

Middle and Lower Moose River – Singing Waters Campground to Fowlersville

revised september 2008

Geographic Location

The Moose river runs in the northwestern part of New York state, USA. It feeds the Black river, which in turn feeds Lake Ontario.

The Lower section is 19 km long, and runs from the McKeever gauging station, a few kilometers from Old Forge, to the bridge of Fowlersville, about 120 km southeast of Watertown, NY.

The last 10km of the Middle Branch are also described. This section is located immediately upstream of the McKeever gauge, and combining it with the Lower Moose allows makes a longer run.

Topographic Maps (USGS)

1 : 50000 Thendara (Middle Branch)

1 : 50000 McKeever

1 : 50000 Constableville

1 : 25000 Thendara (Middle Branch)

1 : 25000 McKeever

1 : 25000 Port Leyden

Suggested Water Levels

Real-time water data for McKeever gauging station:

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?site_no=04254500

Runnable levels (according to the AWA webpages):

- Middle Branch between 3.5 and 8 ft.
- McKeever to Moose River between 2.3 and 10 ft.
- Moose River to Fowlersville between 3.4 and 10 ft.

Wilderness

Although this river runs in a civilized area, the shores have remained unsettled and the scenery looks mostly wild.

Difficulty

Middle Branch, from Singing Waters Campground to McKeever gauge: class 2 and 3, intermediate.

Lower Moose, from McKeever to Moose River: class 3-4, advanced.

Lower Moose, from Moose River to Fowlersville: class 3-5. Because of its several long and difficult (class 3 and 4) rapids, this section is for advanced and expert paddlers only.

Access

- Reach NY12 between Watertown and Utica, and drive up to either Lyon Falls or Port Leyden. There are a few roads that lead to Fowlersville. Only the simplest one is described below:
 - From Port Leyden (km 0.0), take the Marmon road, eastbound.
 - After exactly 1km, at a "T" junction, take the left and continue on Marmon Road.
(if you want to get to the put-in first, turn right here (1.0km), then almost immediately (km 1.2) left on Moose River Road. At 5.7km, you will come to a junction with North South Road. Then continue on Moose River Road as described for the shuttle).
 - At 2.2km from Port Leyden, there is a "Y" junction with the River Road, continue left, still on Marmon Road.
 - At 2.6km, continue straight passed the junction with Murphy Road.
 - At 3.3 km, turn right on Penny Settlement Road.
 - At 6.0km, turn left on Fowlersville Road.
 - At 9.0km, you reach the bridge of Fowlersville, which is the take-out for this section. The actual take-out is located on the right (east), passed the bridge (north).

Shuttle

- From the Fowlersville bridge (0.0km), drive back on Fowlersville Road.
- At the junction (3.0km), turn left on Penny Settlement Road.
- At the next junction (3.8km), turn right on North South Road.
- At 7.2km, turn left on Moose River Road.
- At 11.1km, there is a junction with Boonville Road, continue straight on Moose River Road.
- At 19.3km, there is a small road that goes left, crosses the Moose on an iron bridge, then soon reaches a dead end. This is where the Iron Bridge Rapid does start.
- On Moose River Road, there is a river access in the next half kilometer.
- At 24.7km, there is a small grassy entrance to the left, with the gaging station on it. This is the put in. It is 0.7km short of NY28.
- To reach the put-in of the Middle Branch, continue up to NY28, turn left on it, then drive about 5km up to Singing Waters Campground. Access the river either from the campground, or from a side road that leaves NY28 immediately north of the campground.

Shuttle:

Fowlersville to Moose River	19 km
Moose River to McKeever	6 km
McKeever to Singing Waters Campground	6 km

Description

This river mostly has a drop-pool profile. Difficult rapids alternate with quiet water. Some of those difficult rapids are very short, but some are longer and should not be undertaken by intermediate paddlers who think that "there is a pool at the bottom anyway". The shortest and most difficult (class 4-5 and 5) rapids can be scouted or carried.

Middle Branch:

- Put-in at or above Singing Waters Campground
- Fast water that builds up in class 2 rapids
- Nelson Falls: short distance below the railroad. Carry on the right side. Stop before the railroad at high water. Nelson Falls is a serie of class 4 ledges over about 200m.
- below Nelson Falls, class 3 rapids that becomes milder in the next few hundreds of meters.
- flat section, crossing a lake
- continuous class 2-3 rapids up to the confluence with the Main Branch.
- Stretch of quiet water after the confluence
- DANGER: ruin of an old factory, which is dangerously undercut. Requires great care as swimming at this point may be fatal. Usual run is at the extreme right of the left channel around the island, in a class 2 rapid.

Lower Moose from McKeever to Moose River:

- Put-in at the McKeever gauge.
- Stretch of flat water.
- Short class 3 rapid.
- Long stretch of flat water.
- House Rock Rapid.
- Sharp right turn, with river access left.

Lower Moose from Moose River to Fowlersville:

- Island, class 3 ledge right.
- Flat rocks for lunch/rest before Iron Bridge Rapid
- Iron Bridge rapid is a solid class 3-4 rapid. It ends by a sequence of 2 drops of about 3 and 4 ft that require a thight left-to-right move inbetween. Scouting is not easy for this rapid, nor it is for the next one, Tannery Rapid.
- Tannery Rapid is a class 4 rapid of about 400m. It could be seen as a class 3 rapid running over several class 3 and 4 ledges. Some drops will be straightforward to run, but there are two that probably won't go unnoticed, the last one being about 6 ft high.
- Rooster Tail is a class 4 rapid ending with a rooster tail. It is probably best to scout it from the right before running it.

- Froth Hole is a class 4 rapid that ends by a 8ft frop. It is a good idea to scout it from the left first, as the right part of the drop takes the boat directly onto a sharp edged rock. Because the drop goes on a smooth slope before getting vertical, it seems to be higher when seen from upstream than when seen from downstream. At higher water levels, the hydraulic at its base may become dangerous. As its name indicates, the water in this hole seems to offer very little buoyancy because it is much aerated.
- Mixmaster is a short class 5 rapid where swimming does not seem especially pleasant. There seems to be no rocks, but there is a hole where the water spins very fast. There is a nice lunch rock on the right, immediately upstream.
- 2 islands where good surfing spots are found.
- Elevator shaft. It is a 45 degrees slide of about 2-3 meters, which is pretty straightforward to run. A good alignment is required however.
- Class 2 rapids and class 3 ledges up to the Fowlersville bridge.
- Take out on the right, immediately before the bridge. It is worth taking time to walk along the left shore, and to take a look at the Fowlersville Falls, depicted in the book "Thrill of the Paddle", by Paul Mason and Mark Scriver.

References

Moose River Virtual Tour:

<http://www.boaterspages.com/mooseriver/>

AWA web pages:

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1353/>

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/3590/>

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1351/>

Realisation – Distribution

Survey – Middle Branch

Olivier Tardif

Date: October 26-27, 2002

Level : 3.5-4.1 ft

Survey – Lower section

Charles Leduc, Olivier Tardif

Date: June 11, 2000

Level : 3.3 ft

Base Map

Topozone, <http://www.topozone.com>

Mapwork/Text

Charles Leduc, December 2002

Corrections September 2008

Contributors

Olivier Tardif: corrections and improvements to text.

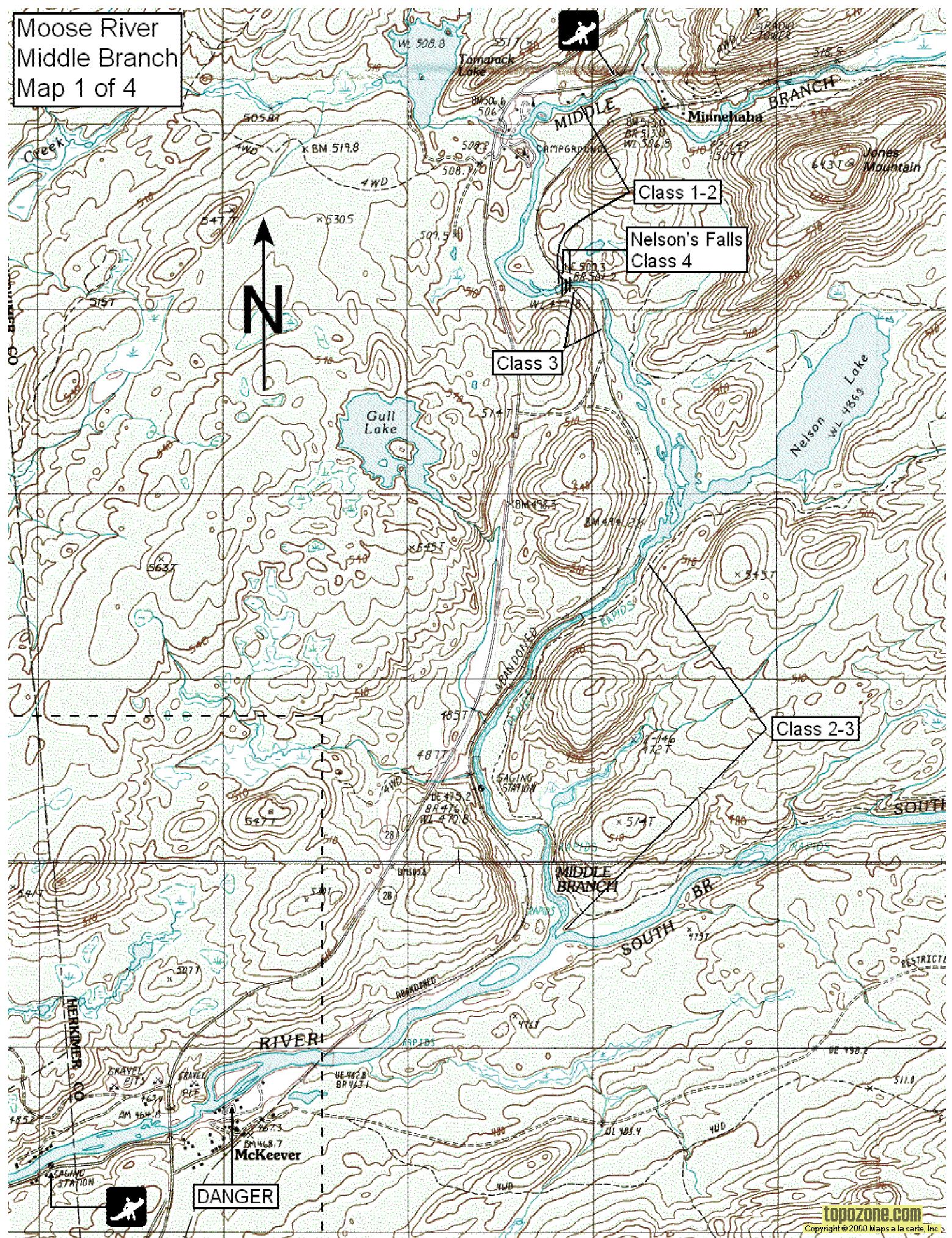
Distribution

Authorized, as long as content remains unchanged and the distribution is free. Available from www.cartespleinair.org.

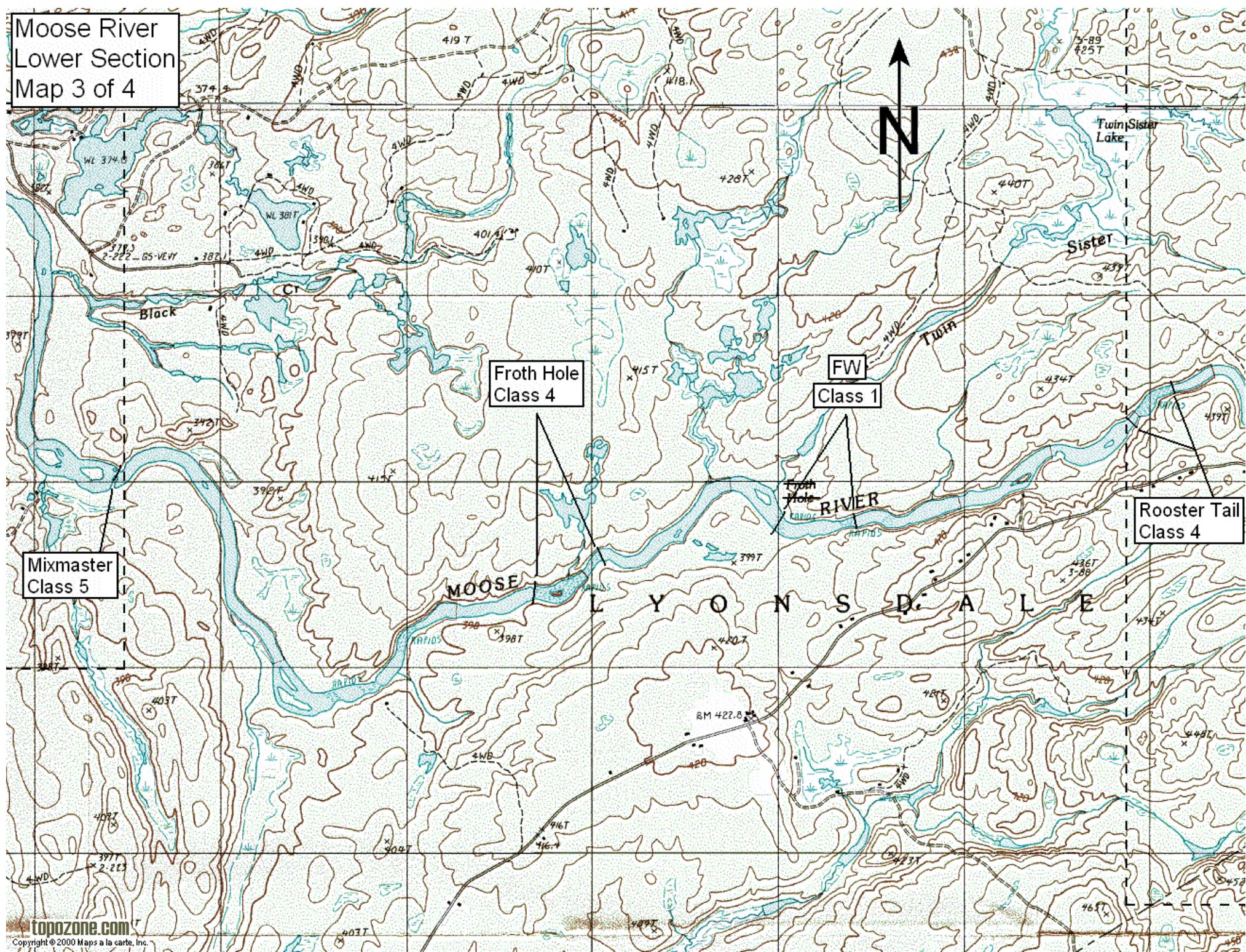
Disclaimer

This document has been produced on a volunteer basis by paddlers who do not claim to have infallible judgment. The authors decline 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.

Moose River
Middle Branch
Map 1 of 4



Moose River
Lower Section
Map 3 of 4



Moose River
Lower Section
Map 3 of 4

N

VERY DIFFICULT SECTION

1

FM 1 Fowlersville

Class 3

Elevator Shaft Class 3-4

Mixmaster Class 5