

The Rogue River watershed is in the latitude where convergence of polar and tropical air masses create rapidly changing weather patterns. However, Lake Michigan operates as a modifier and makes for generally cooler summers and milder winters than experienced by other areas of the same general latitude.

The area has an average annual precipitation of over 33 inches with a fairly uniform distribution throughout the year. Average annual snowfall is 58.1 inches. The average annual temperature is 47.8 degrees with the highest monthly maximum temperature average occurring in July - 72.9 degrees - and the lowest monthly minimum temperature average occurring in February - 17.5 degrees. The average growing season extends from the first week in May to the first week in October. The prevailing winds are from the southwest at about 10 mph. On the average during each year, the percent possible sunshine is about 50 percent.

F. Ownership and Accessibility

Approximately 80 percent of the land along the mainstream of the Rogue is privately owned. The major portion of publicly owned land - 5,260 acres - is located in the Rogue river State Game Area. Public access to the river can be gained at the State Game Area or at any of the bridges and culverts crossing the river. There is an access site near the mouth of the Rogue in Plainfield Township, and Kent County leases to the Department of Natural Resources an access site and park at the junction of 12 Mile Road and Summit Avenue. Because access sites with adequate parking spaces are needed, the State is attempting to buy additional parcels along the river. They are negotiating to buy the Nawara property in Section 22 of Algoma Township and have recently purchased the Powell property in Section 23. This provides an additional 1800 feet of river frontage for public use. They have also purchased 43 acres south of Fonger Road in Section 30 of Algoma Township, and approximately 40 acres in the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 32 Algoma Township, near Pine Island Drive.

EXISTING USES

A. Agriculture

Agriculture is the major land use in the Rogue River watershed. Fifty-five percent of the land is in cropland. In Newaygo County, muckland crops predominate. The drainage from these lands are the headwaters of the mainstream of the Rogue. Periodic cleaning of these drains may cause downstream siltation in the river. In Kent County, pasture land, upland crops and forest land are found along the banks of the river.

Supplemental irrigation of croplands near the river is an established practice. Algoma Township has about 100 acres of land in irrigation from surface water sources. Plainfield , Sparta and Tyrone Townships all have lesser amounts.

Although timber harvest is not a major industry in the watershed, there is some harvest from small woodlot operations. Forests comprise 30 percent of the land in the watershed. Much of this forest land is within the declared boundaries of the Rogue River State Game Area.

B. Hunting and Fishing

The watershed is moderately productive farm game habitat. There is a sparse ring-necked pheasant population, few quail, a fair cottontail rabbit population and good fox squirrel numbers. Fur bearers and waterfowl are numerous on the streams, lakes, and ponds. There is excellent ruffed grouse hunting in the surrounding uplands and a heavy white-tailed deer population in the lowlands along the river.

The Rogue has the distinction of being one of Michigan's southernmost trout streams. Throughout its entire length in Kent County it is designated and managed as a trout stream by the Department of Natural Resources. However, during the summer months water temperatures nearly approach the maximum tolerance level for trout. Sluggish water, eroding banks, sedimentation, and lack of cover are habitat problems which must be corrected.

A stream improvement plan has been implemented calling for clearing the channel of fallen trees to increase the stream flow and decrease "spreading", eliminating erosion through bank stabilization, increasing food production by increasing sunlight in over shaded areas, and by providing more trout cover by installation of log covers.

From Pine Island Drive upstream, 20 miles of the river will have fallen trees removed or relocated to increase the flow rates. In addition to lowering water temperatures this will provide additional fish cover and make the stream more accessible to fishermen. Overhanging brush along approximately 50 acres of immediate stream bank will be trimmed to increase indirect sunlight falling on the river to increase food production for trout without causing warming of the water. Plans also call for the construction of 400 small natural log fish covers, 40 erosion control structures and sedimentation basins to minimize any possible sedimentation caused by cleaning upstream drains. In the lower portion of the river from Pine Island Drive to Rockford 160 natural log fish covers and 16 erosion control structures are planned.

Prior to an eradication program in 1969, the fish population was dominated by carp, suckers and burbot while some smallmouth bass, northern pike and brown trout were present. Extensive stocking had taken place since 1954 but most trout did not survive the competition and predation. Those that did survive grew well. From 1969 through 1972, 124,307 brown trout, 85,690 rainbows and 343,158 steelhead were planted. Intensive creel census data is not available but periodic checks reveal large numbers of rainbows and browns have been harvested.

The first steelhead returning from Lake Michigan were caught in the spring of 1972. With the completion of a fish ladder on the dam on the Grand River in Grand Rapids and the demolition of the Childsdale Dam, anadromous fish runs are expected to increase.

C. Camping, Canoeing, Picnicking and Other Activities

Camping and picnicking facilities are limited along the Rogue. There are no state campgrounds, but there is one privately owned campground at Sparta and one planned near the confluence of the Rogue and Grand Rivers. Picnickers are able to use any of the publicly owned land along the river, but no improved picnic sites with tables, toilet facilities and fireplaces are provided.

From Pine Island Drive downstream the river is attractive to canoeists. Scattered development characterizes the lower part of the river, but it does not detract too much from the scenic aspects. Some rocky riffles and fast moving pools give the novice canoeist some challenge.

Hikers, trailbikers and ATV users are also competing for land use along the river. ATV's have caused some environmental damage to river banks and surrounding swampland. Hikers are also able to use the Rogue River State Game Area. There are also several marked snowmobile trails in the game area.

FUTURE USE AND POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The Rogue River experienced a big increase in angler numbers following the 1968 chemical reclamation and subsequent restocking with trout. It is estimated that angler usage increased from 20 to 80 anglers per mile per year. When the fisheries management objectives are completed, the Rogue will provide even more trout for the angler. They will be healthier, faster growing, and more accessible to the fisherman. With an improved fishery it is estimated angler numbers will increase to between 120 and 150 anglers per mile per year. If this projected increase in angler numbers does occur, it will necessitate more public access sites and might also increase the demand for camping areas. Because of the large amount of land in private holdings these needs might be met by privately owned and operated campgrounds.

Development along the river in the form of home building is increasing. The populations in Plainfield, Sparta, Tyrone and Algoma Townships as shown by the 1970 census data and the projected 1990 populations for these townships is given below:* (The City of Rockford is located in three townships so is listed separately.)

TOWNSHIP POPULATION	1970 CENSUS	1990 PROJECTED
Plainfield	16,935	29,500