

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the Salmon Trout River has been best known for its coaster brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*). However, in the past 20 years numbers of these large lake-run brook trout have declined. There is now considerable interest in developing a management plan to increase the abundance of these trophy fish.

This report describes the Salmon Trout River, its past and present fish populations, the related sport fishery, and the coaster brook trout itself. Also discussed are reasons why the Salmon Trout has been, and can continue to be, an excellent coaster stream and factors which may have caused the long-term decline in brook trout abundance. Finally, several specific recommendations are listed for management of the coaster population in this river and nearby coastal waters of Lake Superior.

Because of the private ownership of most of this watershed, minimal physical and biological data have been collected by state biologists. Thus, some sections of this plan are brief and lacking in detail. Fortunately, the Huron Mountain Club has employed several consultant biologists during the past 50 years. Their recorded data form the basis of this plan. Other information on volume of flow, water temperatures, and angler catches have been collected by foresighted club members. Additional data on stream flows and water chemistries were obtained from the U. S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Marquette Biological Station (Sea Lamprey Control). Finally, a public meeting was held in Marquette to obtain the benefits of opinions and experiences of anglers who had fished for coasters for many years.

ENVIRONMENT

The Salmon Trout River, a tributary of Lake Superior, is located in northwestern Marquette County approximately 30 miles north and west of the City of Marquette, Michigan. Except for the uppermost reaches, the mainstream and most tributaries lie within the boundaries of the Huron Mountain Club, a privately owned and exclusive organization managed primarily to provide outdoor recreation for its members.

The Huron Mountain area consists of a series of high hills and granite outcroppings. Soils in the lower watershed are relatively thin but stable because of the forest cover. The upper watershed grades from flat to rolling terrain of predominantly sandy soils.

Most of the lands within the club boundaries and in the Salmon Trout watershed are heavily forested, many with virgin timber. Northern hardwoods, hemlock, and red and white pine are common in upland areas. Lowlands are covered with a wide variety of woody vegetation including white birch, white cedar, balsam fir, spruce, tamarack, and tag alder.