

Presque Isle River, Michigan

1. Region surrounding the river

a. The Presque Isle River is located in the extreme western portion of the upper peninsula of Michigan adjacent to the Black River watershed in Gogebic and Ontonagon Counties. Topography varies from low lying marshy areas to hill and mountainous terrain with rock outcroppings. The area is mostly forested with second growth conifers being predominant. Two major highways, U. S. 2 and State Route 28, cross the river. County Route 519 parallels the lower four miles of the river. A major portion of the river flows through the proclamation boundary of the Ottawa National Forest. Most of the area is undeveloped within the watershed except along the major highways. Approximate size of the watershed is 294 square miles.

b. The population of an area within 50 miles was estimated at 45,000; most of which lies in or around the communities of Ontonagon, Ironwood, Bessemer, Ramsey, and Wakefield, Michigan.

c. Numerous public and private recreation facilities exist within the region, including federal, state, county, township, and municipal facilities. Acreage figures are unavailable at the present time. Numerous lakes and free-flowing streams are present within the region.

2. River

a. The river covers approximately 35 miles and the depth varies from one to eight feet. The bottom material consists of mud along the marsh areas with rocky or solid rock on the remaining area. The average discharge over 22 years of record is 172 cfs.

b. The mainstem and East Branch is of high quality trout water from U. S. Forest Service Road 322 to two miles above Marenisco, Michigan. The mainstream then becomes second quality trout to its mouth. Brook and brown trout are the dominant species except some steelhead runs occur below the lowest falls. The stream is canoeable except for several miles below M-28 where portages are necessary because of the numerous falls. The mainstream has nine falls, all of which are below or downstream from Marenisco. The river also flows through the Porcupine Mountains State Park, the State of Michigan's largest wilderness park.

c. Stream is of high water quality.

d. The only foreseeable water resource development that may become a factor is a proposal to install fish ladders over the falls to allow Coho salmon to run up the stream.

e.-f. Land ownership is significant since the U. S. Forest Service is a predominant owner in the upper stream to several miles below M-28. From this point downstream to the Porcupine Mountains State Park private ownership is predominant. The stream has little or no development for its entire length with the exception of Marenisco where development is medium.

g. Specific data are not available.

h. See map 1:250,000 Iron River quadrangle.

3. Chief attributes of the river include the excellent canoeing and boating potential as well as high quality water. Excellent fishing potential exists in the area above Marenisco. Scenic areas of falls and large amount of public ownership already exists in some of the best portions of the river.

4. The source of the material used for gathering the above information was: State of Michigan's Fish Division files, Stream Inventory, Michigan Canoe Trails, Department of Natural Resources maps.