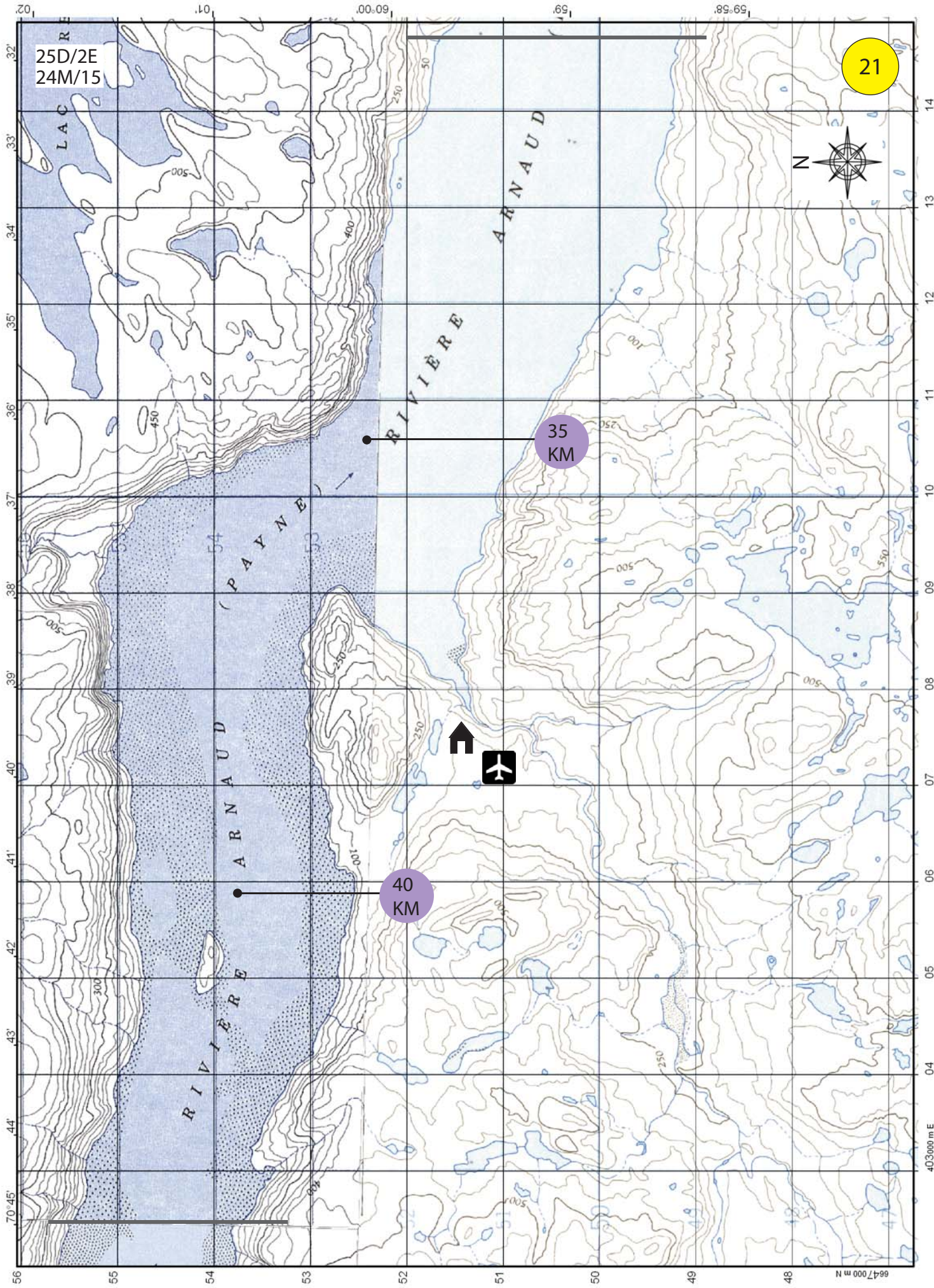
25D/2W

20

45  
KM

50  
KM

55  
KM

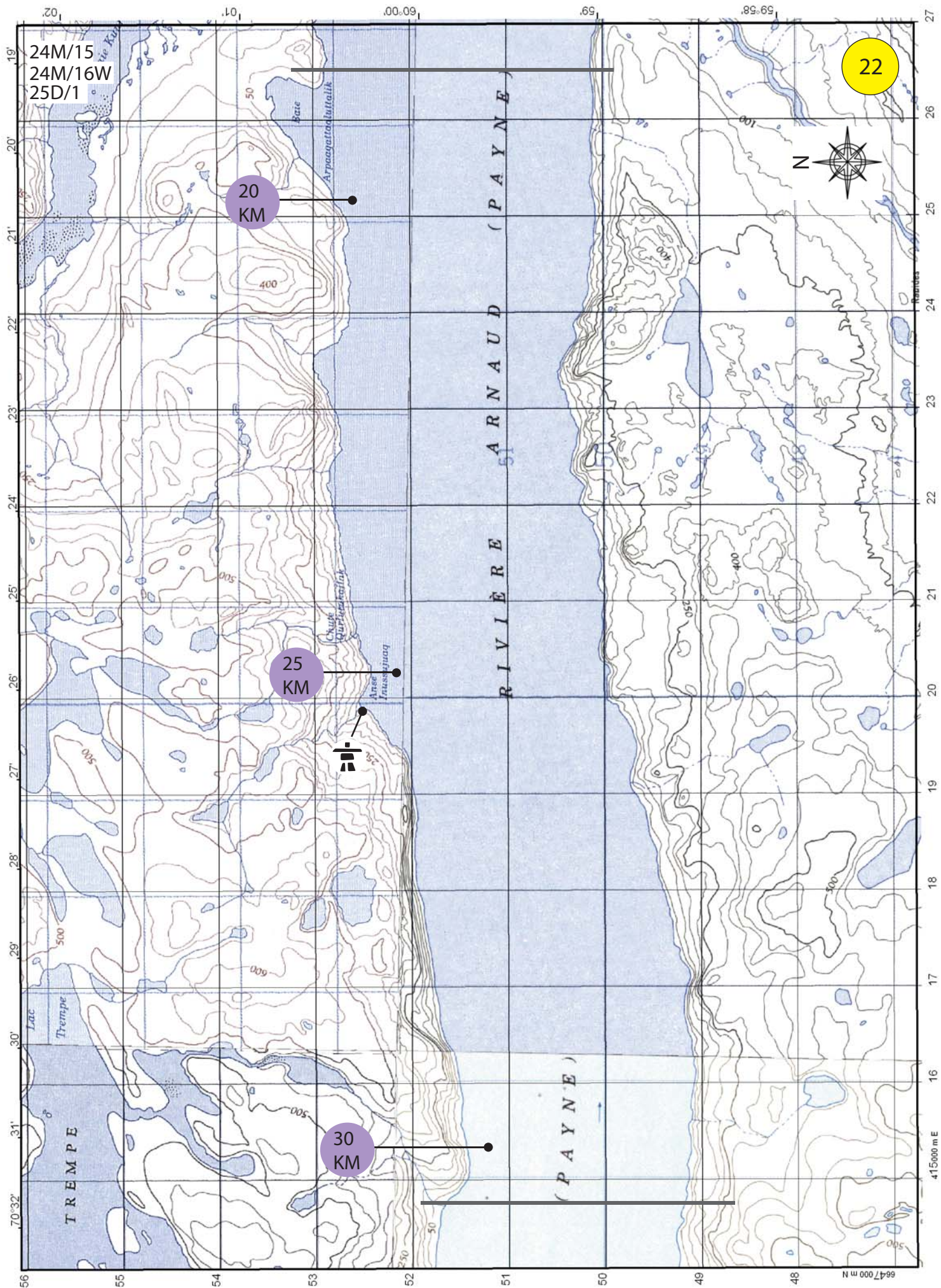


25D/2E  
24M/15

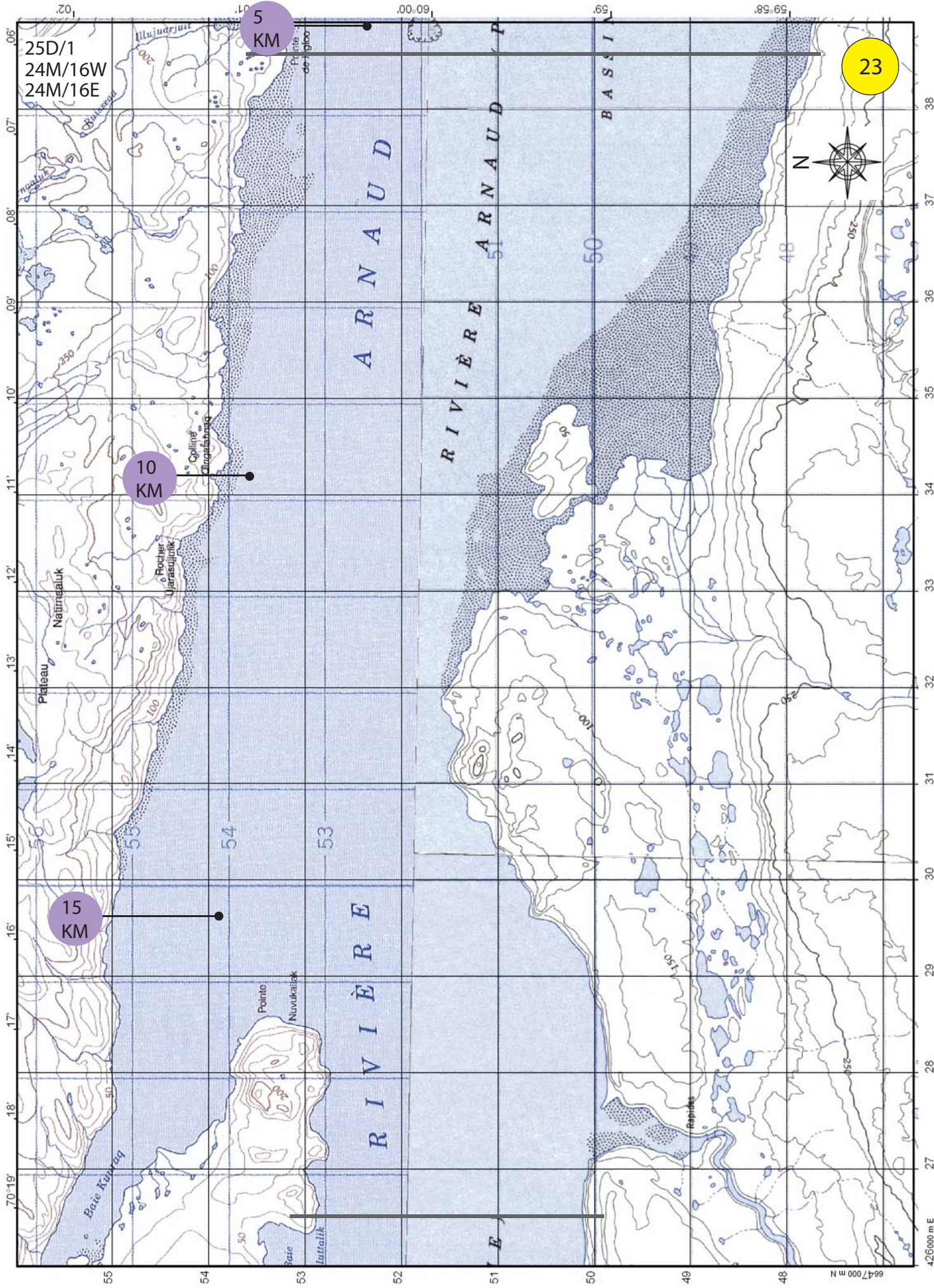
21

35  
KM

40  
KM



22



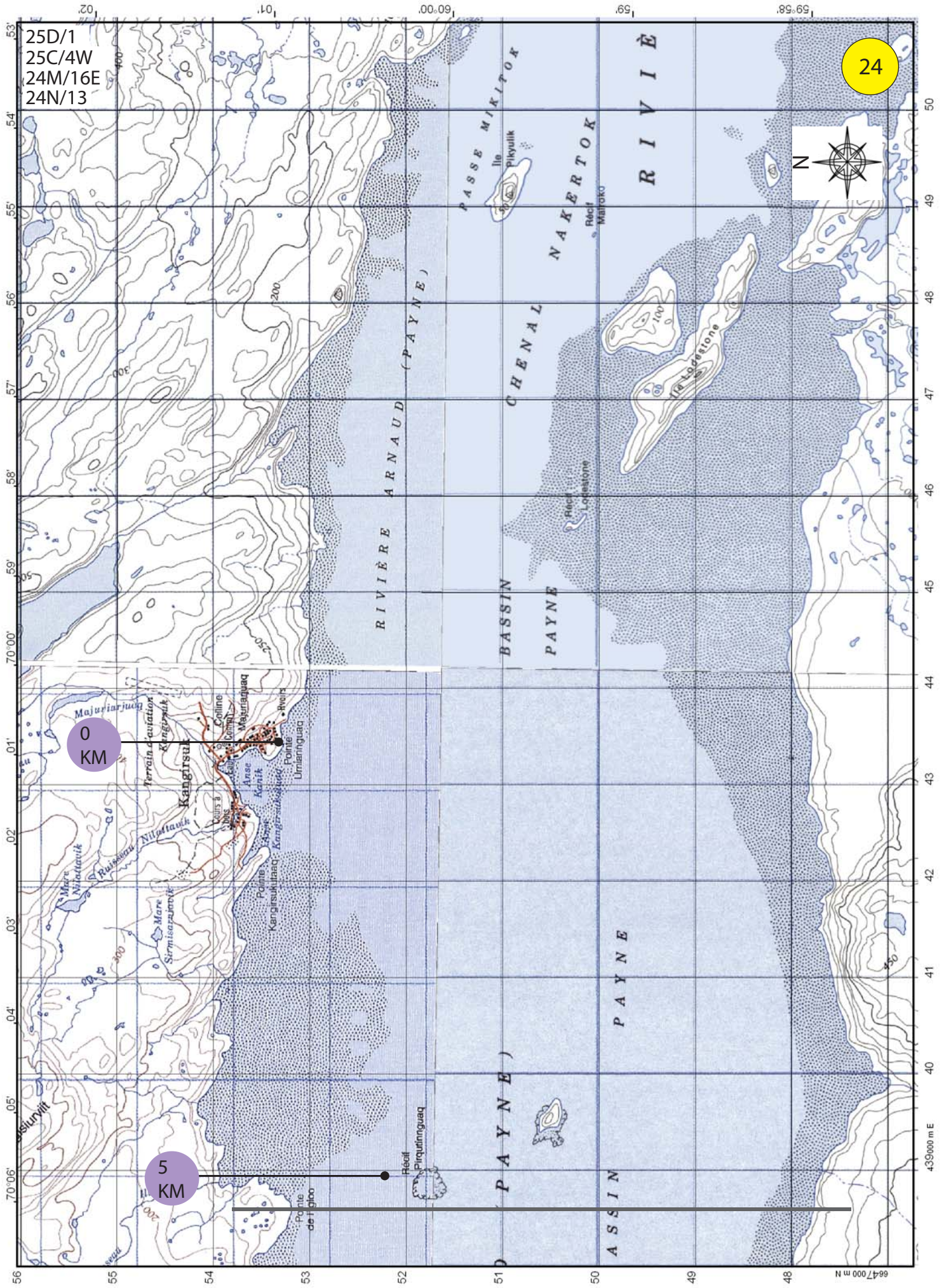
25D/1  
24M/16W  
24M/16E

23

10  
KM

15  
KM

5  
KM



## 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 left end 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 Kangirsuk.

**R II - III** The definition of each class of rapids is done in detail in the section River Ratings.



The red squares correspond to the enlargement of the red area painted in the river.



Twin-Otter possible landing area.



Cabin (often in poor condition).



Archaeological site (do not touch anything).



Campsite (size and quality).

The camping sites I used are marked on this map, but there are plenty of other good camping areas. Every triangle indicates camp sites where I stayed and inside the small circle, which day it was. Inside the triangle, the first number indicates the number of tents this site can accommodate (« G » means more than 5 tents) and the letter gives an indication of the site quality.

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| A | Excellent |
| B | Very good |
| C | Good      |
| D | Poor      |

Scale 1: 50 000 or 1 centimetre = 500 meters

# 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 classes (2.5).

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

**Note :** On the Vachon river, RII-III means the middle of the rapid is closer to RIII but if you can handle your boat in order to stay near the shore, the difficulty is closer to RII. Since most of the rapids ends with a good drop, that means the end of almost every RII-III is either RII/III or 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 rubbing your boat against every rock.