



Chaudière Falls

Ashuapmushuan

**River Map
Prepared by: Eric Leclair**

Prepared for: Réserve Faunique Ashuapmushuan

November 2010

General Information



Père Laure Map, 1732.

The main source of the river is Lake Ashuapmushuan, where French fur traders established a fur trade post in 1685. Used since centuries by Innu natives and Cree people, the Ashuapmushuan River was once the main access route between Tadoussac and the North Sea (James Bay). This 1050 km journey, which included between 125 and 200 portages, took the Voyageurs 20 to 30 days to complete. On the return trip, they only took 2 days to cross the 190 km between the fur trade post and Saint-Jean Lake! The names of the rapids on this map are those found on the maps of *Dumais et Horace* (1894) and *O'Sullivan* (1900).

Given that the water level on the Ashuapmushuan River can vary from 60 to 2400 m³/sec, often completely changing the character of the river, it's not an easy task to assign one difficulty rating to each rapid. The following water levels have been identified with data from the *Centre d'Expertise Hydrique du Québec*, in combination with my own personal observations collected over the course of 22 different trips on the river:

Eau Basse/Low Water (EB):	100 to 200 m³/sec	Average EB: 150 m ³ /sec
Eau Moyenne/Medium Water (EM):	200 to 400 m³/sec	Average EM: 300 m ³ /sec
Eau Haute/High Water (EH):	400 to 800 m³/sec	Average EH: 600 m ³ /sec
Crue/Flood	800 to 1600 m³/sec	Average Flood: 1200 m ³ /sec

The overall difficulty of the Ashuapmushuan River is rated RII-III. RII in EB (low water), RII-III in EM (medium water) and RIII in EH (high water). Depending on the water level, this river is accessible to novice paddlers (EB) and intermediate paddlers (EH). This river is also accessible to beginners, but they must be accompanied by a guide.

The Ashuapmushuan River is the only one in the area that is not dammed, and given the fact that it flows in a natural reserve, its natural environment is well preserved and rich in flora and fauna. The northern section flows through boreal forest, which progressively changes to a mixed forest.

The Ashuapmushuan River can be paddled throughout the summer, and it is particularly appreciated for its long sections of rapids. The Chaudières Falls are well worth a trip on their own. This incredible river is definitively a classic for canoe trippers from Québec and abroad.

River Map Legend

The river maps are made from top to bottom. As a result, when you look at them while travelling downstream, what is on the right on your river map is also on the right of the actual river. The scale of the river maps are identical to the topographical maps, which is 1:50 000 (1 cm = 500m).

Here is a list of the symbols that were added to the original topographical maps:



The numbers in the purple circles indicate the number of kilometers remaining before reaching Lake Saint-Jean.



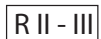
Put-in accessible by road.



Indicate the beginning of a portage trail and the total distance (in meters) to reach the end of the trail.



Campsites. The number indicates the number of tents (G = over 5 tents) and the letter indicates the overall site quality; A : Excellent; B : Very Good; C : Good; D : Acceptable.



Rapid rating

Rapid Rating and Water Level

A RII-III rapid means that its difficulty is closer to RII in EB, RIII in EH and somewhere in the middle in EM. If the river is in flood (over 800 m³/sec), the rapids generally become more difficult (big waves).

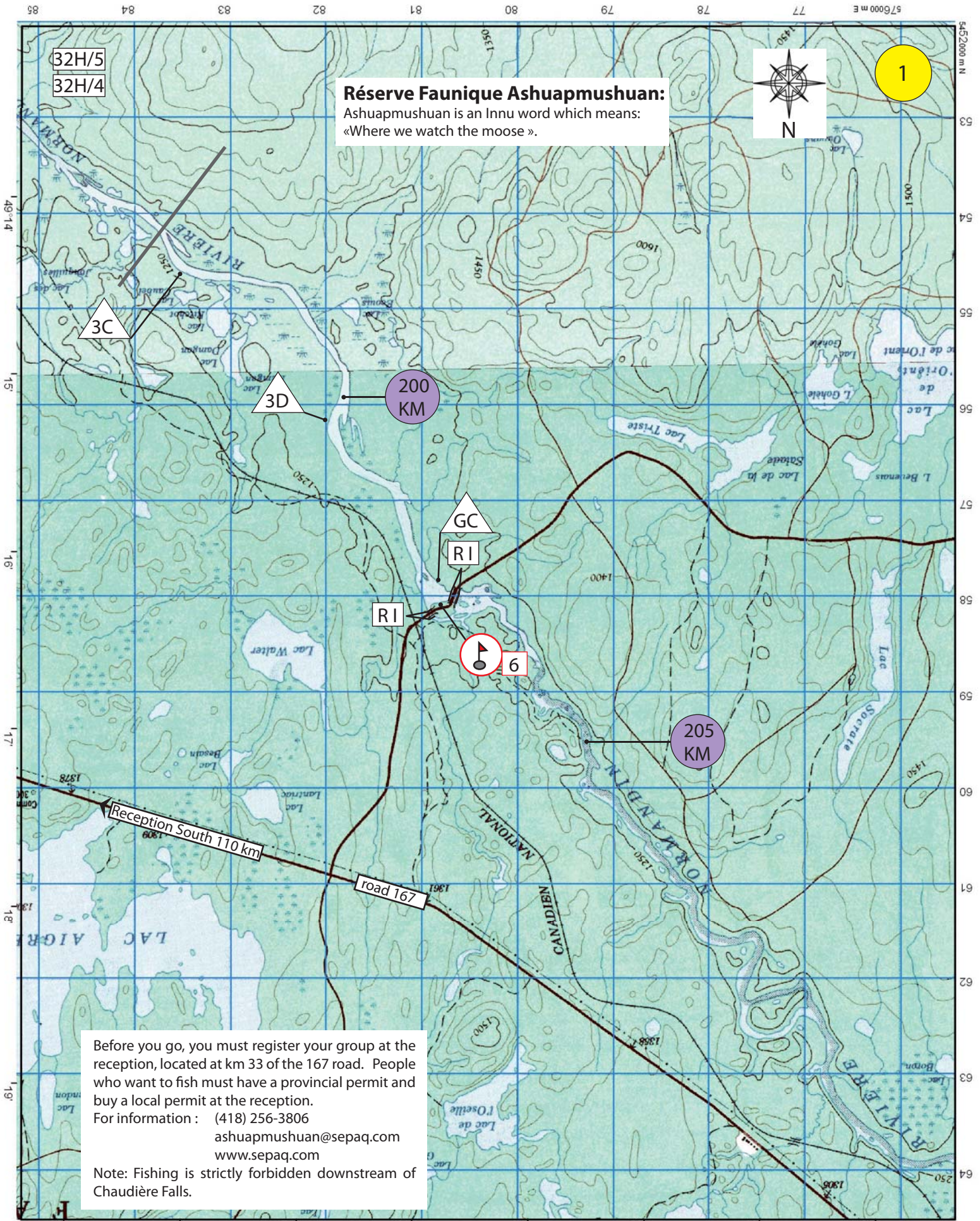
General Ratings

R I : Easy. Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.

R II : Novice. Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers. Swimmers are seldom injured and group assistance is seldom needed.

R III : Intermediate. Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required; large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on large volume rivers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Injuries while swimming are rare; self-rescue is usually easy but group assistance may be required to avoid long swims.

R IV : Advanced. Intense, powerful but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. Rapids may require “must” moves above dangerous hazards. Risk of injury to swimmers is moderate to high, and water conditions may make self-rescue difficult. Group assistance for rescue is often essential but requires practiced skills. Limit of open top canoes.



Réserve Faunique Ashuapmushuan:
 Ashuapmushuan is an Innu word which means:
 «Where we watch the moose».

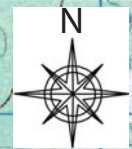


Before you go, you must register your group at the reception, located at km 33 of the 167 road. People who want to fish must have a provincial permit and buy a local permit at the reception.
 For information : (418) 256-3806
 ashuapmushuan@sepaq.com
 www.sepaq.com
 Note: Fishing is strictly forbidden downstream of Chaudière Falls.

Fur trade post :

The Ashuapmushuan fur trade post was established in 1686. Given its location half way between Tadoussac and the North Sea (James Bay), it quickly became an important stop for all Voyageurs. Located at the confluence of four rivers (Marquette, Nicabau, Ashuapmushuan and Chigoubiche) the post was also visited by many natives every year for the annual fur fair. Very active until 1851, the post was finally abandoned in 1935.

The various archaeological research completed in the area revealed that natives have inhabited this area since over 4000 years. Visiting the remains of this old fur trade post and the surrounding graveyards is a true pilgrimage in the Innu territory and history.



195 KM

185 KM

3C

3C

190 KM

GB

INNU CEMETERY
FUR TRADE POST

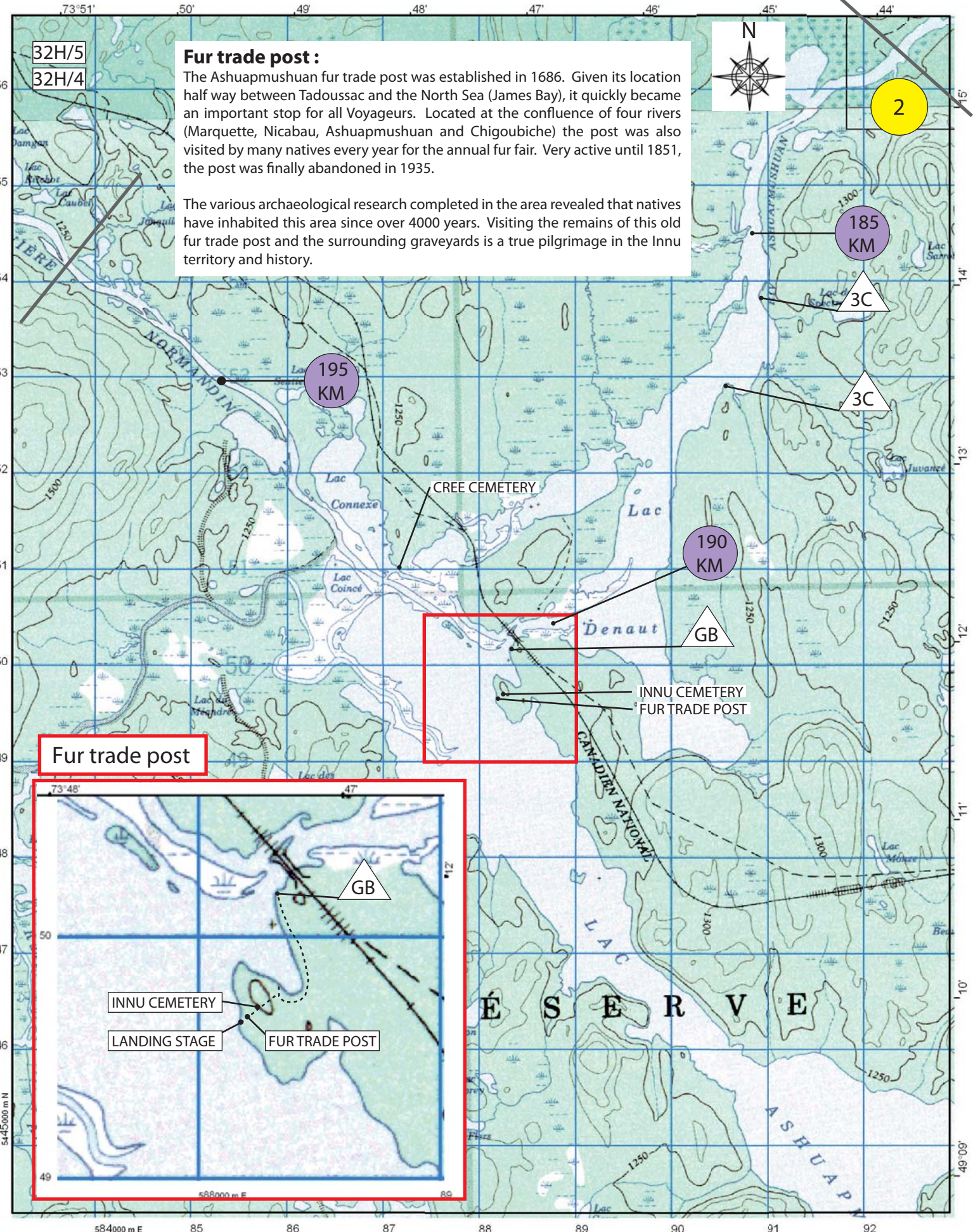
Fur trade post

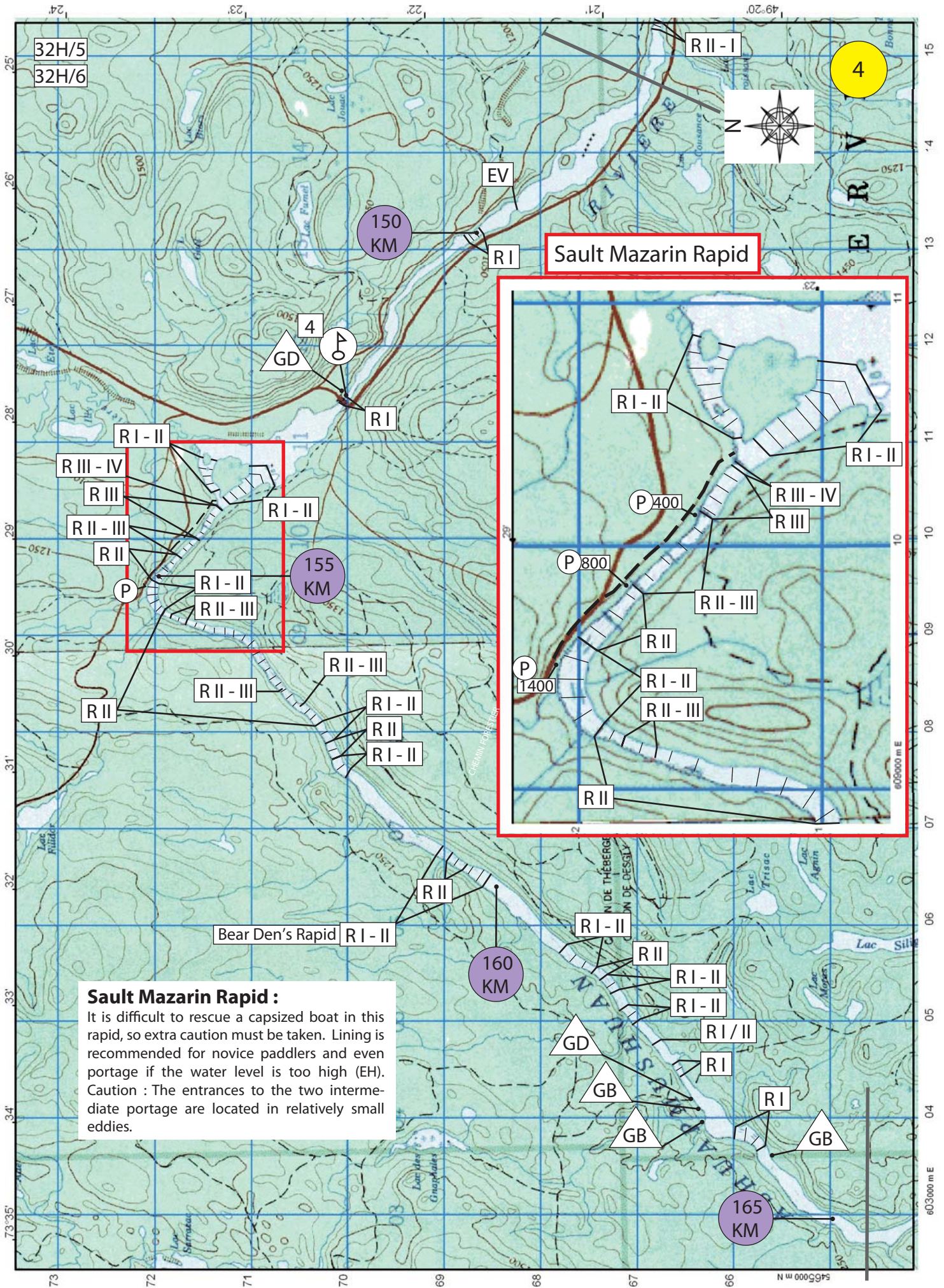
GB

INNU CEMETERY

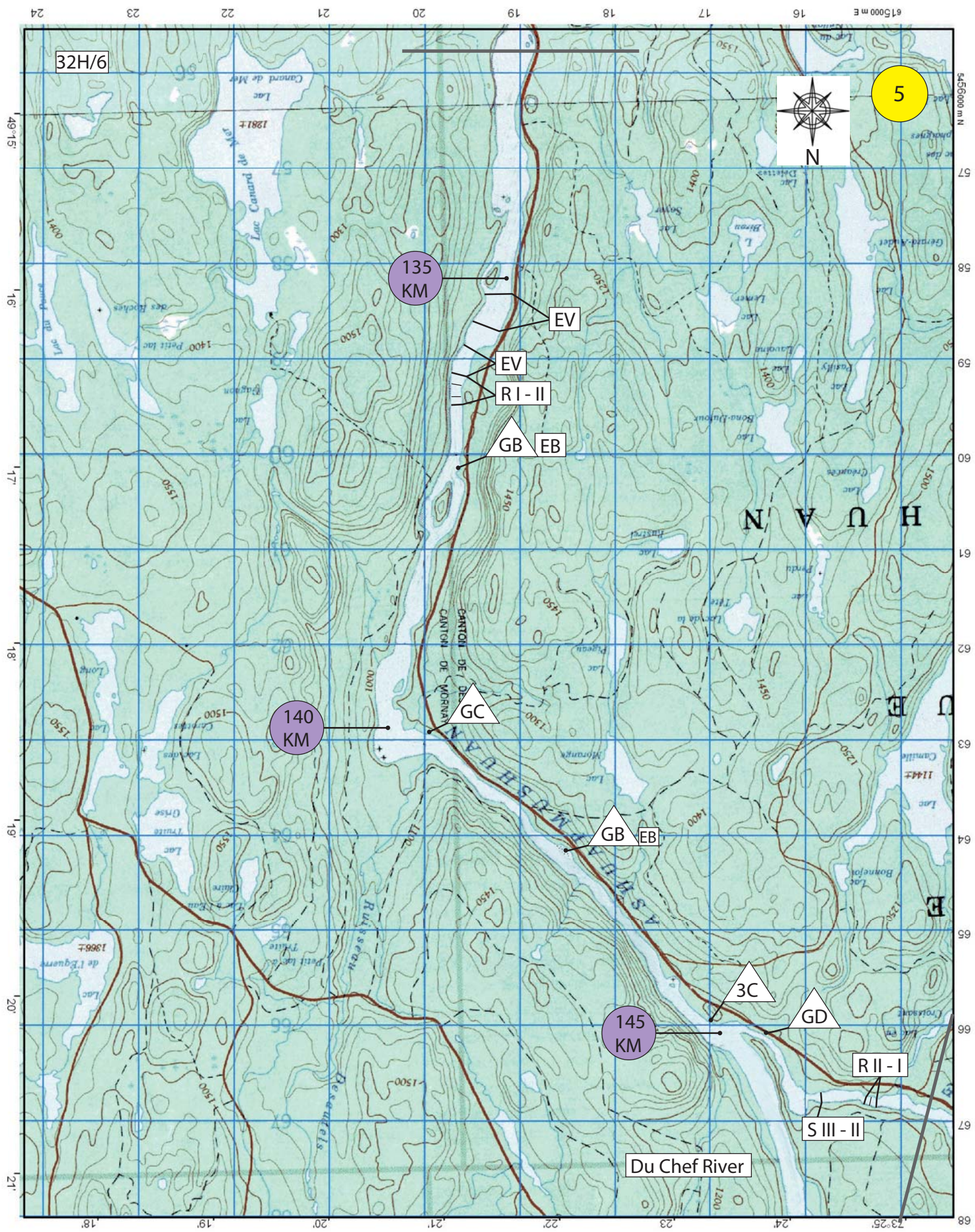
LANDING STAGE

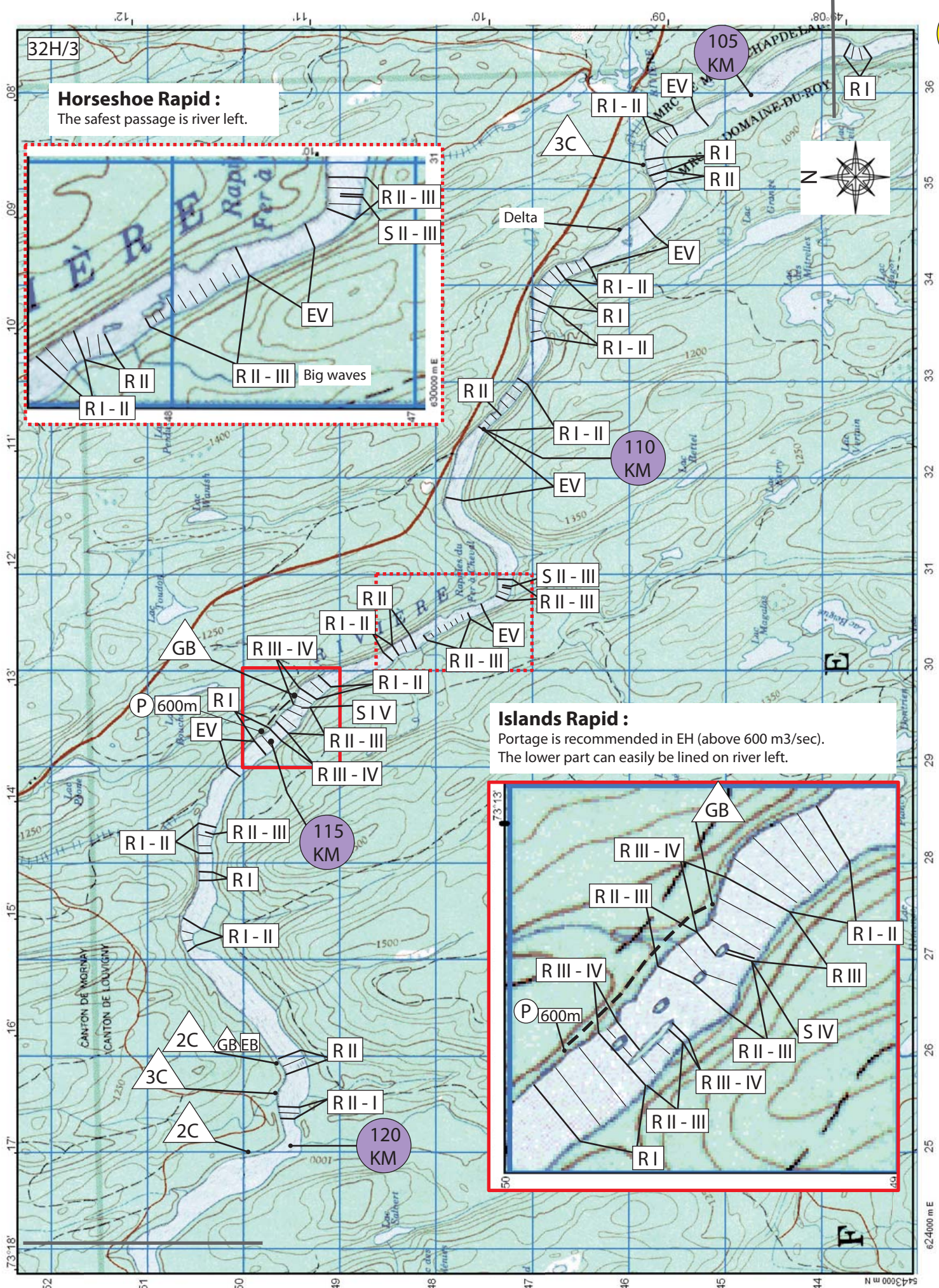
FUR TRADE POST





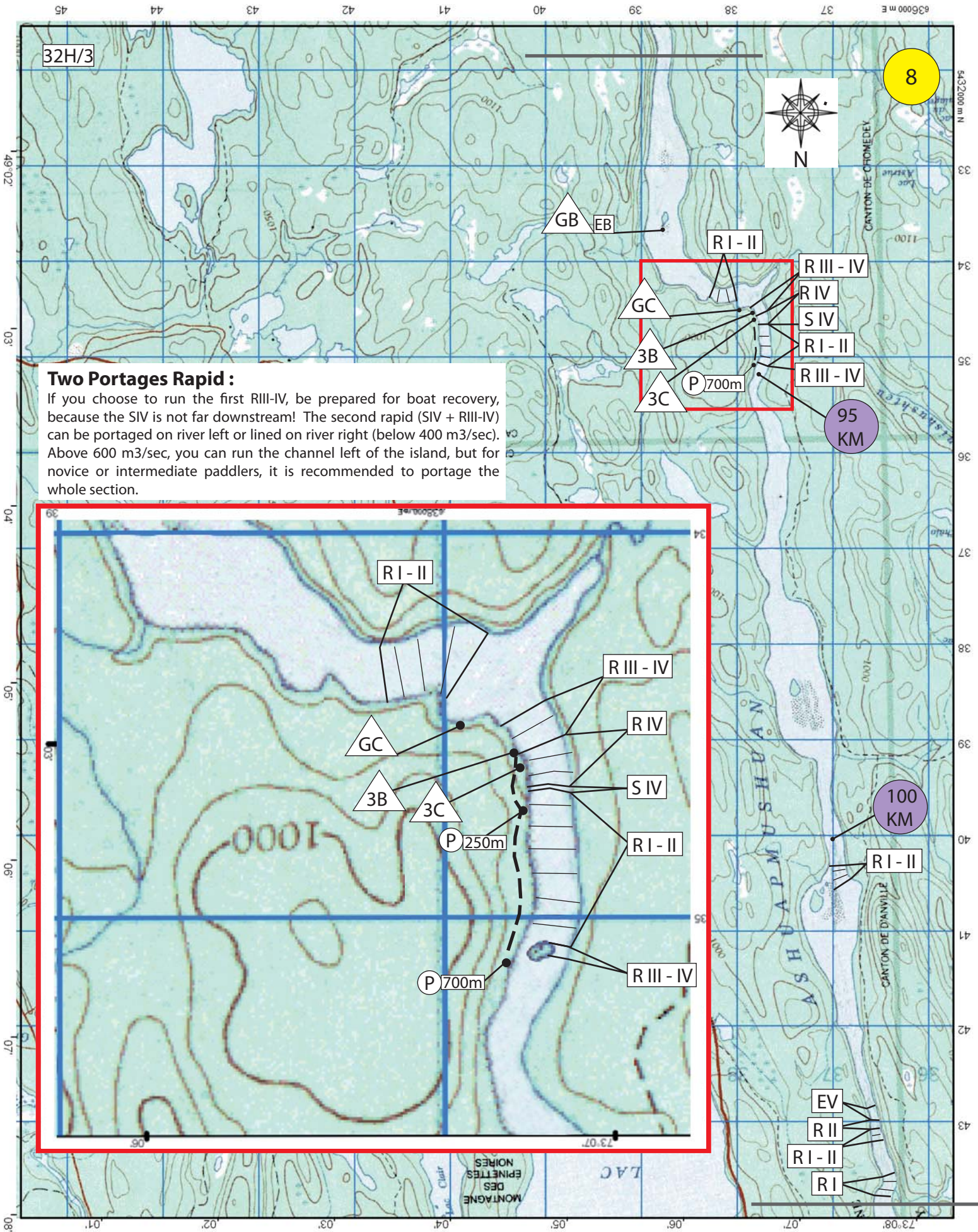
Sault Mazarin Rapid :
 It is difficult to rescue a capsized boat in this rapid, so extra caution must be taken. Lining is recommended for novice paddlers and even portage if the water level is too high (EH). Caution : The entrances to the two intermediate portage are located in relatively small eddies.





Horseshoe Rapid :
The safest passage is river left.

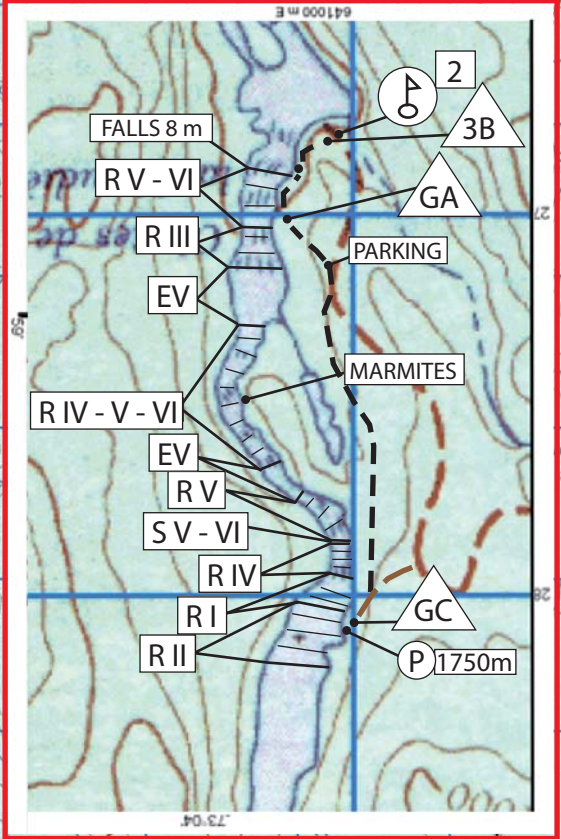
Islands Rapid :
Portage is recommended in EH (above 600 m3/sec).
The lower part can easily be lined on river left.



Two Portages Rapid :

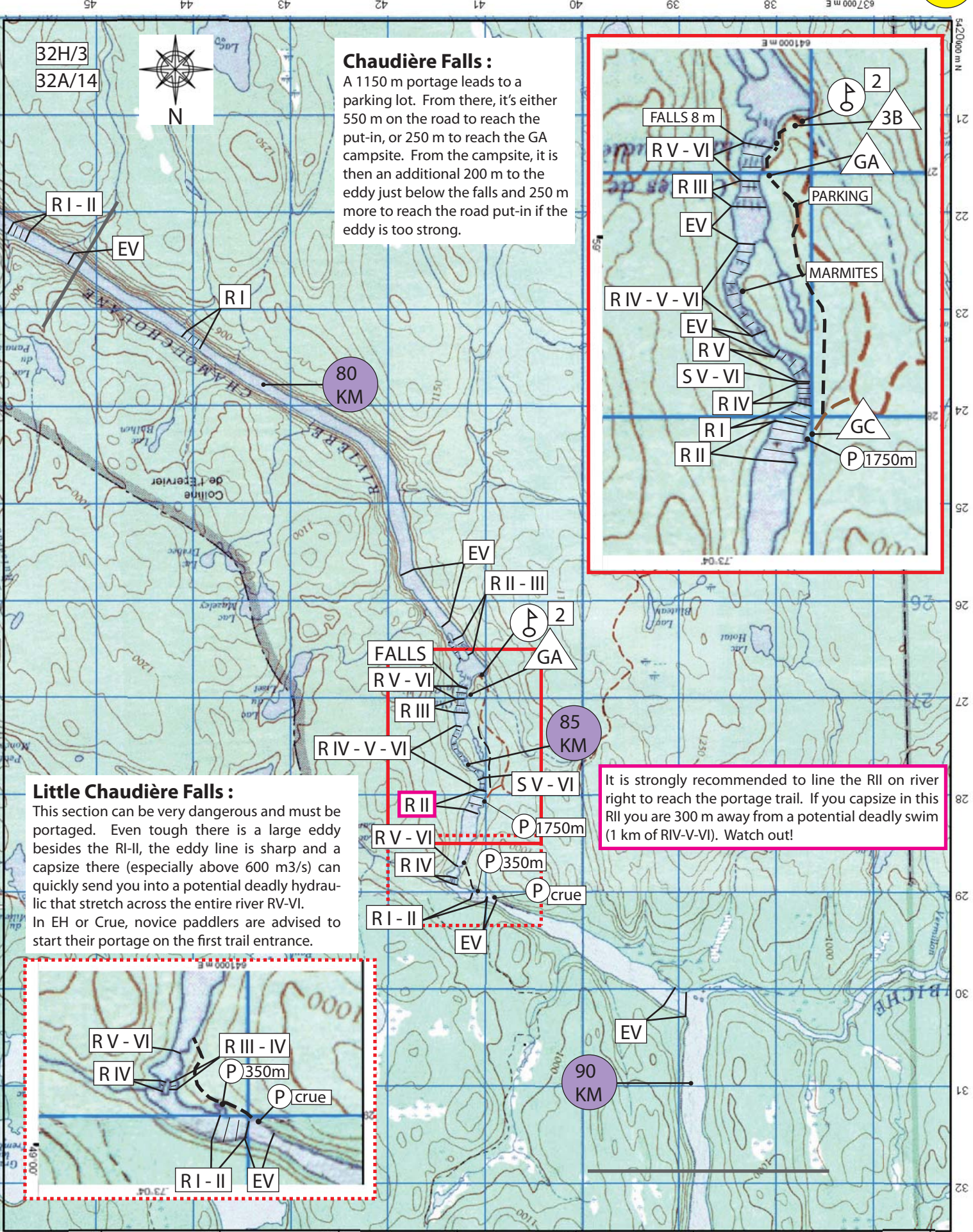
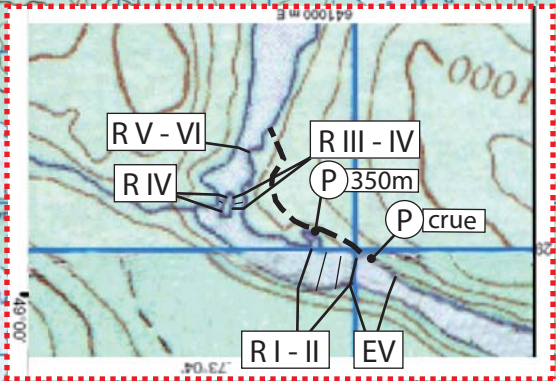
If you choose to run the first RIII-IV, be prepared for boat recovery, because the SIV is not far downstream! The second rapid (SIV + RIII-IV) can be portaged on river left or lined on river right (below 400 m3/sec). Above 600 m3/sec, you can run the channel left of the island, but for novice or intermediate paddlers, it is recommended to portage the whole section.

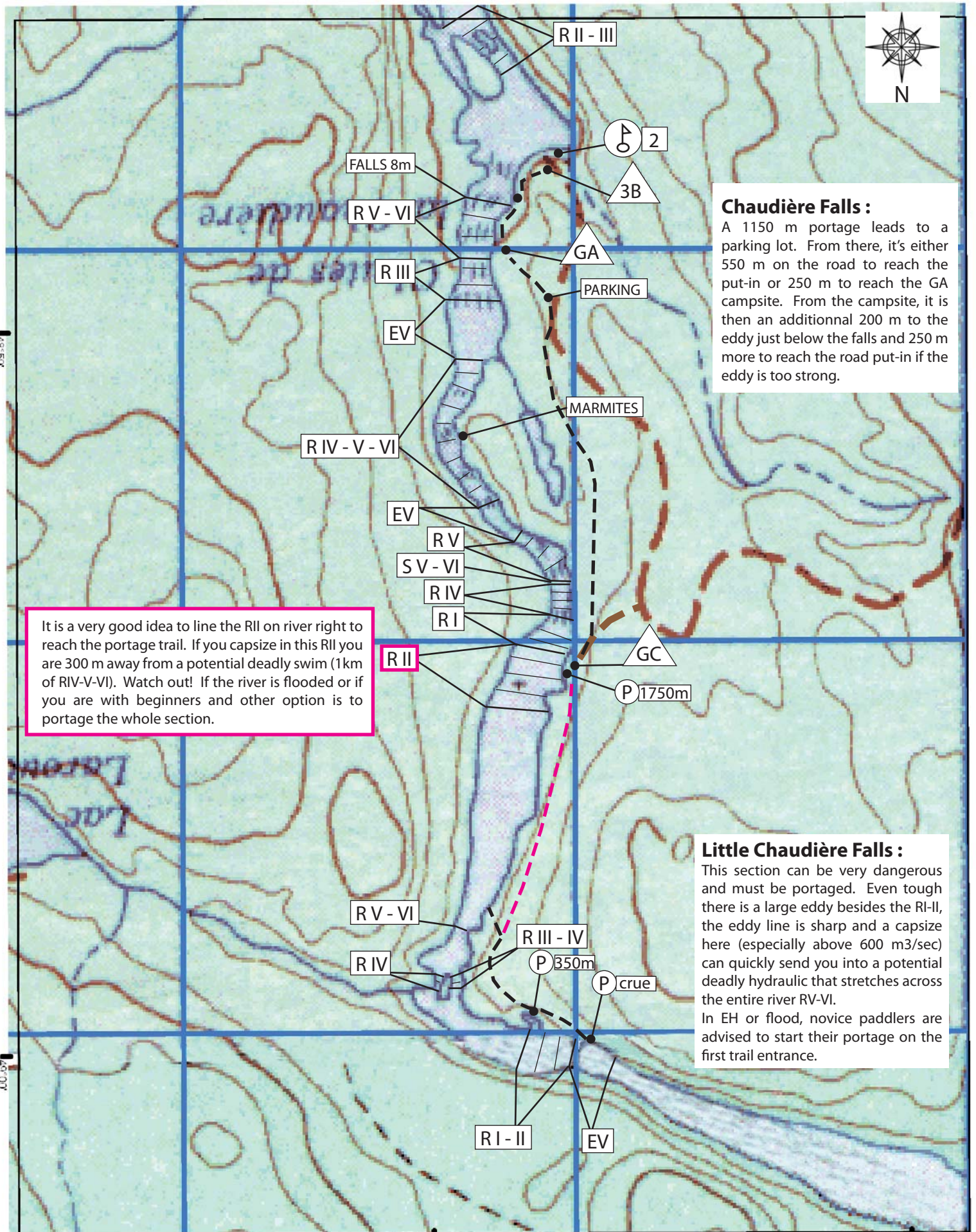
Chaudière Falls :
 A 1150 m portage leads to a parking lot. From there, it's either 550 m on the road to reach the put-in, or 250 m to reach the GA campsite. From the campsite, it is then an additional 200 m to the eddy just below the falls and 250 m more to reach the road put-in if the eddy is too strong.



Little Chaudière Falls :
 This section can be very dangerous and must be portaged. Even though there is a large eddy besides the RI-II, the eddy line is sharp and a capsizes there (especially above 600 m3/s) can quickly send you into a potential deadly hydraulic that stretch across the entire river RV-VI. In EH or Crue, novice paddlers are advised to start their portage on the first trail entrance.

It is strongly recommended to line the RII on river right to reach the portage trail. If you capsize in this RII you are 300 m away from a potential deadly swim (1 km of RIV-V-VI). Watch out!





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It is a very good idea to line the RII on river right to reach the portage trail. If you capsize in this RII you are 300 m away from a potential deadly swim (1km of RIV-V-VI). Watch out! If the river is flooded or if you are with beginners and other option is to portage the whole section.

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