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NO. 26 SABLE CREEK

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Sable Creek lies about two miles west of the picturesque little village of Grand Marais in eastern Alger County. It flows from the 628 acre Grand Sable Lake into Lake Superior and drains about 10 square miles.

Sable Creek has a moderate flow, sand bottom and banks which are well vegetated with tag alder, maple, beech and mountain ash. About a quarter mile from Lake Superior it plunges for about fifty feet in a series of steep steps then flows to Lake Superior over a sandstone, rubble and sandy bottom in rapid fashion. The stream width varies from 15 to 30 feet and in depth from 6" to 3 feet. The west bank comprises the eastern edge of the scantily vegetated Grand Sable sand dunes which rise about 200 feet above Lake Superior. The immediate west bank is vegetated by tag alder, cedar and birch with raw dunes fringing the mouth. The east bank is a steep escarpment type profile well vegetated with maple, beech, white birch, mountain ash and cedar. Some sloughing of the east bank is occurring resulting in a continual erosion of the escarpment. The low spit at the mouth is tag alder covered.

The water is light brown and temperature changes radically with the season and the influence of surface water from Grand Sable Lake. In dry seasons the flow deteriorates to a "mere trickle", but during the spring run off, the stream is a veritable torrent. Stream banks are well stabilized so there is not an erosion problem.

The principal fishery occurs from the foot of the falls to the mouth. The stream decline is moderately rapid so pools are long and shallow. Instream cover consists of a few undercut banks, accumulated debris, logs and overhanging vegetation. There is a formidable jam of driftwood near the mouth. The mouth changes with the northerly winds, however, the flow is usually across a bar of coarse gravel and rock.

A midsummer inventory of species present indicated mostly warmwater fish that undoubtedly came down from Grand Sable Lake. These included yellow perch, smallmouth bass, white suckers, long nose dace and mottled sculpins.

Spring flows pull in good runs of smelt, white and long nosed suckers and steelhead. In the fall of 1975 about 200-300 pink salmon were noted below the falls. Sea lamprey also ascend in the spring. Menominees gather at the gravelly mouth during the spring and fall. Thus, this small stream does provide a good fishery especially for the anadromous fish that use it.

Since the stream has become a part of the Pictured Rocks National Shoreline, an access site and improved steps and path have been provided to the falls and down the escarpment. Hiking trails branch off up and down the creek and to the adjacent dunes.