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MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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SERIES: THE TROUT STREAMS OF MICHIGAN

NO. 22 SULLIVAN CREEK

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Sullivan Creek is a small stream located in northeastern Alger County. It drains about one and one-half square miles and empties into Lake Superior about 12 miles west of the town of Grand Marais. Access is by County Road 700.

It is small (5-15 feet wide, 4" to 3 feet deep), has a steep gradient, and heads in a series of shallow spring fed ponds. The pond bottoms are sand and silt and vegetated with bullrushes and tag alders. The stream bottom from the outlets is sand and gravel. Stream banks are steep, but quite well vegetated with northern hardwoods, hemlock white pine and cedar. Instream cover is abundant and consists of undercut banks and accumulated debris (there is a small log jam between County Road 700 and Lake Superior).

The most common fish species present are brook and rainbow trout and long nosed dace. Pink salmon were noted here in the fall of 1975. Food is abundant in the form of caddis, may and stoneflies, chironomids and fresh water shrimp; the latter are especially abundant in upstream ponds.

Water chemistry indicates medium productivity. Water temperatures rarely get above 65°F. The Water is clear except during the spring breakup when it becomes exceedingly turbulant.

This creek has a history of a late spring steelhead run out of Lake Superior and a fall run of pink salmon. White and long nosed suckers, sea lamprey and smelt ascend this stream in the spring. Menominee whitefish hover near its mouth in the fall and provide a good fishery at times.

The lower 300-400 feet get a good play from the spring steelhead fishermen and "poachers". Brook trout fishing has been good in headwater ponds in the past, and at one time these ponds were stocked with brook trout on a regular basis. Because public access to these ponds is no longer assured, stocking has been discontinued.