

Great Chazy River - North Branch, New York State, USA

Introduction

The Great Chazy River runs in northern New York State, very close to the border with Quebec (Canada). This map covers its North Branch. The North Branch can be logically divided into two sections:

- Upstream of Lake Roxanne and Ellenburg Depot.
- Downstream of Lake Roxanne and Ellenburg Depot.

The short section between Lake Roxanne and the suggested access on Plank/Canaan Road seemed not to be navigable, because of the Lake Roxanne dam, its spillway, and at least one more dam.

The crux of this whitewater section is the rapid that we named *The Accelerator*. It is a long slide on a rock slab, where the water takes speed, and at places forms hydraulics and standing waves up to several feet. The half-kilometer slide can be typically run in a bit more than 1 minute. It ends with a hole just before a quiet lake, where recovery is possible.

This section of river was the last I ran with my friend Olivier Tardif. Olivier drowned on the West Ausable two weeks later in a kayak accident where he got trapped under a log. He was a safe paddler, and a wonderful friend, husband, and father.

Water levels

When we ran this section, the level of the Great Chazy River, nearby, was at about 1900 cfs, or 5.7 ft. A very rough estimate is that the minimum flow to make this river enjoyable would be somewhere around 1300 cfs.

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/drg24/a48.htm>
- Altona, NYSDOT A49, USGS o44073h6
<http://www.nysgis.state.ny.us/gisdata/quads/drg24/a49.htm>

Water quality

At the suggested put-in, the water spilling over the dam, along with the wind, made for a very unpleasant smell, and we came very close to switching to another river. After a short distance, the river reverted to a fairly acceptable standard, where the water was obviously polluted, but where we could enjoy and play, with the option of swimming being not scary at all. We think that the pollution came from a farm very nearby, just upstream of the put-in, and that the dam played a good role in aerating the water at this point.

Difficulty

Generally class 3, with stretches up to class 4.

Access

See the road map included. Details about some potential access points:

- Lake Roxanne: it is possible to drive to the east side of the lake and to get access to the water.
- Ellenburg Depot - Plank/Canaan Road: access from the north-west side of the bridge, with room to park (legal in 2006). Not-so-nice environment because of the nearby farms. The first rapid after the bridge has small ledges, and ends with a class 4 drop under a tree with low branches.
- Miller Road (600m downstream of Plank/Canaan Road): this could be a good alternative to Plank/Canaan Road. This access seemed to be convenient, but we have not checked if it is legal.
- Gero Road: the access at this point may be legal, but it seems not to be convenient at all. **IMPORTANT**: it is advised, BEFORE the river run, to drive to the bridge, and to scout *The Accelerator* from there, the goal being mostly to look for jammed logs, bad hydraulics having potentially formed, and other transient traps. Once on the river, scouting the whole length of this rapid would require a long walk and a lot of time.
- Amberton Road: no info.
- Big Hill Road: the access from that road seemed convenient, but has not been checked for legality.
- Route 11 at Mooers Forks: access seemed to be possible, but potentially dangerous considering the amount and speed of traffic.
- Route 16/52 at Mooers Forks: there is an access and small parking lot on the southeast side of the bridge.
- Confluence with Great Chazy Main Branch: according to the road map there seems to be a picnic area there. Potentially good access, but still unverified.

Credits and Distribution

Survey

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May 21, 2006

1900 cfs on the Great Chazy at Perry Mills

Map work/Text

Charles Leduc, Kate Donis, Nov 2006.

Distribution

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Available from www.cartespleinair.org.

Disclaimer

This document has been produced on a volunteer basis by paddlers who do not claim to have infallible judgment. The authors assume no responsibility for any accident, damage or other prejudice that may result from the use of this document. Omissions or errors are always possible, and we would be grateful should you bring them to our attention.

Great Chazy River North Branch Road Map

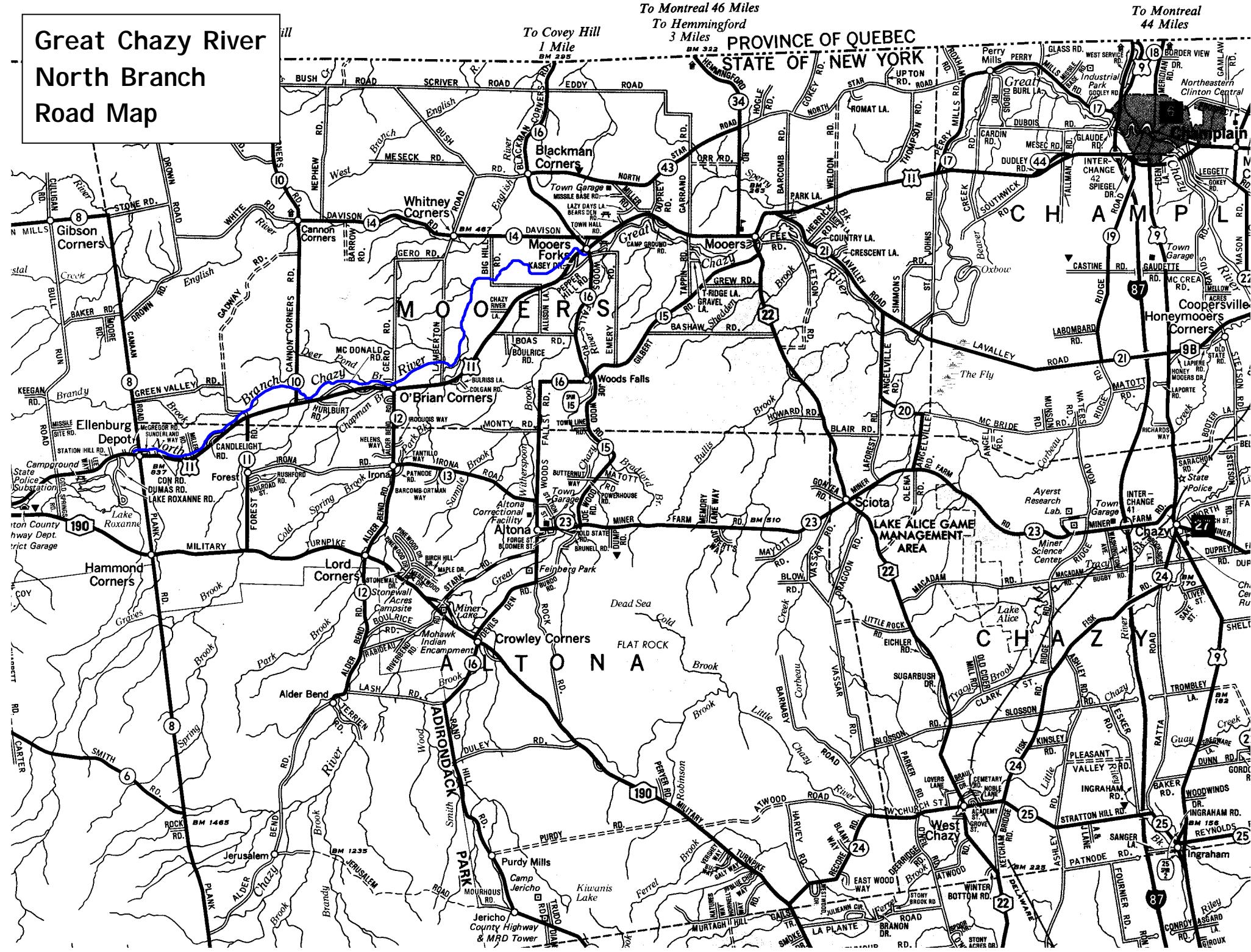
To Montreal 46 Miles

To Hemmingford

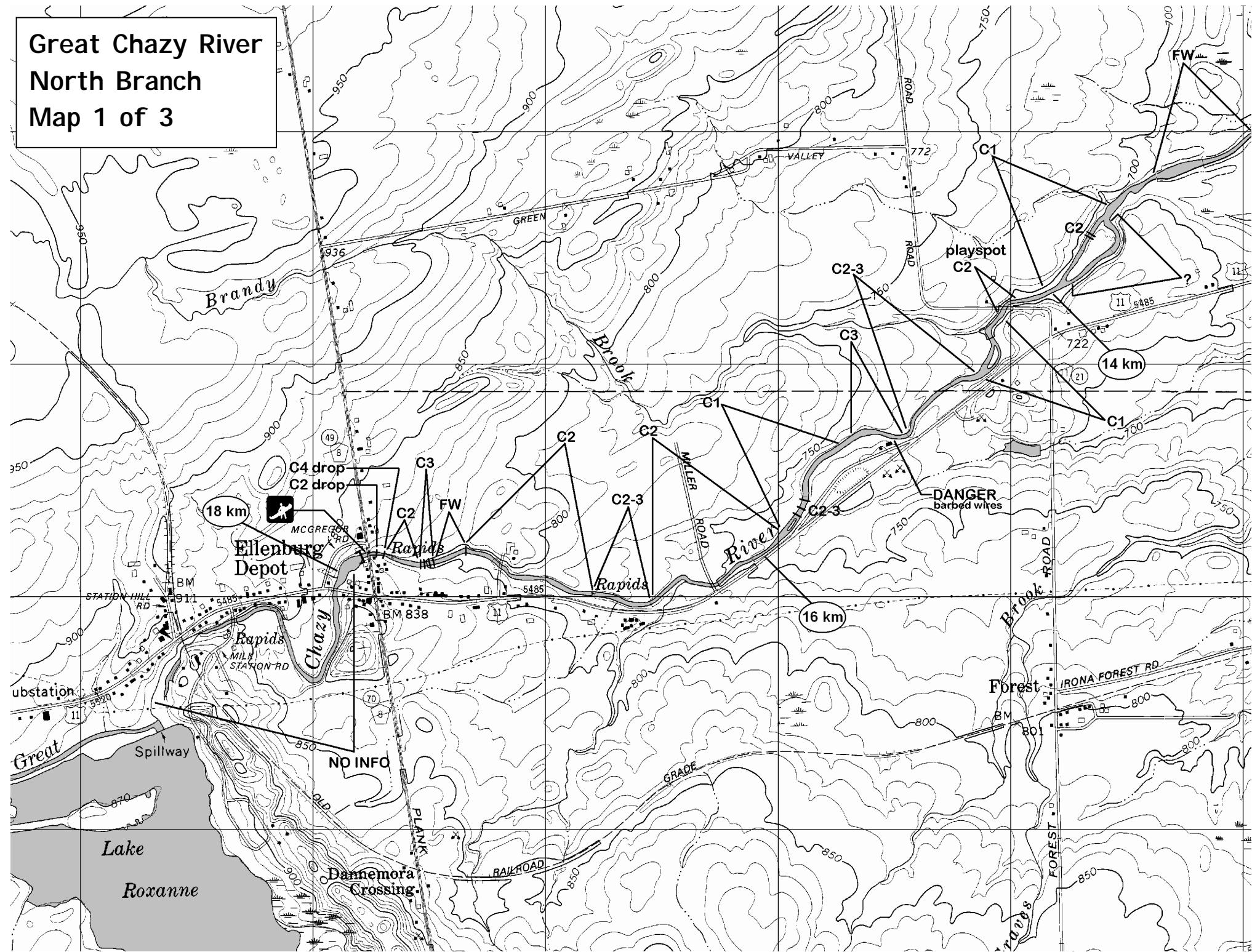
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

To Montreal

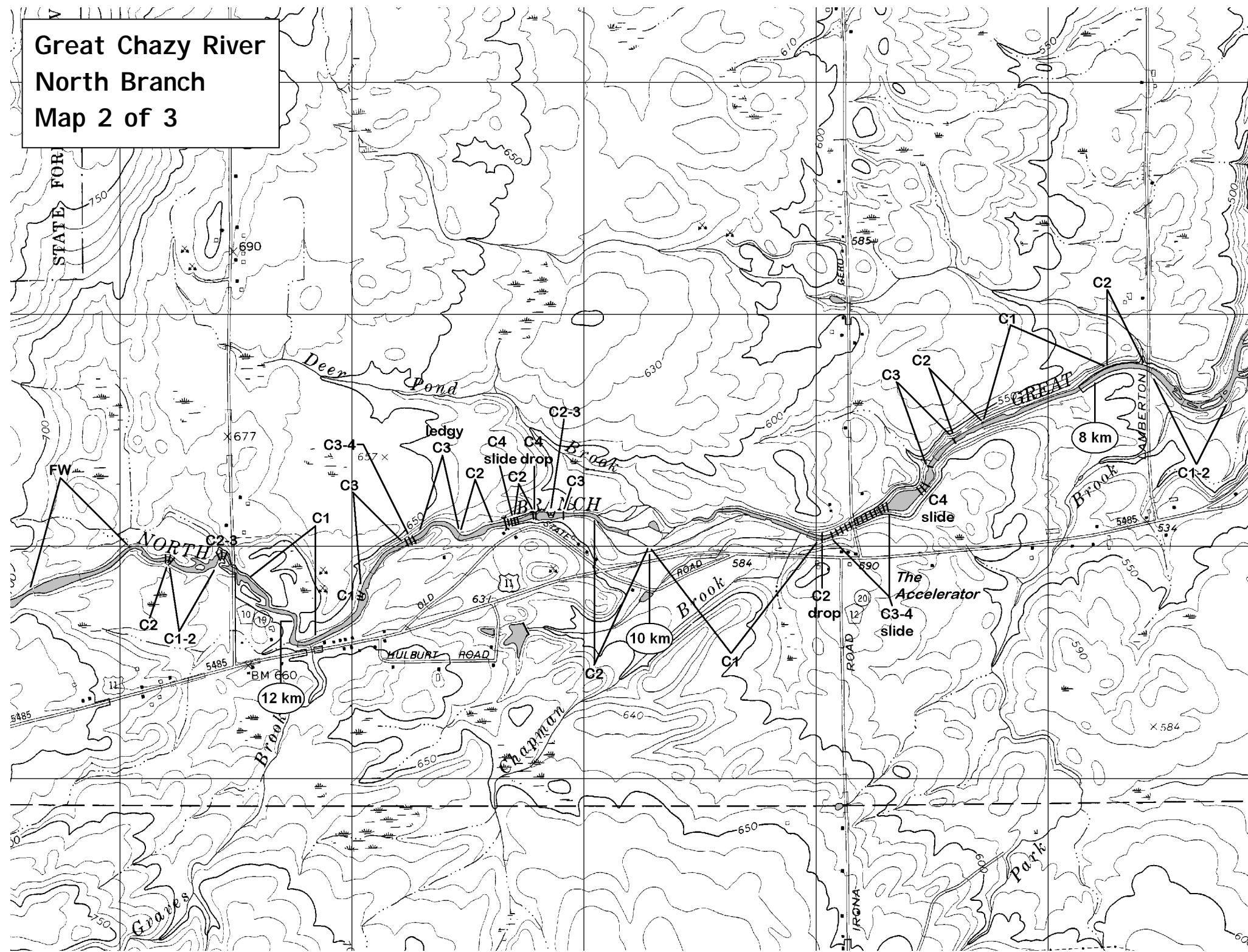
44 Miles



Great Chazy River North Branch Map 1 of 3



Great Chazy River North Branch Map 2 of 3



Whitney
Great Chazy River
North Branch
Map 3 of 3

