

Introduction

Victoria Island (part of Western Canada's High Arctic island archipelago) is Canada's third-largest island, divided by an administrative line between the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

The Kuujjua River ("big river" in Inuktitut) originates in the center of Victoria Island and flows about 350 km into Minto Inlet on the island's west side. Beginning as a shallow stream, the river flows smoothly across rolling tundra, gaining speed and volume as it drops through rugged landscape, cutting canyons through basalt cliffs.

Words of Caution

These maps were created based on notes taken during our canoe trip in July 2012 (our trip report is available at <http://sites.google.com/site/landtrips/Trips/kuujjua2012>). 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 14 - August 1, 2012. We started at Lake Hope on the East branch of the river, still in Nunavut. For completeness, I provide also unmarked maps of the Northern branch, which should have slightly more water, but was beyond the range of the chartered Beaver we used for access. There is also a Southern branch of the river, which has been "paddled" once before (as far as we know), but it is reported to be extremely shallow and difficult to access.

All of our rapid markings and ratings are subject to the water levels we had at that time. High water marks were evident all along the river, alerting us to the fact that this river would be extremely different and dangerous in high water. Some shore debris was on such high ground that we suspect the possibility of ice jams creating sudden, massive flash floods. This is treeless country & campsites abound, so there was no need to mark them on the maps. The River (and the whole area) is much shallower and there is much less precipitation and water drainage in general (than in Northern Quebec, where we are used to wetter conditions). We experienced a lot of walking and dragging - especially during the first 3 days, but also towards the end of the journey, where aerial photographs were a huge help in navigating the shallow lakes successfully.

Wildlife is abundant on the Kuujjua. With every turn of the river, you are likely to see muskox, arctic wolves, arctic foxes, snowy owls, arctic hares, and caribou. Dozens of bird species nest, from the tiny Lapland longspur to sandhill cranes, arctic loons, Sabine's gulls, white-fronted geese and tundra swans. Fishing is very good.

The sun never sets during the arctic summer, but be careful to avoid paddling directly into the low sun late in the day (the Kuujjua flows generally west) - the reflection on the water's surface will impair your vision and make rapid-reading quite difficult. Hiking is excellent. There are also many Palaeoeskimo and Copper Inuit historic sites along the river.

We did not paddle from the outlet of the Kuujjua at Minto Inlet to Ulukhaktok so our maps do not cover this section. Being short of time, we pre-arranged the safer, speedier option of being picked up by motorboat by Pat Ekpakohak (867-396-4541). It is possible to paddle the arctic ocean, however ideal wind and weather conditions would be essential to a safe passage, as the shoreline, especially for the 1st day or two, consists of steep cliffs where safe landing spots are infrequent.

To contact the author of these maps, see the bottom of the page at <http://sites.google.com/site/landtrips/>

Credits

Author

Lester Kovac, 2011

Base Topographic Maps

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Map work/Text

Lester Kovac, 2011

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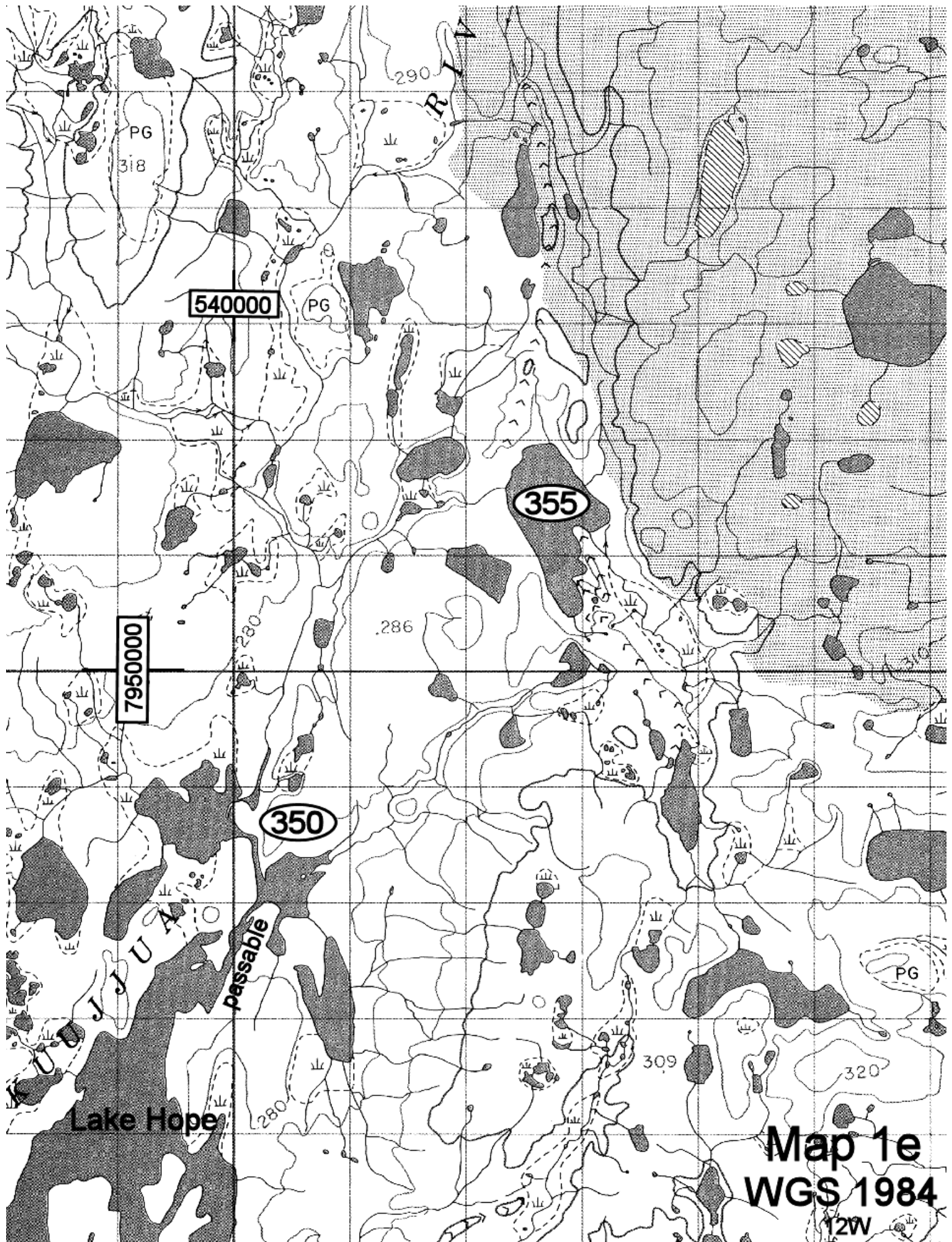
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Contact

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540000

7950000

350

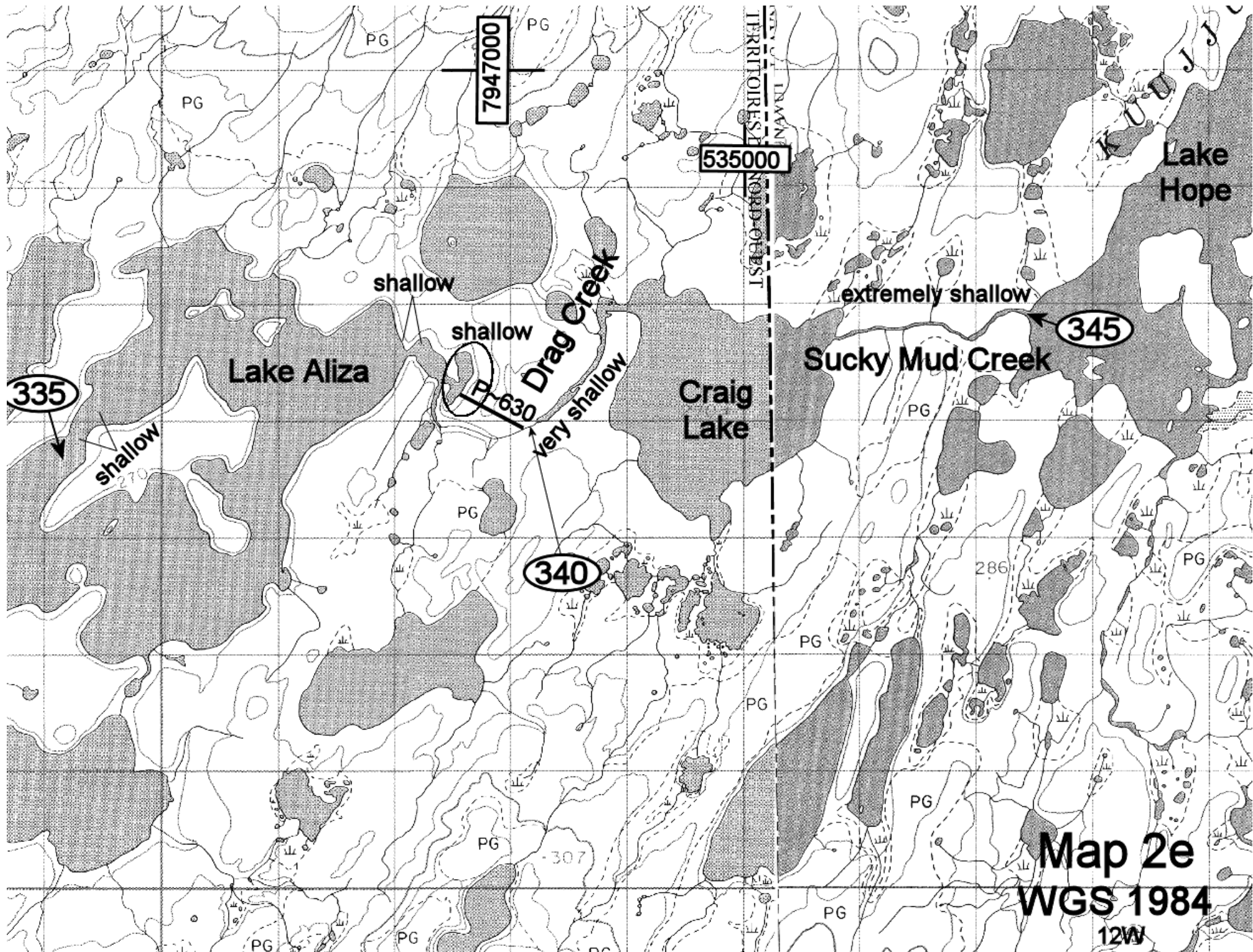
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Lake Hope

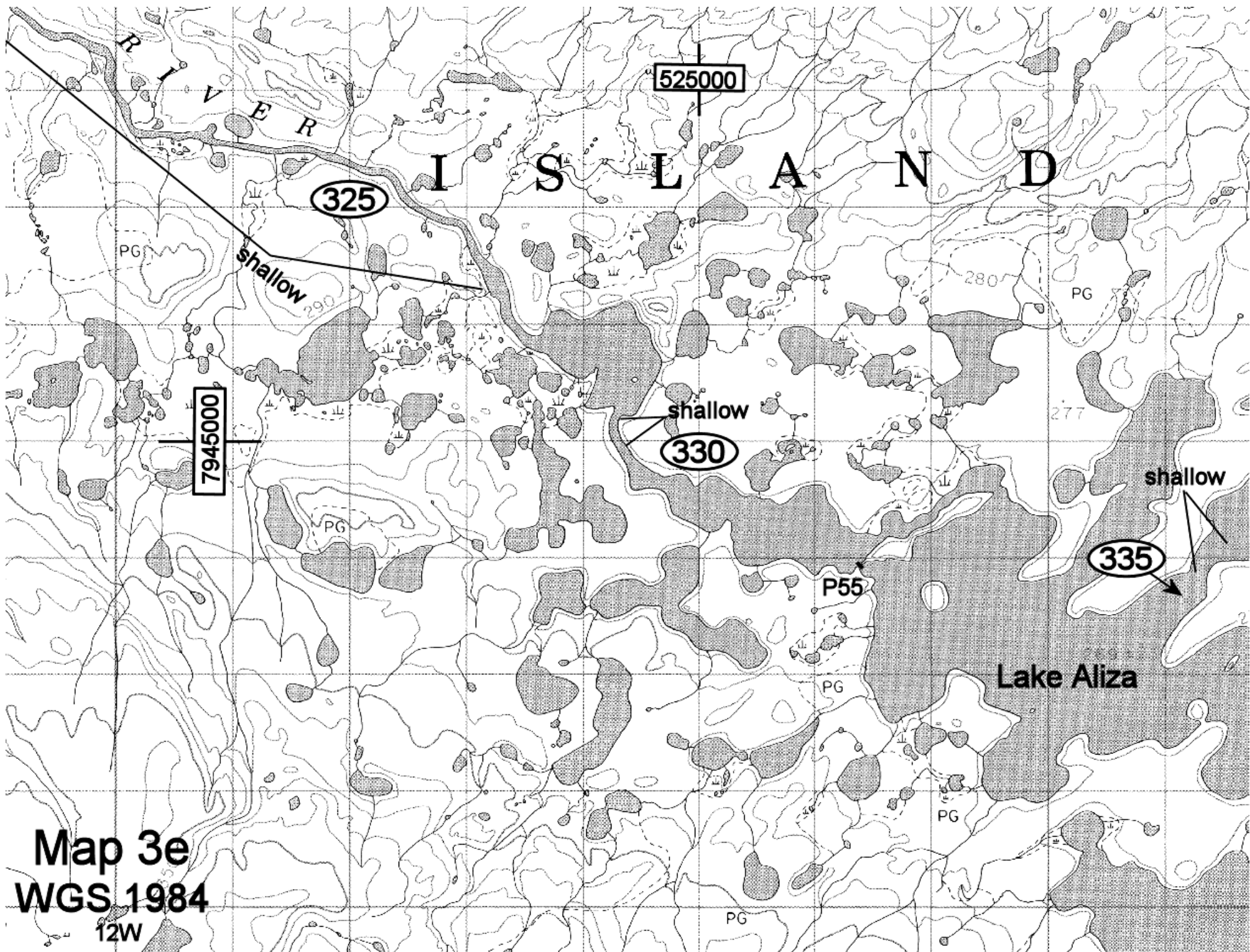
passable

J U A

Map 1e
WGS 1984
12W



Map 2e
WGS 1984
12W



Map 4e WGS 1984

PG 12W

7950000

315

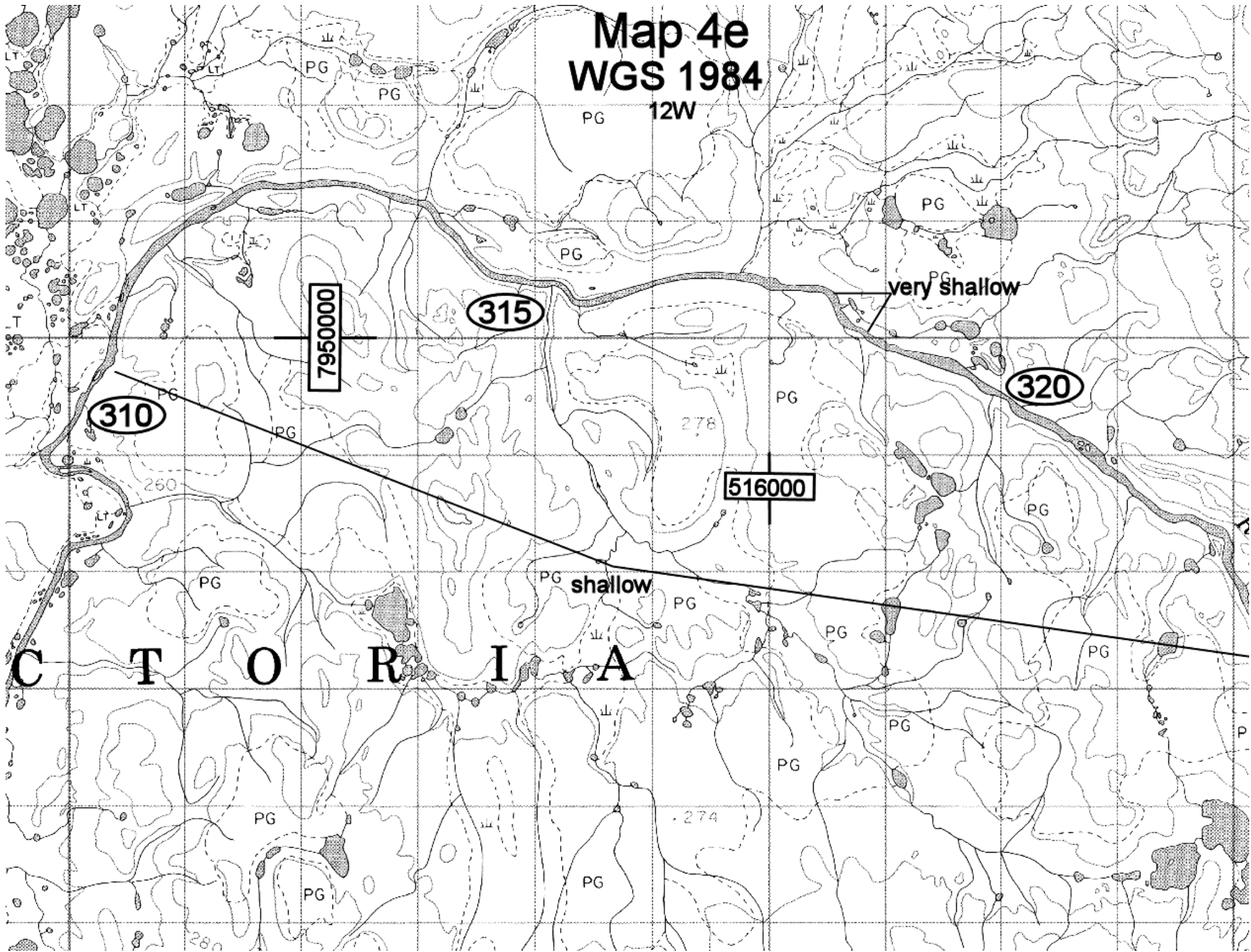
very shallow

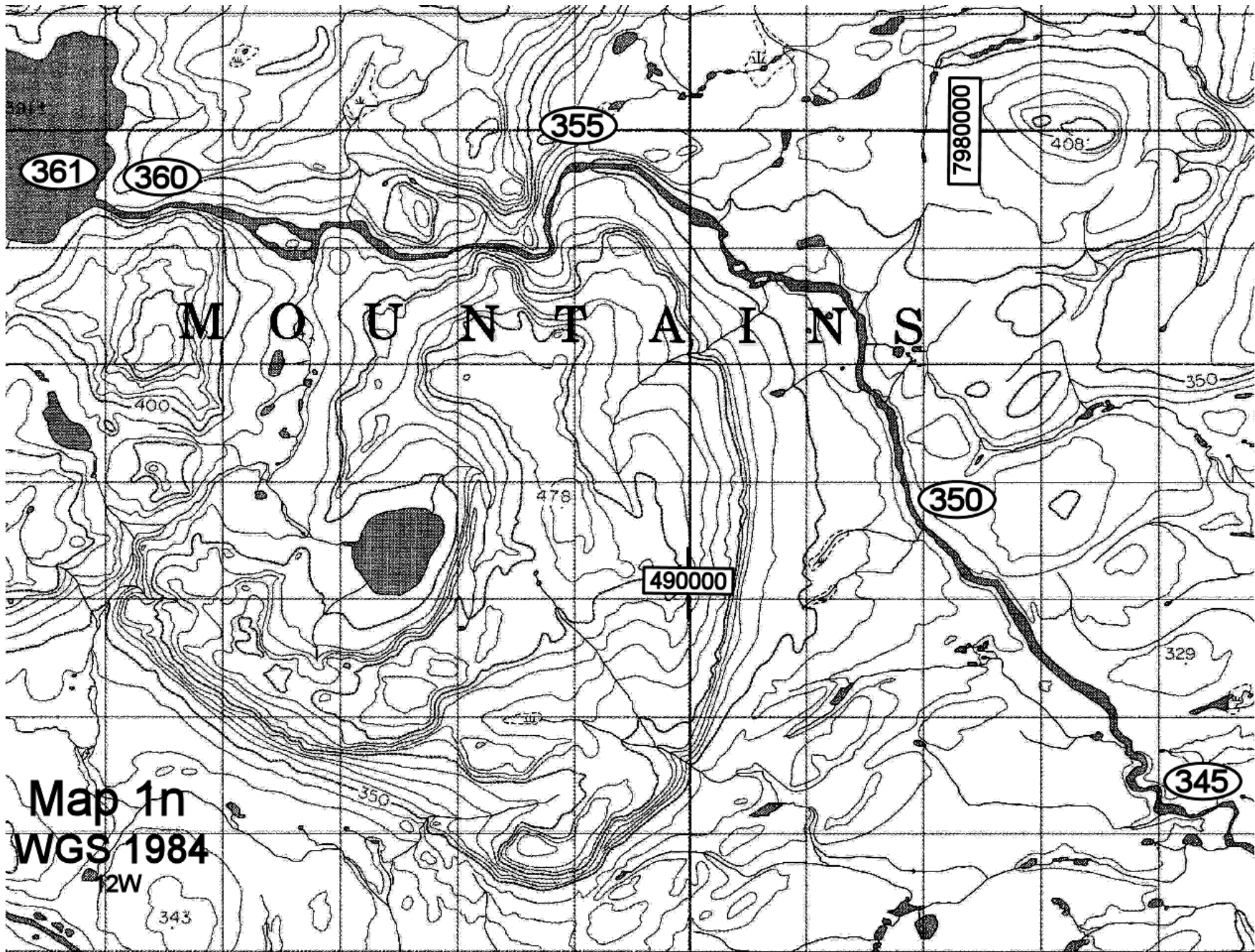
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516000

shallow

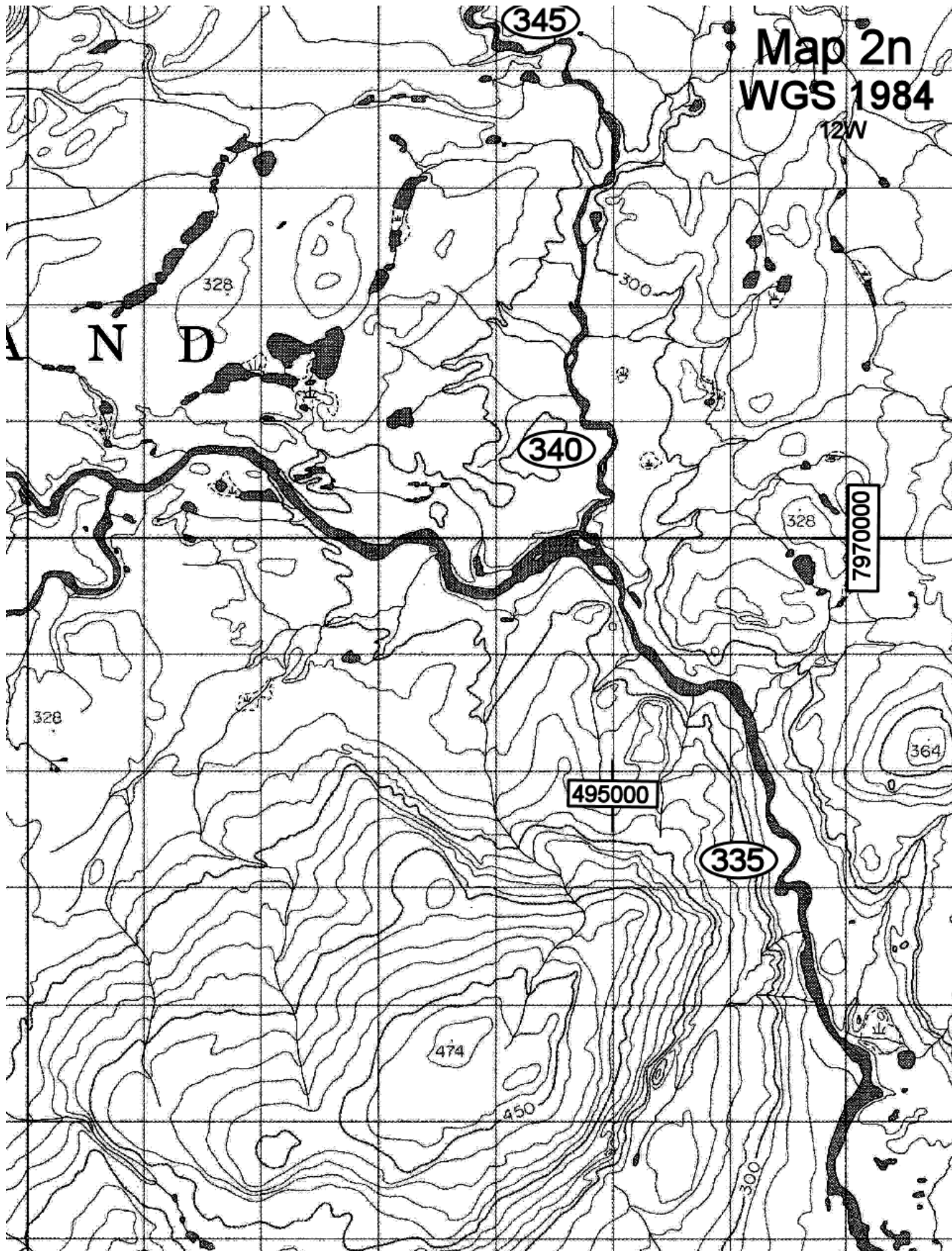
C T O R I A





Map 2n
WGS 1984

12W



Map 3n
WGS 1984
12W

502000

330

3770

462

7960000

325

280

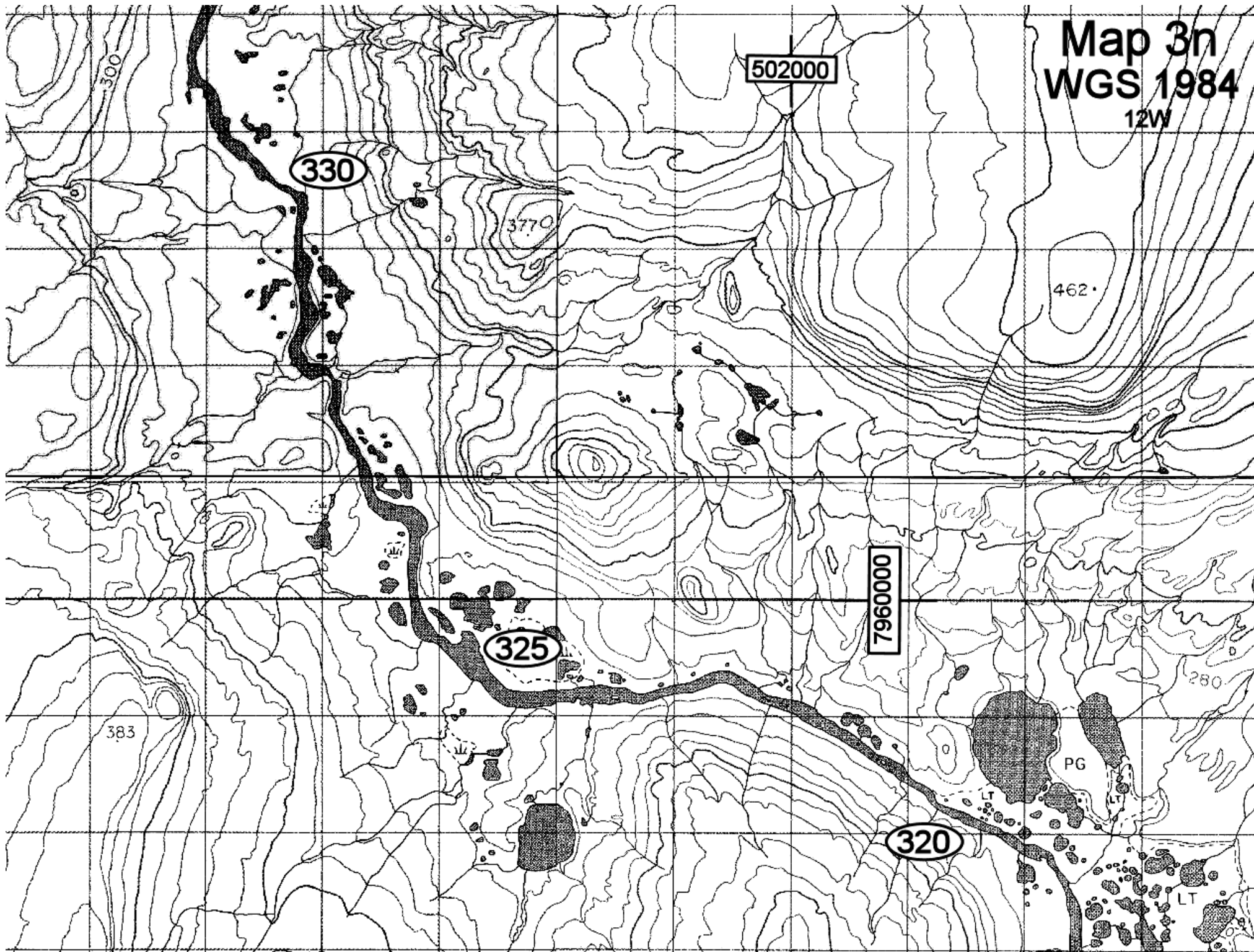
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PG

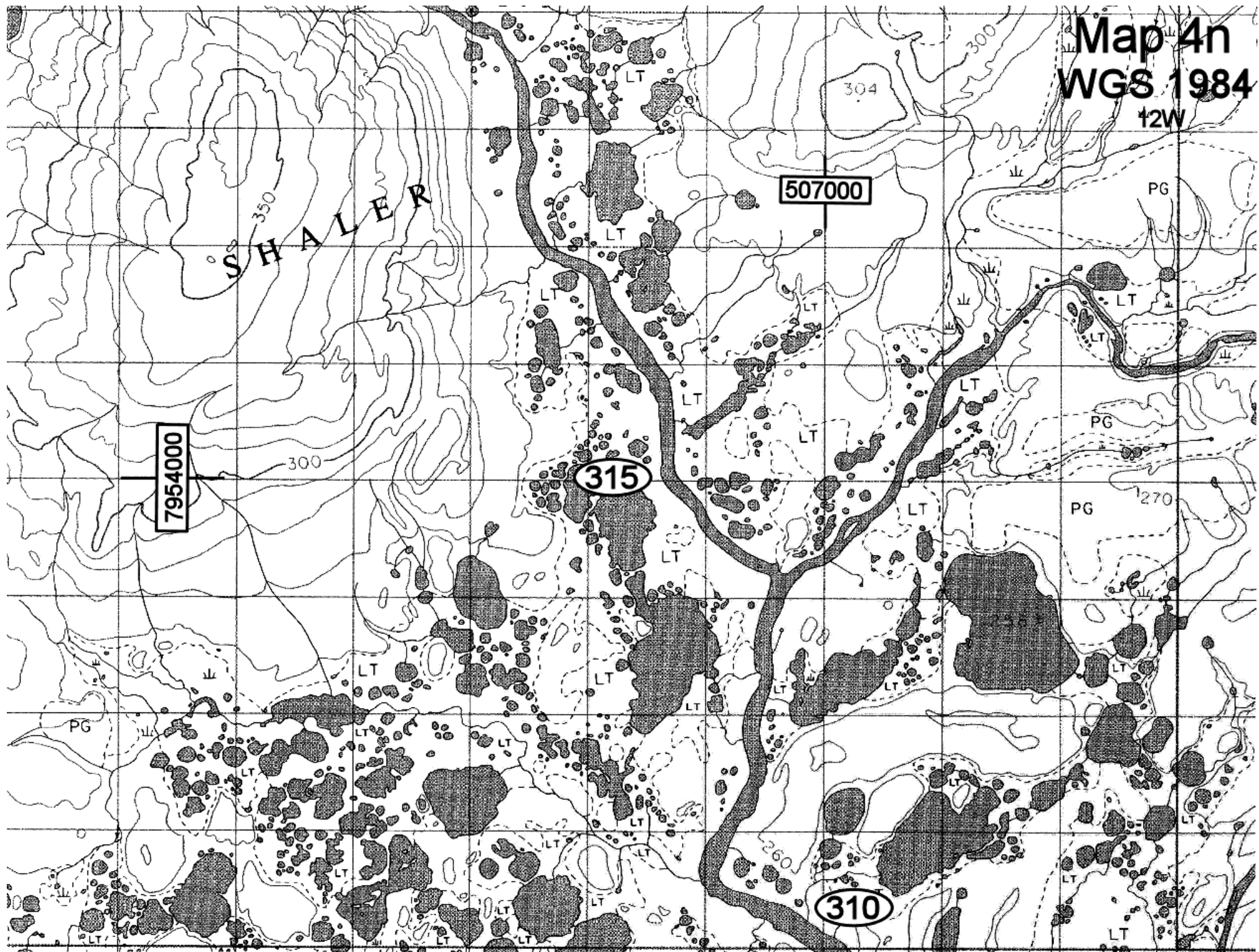
LT

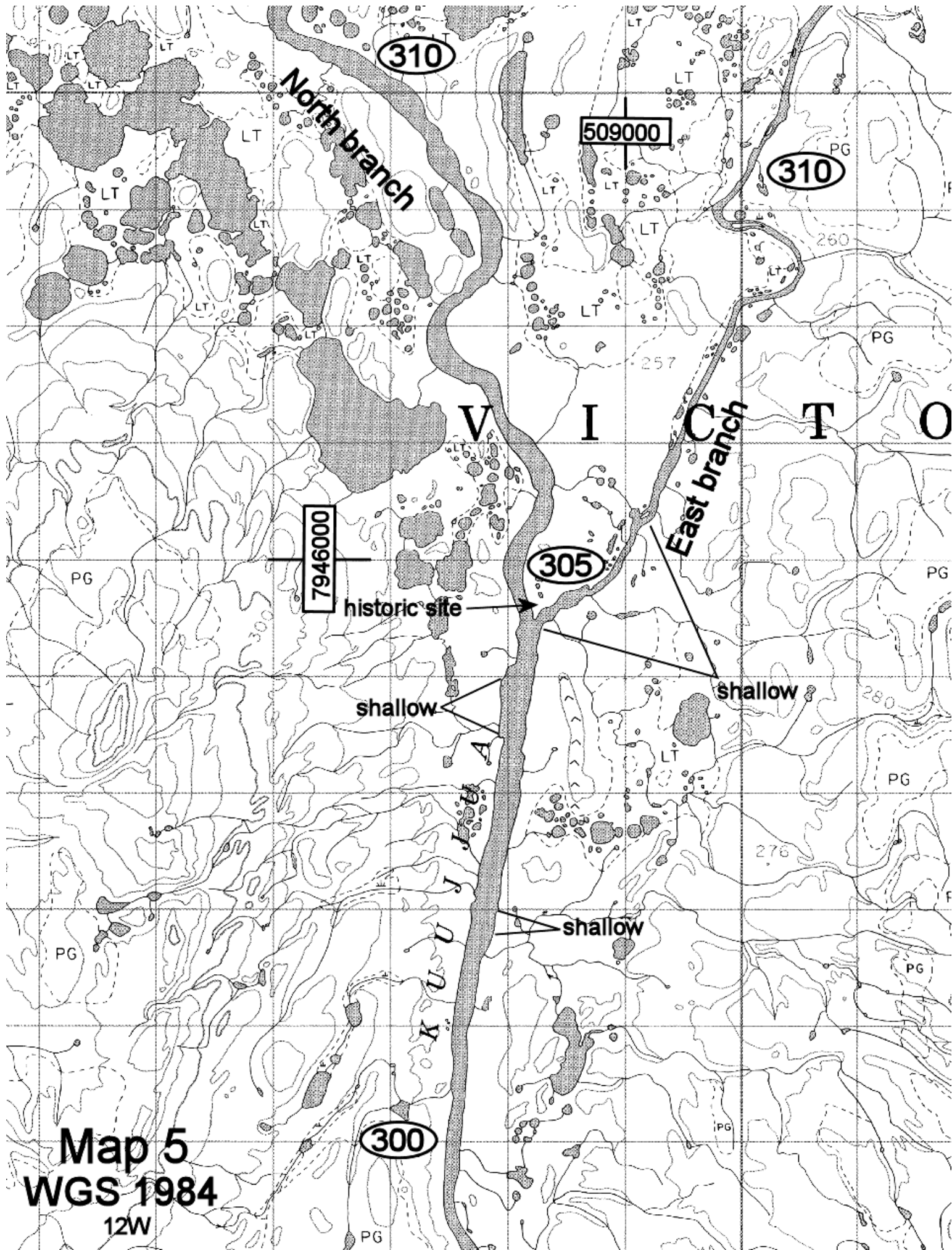
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LT

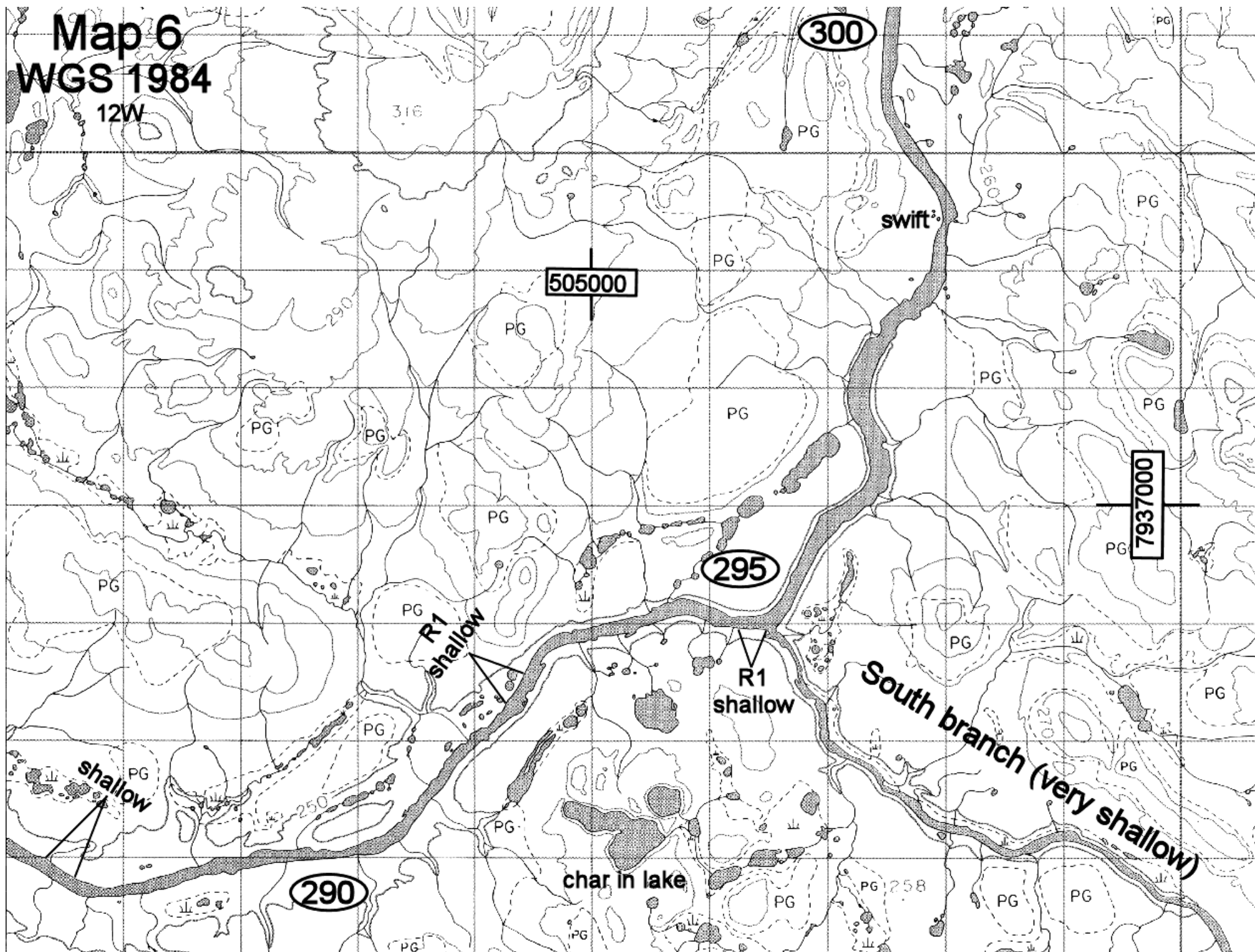


Map 4n
WGS 1984
12W

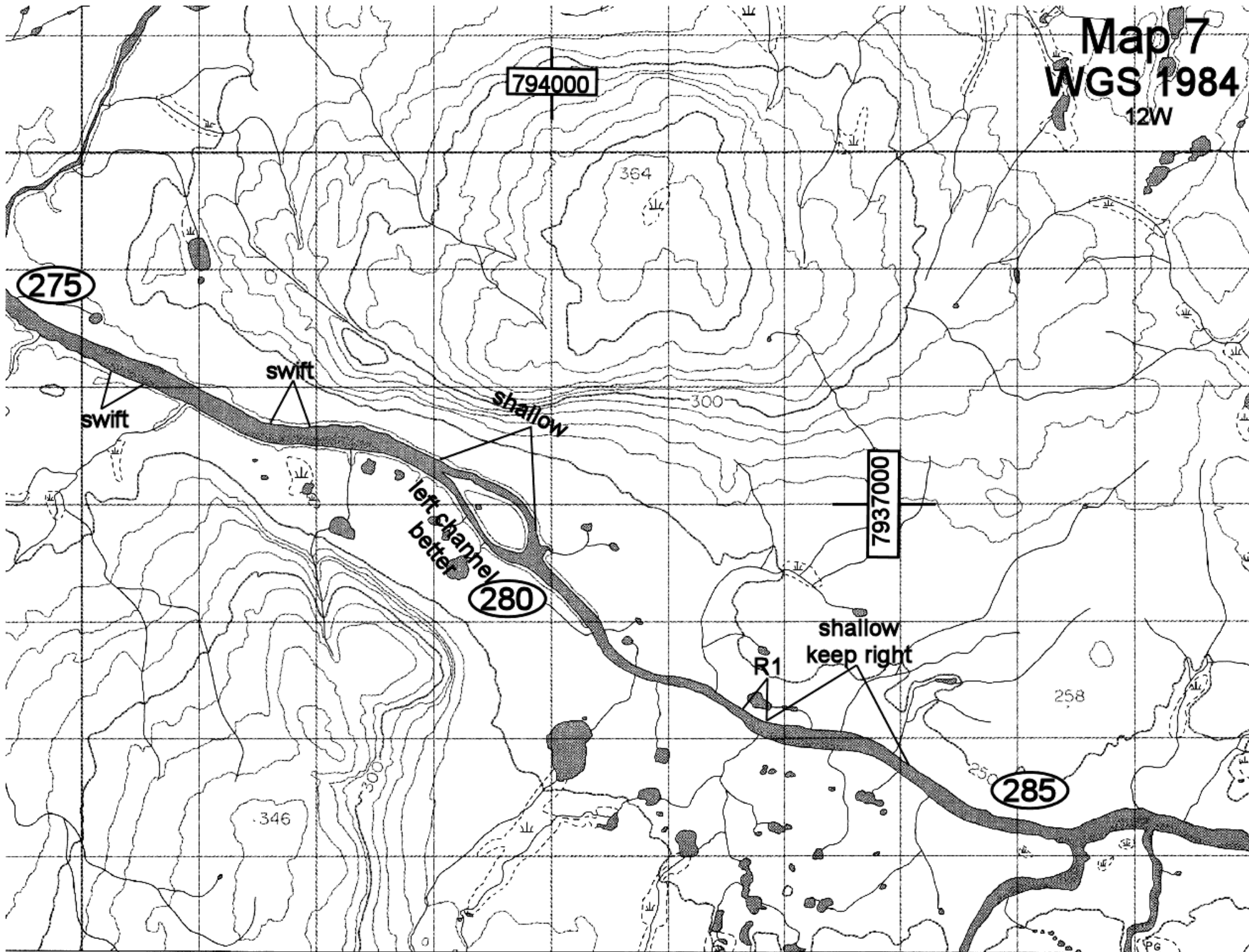


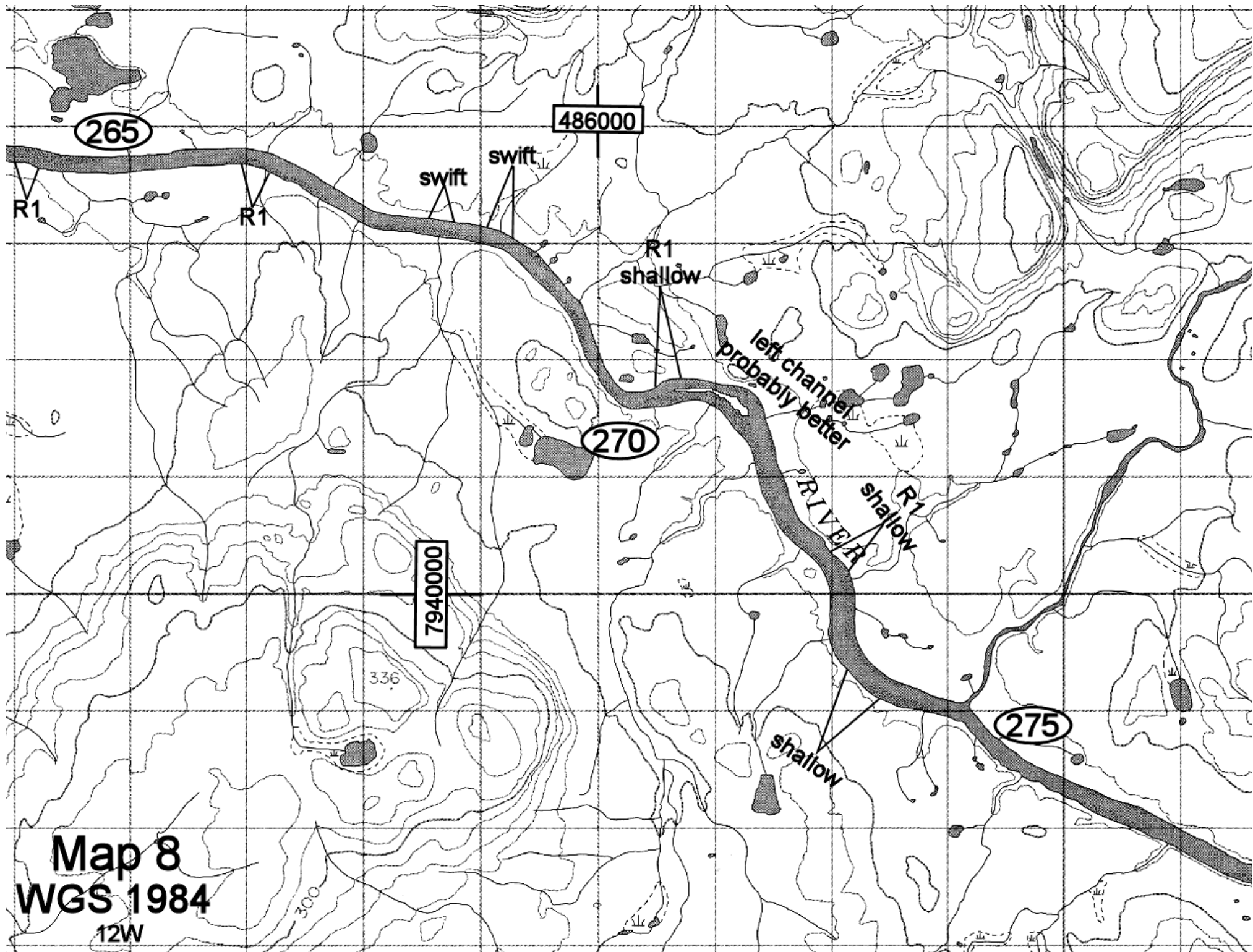


Map 6
WGS 1984
12W



Map 7
WGS 1984
12W





Map 9
WGS 1984
12W

V I C T O R I A

← **Messa**

R1

swift

KUUJJUA

250

swift

(255)

R1

swift

(260)

swift

swift

R1

swift

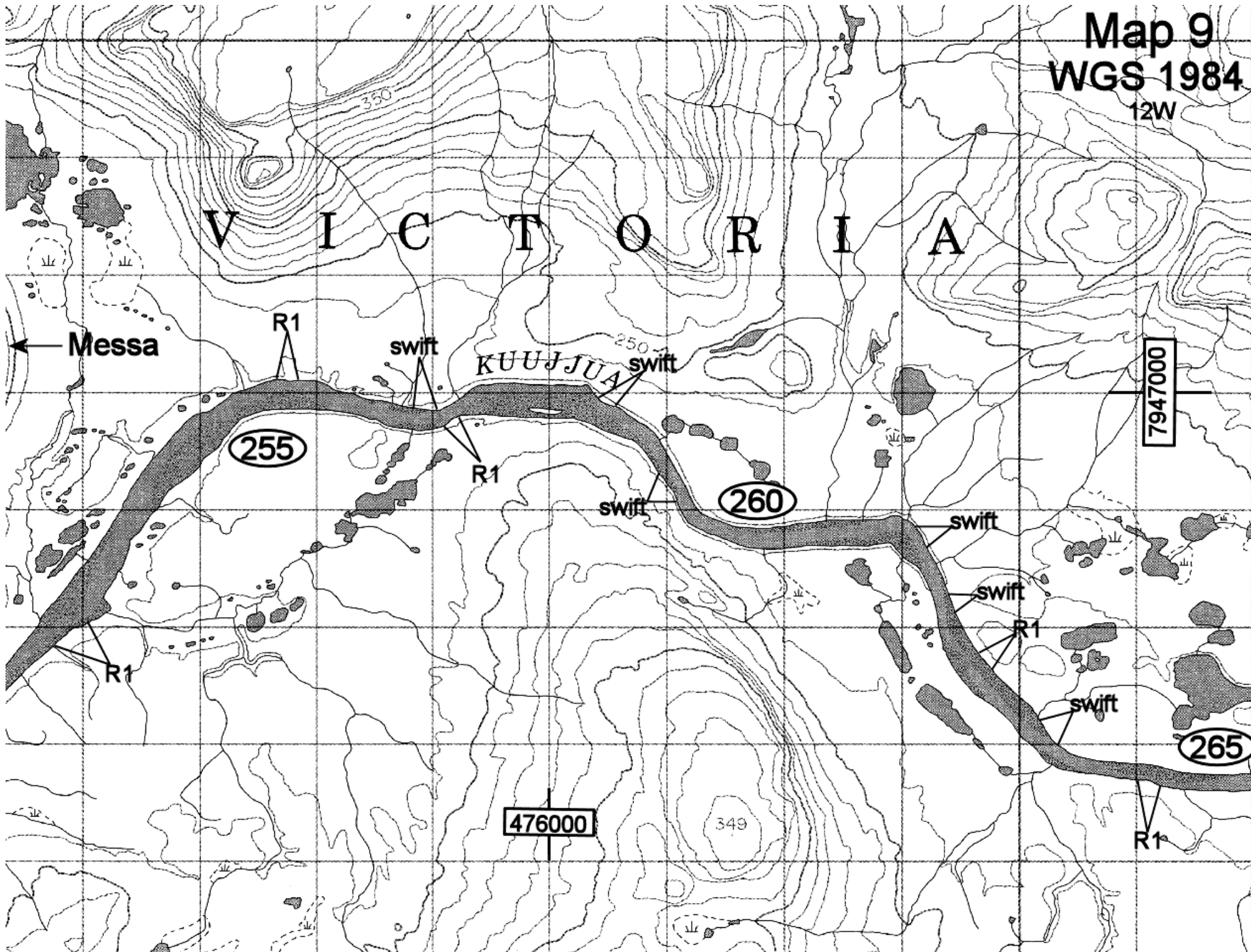
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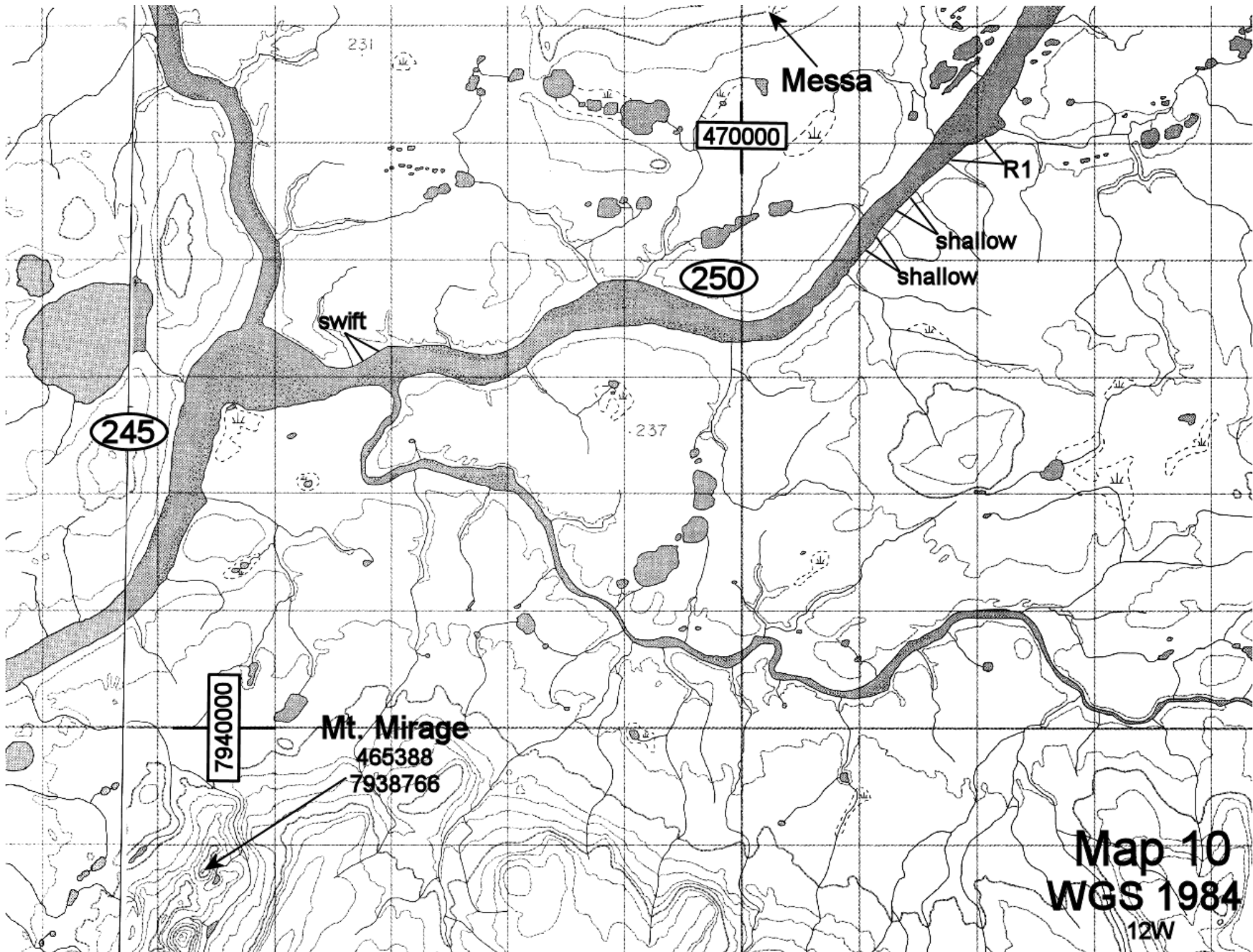
R1

476000

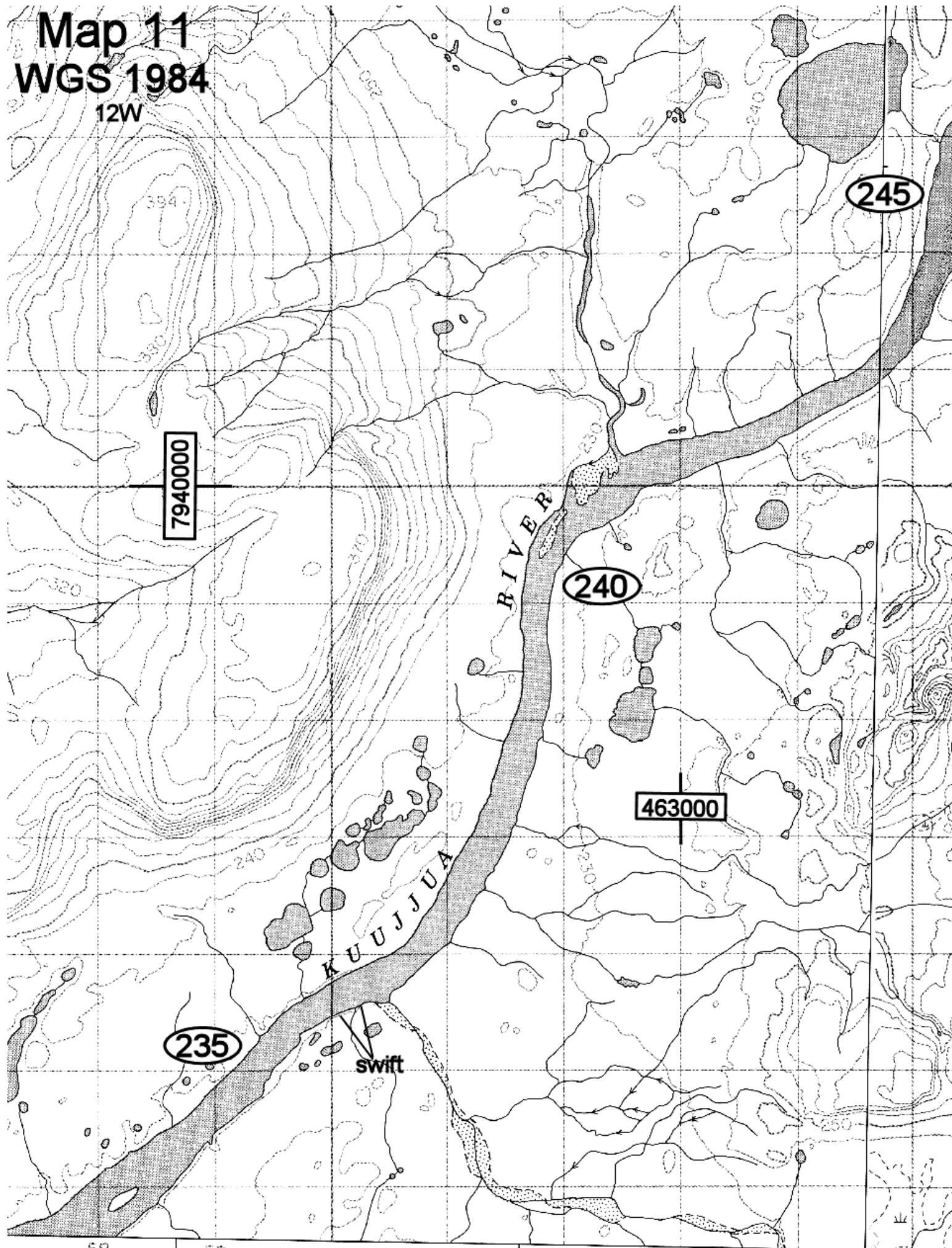
349

7947000





Map 11
WGS 1984
12W



Map 12
WGS 1984
12W

White Mountain

LAKE MOUNTAINS

historic
site

454922
7933208

swift

swift

(230)

(225)

RIVER

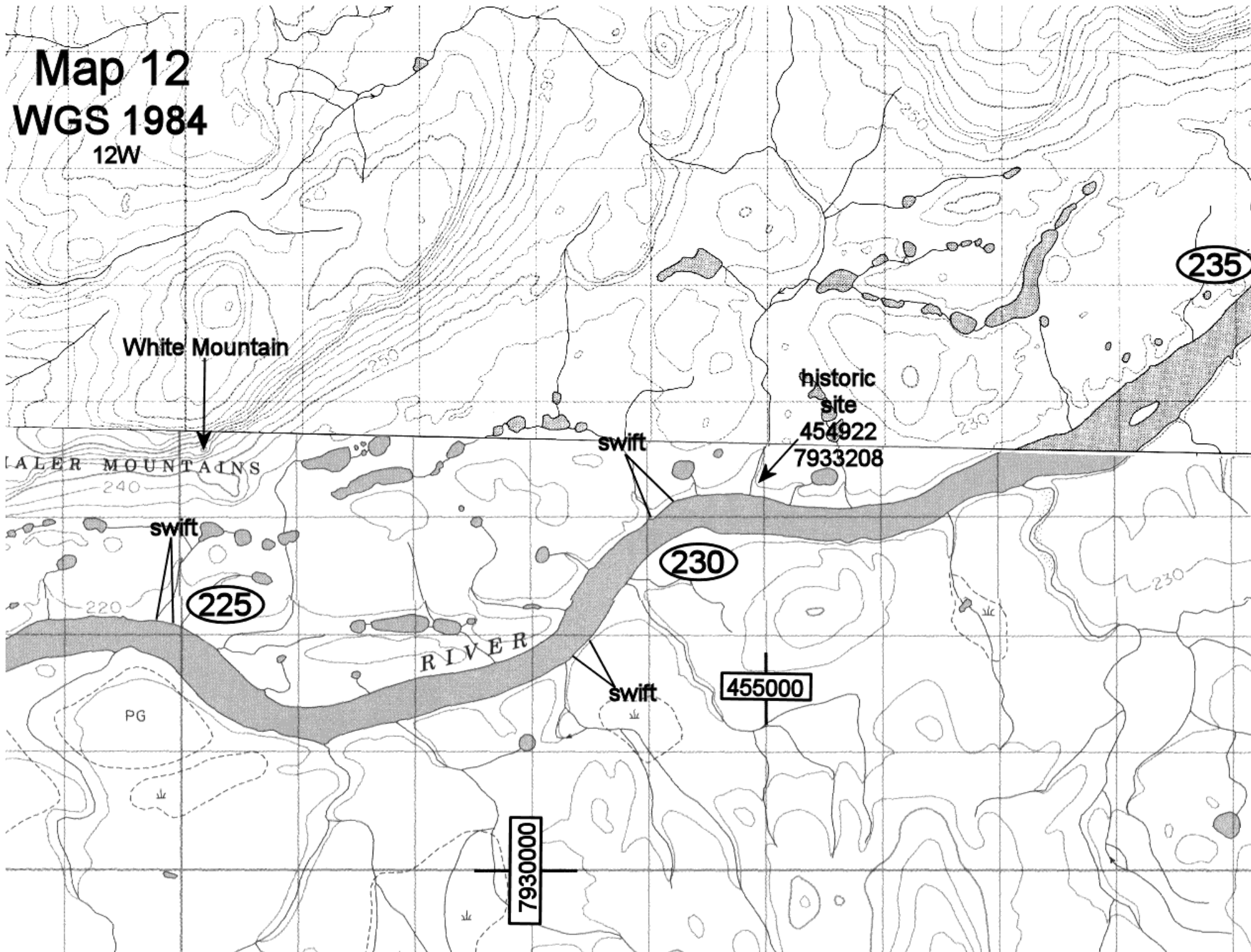
swift

455000

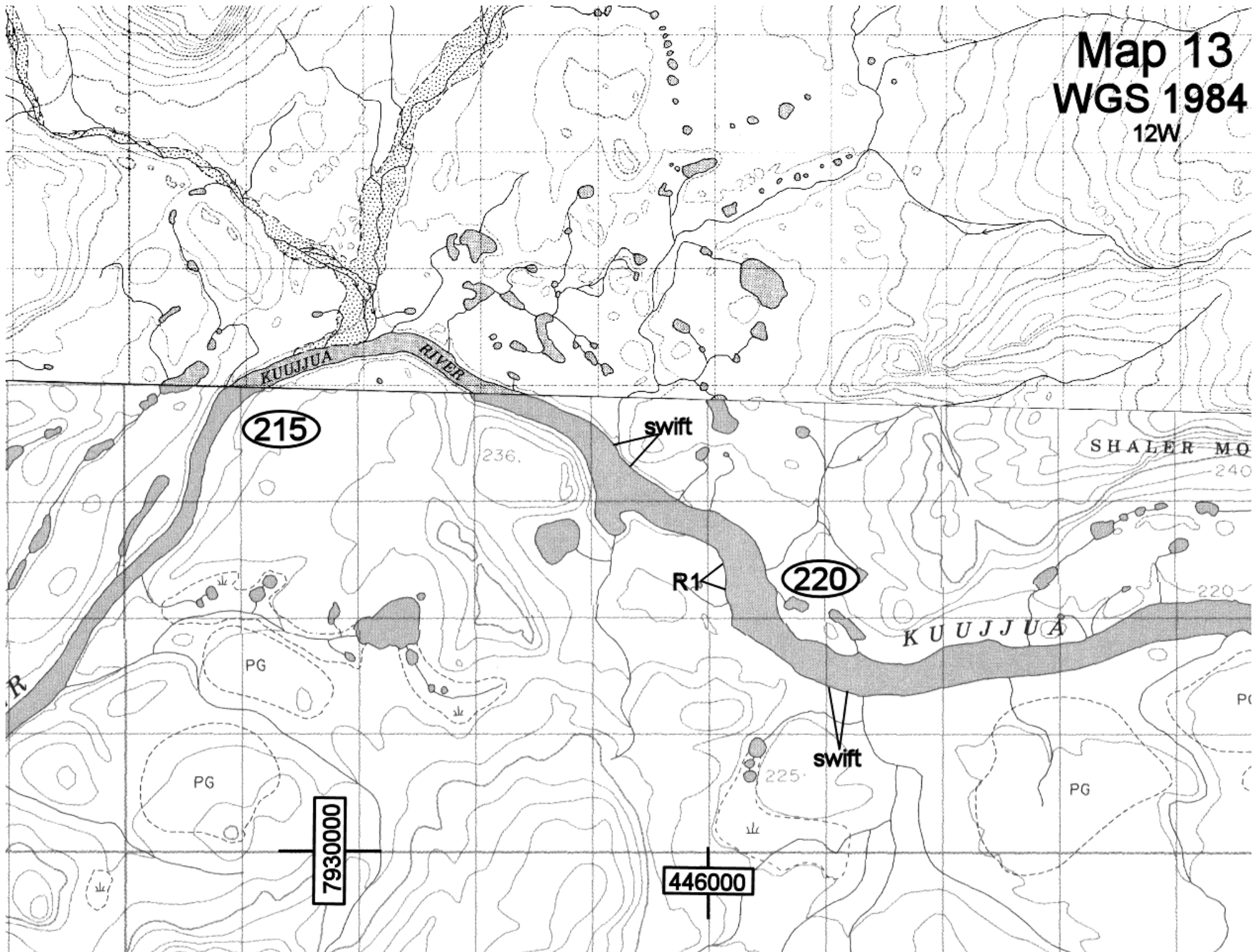
7930000

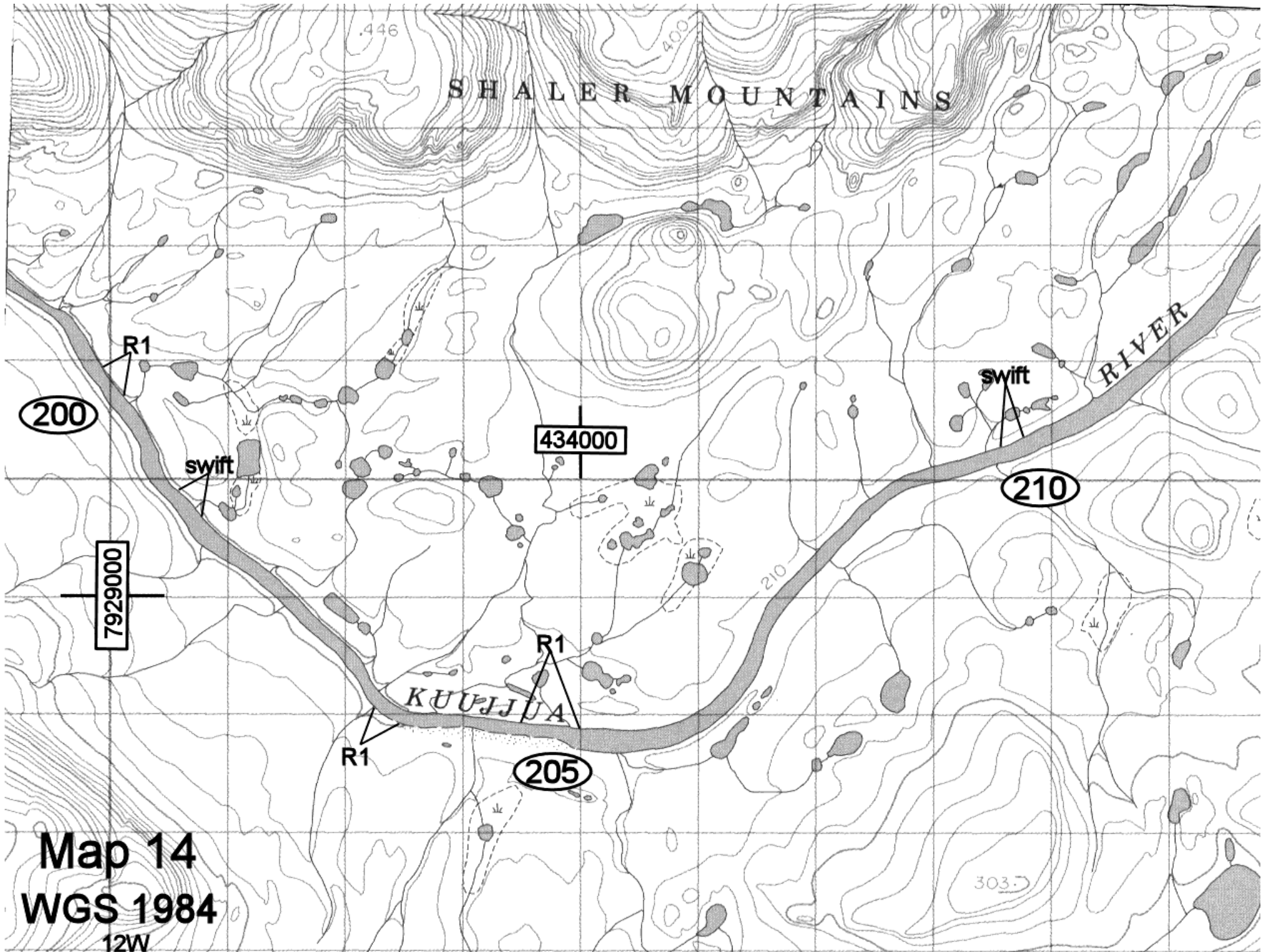
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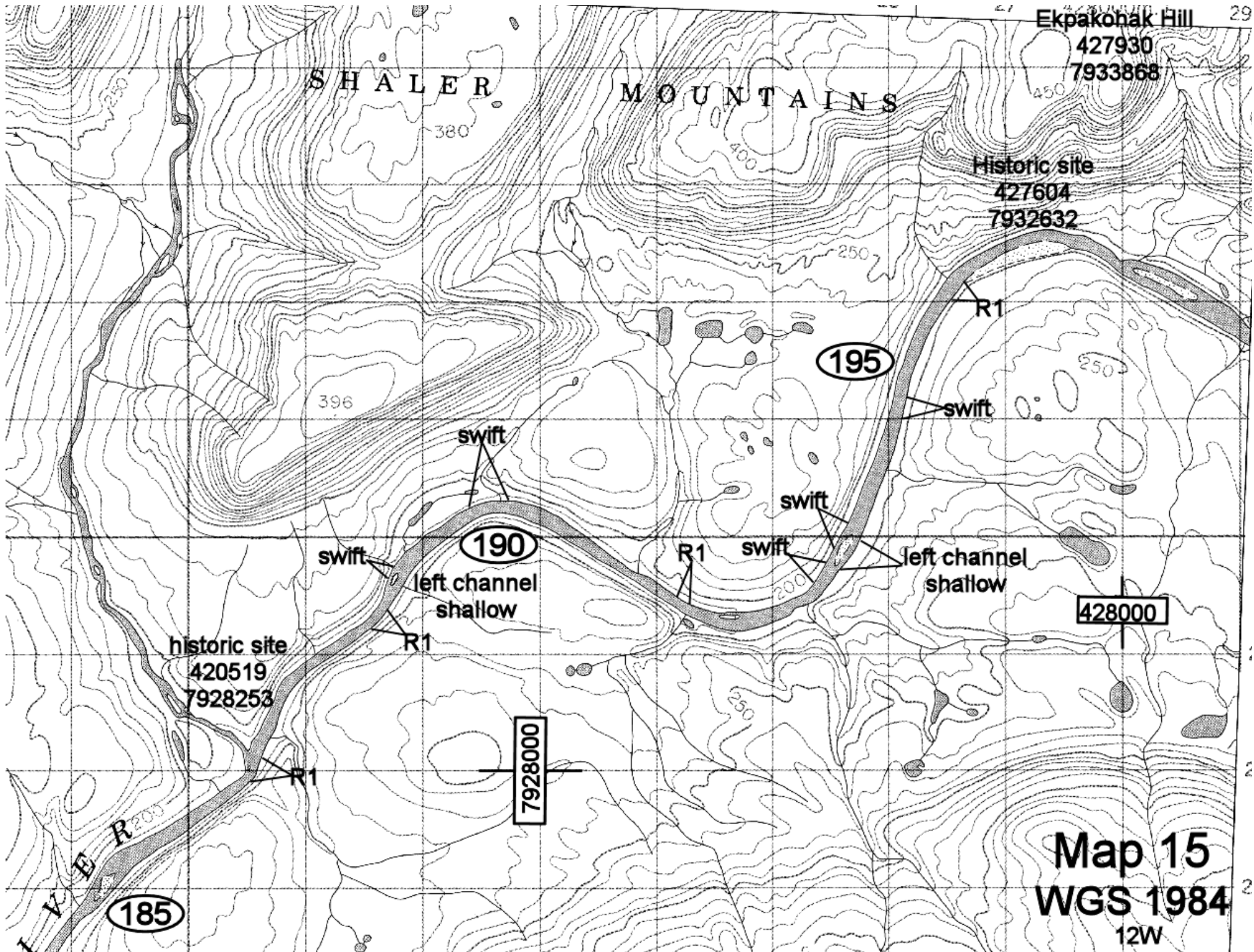
PG

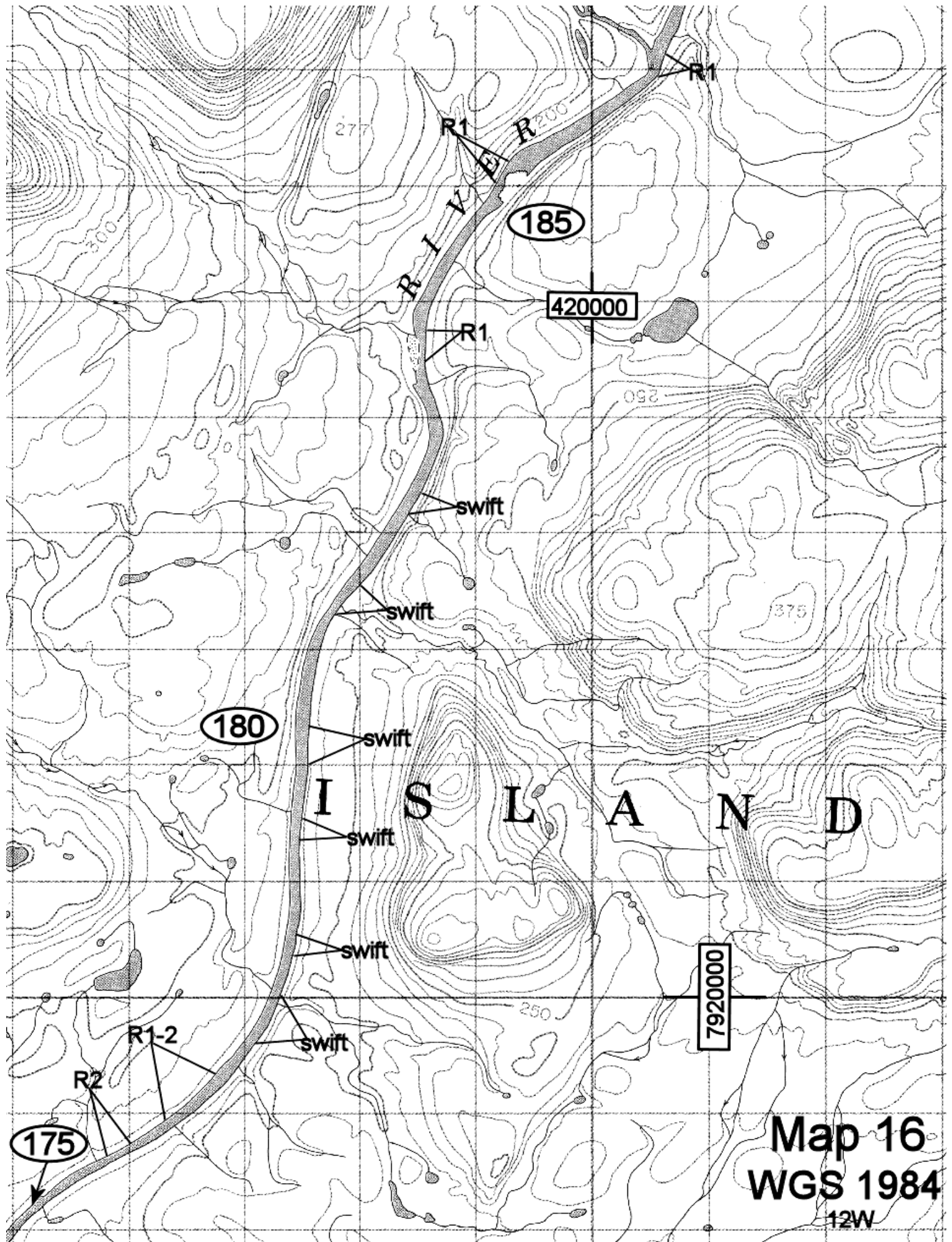


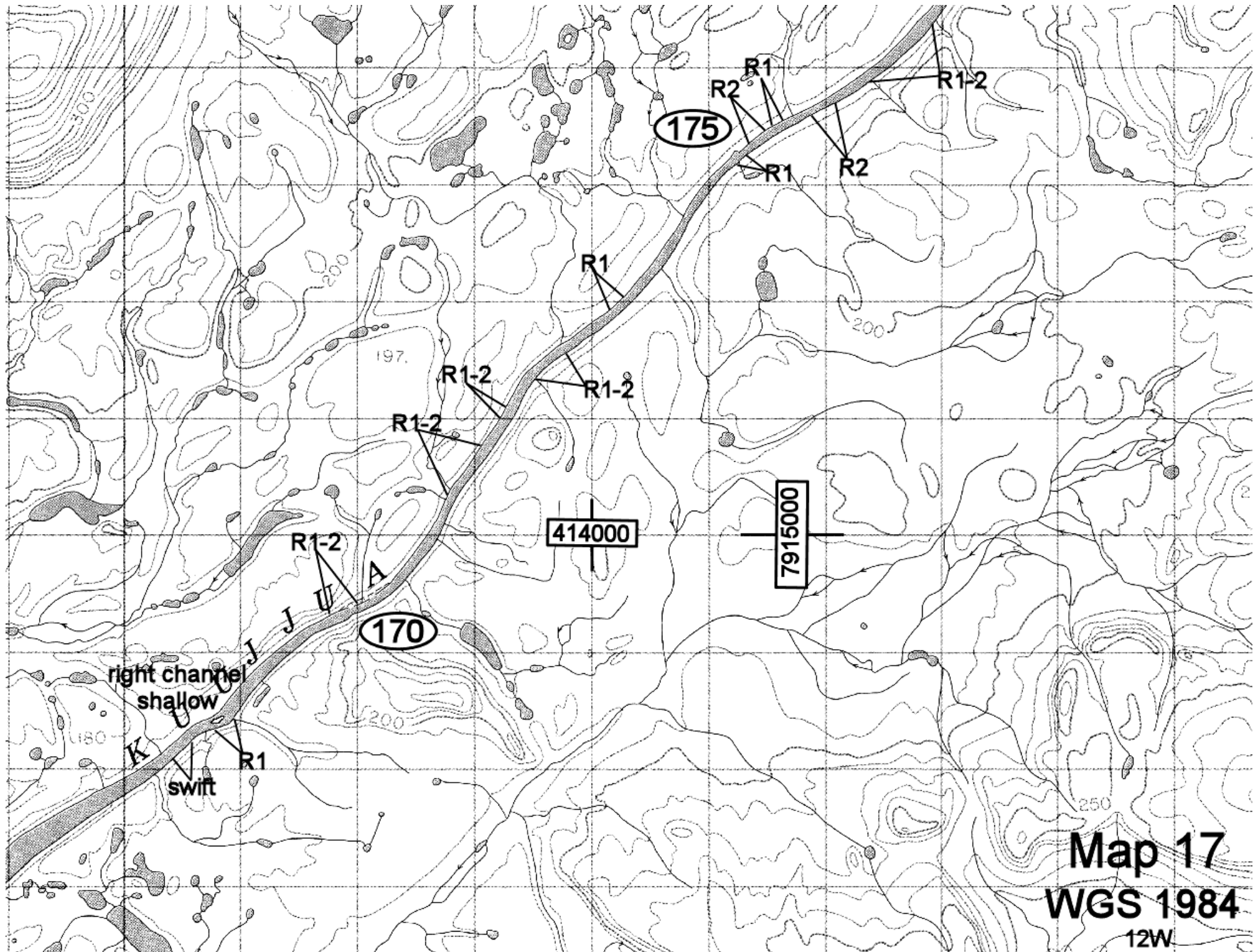
Map 13
WGS 1984
12W











Red Mountain
401682
7912568

406000

historic site

swift

R1-2

R1

165

left channel
shallow

right
channel
dry

shallow seave

155

7910000

167

R1

R1-2

R1

R1

160

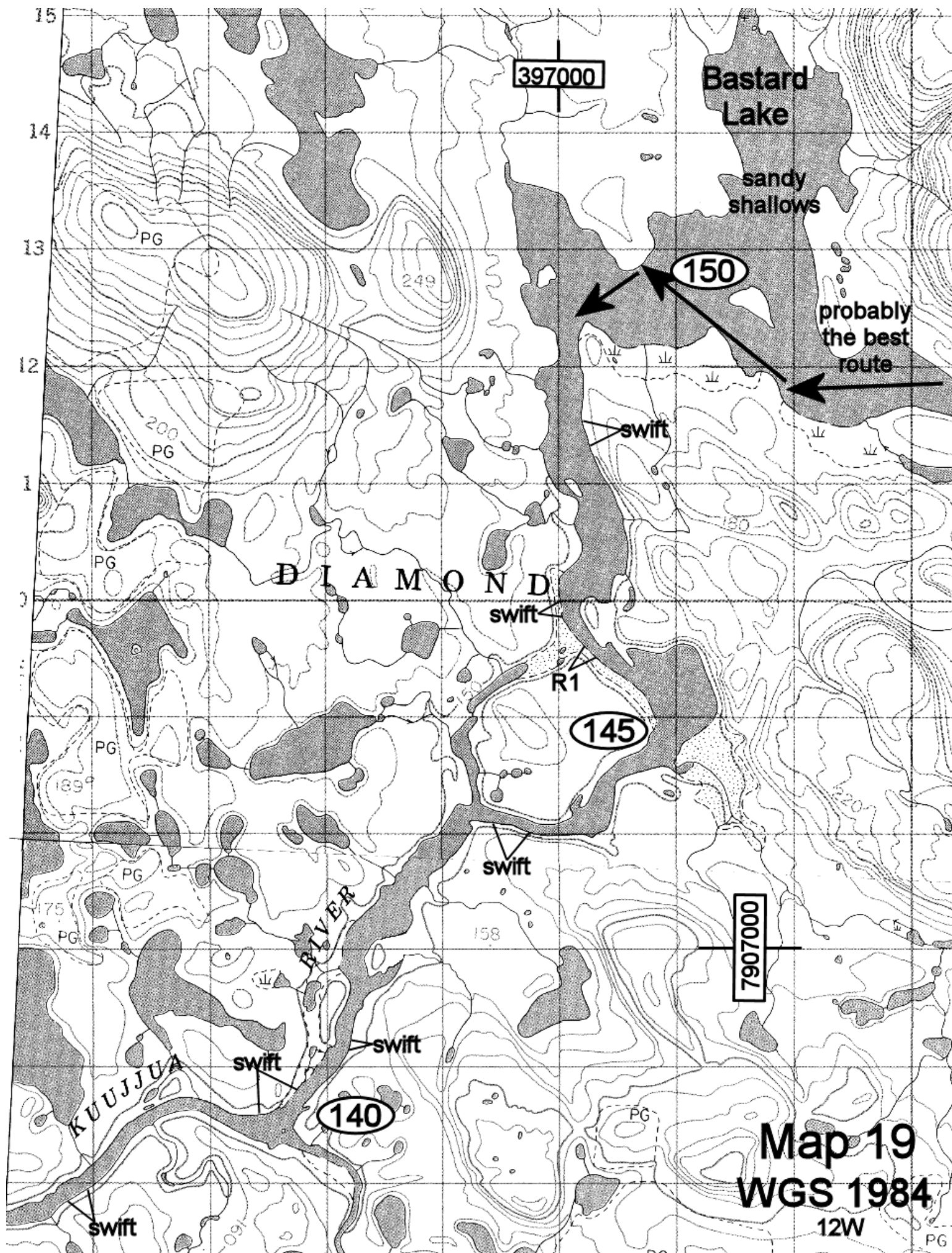
R1

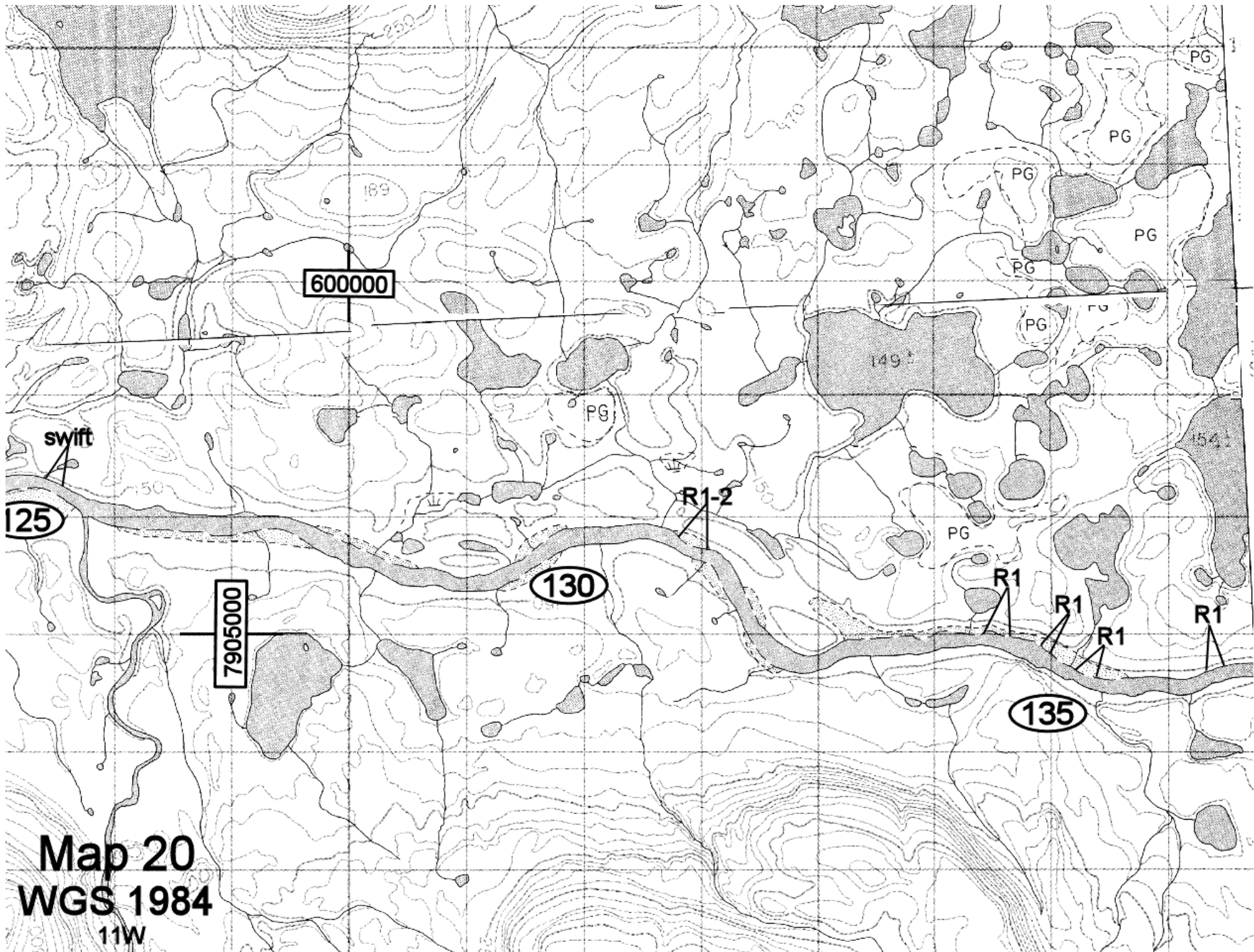
J E N N E S

P E N I N

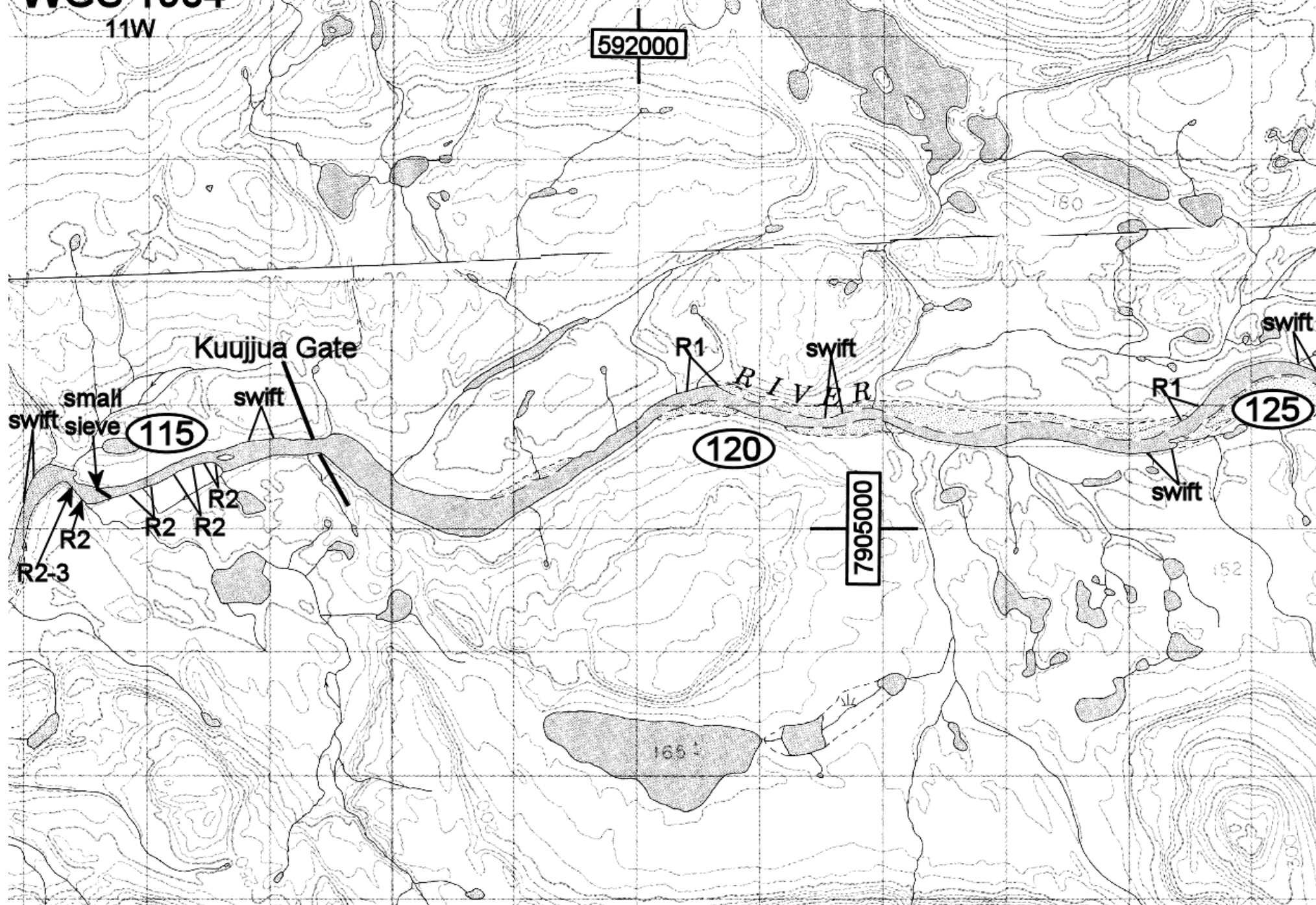
Map 18
WGS 1984

12W





Map 21
WGS 1984
11W



11W

110

115

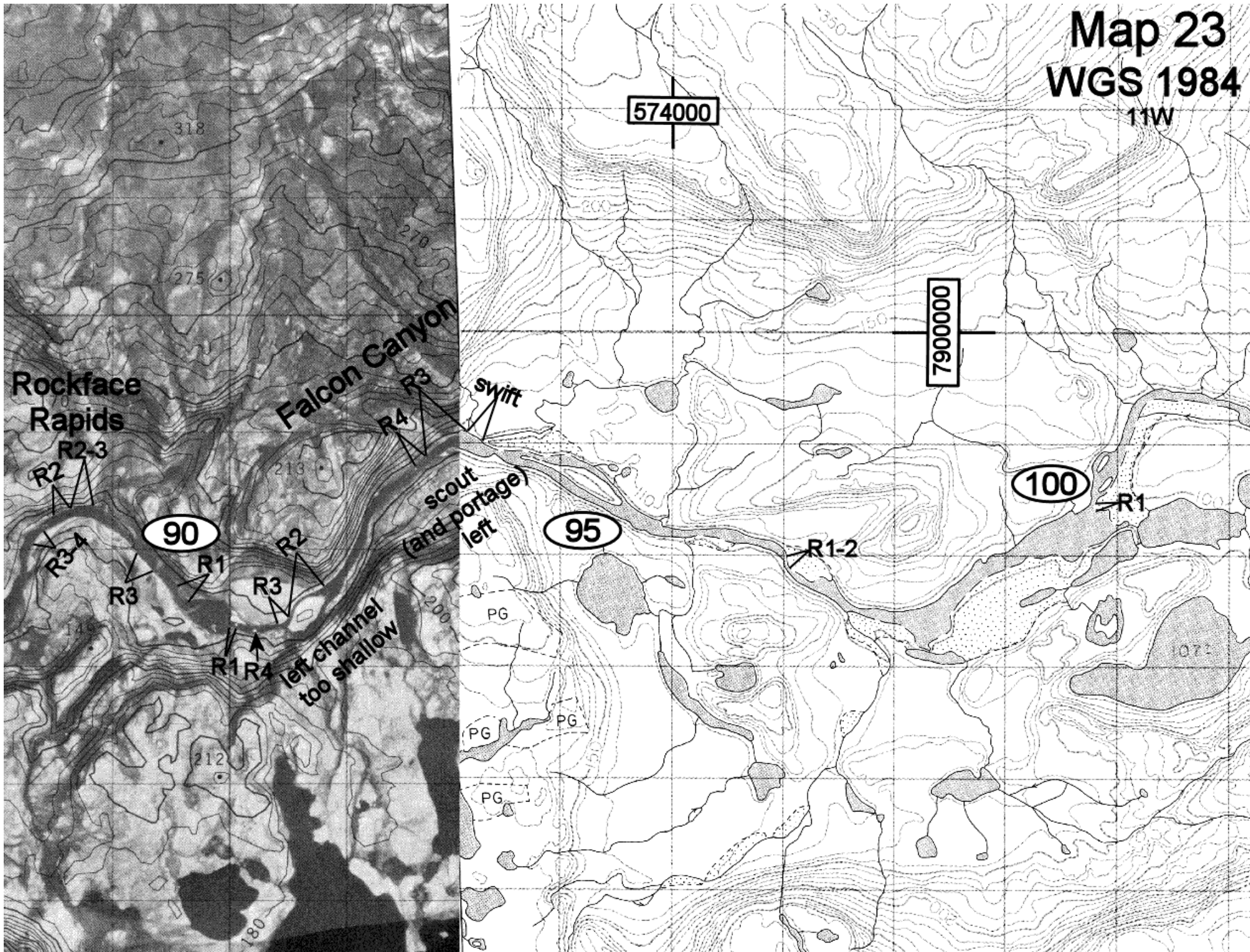
105

100

7899000

Saneraun Hills

Map 23
WGS 1984
11W



Map 24
WGS 1984

Rockface Rapids

7898198

R2-3
R2
R3
R3-4

11W

Dave's Lost Lake

85

563931

RIVER

80

deep channel at south shore

081

291

387

478

460

066

493

149

120

195

N E S S

R2

Map 25
WGS 1984

553931

Little
Canyon

Swan
Lake

75

right channel probably better

R3-4 R3 R3

R1

R1

R2

swift

short drag

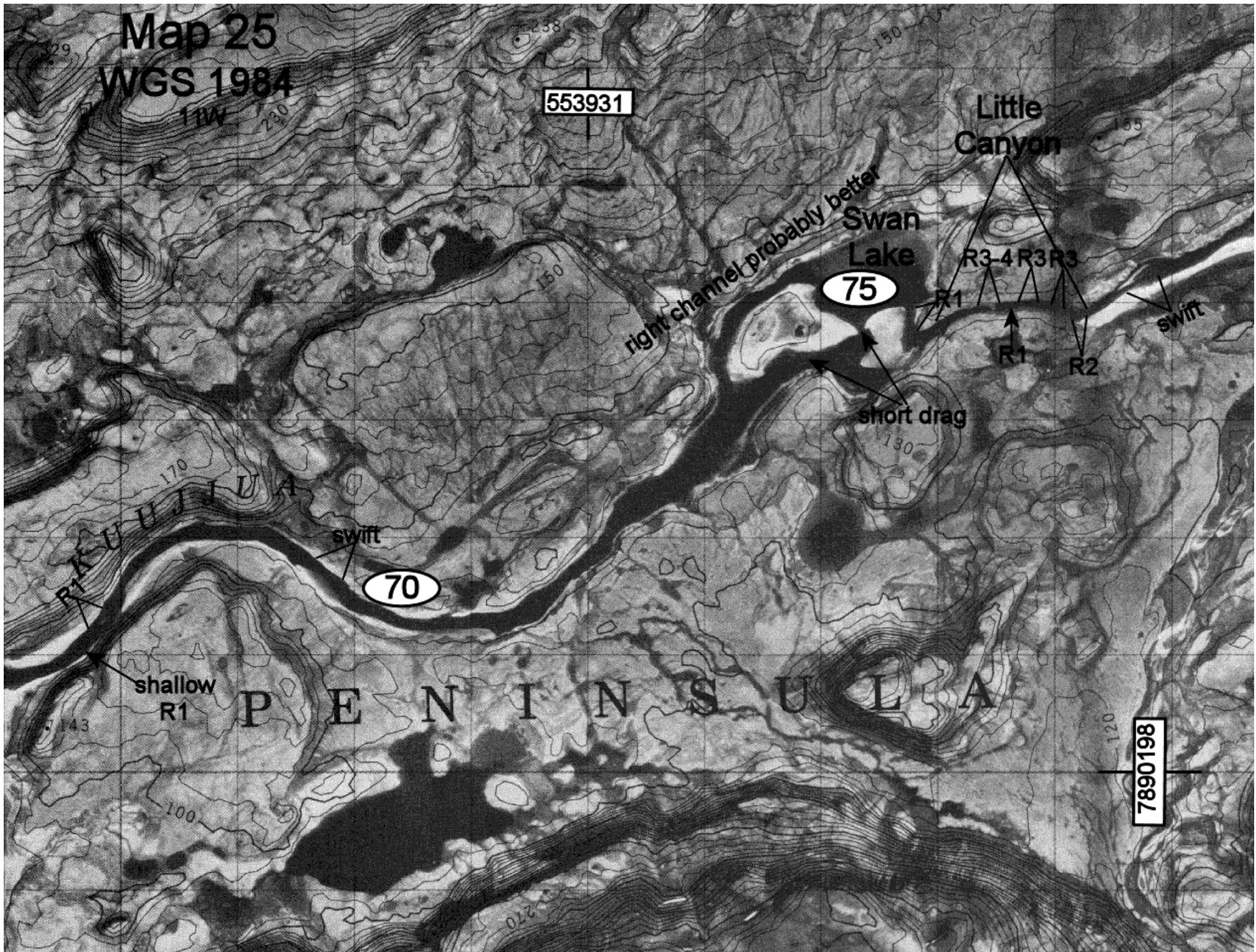
swift

70

shallow
R1

P E N I N S U L A

7890198



Map 26
WGS 1984

11W

shallow
R1

65

544931

60

7888198

Good Fortune Lake

55

shallow

• 245

08

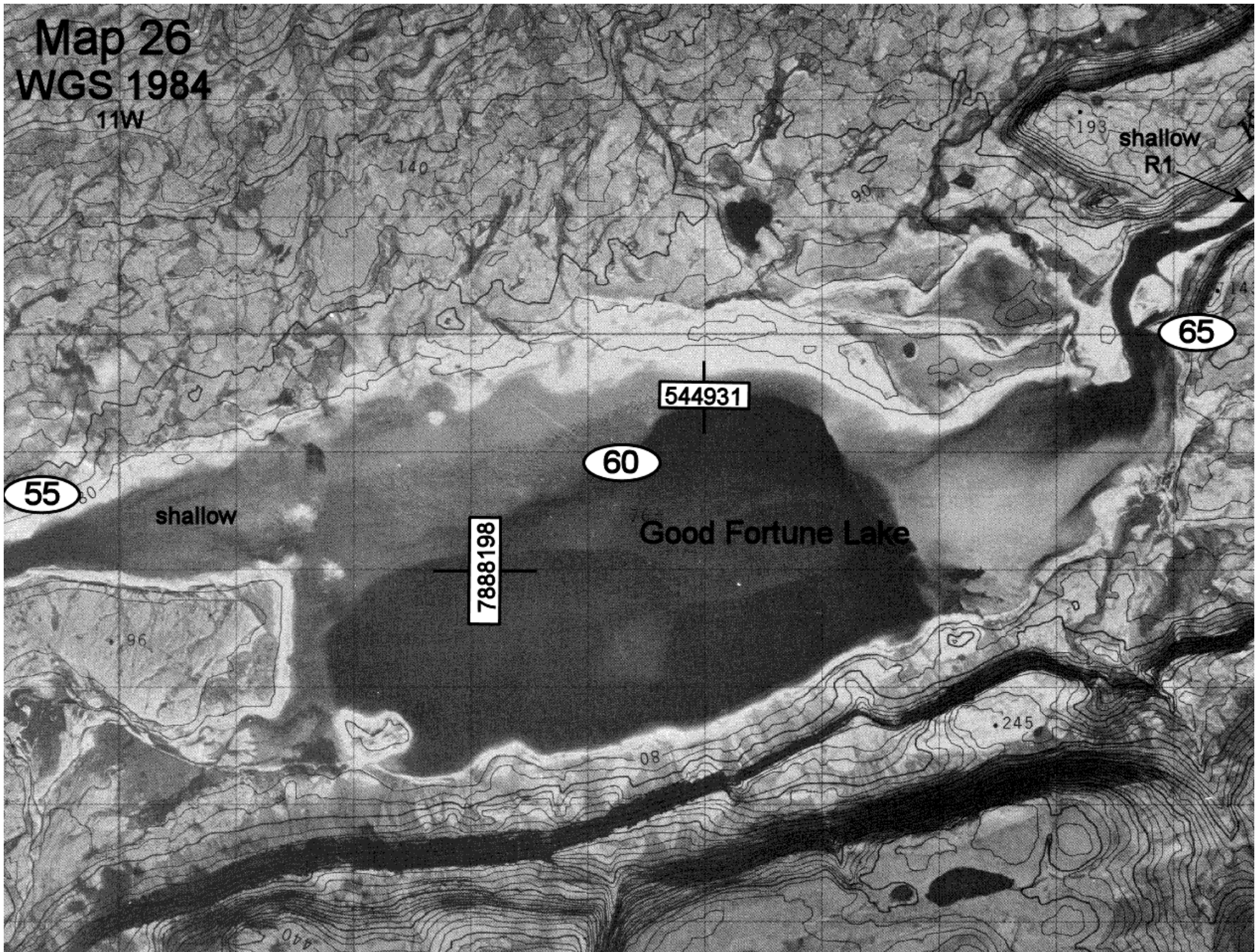
• 96

• 193

90

140

440



Map 28
WGS 1984

shallow

30

522931

Gull Lake

35

Loon Lake

ISLAND

7887198

40

R4+

R4

R2

11W

240

120

120

178

120

235

Map 29
WGS 1984
11W

20

Muskox
Lake

519931

probably the best
route through
shallows

7897198

25

KULUHUA

R3 R2-3

R1 R2

R2-3

R1 shallow

R2-3

R1

30

E N E S S P E N

10

519931

R2-3

R3-4 ledge
(sieve)
keep left

R2

R2

R3 ledge

R2 (start right)

R2-3

15

R2

swift

R3

R1

R2

R1

R1

KILGILLA
RIVER

cabins

7901198

20

Muskox Lake

Map 30
WGS 1984
11W

Map 31
WGS 1984
11W

Minto Inlet

509931

7910199

Mt. Goose
507265
7908600

old
"Goose"
cabin
506677
7907279

historic site
airplane
landing
historic site

shallow
swift

DIAMOND

10

5

0

R2-3

R3

R2

R2

R2-3

R2

220

271

011

041

1061

012

091

20

80

229

20

Map 32 WGS 1984

13W

459914

GREINER

LAKE

MT. PELLY

CAMBRIDGE BAY

7667238

E G

