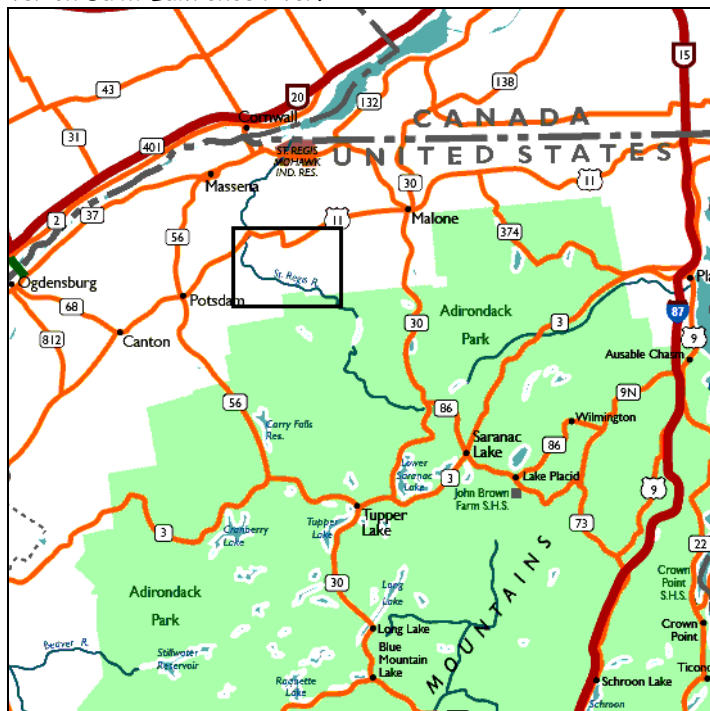


Saint Regis River (Middle Branch) – Silver Staircase

Geographic location

The Saint Regis river flows in northeastern New York state, USA, and is part of the drainage system of the Saint Lawrence river. The section described here is located about 50 km south of Cornwall, Ontario, and covers the Middle branch from Saint Regis Falls to Nicholville, Fort Jackson, and then Buckton. Eventually, there is plan to lengthen the covered section downstream to Brasher Falls, and one day to the mouth of the river on Saint Lawrence river.



Source: I Love New York tourism map

Topographic Maps

1:24000 Parishville NYSDOT C40 USGS o44074f7
1:24000 Nicholville NYSDOT C41 USGS o44074f6
1:24000 Saint Regis Falls NYSDOT C42 USGS o44074f5
Available from: www.nysgis.state.ny.us/quads/usgsdrq.htm

Overview

The highlights of this section are its continuous rapids (only 100m or so of flat water), and its nice scenery.

Saint Regis Falls to Nicholville (12 km/7 mi):

continuous rapids, mostly class 2-3, with some stretches of class 1-2, and some stretches of class 3 and class 3-4, and a short class 4.

Nicholville to Buckton (14 km/ 9mi):

Continuous rapids of class 1-2, with short stretches of class 2 and class 2-3.

References

County Line Taxi (for a shuttle)

1-877-275-8913 or (315)328-5454

Saint Regis Scenic Campsite and Cottages

(518)856-9482 or (518)856-9820

Saint Regis Region website

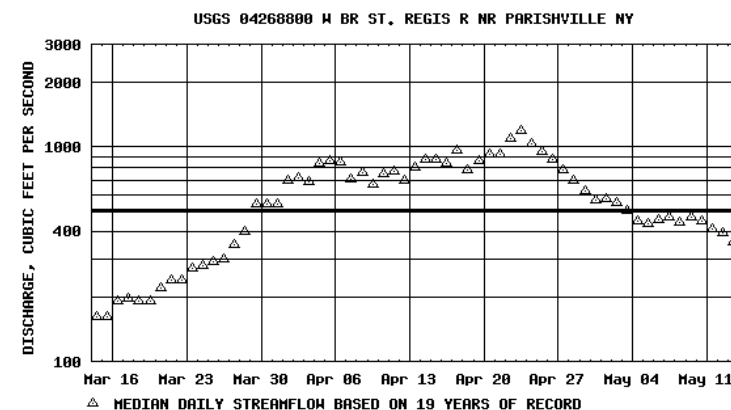
<http://www.saintregis.org/>

Water levels

The best indicator of the water level is given by the USGS station 04268800, located on the West Branch of the Saint Regis. Both branches are controlled by dams, but in general there is a very good correlation between the levels of the USGS station and the actual water level found on the Middle Branch Saint Regis. The gauge reading is available on the USGS website at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ny/nwis/uv?04268800>

Minimal level is about 400-500 cfs.

In general this minimal level is found during the whole month of April, as shown by the graph below:



For those most familiar with levels in feet, here is a mapping:

1.8 pi => 289 cfs	2.5 pi => 747 cfs	3.2 pi => 1330 cfs
1.9 pi => 337 cfs	2.6 pi => 827 cfs	3.3 pi => 1419 cfs
2.0 pi => 390 cfs	2.7 pi => 908 cfs	3.4 pi => 1500 cfs
2.1 pi => 449 cfs	2.8 pi => 990 cfs	3.5 pi => 1590 cfs
2.2 pi => 514 cfs	2.9 pi => 1070 cfs	3.6 pi => 1680 cfs
2.3 pi => 586 cfs	3.0 pi => 1160 cfs	3.7 pi => 1770 cfs
2.4 pi => 664 cfs	3.1 pi => 1240 cfs	

For when the water level is close from the lower limit, here is a comparison of each section's depth :

Saint Regis Falls to end of Larose Road (old bridge pillars):

this section has a high tendency to become bony, and should be skipped if the water level is too low. Looking at the water level for the first 100-200 m below the falls gives a good idea of what is coming next. There are shallower stretches in the next kilometers down to Larose Road.

Larose Road to Nicholville:

there is about 1 km of shallow water downstream of Mills Road, but in general the remaining of this section is the last to become bony. At 1.8 ft on the gauge painted under the bridge of Mills Road (different from the USGS gauge on the West Branch), there was enough water for a solo canoe to avoid most rocks.

Nicholville to Fort Jackson:

Better skip this section if there is not enough water. Not as shallow as the kilometer downstream of Mills Road, but close to for the last 3 kilometers or so.

Fort Jackson to Buckton:

If it was okay from Nicholville to Fort Jackson, then it will definitely be okay too down to Buckton.

Driving directions

Delorme New York Atlas and Gazetteer page XX.

From Montreal:

- Hwy 20 west (towards Ontario where it becomes Hwy 401)
- Once at Cornwall, take the street that crosses the city up to the toll bridge (fee of 3\$) that brings to New York state (7 km from Hwy 401).
- Take route 37 east for about 5 km. You may find some cheap gas as you near the Saint Regis Indian Reservation.
- At an intersection, take right, following the signs for Helena (10 km).
- From Helena, take local roads (see regional map included) and drive to either of Saint Regis Falls, Nicholville, Fort Jackson, or Buckton (or even Brasher Falls if you dare exploring the section downstream).

River Access

Km 69 Campground at Saint Regis Falls: drive in the campground (closed but not gated in April, entrance immediately east of the bridge over the Saint Regis), then unload at the bottom of the falls, and leave your vehicle in the parking lot paved with concrete next to the restrooms.

Km 68 DEC Interpretation Center: take Hewitt Road (same as Larose Road), and always keep your right. The unpaved road may happen to be in poor condition but in general it is passable without difficulty for most vehicles.

Km 67 Left branch of Larose/Hewitt road mentioned above.

Km 63 Mills Road

Km 58 Nicholville, north east side of the bridge

Km 52 Fort Jackson picnic area (bridge upstream should be used only when the picnic area downstream is closed). To reach the picnic area, from the intersection south of the bridge, take the Converse road west (right), and within 1 km there is a park fenced with large rocks and a metal gate made of only one metal bar. Most time the gate is opened. Drive in and follow your right. The river is about 0.4 km ahead.

Km 44 Buckton road - use south west side.

Shuttle

- From Buckton to Saint Regis Falls:
- Buckton Road (54) east for 2.5 km
- Right on 49, it is 6.7 km to the bridge. On the south side of the bridge is a "T" intersection, where the right brings to the picnic area of Fort Jackson where the river can be accessed.
- Left is route 49, keep it for about 2 km.
- Turn left (east) on route 11B, for about 3 km to the intersection with route 458. The access at Nicholville is at the bridge 300 m ahead.
- Turn right (south) on route 458. From there it is about 11 km to Saint Regis Falls. On your way you will see two intersection with both ends of Mills Road (one is near Nicholville, the other is immediately before Ozonia Lake Outlet). The entrance of Hewitt Road that brings to two access points is located about 600 m past a 90 degrees turn to the right. Another 600 m ahead is the bridge over the Saint Regis River, and the entrance of the campground from where the river can be accessed.

Description

Saint Regis Falls to Nicholville

- put-in at the base of the falls
- 0.5 km of class 2
- DANGER: class 5 drop on the left, class 4 drop on the right. There can be an hydraulic keeper depending on the water level.
- Short class 3 with a small drop
- class 3 from the island below for about 400 m.
- pool of about 150 m
- old broken dam, a steep and tricky portage can be done over the center-left part of the dam.
- The (former?) NYSDEC Demonstration Center, from where access is possible, is located on the left bank.
- Class 3-4 rapid after the dam. The most difficult part is immediately below the island. At some point, the rapids temper down to class 2
- Old bridge pillars. Next to these is another access point, at the end of Hewitt/Larose Road.
- Class 2-3 for some hundreds of meters
- After a large curve to the left, the river becomes class 3 for about 300 m
- Short stretch (less than 50 m) of class 1
- For the next kilometers, continuous rapids of class 2-3 and 3
- Mouth of Ozonia Lake Outlet
- Class 2 up to the bridge of Mills Road
- Class 1 for about 1.7 km downstream of Mills Road
- Several bends ahead and shortly after an island begins the section called "The Gorge". The next 3.5 km down to Nicholville are made of class 2-3.
- At some point in the Gorge one can see the ruins of an old factory. This marks the approach of the most serious rapid of the whole run. The right is a class 4 rapid, whereas the left side is a class 3 slide in shallow water over a long rock slab, followed by a good hydraulic. The whole thing can be scouted from the left bank, although the steep rock banks might make it difficult at higher levels of water.
- Further downstream, Miller Brook, a tributary of the left bank joins the Saint Regis over a very picturesque fall.
- In Nicholville, the best way for getting out of the river is from the right bank, immediately downstream of the bridge.

Nicholville to Buckton:

- The gorge continues for about 1 km
- The last 3-4 km to Fort Jackson are class 1, where the river often splits in many channels around islands.
- Bridge of county road 49 at Fort Jackson
- About 500m of class 2, with a short stretch of class 2-3
- Picnic area of Fort Jackson, where another access is possible. There is a nice good surfing wave on the far right (opposed to the picnic area)
- Continuous class 2 for another 500m or so. At the end of this stretch, there is a very good and very sticky surfing wave on the right, followed by about 50m of backwater.
- The next 7 km down to Buckton road are continuous class 1-2, with short stretches of class 2.
- Take-out is on the left bank, before the bridge unless you enjoy the electric fence.
- UP TO YOU TO EXPLORE THE NEXT SECTION...

Credits and Distribution

Survey

Olivier Tardif, Charles Leduc

April 6, 2002 at 670 cfs

May 11, 2002 at 360 cfs

May 04, 2004 at 490 cfs

Map work/Text

Charles Leduc, May 2004.

Base Maps

Topographic maps from USGS.

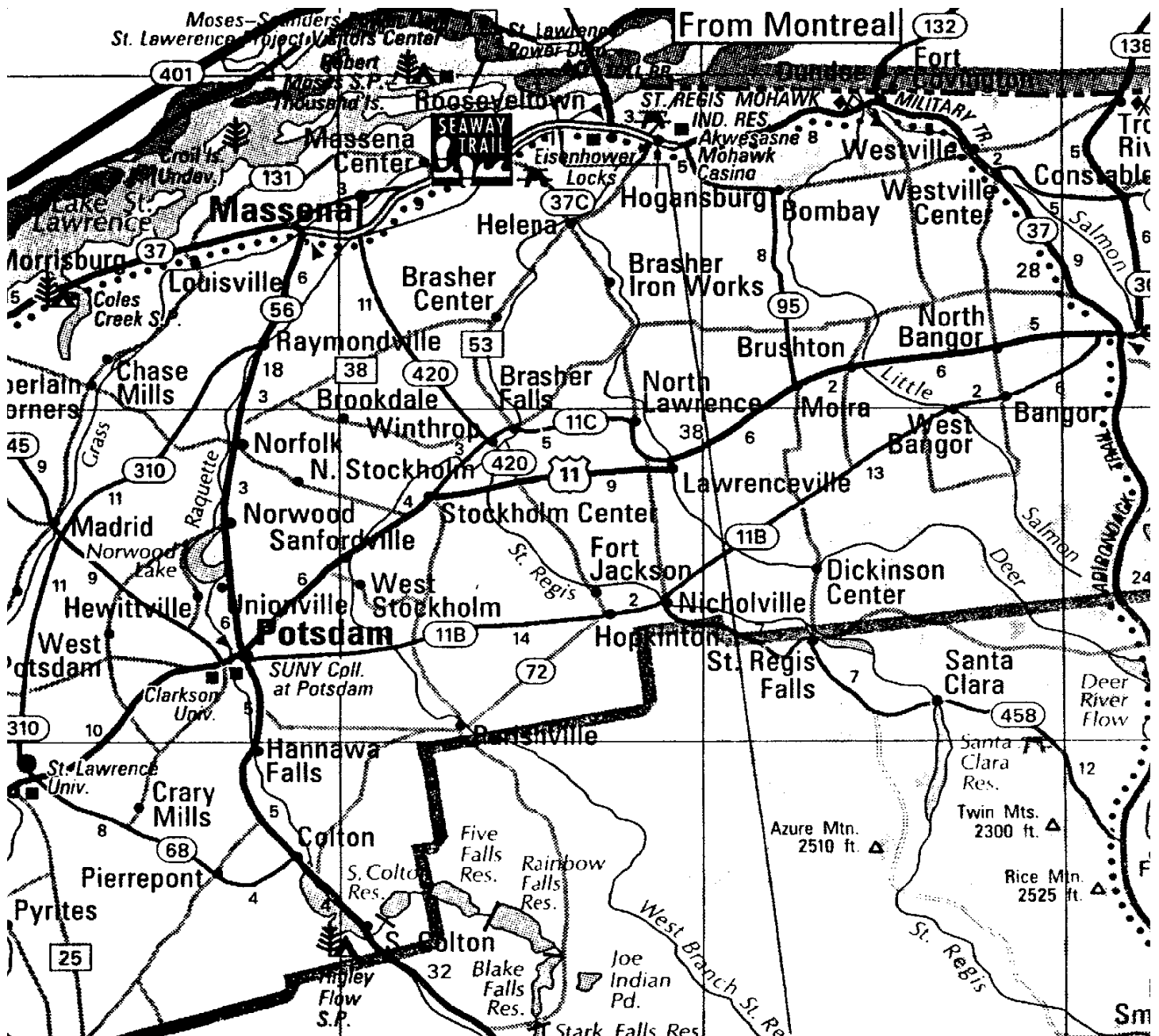
Distribution

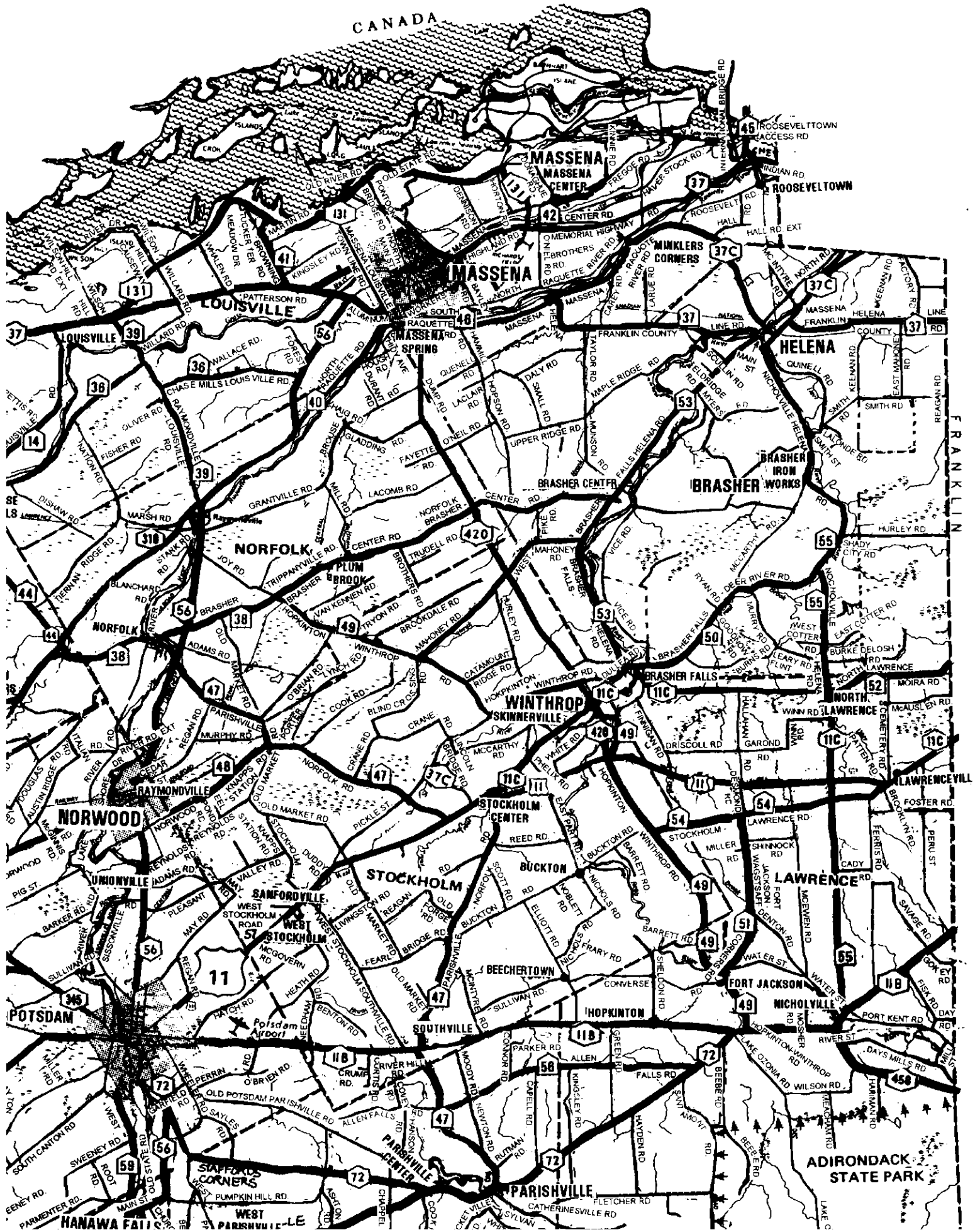
Authorized, provided the content remains unchanged and the distribution free of charge.

Available from www.cartespleinair.org.

Disclaimer

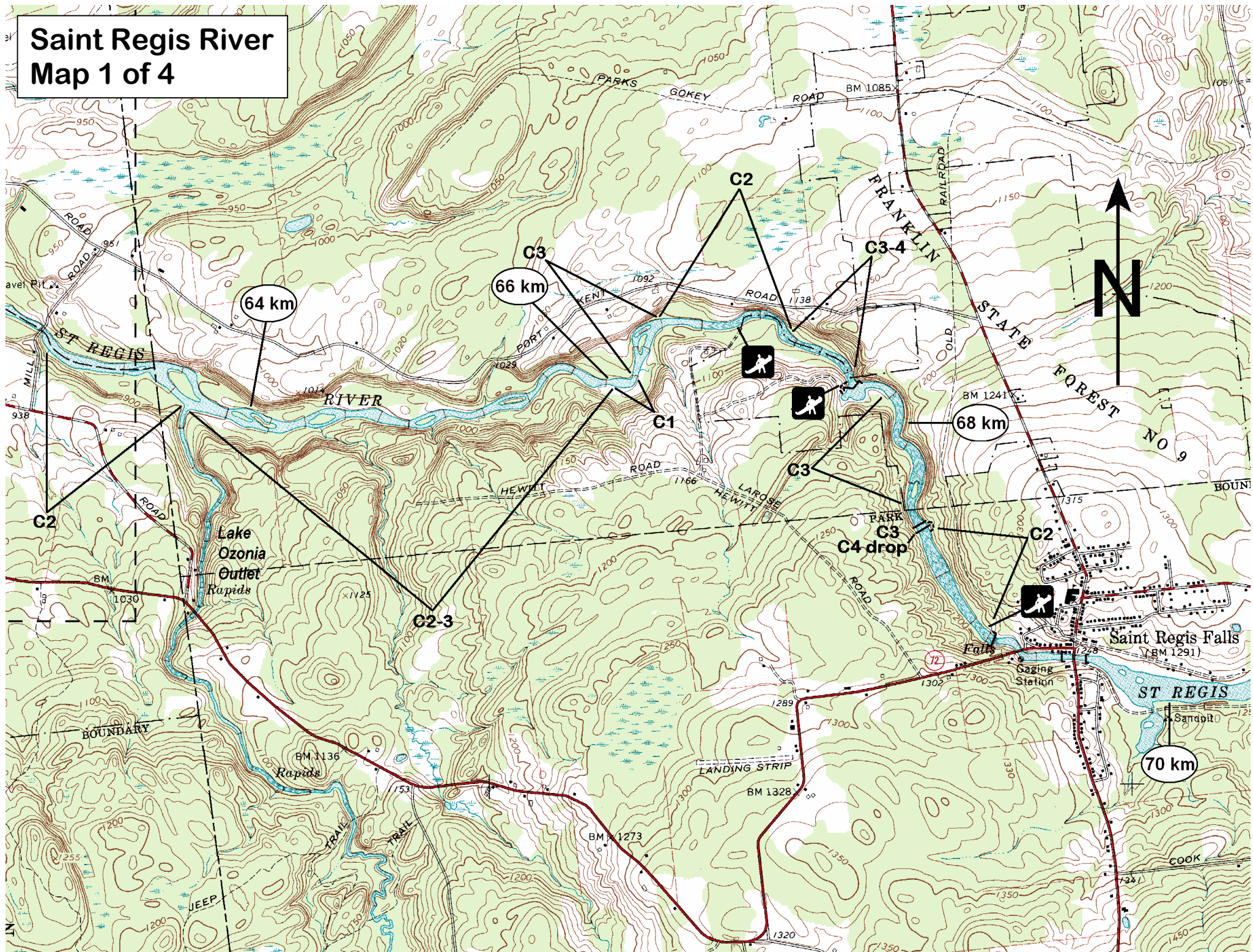
This document has been produced on a volunteer basis by paddlers who do not claim to have infallible judgment. The authors assume no responsibility for any accident, damage or other prejudice that may result from the use of this document. Omissions or errors are always possible, and we would be grateful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



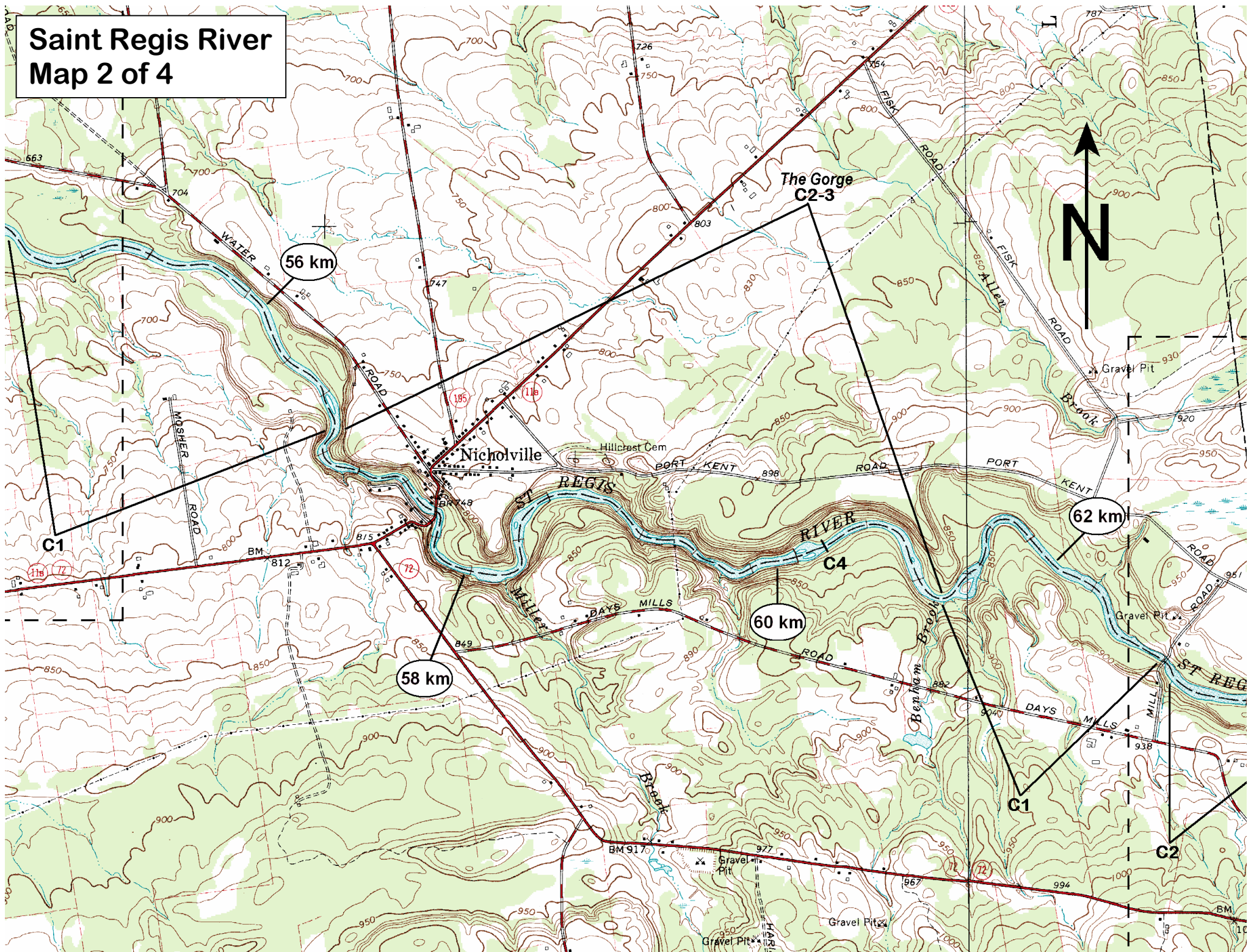


Saint Regis River

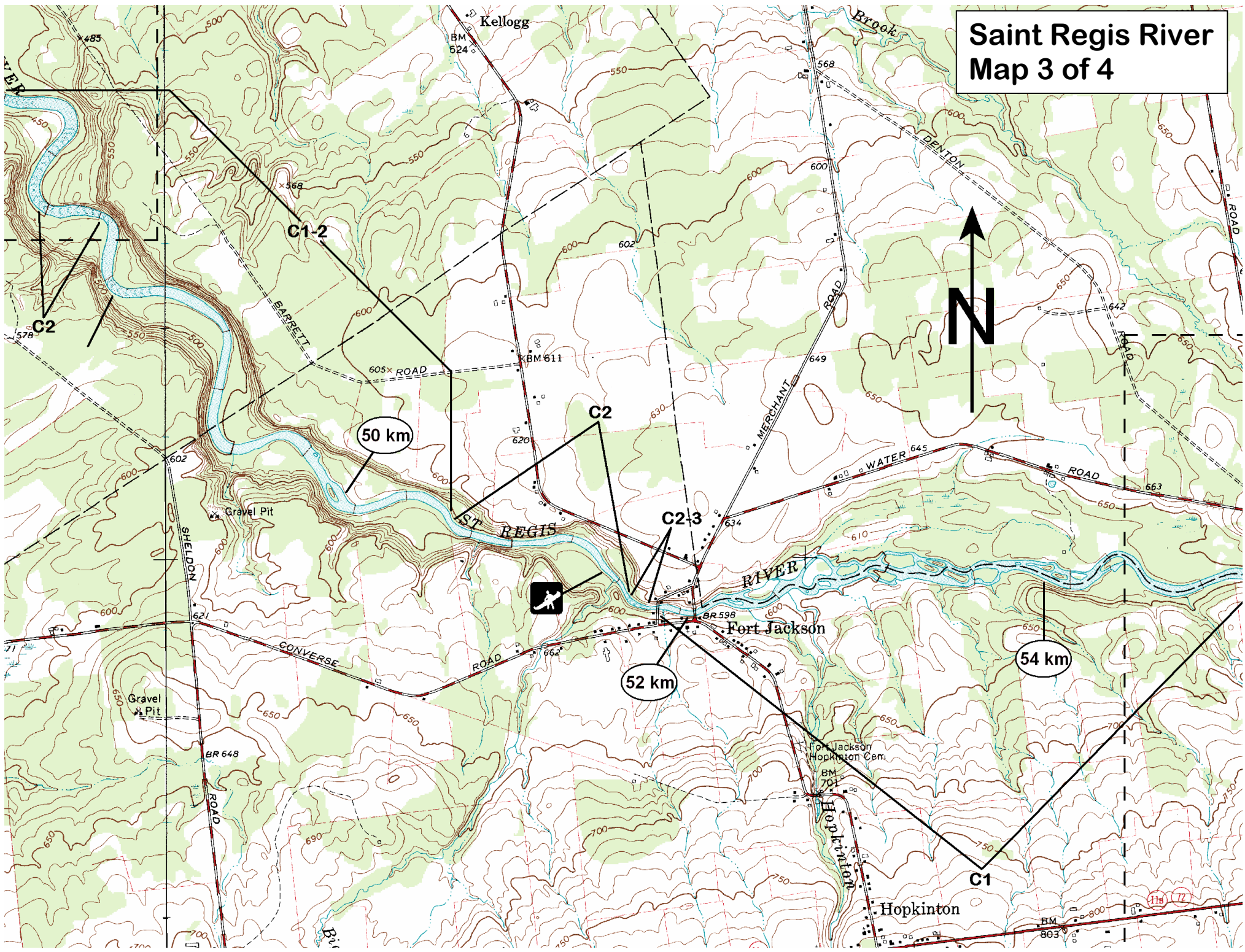
Map 1 of 4



Saint Regis River Map 2 of 4



Saint Regis River Map 3 of 4



Saint Regis River

Map 4 of 4

