

English River, New York State, USA

Introduction

The English River begins its run in northern New York State, then crosses the border, and continues in Québec, Canada, where it is called "Rivière aux Anglais", up to the Chateaugay River (continuation of the Chateaugay - note the different spelling - in New York State).

Water levels

When we ran this section, the level of the Great Chazy River, nearby, was at almost 3000 cfs, or 7.0 ft, a quite infrequent level. A very rough estimate is that the river would be navigable at about half this amount of water, at around 1500 cfs, and maybe even lower.

04271500 GREAT CHAZY RIVER AT PERRY MILLS NY

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ny/nwis/uv?04271500>

Topographic Maps

USGS, 1:24000 scale, UTM zone 18, NAD 83

- Ellenburg Depot, NYSDOT A48, USGS o44073h7
<http://www.nysgis.state.ny.us/gisdata/quads/drq24/a48.htm>
- Altona, NYSDOT A49, USGS o44073h6
<http://www.nysgis.state.ny.us/gisdata/quads/drq24/a49.htm>

Water quality

When we ran the river, during a flood, the water was clean and fresh enough for enjoyable paddling, but still polluted and not drinkable.

Difficulty

Km 52.0 to 45.5: class I-II (2) - intermediate

Km 45.5 to 42.5: class III (5) - expert

WARNING: at several places, there were downed trees. Most could be avoided easily by zigzagging a bit, and a few others (I remember two specific places) required getting out and carrying the canoe around. This required little effort, but great care.

Access

The put in at Barrow road is acceptable, but not ideal. Take care as there are old barbed wires on the ground.

The take out at Bush Road is okay, too.

The take out at Sriver/Eddy Road, less than 1 km from the border, is physically easy, but it is posted. Is it to prevent undesirable swimmers, to prevent smugglers from using the river to cross the border, or to protect the landowner against lawsuits? We could not tell. Permission to access should be discussed beforehand with the landowner.

Crossing the border, and continuing the run in Québec is possible, but requires pre-arrangement with the border patrol at the closest customs.

Interception by the Border Patrol

When we put in at Barrow Road, on May 20, 2006, it was late in the afternoon, since we were on fire to enjoy the flood after a couple days of rain, and we had already run the Great Chazy the same day. I was with my friend Olivier Tardif, and that was to be one of our last whitewater runs together, as he drowned on the West Ausable 2 weeks later.

Being carried by the rapid flow, it took us a very short time to reach the van at the take-out. As usual, Olivier asked me if I wanted to keep going for another stretch, since the dark was "not so close", and we were having fun. We knew we had a "not so easy" section ahead, but we were confident in our ability to run it quickly, efficiently, and safely, and were ready to abandon our boat along the river and call it a day, if need be. Like usual, Olivier would jog back to the van, and I would stay with the boats.

Once we reached the (posted) take-out on Sriver/Eddy Road, we carried our boats to the corner of Blackman Corners Road, and I spent half an hour waiting there, eating apples and peanuts under a pouring rain. Several neighbors passed in cars, pretending not to have seen me. When Olivier was back, we packed everything quickly, and left.

After about 40 minutes driving south, a bit short of Plattsburg, we were intercepted by what we thought was the police. I told Olivier he was not driving fast at all. While driving calmly and looking for a safe place to stop (for Olivier, safety was way more important than stopping for the police), he told me that he might have crossed a village and missed a speed limit sign, he could not tell. At last, we stopped in a large store driveway.

The man who approached had "Border Patrol" written on his jacket. At this point we immediately knew we would have fun, and not a fine. The man asked us if we had seen an off-white van picking up a hitchhiker. We said no. He asked us if we had gone to Blackman's Corner Road. We said no. Then we told him we were returning from the English river, close from the border, but Blackman's Corner... we did not know. He asked us to look on our map. Then I realized and said, "Ah, that might be us, as you picked me up on the corner of the two roads". At the same time, Olivier, the county map in his hands said, "yeah, that's exactly where we have been". The man asked us if we had run the river upstream, or downstream. We were laughing while telling him that with the current flow, and motor-less boats, it could be from upstream only. As I was trying to make up some story to tell him that crossing the posted land was the result of a mistake, and not a choice, Olivier simply told him "We were having fun, we wanted to continue having fun, so we kept going".

Olivier asked if it was a neighbor who had called the border patrol. "Hah! More than one, believe me." The border patrol agent liked us. He went to his car, took his radio, and said, "Ah, this case is closed... no, I don't think there is anything in there, let me check". He came back to us, and asked in a friendly manner, "Hey... kayaking and marijuana, that goes along hey... don't you guys have any?" He was intimate, and friendly, very inviting for a confidence, or ready to buy some. In my head I thought "Never a good idea in the US", but my mouth stopped after "Never a good idea". The agent wished us a good evening.

We resumed driving, we laughed, with a bit of regret that we didn't ask the agent if we could take a picture of him, the van, and us all together. This event added some poetry to an already perfect day.

Credits and Distribution

Survey

Charles Leduc, Olivier Tardif

May 20, 2006

Map work/Text

Charles Leduc, Kate Donis, Nov 2006.

Distribution

Authorized, provided the content remains unchanged and the distribution free of charge.

Available from www.cartespleinair.org.

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English River Road Map

To Covey Hill

To Covey Hill

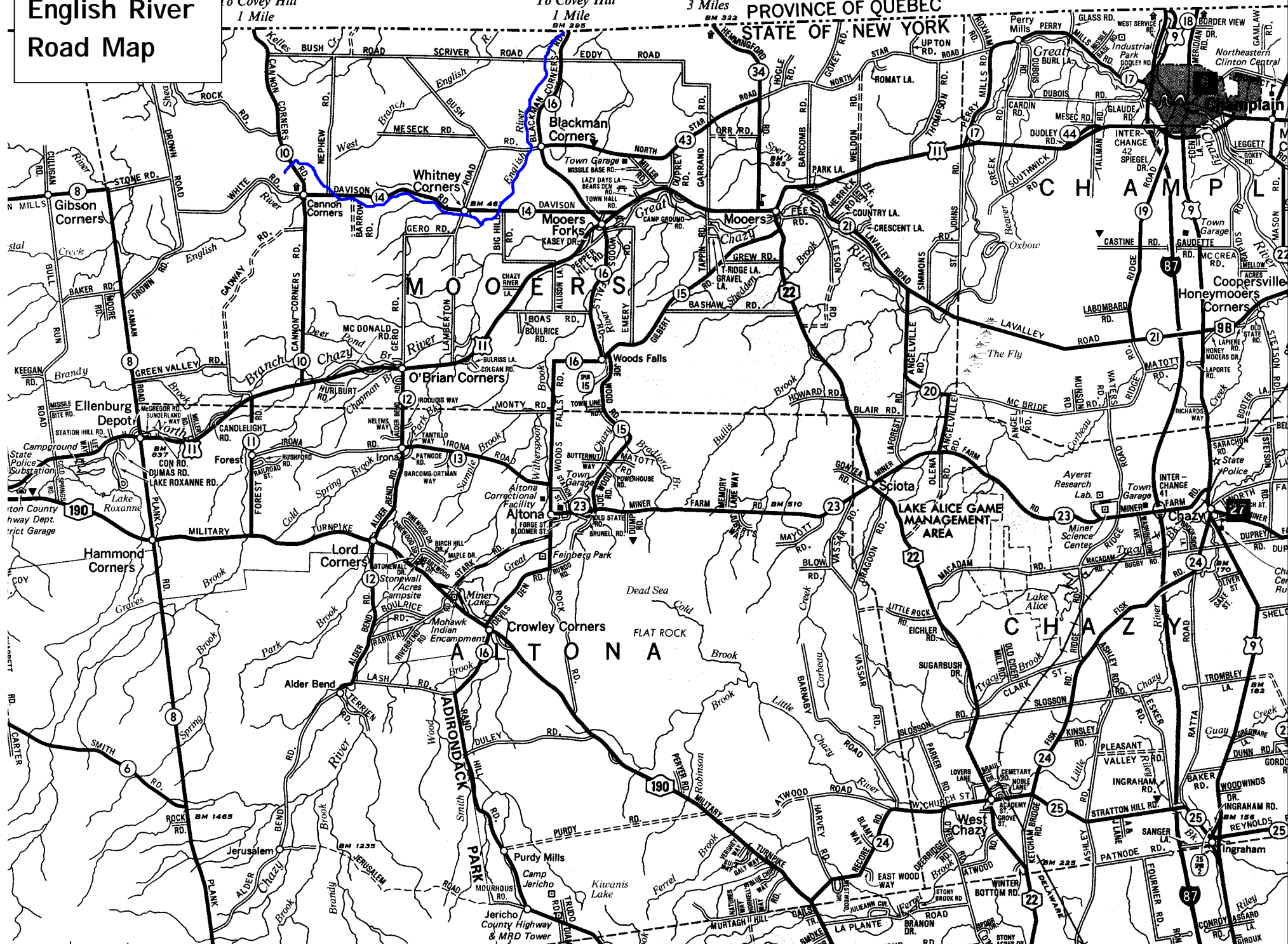
To Montreal 46 Miles

To Hemmingford
2 Mil

To Montreal

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

STATE OF NEW YORK



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