

Bruce Grant

Oral History Interview  
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Carson G. Prichard  
March 29, 2021  
Manitou Shores Resort  
Rogers City, MI

Project—Human dimensions of the Lake Huron salmon fishery crash: Using oral histories to assess the attitudes, values, and beliefs of anglers and non-angler stakeholders in Great Lakes coastal communities

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PRICHARD: Okay. So we're recording now. So my name is Carson Prichard. I'm here with Bruce Grant at the Manitou Shores Resort, in his office at the workshop. Today is Monday, March 29, 2021, and it's 2:41 p.m. So Bruce, thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. Before we begin can you just state on the recording that you do agree to being recorded and consent in participating in the interview?

GRANT: I fully agree to be recorded and help you in any way that I can.

PRICHARD: Okay. Thank you.

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PRICHARD: So we had been talking before the recording started, and I didn't want to interrupt what you were saying, but to begin, can you just tell me a little bit about yourself?

GRANT: Well we've been here at Manitou Shores—we bought it—it had been shut down and [a] dilapidated place. And we had a business downstate in southeast Michigan. We were looking for change. That was in '83-'84. And we bought this place, completely rebuilt it, and wanted to get in on the ground floor of the salmon fishery because we knew it was a new industry coming. And we thought being on the ground floor might be the best place. And we just—for lifestyle, we wanted to live in the north anyways. And due to an industrial accident I kind of had to get out of the business I was in anyway. So this worked out very good for us, and thirty-five years later we're still happy to be here.

PRICHARD: So you came in '83-'84—that was right around the time where the big initiative to stock—

GRANT: —just started. (Prichard: Yeah.) They did some Ocqueoc River stocking in, I believe, around '67. And I think it was around '68-'69 we started being able to harvest some of the jacks and the early spawners in the Ocqueoc River, and that kind of started it all. And it kind of went that way for quite a while. And then the population just kept growing and growing and to go to the river and catch a thirty-pound fish was just—I mean that was just normal. And most of us got our limit and left and came back tomorrow, or when the weekend was over you went back downstate and lived to the next time you could get back up. And many people just harvested for waste. And then we also saw—it was—waste got to the point [that] people were coming just harvesting for eggs, for spawning. And it was really bad. Then they realized, We really have got to do some work here to clean up. And I have got to say law enforcement did a good job. I mean they were on it all the time. And to some extent it's still an ongoing problem. And I really think going back then and knowing the people—I mean everybody here at one time or

another has been a transplant—but a big majority of the transplants here are here because of the fishery. They came up. Our business was based originally on people coming up for the fishery. And now they're our neighbors. We stand in the voting line with them. And they moved. A lot of people changed occupations. People bought small businesses. But most of them came as soon as they could retire. And a lot of early retirements. Rogers City's full of retired people that like to fish and boat. Kind of how it went.

[00:03:53]

PRICHARD: Yeah. So how did you—what role did you play in that early initiative to stock salmon? Or, I mean, I've talked with Frank Krist and he was a big promoter. I read back in the newspapers [that as] early as 1982 they were really pushing to make Swan River the site. And then it became, quickly, the largest plant—individual planting—the State of Michigan did. And in Lake Huron, so—.

GRANT: Well, my involvement was once I got—I was in—I love the outdoors. Just wildlife—birds, fish, conservation issues. When I had my cabin in Onaway [Michigan] we would come over this way to smelt fish in the spring because they'd come up all the creeks real heavy, and that was a great thing. But once I moved here and then start getting around the harbor and getting in and out of hardware stores and building places for materials because we completely—we spent a year and a half completely rebuilding Manitou Shores—and I started running into people with issues. And then the Hammond Bay [Area] Anglers [Association] started. I should say, fishing issues. And the Hammond Bay Anglers started. And they'd started a month or a couple of months before I really got into it, but I got in just about on the ground floor. And then it was like, gee, we're doing

fulltime meetings. It's all we were doing is meetings meetings meetings because [we were] trying to get people together, trying to get people involved. And one of the big issues was raising money so that we could be part of the system. It was kind of like, politically. And Department of Natural Resources—every once and a while somebody would come through and tell you what was going on—but, they really weren't real happy about you getting involved. Or they weren't welcoming people to get involved. They were handling it. But then the issue got pretty heavy between the tribes and the sportfishermen because you couldn't even fish out here. It was solid gillnets (Prichard: Really.) all the way. And the thing that upset me the most is right at that time Alpena was building a beautiful brown trout fishery. And every time you picked up the paper people were headed to Alpena to go brown trout fishing. But yet, after a few years—and that was getting really well established—I'd walk out and I'd have to go on to the beach two times a day and clean up the dead brown trout. And a lot of lake trout. It was because they were caught in gillnets and they couldn't sell them and they threw them back in and there was nothing—I mean the beach would stink with trophy fish. I mean nice brown trout. And decent lake trout. And that's got a lot of the shoreline people really involved and the people that would come over and see what was going on because of the waste that was going on. So, a few that got started with the Anglers, we started doing Sea Grant meetings and really getting involved and getting pushy and getting loud. We started doing newspaper articles, taking pictures. The *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit News* put us on the map, coming up here to take pictures of (laughs)—and it was kind of tough for a while because the good people and the people that were willing to be in a group like the Anglers or the Steelheaders or something like that, they weren't out there for trouble,

they were out there to save the fishery. And there was a couple pictures posted in the Sunday [*Detroit*] *Free Press* and *Detroit News* and after that I was threatened—a couple of us were threatened like you can't imagine. Had phone calls and, We're going to burn your place down. And just all kinds of stuff. And then it got to the point, it was just I'm going to stay in this to survive because it was a big issue. And then, oh a little later on when it really got going good then they started putting salmon nets out. And the fish were being blocked from going up and spawning. And that went on right up well into the eighties.

And so, if you didn't get involved then you really didn't care about the fishery, the community, or anything else, because this community was growing. And what it was doing, it was bringing people in here that could make it better. This community didn't have a lot of money. And this little community didn't have too many people in it that knew how to get the press so people would come. And a few of us had a few ideas and we started doing outdoors shows. Got to know the outdoor writers. They'd come up, we take them out fishing, give them a meal, maybe a night's sleep, and they start writing about Rogers City.

And then at that point—and they were also helping us with the tribal issue which I think really helped to settle things down so that it wasn't, I want what I want, and they wanted what they wanted. It was like, Why don't we sit down together and try to work this out so we can all live with the problem? And I think that's pretty much where we've been since—at least since—the '85 [Consent] Agreement, it was tough. But when we got the 2000 [Consent] Agreement, it was tough, but it was agreeable, and it worked. And that made a big difference. But we had to get people in here to—like the [*Detroit*] *News*, the

[*Detroit*] *Free Press*, and the outdoor writers, and the magazines—get them here to make an issue and to explain both sides. A lot of them were very fair and some of them were terrible. I've got some articles out there hanging on the wall that I won't let go away because I don't want people to forget. You had two sides with different attitudes and we actually had some outdoor writers that were saying, Well hell they started here, let's just give them the fishery. Well what do you do with the population that's here? And what are we supposed to do, drive to Detroit to go bowling? You know, I mean, go fish at Belle Isle when we have one of the greatest fisheries in the nation starting to establish right here? I had people out from France—on my charter boat from France, Germany—because they read about this. And Japan. Oh my gosh I had so many customers that came from Japan. Because usually the husband worked here as a salesman or a technician and they came back and they brought people out fishing. Families. What more could you ask for? And it was because of the help we got from the media. And we had some very wonderful people. Most of them have passed away now. But they knew what it took to get a community established. The biggest problem I've seen—our community wasn't ready to be established. And we had a serious local problem because the people that were—well the old families, very few of them were born and raised here. They were transplants, too. But their families maybe came here in the thirties or forties or fifties. But this was their fishery. They didn't want charter boats here. They didn't want people coming here because this was their fishery. The State [of Michigan] did this for the people of Rogers City. And it was a tough go in that situation because they'd get belligerent and come to the meetings, and, We don't want these people here. You know? Which—and another thing, you had—like some of the family restaurants were here for

years, the grandfather started them, then the father, then the son's into them—and we'd go to them and say, "We're going to start a fishing tournament, would you open at four thirty?" They normally opened at six or seven. "No, I've got plenty of business. I've got all the business I need. I'm feeding my family. I ain't getting up at four thirty to feed a bunch of fishermen." Things like that had to be overcome. Then businesses started getting bought out by other people that did open at five o'clock in the morning to feed the fishermen. And it got better because they had seen what it was doing for the community. I mean everything. The restaurants. The bars. Gift shops started springing up. And never had a sporting goods store in this town. All of a sudden got a sporting goods store—big one.

PRICHARD: Would that be Blair's?

GRANT: Yeah. [ed note: in later correspondence, Grant clarified that the store to which he was referring was Lakeshore Sporting Goods, which was actually the second sporting goods store to open in Rogers City; Blair's Bait and Tackle opened in 1982 and Lakeshore Sporting Goods opened in 1986] And so it took ten years for it to happen, but it happened. But I still have to say the people of Rogers—not the people of Rogers City, the management in Rogers City—they were excited and they were all for it. But deep down businesswise they didn't move with it. They got a harbor expansion. Soon as they got a harbor—and the state put up the money—but you start at Port Huron and you come up the lake—Port Huron, Port Sanilac, Lexington, Harbor Beach, all those—they did the same thing, and they were having a great fishery. But when the charter boats moved in they turned their head because State Waterways [Michigan Department of Natural Resources Waterways Division] told the city, Well we own the harbor, you own the

parking lot. We put up the money for the harbor so you'll follow our rules. They charged the charter boats double dockage. So if you came in and you weren't a charter boat—which a lot of guys come in and left their sticker off and brought their business they had in Port Huron and Oscoda. And there was no policing of the issue other than they knew who the local guys were. And you were licensed—you had to have your license on your boat, so it was displayed. And we're paying sixteen hundred dollars a year for dockage, and fifty cents to a dollar more for gas because we couldn't get our own gas. The charter boats moved out of the harbor. The lumberyard fixed up their old commercial fishing harbor and moved us in. All of a sudden all of the activity's over at the lumberyard harbor and not in the city. And then it was a big thing about getting money to build a cleaning station and all of sudden now we've got too much guts to get rid of. Too many fishermen. And then—I mean this town was so crowded I've seen them lined up all the way out of the harbor all the way back to the street light in town at five o'clock in the morning to unload boats to come in and go fishing. Three hundred boats was nothing. And this all happened in a five-six year period. And, oh, the city was upset. Too much—they didn't grow with what was happening. And in doing so, they upset a lot of people. You can tell somebody in a nice way, "I'm sorry, I don't have a slip. Give me your name, I'll call you as soon as it opens up." But if you go out and say, "Get out of here, I don't have any slips left, don't bother us," then those people are going to get mad and go back to Lake Michigan. And those were a lot of the issues that we had.

I've got a magazine here—goes back to I think '86. And before you leave I just want you to read something—a paragraph in here.<sup>1</sup> And this was the biggest, hottest magazine going here on the Great Lakes when the salmon thing started. And by accident—back



then we had the East Michigan Tourist Association—and they had a weekend setup in Oscoda for the editor and a group for this magazine. And I don't remember what it was—oh, their boat broke down. When they got here their boat broke down. And it was a major breakdown. So they went back to Ohio and came back a couple weeks later. Well it was right in the heat of the season, but we'd just opened. I mean we'd just opened the doors. And the tourist association came and said, "Is there any way you can put these people up?" Well, sure. We did. And it worked out so well because in this editorial that he wrote—it's a whole page editorial—but one of the paragraphs in here he said a very important thing is that it happened in the past and it's going to happen in the future—hopefully something that you're writing will tell people ahead of time to have a work plan. Have a plan together so when these kind of things happen. But just think like what he said, they fished Lake Michigan right from when the salmon bonanza started right up until Rogers City started hitting the newspapers, and they love fishing in Lake Michigan, and the fishing was good. But they got tired of the way they were treated in the restaurants. They got tired of the way they were treated in the marinas because there was so much business, the people forgot about what it was like before they had this business, and then they built an attitude because they had too much business. And his thing in there that just touched my heart—I've never forgot it—he says, "The experience we had in

<sup>1</sup>The following is the paragraph referred to by Grant, from: Ottie M. Snyder, Jr, "Editorial," *Great Lakes Fisherman*, November, 1986, 3.

"I spend several weeks of a busy travel schedule each season in Michigan on both sides of the state. I enjoy the west side and have caught a lot of fish there. However, the east side does not have to take a backseat. If there is anything missing on that side of the state it would have to be the crowds. Perhaps because they haven't been harried by the masses yet, like their counterparts on the west side, most service providers—charter operators, motel and resort operators, marina operators and even restaurants—still take that extra time to make you feel a sense of old fashioned hospitality. If the fishing continues to improve and things get as hectic on Lake Huron's shoreline some of that will be lost, which is natural. There's nothing wrong with services on the west side, they remain [sic] excellent in spite of the volume, but simply cannot continue as personalized as they once were because of the traffic."

Rogers City was like none we've ever had. We just hope that the people don't change like they have on Lake Michigan. But I'm afraid it's going to happen because that's history." And what he said—to me, there's an awful lesson in what he says there because if you don't have a plan—and we have a wonderful city here, but we're going back—this was a commercial fishing town and a lumbering town, it wasn't a tourist town—I think, in the future when these things happen to places, that a community should establish a committee made up of a couple of business people, a person from the city government, a person from the county government, and just some general sportsmen, to sit down and share their experiences and share what they're hearing at the harbor, sharing the rumors they hear—because we go down and do the outdoors shows, and that was a goldmine for us, because people would come up and say, "I'm not coming back because I didn't like this"—what had happened. You went home and you fixed it. And you called the guy back and said, "We fixed your problem and please come back." Or people would come and say, "Man that was great, that was great." You can do that with a—I know you can do that with a business group because the Hammond Bay Anglers kind of took that role over. But when you have your city people, and your county people—they're people with a job. They're people with a budget. And what you're doing in a business like this is, I'm looking at what I have got to readjust next year by what happened this year. And they're saying, We've only got this much budget. We don't know what we're going to have for next year, so we're going to be based on this budget. And I think you could take people from in the county and the community—especially big businesses. We've got Cadillac Products here. We're one of the biggest automotive manufacturers in the country. And this was their prime place. Their cottages were here. We've got Moran Iron Works. That

guy went from a high school kid doing welding in his dad's logging garage to one of the biggest businesses in northern Michigan right now. And all they want is to make the community better, and to bring people in that they can hire that's got some common sense. I think if our community would have put a group like that together, I think that would have saved—it would have been easier and better, because—besides trying to make things happen, a lot of times you're fighting the community. Like, oh we'd get a harbormaster he'd get so mad, I've got so much guts to dump I don't know what to do. Man, (laughs) this—this is gold. And we've got a quarry here that let us take it down—they didn't have to go buy a piece of ground and—or make compost. Sea Grant would come in and help them make a compost pile with the commercial fishermen. And because of introgression and they're happy with their commercial fishing, that kind of died. But look at the people over on the west side of the state—what do you call, um, oh where they take cow manure and they make compost and everything [Morgan's Composting and Dairy Doo]? They're going so big now and it could have been the same thing here. And again, when the fishery died they would have went down, too, but they'd have still had plenty of stuff for a product.

And a lot of the conflict then was there was just too many boats for one little harbor. So why don't they open up more harbors? And like here, I could have put a dock in, and the State wouldn't let you. I can't put a dock in. I couldn't even—I had to send my customers to town. I could have docked them right here with a seasonal dock. You pull it out in the summertime. [Grant clarification: fall, not summertime] You follow the rules and regulations. But, No, we don't need anybody stealing our business. Because they had people locked in. And you go back—we had ten charter boats here, and two sailing

charters, all paying double dockage and paying high gas. And they drove those people out of there. They drove them—the lumberyard went and spent a lot of money to rebuild their docks and bring them in, and of course it made more room in the city. But those charter boats were bringing the business here by bringing the media in, taking them fishing, catering to them, and then they are writing all that free advertising. And I just wish we could have had a business group that could have sat down and then went to the city and the county and had a little more power to lean on them a little bit. But—and then we’d have 350 boats out there. You could hardly move. You’d catch a fish and somebody’s cutting your line off. Fishing was fantastic.

But there’s a big reason—our fishing here is still fantastic. I sold my big boat. I quit chartering. I have a sixteen-foot boat and a four-wheel-drive tractor and I launch off the beach. I go right out here one mile, catch my three fish, and come back. If I want more fish tomorrow morning, or a customer wants to have a salmon dinner, I can go out there, catch it, and come back. Or go out there and turn them loose. It’s just fun.

But our—when the crowd left, the media left. And our people didn’t pick up on that. And now—and you check out what I’m saying, I bet nobody pays any attention—you take all the—Michigan Outdoor Magazine, Michigan Outdoor television show, Mike Avery Show. They all go to Lake Michigan. We’ve even had a few outdoor writers stab us in the back. One that we catered to was a heck of a swell person. We catered to him in and out. His last article said, “Last one out of Rogers City, please shut the lights off because the town died.” I mean, you can’t—and put that in a major magazine—I don’t even know why that editor would let that go. But, we’re still fishing. The locals are still catching fish. You go out there now and you count thirty-five to fifty boats. We’re still catching

limits. We have a beautiful fishery. But we're running aground. And what I was getting at, you go pick up the Michigan Fisherman—um—Michigan Out-of-Doors Magazine. These magazines, most of their writers—their column writers, their staff—are charter boat operators in Lake Michigan. And in order to make themselves—and their fishing is good over there, yet—and our fishing is still good here, we're not out of fish—but when all your articles come from there, they draw the people. And the thing of it is they draw the new people. We get people come up here and sometimes say, “How come nobody talks about this place? It's hidden all the way from here to Cheboygan,” and didn't know. It's a secret. Well, it's not a secret. Most of them are in their twenties and thirties—or late-twenties and thirties—just getting established, and for some reason got over here and got out fishing. We don't get the media anymore because they're charter boat operators and they write their articles for the magazine, get their fifteen-twenty bucks for an article, or fifty bucks, and it's hurt our area. But we have such a livable area maybe it's not so bad, either. The retirees hated it because it would be so crowded. They came—a lot of GM [General Motors] and Ford retirees up here. And they like to go out on a sailboat. They like to go out and fish. But this crowd came and now they're kind of put back. Everybody's so happy now, but we still have a good fishery. We're not catching thirty-pound fish. But I've got to tell you this, when I first came here you could hardly catch a lake trout that was legal in length. And a lot of them died because they were brought up too fast. They were hooked, and they bled, you know they were going to die. And same thing—I pick up brown trout and lake trout—most of the lake trout were from recreational fishermen that couldn't keep them. They unhooked them, put them back in the water, they died and floated up on the beach. What a waste. Now these fish—there's

lake trout running twelve, fifteen pounds. You go out there and it is a fishery all by itself. Another thing I don't think people realize—and I think I'm onto it because I did the Sea Grant meetings—Frank [Krist] and I we did all the court meetings in [Federal Court in] Kalamazoo—and the state fish biologists that were in charge of all this stuff used to stay here with us. So we could get what the fish plants were, what was happening, what was fin-clipped, what wasn't fin-clipped. And you start reading the numbers. And we start—then we had a young man—a biologist from Charlevoix that would come over, took care of the micro-wire tagging. And he came here, he'd stay here.

PRICHARD: Yeah, I know John.

GRANT: You know John? (Prichard: Yeah.) Oh, John's a great friend of mine, yeah. John and I would go collect heads because we'd get bags and get the little store up here and anybody that was by the harbor that would save heads. We had volunteers to go down in the evening and save heads. Then I put them in a big freezer here and John would pick them up. John and I fished off the shore here for years. And anyways, a few of us [had] come to the understanding that no matter what happens, they're not going to take our fishery away because there is a line going up Lake Huron—east of the line they call it Canada, west of the line they call it Michigan. In Canada, they've never done anything about their salmon fishery. They're strictly into commercial fishermen. But they didn't block their streams off so our salmon could get up and down them. And still to this day—and we don't do it much—I mean, it's not like it used to be—but it starts the last week of July, the first week of August, I can go out here and I can still catch twenty-five-, twenty-seven-pound salmon. They're not fin-clipped. They're Canadian fish. They're truly natural-reproductive fish that—they're making their swing, they're coming through.

And they're not fin-clipped. This—I know they don't fin-clip every single fish that they put in—but why do those fish come through here the last week of July and the first week of August and then you never see them again, until next year? Before that and after that you're catching 90 percent fin-clipped fish. That's that Canadian strain that's keeping us going. They're tough. They're natural. I mean they're settled in here and the Canadians are still catching them good. You can go up in Drummond Island and Les Cheneaux [Islands] and still catch good salmon. I think it's the group of fish that were forgotten about and went up on their own and nobody pays any attention. And that's keeping our fishery going good even though—I know the food's down over there like it is here—but I'll bet any money the fish that—the salmon—that start eating gobies and some of the other stuff was that Canadian batch that were naturally-reproduced.

And we still have a good fishery here. And we just don't get the press anymore. And I think that's—it's nice, I mean—in fact I have a problem with my wife because—and I'm almost eighty—I go out in my little boat all by myself and she can't see another boat out there in case I fall out or have trouble. And before there'd be ten, twelve, fifteen boats out there. It's starting to come back that way now in July and August, but strictly word of mouth. We're just not getting the media. And we don't have a group here—the motel group used to stick together and come up with—oh, we had a bed tax and we'd use that money for advertising. Or bring somebody up that would be a writer. But that's been gone for—effectively for six or seven years. And it's made a difference. And God bless Frank Krist. He's one of the ones that, “Oh, I hate them people crowding the place. I just want to—we got this to fish ourselves.” But, if it wasn't for Frank, we wouldn't have a fishery here (Prichard: Yeah.) because he just—he's into it. And the rest of us go out and

raise money so he can pay the lawyers to keep us involved. And that's just a great thing. And now, just to go out—I came here when the lake trout were ten, eleven, twelve inches long. Now they're ten, eleven, twelve pounds. (Prichard laughs) And they're easy to catch. And so it's still exciting here. It hasn't wore out.

But I just wish that if other communities get this opportunity they put a group of people with sportsmen, businessmen, and a few of the county, city, people together, so they can look at the whole aspect, not just, Well this budget only allows us to do this much. When your budget's tight you go out and raise some money. But without the media you don't bring the people here. It just doesn't happen. I mean to me that's about the story here.

PRICHARD: Yeah. Um—

GRANT: And I didn't mean to get carried away like that.

PRICHARD: Oh, no. That's okay.

*At this point in the interview Prichard asks Grant a question and Grant asks to keep the response off the record. Prichard told Grant that the question would also be removed from the recording. The recording is stopped and the conversation continues for approximately ten minutes, at which point the topic of conversation seems to Prichard to have shifted away from that which Grant had asked to keep off record. Mid-conversation, Prichard asks if he can resume recording and Grant agrees.*

|00:33:16|

PRICHARD: Okay, we're recording again.



GRANT: I can't remember the guy's name right now [Rollie Harmes]. He came out of real estate. They made him DNR [Department of Natural Resources] director. Tall, lanky, real nice guy. But anyways, Beverly Bodem said, "We're going to meet over at the Mason Building at one o'clock, right after lunch." And she said (laughs), "I want to get them after they've had their lunch so I can bring a good burp out of them." We go over there and he [Fisheries Chief John Robertson] starts getting heavy on Frank and I about, You guys in Rogers City, with the finger pointing. She stepped between us and she said, "Mr. Robertson, you probably don't know who I am, but I'm on the committee that controls your budget, and if you don't understand that, and you don't understand to listen to Rogers City's problem, then you're going to be picking nickels up in the parking lot to get through next year." His whole attitude changed and Frank and I were like the kids in the neighborhood that he liked. That's what you learn about politics. But if you don't have the right person doing it, it doesn't work. And Beverly Bodem and John Pridnia were both real leaders, very aggressive. And they went out honorably. But we sure lost a lot of representation. But by that time they both taught our Hammond Bay Anglers and our local politicians enough to realize you have got to stand your ground. They'd come in to start a big program and then just abandon it because someone on the other side of the state says, "Oh, no, we should have that over here."

And so, it was crazy, but we still have a good fishery. Our fishery is good out here, it's just—and here's the other thing, is we don't get the outdoor writers that much. They go by the scale. These writers will go by the scale and the DNR records. Okay, look at what we're catching compared to what they're catching at Rogers City. If you've got thirty-five boats fishing against two hundred boats fishing—get us seventy boats out here and

we'll double our catch rate, you know what I'm saying? Because when you go from 350 boats—and the population is down, but the fishery is not dead. A lot of us, we don't just catch a fish, bring them home and clean them, we open their stomachs up and see what they're eating. What I'm getting at, these fish that I'm saying that I'm a firm believer are Canadian fish, they had everything in their stomachs. They were eating, they weren't starving. But boy for a while there we couldn't catch a fish over ten, twelve pounds. It was fin-clipped. And it had basically an empty stomach. Now, we're cleaning fish and they've got smelt in their stomach. I don't see any alewives anymore. But they got other stuff and they're eating other things. This fishery's going to get better, I think, as long as politically they don't screw it up, go back to letting the commercial tribal fishermen, or commercial fishermen in any way block off the streams, or to do anything to mess up our natural reproduction. Early on it was a fight to get the resource. It's turned into, now, you're still fighting, but it's to keep the resource. And the hardest part is protecting the biologists and getting the politicians to shut up and go do business someplace else and leave the biologists [to] do their thing here, because they have an interest in the resource, and they want to come back to work next year and the year after and the year after. You eliminate all the fish out here, and you're going to have a lot of biologists looking for a job someplace. But it kind of sometimes seems hard to get people to understand that. And to me our biggest threat are the carp in the Chicago River that all our politicians should be there fighting, putting up the money, to save the Great Lakes. And I'll tell you why, if you can shut that off. (laughs)

PRICHARD: Yeah. (laughs)

*The recording is paused again at Grant's request. Recording is resumed with Grant's permission.*

|00:38:00|

PRICHARD: Okay.

GRANT: I think that one of the biggest assets that's buried and is unforeseen in our community was the real estate companies. And we just about had—we only had one real estate company—individual that owned the real estate company was Real Estate One, Bill Petz—he would do anything that he could to back the fishermen that were raising money. But the people were coming here fishing, staying, buying property. And they weren't building cabins. Their second homes were better than the homes they lived in downstate in metropolitan Detroit or Lansing or whatever. And I could right now take you from the city limits of Rogers City out to the Ocqueoc River which is about a fourteen-mile stretch and show you millions of dollars in homes and real estate that are here only because of the fishery. And other than the one real estate guy, they were the hardest people to convince but profited the most. Or they just kept their mouths shut and reaped in the benefits. But, I mean we've got housing here now that's totally different than it used to be. And shoreline footage on Lake Huron right here—when I came here it was about 175 to 200 dollars a running foot. Today it's—even after the two-oh-eight recession and what we're going through now—and it's at a low scale right now—it's low at fifteen, and average about seventeen hundred dollars a foot. That's because of the fishery. It isn't because somebody drove over here and said, “Oh, what a beautiful sunrise.” The fishery brought them here. And I think our community—me, I'd have a big

statue in town of a Chinook salmon, not a—alongside the propeller—the propeller down there. The big brass propeller is important. But I feel like Kalkaska [Michigan] did. They knew their trout brought their people there. A lot of us know the salmon brought the people here. And it provided a lot of jobs. A lot of jobs. And we had some county commissioners and some city people that were on top of it, but they still fought a balance issue of, Oh, we don't want to go that far, or, We can't put out that much money for next year. But the people were coming. And I'd like to just have a figure of what the income tax take-in was around 1980—or even give them '85—to 2020, and then—or to 2010, and from 2010 to 2020, and it wouldn't be the base from the old cottages on the lake that was inherited from grandpa and then my dad. Because this place is full of those old cement block cottages. They're not bringing in any money like these four and five hundred thousand dollar homes are. The fishery was a big thing for here and I hope other communities—whether it's a fishery or somebody discovers gold in their creek—that they would just have some sort of a guidance plan—not to go to the groups of people that are starting the business—but to go to the community leaders to tell them what could happen, or what's going to happen if they don't play their cards right. Because, now, the fishing has died, but the real estate hasn't. That's kind of funny. (Prichard: Yeah.) Fishing had died because we're not getting the press anymore. The fish are still here.

And it's—I think it's better. I ran a charter boat for over fifteen years. The first five years, people were so grateful. As you went down the road—and I just quit when I was sixty-five, because I got so fed of people getting on the boat and saying, “We don't get our limit, we're not paying you.” That's the attitude that gets created when you have too many fish. When we first started—. Fishing and hunting have their days. I don't care

what you do—I don't care if it's a weather front coming in, or whatever it is—you're going to have days [that] you're going to go out there and you're not going to catch fish. You're going to have days that you're going to go hunting and not see an animal. And that happens. But it got so good here, and it was written up so much, that people just took the attitude when they stepped on the boat [that] they were going to get their limit, and that doesn't happen. I've got a good friend that fishes out of Bay Harbor. He started fishing over here. The last few years his fishing has been phenomenal but they're not catching salmon. Every one of their charters, they go right out, catch their lake trout, and they're back. And if they pick up a salmon they're happy as heck. Now as the fish move north, end of August and September they're starting to pick up their salmon. But in general they went to a different fishery. And that fishery happened because the state moved a lot of gillnets out of that area and scattered them out between the Garden Peninsula and Rogers City. And the trap net boats don't affect us at all, whether their tribal or whatever. They're great. And they're good to fish around because once you learn how they're set, you fish them—when things are bad you fish around the nets and you're going to catch fish. I think that odor, that smell of those trapped fish and those whitefish beating themselves up trying to get in and out puts enough stink in the water, because when things would get so bad, and you just have one of those days, and you just creep over and fish along and around—as long as you knew how they were set—you'd pick up two or three fish and get yourself off the hook. And, boy I tell you it was the difference. But Lake Michigan is good, and not only that, they weren't totally relied on Chinook salmon. We totally relied on Chinook here. They relied on coho which never really did slow down that much. It was a smaller fish—didn't have to have as much to eat. And the

other thing that confused me and I don't know if it's stopped now because they're—I haven't been out yet this spring—but you can go to St. Ignace or Mackinaw City in another week or two and buy smelt. And they're fresh smelt. I don't know if it's going this year because I haven't kept up with it. But if our salmon are dying because there's not enough to eat, why are you letting people trawl smelt out there to put in the fish store to sell for a buck a pound? That doesn't make good sense, when a twenty-pound herd of salmon over here will generate tens of thousands of dollars. But they need those smelt to eat on. That's just—it's confusing, but it's a big picture.

|00:46:04|

PRICHARD: Yeah. You brought up a lot. I might, kind of, go back if we can, to just focus on the tournament for a little bit. And so I know that you were one of the directors in '88 and '89, I think, (Grant: Yep.) and the resort sponsored the first one (Grant: Yep.) in '86. (Grant: Yep.) [Grant note: The Manitou Shores Resort was one of many sponsors.] So what was that like when the tournament was getting started? And because—I've read that it just got bigger and bigger with participation, the fish got bigger every year through the early nineties and, kind of, what was that like?

GRANT: Yeah, well, I think '86 is when it started. And we had a resident here, his name was Mike Modrzynski, (Prichard: Yeah.) and Mike was in the Air Force, and he was stationed in Oscoda, but he was from Rogers City. And he wrote a couple books on steelhead fishing in the rivers. And when this hit in his hometown he was excited. But he was an intelligence officer down in Oscoda. He'd run up here for the weekends. But he was part of the Michigan Outdoor Writers Association. And I give Mike all the credit for

the tournament here because he had the experience—how to build one. But his experience came from all the outdoor writers he knew in the Michigan Outdoor Writers [Association] organization, and he communicated with them. Well at that time the people had bought our newspaper out here, the *Presque Isle [County] Advance*. The guy that bought it—his name was [Richard L.] Milliman from Lansing—he sent his son-in-law up here to run the new newspaper—or that they'd just bought. And Mike wrote articles for them. And Mike was still heavy in the Air Force. Well, Mike and his brother and this Terry Fitzwater started the first one, but Mike did press releases, he did all the stuff you have to do to let people know something's going on. And the word was already out how good fishing was and—but they weren't prepared for it. (Prichard laughs) I'm telling you they were lined almost out to twenty-three [US-23 N]. What do we do with all these boats? And actually ended up having to shut it off. First couple of years it was just out of Rogers City. Then we decided—well first it went for a few years—there were some—eh, I say financial problems—it didn't work out with the three guys that started it. And they—Mike stayed clean; the other two guys didn't—so Mike said—he came to the Hammond Bay Anglers and said, “Why don't we set this up through the Hammond Bay Anglers—the other two guys are gone—it's over with—and the Anglers run it for a fundraiser for these—help us raise money for the issues we're going—for our fishery?” So then we opened up the Hammond Bay Harbor and went down to Presque Isle and offered them to open up their harbor. Now, man, we got boats coming, every year it's getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And we got a real education. The problem was a couple of us that run charter boats, we had to park our boats when fishing was good, and some guys were taking—well I had a lot of legal firms and insurance companies, and

they'd pay two thousand bucks to take their customers out to let them fish the tournament. A few of us had to park our boats to help keep it going. But it was so good for my business. It was good for the community. And we did it. But it just kept growing growing growing. But the biggest problem they had—

And it's actually still going. But it's not going as our tournament. The locals turned it into another tournament. They call it the Fat Hogs. And people can get into it, but they don't want to grow. It's a local thing. But if you fished here over the years you're welcome to join.

—it grew too big too fast. Growing pains actually killed it. And the fishermen killed it. If you drive through our town it's clean. The houses are clean and painted. You don't see too much trash laying around. And I—you haven't even brought the guy's name up yet because it hadn't got into it—we had a goldmine here with one man, his name was Harry Whiteley. He used to own the [*Presque Isle County*] *Advance*. He was the longest serving—still on record the longest serving DNR Commissioner and Chairman. And when we had a problem that we couldn't get through, you called Harry. Harry took care of it. And he took care of it well. Because you went to Lansing with Harry and you walked down the halls with a hero. I mean everybody, “Harry come on in my office,” you know. Didn't matter who it was. Senators, representatives, and the DNR loved the old guy. And they really did the right thing at the—Higgins Lake there at the center there [the Ralph A. MacMullen Conference Center, Roscommon, MI]—made a Harry Whiteley building. (Prichard: Oh. Yeah.) Harry just passed away, couple months ago. But, Harry was good at keeping things in control, too. And he warned us, This is growing too fast. Get some more rules. Get things settled down. And we fought real hard. And I'm



probably the one behind it—that pushed it too hard. It’s my fault. We said, “We’ve got to cut this thing down,” because a fisherman could come in and register—it cost a boatload of people maybe a hundred bucks. Or you could fish all by yourself for thirty-five [dollars], by yourself in one boat, which is fine. It’s a good thing for a family. But when you get too many people you can’t control them. When you get people that go out there at six o’clock in the morning and come in at eight o’clock at night and they’ve been drinking all day, you’ve got a serious problem. And when we tried to cut the hours—when it got to the Hammond Bay Anglers—from six o’clock in the morning to two in the afternoon, before they’d had so much to drink and the sun bleached them out—

Volunteers—you can’t run something that big without volunteers. And then when you make money, you give it back to organizations like 4-H, the school groups, and things like that. Well, when we get the cheerleaders, or the girls’ basketball team and the coach to agree to come down and weigh fish, you can’t have a bunch of drunks out there cussing and swearing and slobbering. And then they’d come up, and they’d pick their fish up, and they’d dump them down in the tubs you weigh them in, and here’s a little seventeen-eighteen-year old girl, or guy—or anybody—gets all splattered with fish slime and fish stuff, and this guy’s stumbling all over. It got out of hand. It got out of the hand where, you know, we complained to the—and our local police department wasn’t bad, it was the state police—well they’d sit out like predators and hammer everybody after they leave the harbor because they knew half of them were half screwed up on beer and drinking all—that’s not good. You’re out of control. If a guy goes out there and drinks a little bit and he can handle himself or if somebody else drives—but this is what they were doing. Even had conservation officers here doing traffic patrol after dark, getting—they

didn't—not in the morning coming in—at night going out. You lose control when it gets too big. So how are we going to shrink it down? Well I got to talking with some of the other outdoor—or we—a couple of us did—other outdoor writers and said, “Hey, the problem is your tournament is too cheap.” You're not—because we never got big boats. We might give a sixteen-foot boat away with a twenty-five horse motor on it. Or then we got to the point we'd just give you half of what we collected and pay for the first fifty slots. And somebody might walk away with four-five thousand dollars which is a lot of money. But as other tournaments are run, that's no money at all. I said, “You've got to get up—[if] you want the big boats to come in, and you want the big money supporters—the advertisers—to come in, you've got to give away some money.” But Starcraft isn't going to come in. Mercury or Evinrude isn't going to come in. Jay's Sporting Goods isn't going to come in, or Cabela's, unless you've got the big guns here because that's where they get their coverage. And we tried to do that. We did it one year, and we did it that you could have as many boats as you wanted—or you could have like six people on your boat—but it was a thousand bucks. So if you had four people each guy paid 250. And you got 50 percent of the take. So if you've got three hundred boats, they're going to walk out of here with a lot of money. And then we went from fifty prizes, I think, to maybe twenty prizes. But they were much better. You didn't walk away with a six-pack of Pabst. You could walk away with a few hundred bucks. The lowest prize would have paid everybody back that paid 250 bucks. And do you see the boats that come in here? Two hundred and fifty bucks is nothing, you know. Anyways, it dwindled down—and it started dwindling down—and then the Anglers got—they—it just got—it was so hard to get the volunteers. Then we had a tourism council here that was really doing well. Our motel groups were

charging 2 percent for a bed tax, which was good. We supported them. We went back to running our business and turning it [the tournament] over to the tourism council. They did very well with it. But a lot of us made the mistake of stepping out of helping it, or giving them good vibes, or, Don't do this, or, You've got to do this. And they got the volunteers and everything. But they let it go downhill. You can have a drunk. You can have a belligerent person. If he's really bad you call the police and get rid of him. That's what they do. But if you get a guy that you can make him happy—so you put people in the crowd. As those guys are coming up in the line to weigh their fish, settle them down. Talk to them. Get them in the mood to go weigh their fish without people getting upset. It just ended up getting to the point—you couldn't get the volunteers and it died. Nobody took it over after that.

PRICHARD: So when was that?

GRANT: Well it would have been—oh it would have been six-seven years ago.

PRICHARD: Okay.

GRANT: And then when that happened, the Fat Hogs took over. That's a group of locals that always had a tournament, anyways. But they go out on a weekend—they pick a weekend and do that themselves. And each would throw in a hundred bucks. Whoever'd come in with the biggest fish at two or three o'clock would get the money. And that was a problem. It upset a lot of people when we cut the hours down to two o'clock in the afternoon to get away from that drunken stupidity stuff you went through at night. I mean, cops would come down there at four o'clock in the morning, guy would say, "Well

it's too late to go home." And they're sleeping all over park benches (Prichard laughs) and taking a leak in the park behind a tree. It was just uncontrolled.

|00:59:28|

PRICHARD: When did—that time, when did it move down to two o'clock? When did you do that?

GRANT: Well I'd have to go back through my records. I'm going to say probably 2008, 2010 area. (Prichard: Okay.) 2012.

PRICHARD: But the—kind of the drunken problem had built up?

GRANT: It went on through the tourism group and they just couldn't hang onto the volunteers because as a parent I wouldn't let my (Prichard: Yeah.) kid go down there and listen to that trash. But again, they didn't listen to us and say get it established. Quit at two o'clock in the afternoon. Let them get out of here or let them go to the bars and drink. I'll be very honest with you, and I—(laughs) I hope people catch on to this—I've got a resort down there. And I've got big nice log cabins. And then I had a motel unit, with six units. And I used to take people out fishing and they'd stay in our motel. I tore the motel down—because I could take a log cabin and get \$1,200 a week and get a nice pleasant family group in there. But you can't take guys that'd been beaten in the sun all day with a cooler full of beer and put them at a fire pit at night with a family. And they won't pay—in town they were selling rooms for \$49 a night. I wouldn't take less than seventy-five. And I listen to people, "Why should I pay you seventy-five because I can't get a room in town for forty-nine?" And then they drive your \$1,200 a week people away.

When you do something like a big tournament you've got to have a good plan. And you learn from experience, but sometimes the experience comes too late. And they could get back to that here. [The] fishery's got to build up—I think it's going to build up. A lot of twenty-, twenty-five-pound fish were caught last year. (Prichard: Okay.) That's not because of anything other than the fish learning to eat the forage base that's out there now. They're not, Oh, I'm not eating unless I have alewives. Or, you know, they're raised in a trough in a hatchery. I think our fishery here has held up because of the Canadian fish—the ones that learned to eat whatever they could find early on because once they get in the spawning mode they ain't going to eat anyways. So, it can come back, it's going to come back. I've got a friend, right across the road here. He's a big contractor, excavator. Todd Curtis.

PRICHARD: I did try—well I left him a voicemail. I haven't heard anything back from him.

GRANT: Oh, really? I'll give you his cell phone if you want.

PRICHARD: Okay.

GRANT: He's the best representative, to me, of a local fisherman that does it for fun. Strictly does it for fun. And he knows how to fish. He's a good, hard fisher. Him and his dad started off in a sixteen-foot boat, and now Todd I think's got the best boat in town. When I look out there, it's Todd fishing. He's fishing right where the fish structure. He knows what he's doing. And he can tell you a lot of the story about the changes. But last year Todd caught a thirty-pound fish off the boat, and he caught—he said, "Bruce, I'm catching twenty-twenty-five-pound fish. And I'm out there all by myself." If we could

just let this build for a few more years, and not get the nets back in here in August to trap the spawners because they did let—and I don't know—we didn't have any here—but the tribes used to be able to set—anchor on shore and run a gillnet out a quarter of a mile to get the fish that were looking to get up our streams to spawn. I mean, that's killing them. And I still say—I'm just a firm believer—those naturally-reproduced fish are stronger, turn out to be healthier, better fish than the hatchery fish. They've evolved since '66 or '67. I don't know that they do that in Lake Michigan because Wisconsin, Minnesota, even Indiana, all maintain part of the fishery, and they're all part of making the rules, right? Canada doesn't give a damn about how many salmon are going up and down the lake. They're worried about their walleyes and their commercial fishermen, and that's it. (Prichard: Yeah.) I still think—and maybe I'm all wrong, I don't know, I'm just going by what I've seen over the years and I just still think that original fish that's coming, circling through here—and why do they only go through—why are you only catching fish with an adipose fin, or an un-clipped fin—I mean—that's not clipped? Normally, that's a naturally-reproduced fish. You'll get them the last week of August—or the last week of July, first week of August, and they're gone. Then you hear them—they're catching them more in the islands. (Prichard: Okay.) It's an interesting thing. I don't know if that's the case, but—

PRICHARD: I know that's a big part of the story is the natural reproduction on the Canadian side of things in Lake Huron. Yeah.

GRANT: It's a big thing.

|01:05:29|

PRICHARD: In the years—well, would you say that there was definitely a big shift in the fishery from like 2002 to 2005? And that's kind of where the big downturn was?

GRANT: Well—let me just check something here once. (Grant opens cabinet at desk) I think—yeah, I think a downturn was coming, but—here, while I'm doing that, you can shut that off for a minute.

*The recording is paused again at Grant's request. Recording is resumed with Grant's permission.*

|01:05:57|

PRICHARD: Okay.

GRANT: Every month, if you ran a charter boat you had to fill out your list of what you caught. If the state would let you get copies of that, you could just build a graph of what happened and when it happened because all the guys that fished here were very very accurate with it because we knew our fishery depended on it. A lot of guys felt that, Ah, don't tell them anything. They don't need to know. No, you—the guys that ran charter boats here—and we went around, reminded each other, Don't forget to fill your chart out. And that went right to the fish commission. And that would be a—

PRICHARD: They—I reached out to Donna [Wesander] and she wouldn't—well, she didn't want to violate trust that any people that were charter anglers—registered—had with the DNR. So they won't give me data in any form that would allow me to—I can't—basically, I get monthly breakdowns by the port, and that's as good as they'll give me.

GRANT: That's public information. Writers wrote articles off those charts. Here's where I was talking about you're in a situation. If it was somebody like me I'd tell her, "I'm going to have my state representative get it for me, then." Because that's baloney. Those were state records and they were very important records because all the fish biologists would say that's—they based that on what we'd tell them back.

PRICHARD: Well, I don't want to be too disparaging. I do understand where she was coming from.

GRANT: Okay. Well—and we do have creel census people down there. And we have one here, Julie [Shafto], she's really good. But I've had creel census people—and I used to get so mad I actually had called Lansing a couple times and said, "Send these people to fish school!" (Prichard laughs) Because I'd catch a steelhead and, I've got—this is a nice steelhead. This is a twelve-pound steelhead. Take your picture with it. Bring it in and the creel census would come over and they always checked the charter boats out and, "Oh, you've got eleven Chinooks." (Prichard laughs) "That's a steelhead." They didn't know a brown trout from a steelhead. Everything was a Chinook. Oh, we'd get so mad. I mean, but—

PRICHARD: Yeah, I got told a coho was a Chinook in Grand Haven one time by a creel—(laughs)

GRANT: And then, a lot of our business, too, a group of us would get together—my book, I'd have to sit down and straighten it out to the year. I'm going to say—it was still going good. I shut down in 2006. (Prichard: Okay.) Two thousand six I went and got my flu shot and was one of those one in five hundred thousand that gets Guillain Barre. I lost



a whole year of my life. I was paralyzed from my Adam's apple to my toes. (Prichard: Oh my god.) And, I just—I was old enough to retire and I said, "I'm selling the boat." I stayed working as a contractor, but when it came summertime I dropped everything and I chartered. I mean you'd—the other thing that was different here in Rogers City right from the beginning, I don't care what anybody tells you, the fish don't come here—never came here until Fourth of July. One time we took a group out from the plant because—the management from the stone quarry—because they were allowing us to take the fish guts down on the quarry and bury them from the cleaning station and that—and we wanted to show them we appreciate that. And it was just already in two thousand—maybe two-three-four, something like that—and it was on my boat that we caught a salmon and everybody was shocked, and that was Memorial Day weekend. We think he forgot to go away for the winter. (both laugh) Our fish would never show up until July first—or July fourth. I wouldn't even book until July fourth because you're embarrassed you go out there and catch nothing but ten-eleven-inch lake trout. And most of them died because they were bleeding. And all you're doing is destroying your resource. And that was bad, so—but, then you couldn't keep up, unless—until we got into a three-day blow, you had to stay down there after ten o'clock at night and change the oil on your boat because you were back there at five o'clock the next morning. Come in at eleven o'clock, clean the boat up, get a bite to eat, and at two o'clock you're gathering your people. Day after day after day, I don't—it gets to you after a while. And it just got to the point when you get sixty-five you get tired.

|1:11:40|

GRANT: I want to show you something here. (Prichard: Okay.) We did a lot of the outdoor shows. (Prichard: Down in Novi?) Yep. And our booth would be so crowded—and we did it as a Presque Isle County booth, but in Rogers City (Prichard: Okay.)—and we would do—we just had a ten-foot background. And we took a couple mounts. And we'd take this cooler down. (Grant slides a white, twenty-five-gallon cooler out from under a table.) We'd take this cooler down, and this was our display. (Grant opens the lid of the cooler which is on a hinge. Inside the cooler was a taxidermy display consisting of a large, approximately thirty-pound Chinook salmon, a steelhead, and a brown trout, on ice in the cooler.<sup>2</sup>)

PRICHARD: Oh, that's awesome. I want to take a picture of that.

GRANT: You couldn't believe the people lined up just to look in the cooler. (Prichard laughs) And then you knew who to talk to. You talk to the guy that was dressed the dress.



<sup>2</sup>Bruce Grant's taxidermy display of a twenty-five-gallon cooler containing mounts of a steelhead, a brown trout, and a large, approximately thirty-pound Chinook salmon, on ice. Grant used to take this to outdoor shows to promote tourism in Presque Isle County.

His wife looked like she allowed him to go fishing. (Prichard laughs) Or, like for me it was talk to the family, “Bring the kids up. We’ll fish them in the creek and they can fish right off shore. And your wife will enjoy it. And you can go to the casino.” That brought the people to the booth.

PRICHARD: I’m going to take a picture of that. If you don’t mind.

GRANT: Oh, no no. Isn’t that a beautiful fish?

PRICHARD: Yeah! (Prichard takes photos of the display.) I like that brown trout, too. It’s cool.

GRANT: But those were the things it took when you live in a community that doesn’t have a lot of money to work with, and you can’t keep beating the same businesses up over and over and over again, a little gimmick like that will bring the fish to your house—people to your place. Makes a big difference. (Grant closes cooler slides the display back under the table.)

|01:13:56|

PRICHARD: Was there enough lodging in Rogers City during the heyday?

GRANT: No. And that’s the other thing that still gripes me today about our people here. They use the fishery. But right when the peak of the salmon were here the first week of August, I mean, you just went out and caught fish. I mean, there’d be a day [when you didn’t catch fish], but if you got out there early in the morning or late at night, you were going to catch fish. They always had what they call a Nautical Festival here in August.

They had all kinds of places to put that festival in. “No, we do it in the fish harbor parking lot.” So now you’ve got people that want to go to the festival. They take up all the parking in the parking lot. And you’ve got fishermen wanting to come in to fish. And that drove people away after a few years. The worst part that turned so many people off—because the festival’s based on volunteers—they had the same problem I was talking about. You put guys on a boat all day, drinking beer, in the sun, and then they come in—a lot of them slept on their boats, especially the ones that had a slip in the harbor—and they go to the festival drunk, swearing, causing trouble. Police haul them away. Have to have more police. And then they get mad—and I know. I did the outdoors shows. “Oh, damn police locked me up. I wasn’t even driving.” Well, it was one of those—and there at the festival where you have family—nobody—I don’t take my wife no place if the language is—I’m with a bunch of guys I don’t care. I’m bad myself. But when you’ve got your family, and you’ve got other women and stuff there, you don’t carry on—and young girls dancing, polka-ing, and living in the old town thing—move it someplace else. Get it the heck out of your harbor. Well, then they said, “Well, everybody’s in town—” And then they’d have the softball tournaments when we have the next weekend, and the Fat Hogs would do their tournament, or the locals would—but the parking lot is full. And now it’s even less because I tore down our unit. They shut down North Star Motel. When we were in our heyday, we had 113 lodging facilities in the county. You’ve got 350 boats here with four to six guys on each boat (Prichard laughs) and you’ve got 113 lodging facilities, you don’t have a festival. Or if you have a festival, you don’t have a boat tournament. But they put the two together. And then they’d have the softball tournaments for the whole northern Michigan the next weekend. And when

prime fishing was here the parking lot was full of arguments. It was crowded. It had nothing—and then, let me tell you, when our police went down and did a—they kept record. The money was coming in. The city would charge the harbor fund for every time a policeman made a trip through. (Prichard laughs) If somebody called down and said, “I smell gas coming out of a boat,” they’d send the fire department down there and they’d charge the harbor fund. That’s how they were taking money out of the harbor fund to support the general fund. Okay? That’s not right. So it was an issue.

We had some really wonderful harbormasters, which I think control the whole thing. It’s their personality and how they handle the problem. If you handle a problem—you’re not going to please everybody—but if you handle a problem the way you’d like to be handled—kind of the golden rule idea—if you lose a few, they were the ones you didn’t want anyways. If you made it right with the people, they came back. And they knew the rules, and they had an understanding. And we had some harbormasters—this happened several times. Two buddies. Two brothers. One leaves Detroit on Thursday night. Comes up, gets a slip. His brother leaves Friday morning. He worked nights. He comes up and there’s no slip available. His brother got a slip. But there’s empty slips. So the guy leaves. Parks out in the parking lot. Or goes to Presque Isle to try to get, whatever. And an hour later, a local comes along and gets the slip. And that’s not—I know that goes on, but that’s not right. And those people compare notes. Next week, the two brothers don’t come back. So you didn’t lose one, you lost two by not being upfront. There’s got to be transparency. You’ve got to be fair with everybody.

And the fishery is great. If you want a good crowd and you want to keep it coming, I hate to say it but you’ve got to get rid of the riffraff because they drive your volunteers away.

They drive your family groups away. And they're usually the one that's complaining about price, anyway. You know what I mean? And so that's a—when things blossom, that's one of the things that happen, and it takes some good strong people to keep it under control because—oh, I see things happen down there during the fishery that—they actually had a list posted one time to tell—if you knew who this person was, tell them not to come back. And it was deserving, because you could hear the language from one end of the parking lot to the next. They go drunk. You want to be cleaning a fish next to a drunk in the cleaning station with a filet knife? I don't think so. So, these things are wonderful, but they've got to have a program, be a little bit policed, and it will last for a long time. We could use three-four more times the amount of fishermen out here right now. But they can count the numbers, they can say what they want. Get Frank [Krist] to show you his chart for fishing this year—or last year, the year before—of what he caught, because Frank keeps a record—or some of the other ones—and they're not starving for fish. They're catching their fish and going home. And there's room for more boats. I think the population's going to come back a little better. I hope it never comes back the way it was (Prichard: Really?) because it creates chaos. Creates enemies. And like I say, we go to the outdoors show and out of every ten people, two had a problem. It was a social problem. It wasn't a fishing problem, (Prichard: Yeah.) it was a social problem. And you're going to have that. You've got to weed the—we had it right here at the motel. My wife had three cards: a green, a yellow, and a red. If you left a room and it was a mess, you got a red card. And the next time you call for a reservation, "I'm sorry, we're booked." A yellow card, you would get a little talking-to, "These are our rules," and they turned into green cards. If they were just a great family, and no bad language—and I'm

not against bad language, don't get me wrong—but there's a place for it. And there's a place not for it. So if a community puts a plan together—kind of like a business plan—and sticks to it the best they can, they're going to lose a few. But they're the ones they don't want anyways. So it's just one of those things.

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PRICHARD: So you were, I mean, you were fairly selective with who you let stay. And then I'm wondering, did you—so you were probably turning away some people, or being prohibitive based on cost, and so was that—do you think that kind of helped buffer against—

GRANT: It kept me out of jail because I tell you, you were in town? You see the Driftwood Motel?

PRICHARD: Yeah. Yeah.

GRANT: That guy was [a] trained hospitality person.

PRICHARD: That Nadolsky?

GRANT: Well it is now. Used to be Jim Dempsey. (Prichard: Okay.) He came out of the St. Ignace-Mackinaw City area. He was trained hospitality. Their key contractor was a drywall man. They'd have a softball team in there, and they'd get mad because they'd lose and put their fist through the drywall. I couldn't tolerate that. And, yes. We had a policy no pets. And I'd get up in the morning—I'm an early upper—and here's somebody walking little Tutu around on a leash on the back porch, but they're hiding it.

I'd go over, give them their check back—give them their money back—and tell them to get out. That's it, you broke the rules. We just chose not to have any pets because they're too hard to clean up after. Would you pay twelve-fifteen hundred bucks a week to stay in a cabin and the next cabin the people went out to dinner and left their dog in the cabin, "Yap, yap, yap, yap," all night long? Especially a little yappy dog? Or, "No, we'll leave him in the car." No, that doesn't work. You have to set a standard and go by that. I mean, if you want to rebuild a car you go to the junkyard, get your parts, and that's what you rebuild. If you don't want that trouble you go to the dealer and buy a new one, but you pay a lot more. It's very easy—you've got to have discipline—it's very easy to sort your crowd. When we were in our peak they were letting rooms go for thirteen bucks a night. Why the heck do you want to let a room go for thirteen bucks? It cost me—we put a girl, when I had the motel—we put two girls in there for forty-five minutes [to clean a room], I've got twenty bucks spent. And thirteen bucks a night you can't clean a room. You can't make it healthy for the next person. But all a guy would have to do is say, "He just gave me fifteen bucks across the street. You want twenty-nine?" Okay, I'll do it for—well, I like this place better for fifteen. Okay, I'll do it for thirteen. This happened all the time. It's not good. I mean, it's not good.

PRICHARD: I spoke with Rich Hamp. I haven't done an interview with him.

GRANT: Well he's in Colorado now.

PRICHARD: Yeah. But he kind of had a different approach it sounds like, because—

GRANT: He was a \$13 a night guy.



PRICHARD: Yeah, yeah. So his business would be booming July-August-September, and then that was 60 percent of his—

GRANT: And that's who he had (Prichard: Yeah.) is that guy that'd come up here to fish—his wife didn't want him to go in the first place—he spent the weekend, bought a lot of beer, and went home and argued all week. We were just as busy all through deer season. All through snowmobile season. We've got a lot of cross-country ski trails here. We have the same people in January, February. The only time we shut down is in March when the frost comes out of the ground and the big high snowbanks melt because it's just a muddy mess. And I never wanted asphalt because I want people to come up and have the northern experience—that's what we went on. We weren't short of people because they didn't mind—and if they only stayed for a weekend in the wintertime when a lot of them wouldn't take a full week—we charged a couple hundred bucks a night. They only got a break when they took a full week. We'd have a waiting list. But we had different clientele. Most of the people that stayed with us paid a high price, and if they drive by, now that we're shut down, they stop by to visit. He doesn't even know who his customers were. Price separates—I'm not saying the good from the bad—you need a place for the guy that can't afford to pay a hundred bucks a night—but the part that gets me about the guys like Rich—he's a wonderful guy, too, don't get me wrong—they need to go to Alpena, Oscoda, Traverse City, Charlevoix, or Petoskey—you can't get a room for—on the weekend price goes up, through the week the price goes down because they rely on business people. Or, I mean, yeah through the week the price goes up, weekend it goes down. But you're not going to get a room over there for less than seventy-nine, \$89 dollars a night. Another thing you might put in that—I'm against what the communities

do—you have a lodging group that bring people—and they’re the people that go out and advertise and draw the people. A big problem we had here in Rogers City, and in the county—and right now it’s infestive; it’s cancer—letting people rent their cottages out. I’m not against somebody renting their cottage out. But I’m against making me put up with Frank Krists at the health department. “How’s your water? How’s your room?”

We’ve had people leave here, go down the street, rent a cottage for the next summer for a week, come back and say, “Can we get our date—,” because if you stayed the first week of August for the festival, you were the first one—if you told us by January first, you got next year, the same week. If you lost it, you started back over in May to get back up to your week. They rent a cottage that, “Oh, the silverware’s full of mouse turds. The linens have got spots all over them.” And the people are renting their cottages and their homes out to make the payments on them. No health department checks. And here’s what’d kill us. They’d pull in here. Somebody would buy a cottage down the beach. I used to snowplow. They go, “Would you snowplow for us?” Because I did all these cottages.

When the people would come up, “Yeah, I’ll snowplow for you.” “Oh, by the way, we might rent our cottage out. If you get overflow, would you give it to us?” I will if you go register at the Chamber of Commerce and pay their dues. I will if you show me a certificate of insurance, that you got insurance other than homeowners. And you charge 6 percent sales tax. And 2 percent bed tax that we had. Now we’re competitive, right? But don’t come get my price list at twelve-fifteen hundred bucks a week and then drop yours down two hundred bucks, and you don’t have to live to any of these standards that I do, and we’re bringing the people here, and you’re stealing our customers. And then we went through the thing of they’d sit in the driveway out here at five o’clock in the afternoon

and stop our girls wanting to know if they'd clean the cabin for cash. (Prichard laughs)  
That's cancer.

PRICHARD: Was that more of a problem when there were more people coming for fishing?

GRANT: It started then. (Prichard: Okay.) I would go in the cleaning station to clean my fish and all on the bulletin board is (Prichard: Ah.) a sticker up there. Rip this tag off with this phone number. We have an apartment that we rent for the weekend. Right along by the harbor, there. Then it was the whole house for the summer. I mean, it's crazy. But they didn't charge sales tax, didn't have to charge the bed tax—that's 8 percent right there that puts us out of the ballpark. But what made me mad, really mad—back then it was twelve hundred bucks a week, they'd rent a place for four hundred bucks a week. They're leaving a lot under the table. But what made my wife and I stick to it is, everybody that left came back. And it's so foolish. We're right here—especially my wife—and the people that stayed here for three or four years are walking by the beach. You know, walking the—don't want you to know they're staying down the road. (Prichard laughs) And then pretty soon they'd come back and, "Can we get—can we book again?" Oh, this happened time after time. Other thing you have to be careful of—I go back to the same thing with real estate. Somebody would ask you about a piece of property. You knew somebody in real estate who was fairly honest, and you give them their name and they go into the office, maybe that person wasn't there. They picked the people up here and show them a piece of property and say, "Hey, I've got some other—if you can't get in there or don't like it there, I've got a list of other cottages." They got a percentage of renting out some of these cottages. We went to the county and tried to get

them to do an ordinance. Went to the city and tried to do the ordinance. They wouldn't talk to us. When I really got into it I found out that half the people on the county commission were renting their cottages out, and the people on the city boards were doing it. It's a cancer. And it's—now I don't know if you—Traverse City and Petoskey, both now are stopping that. If you want to go register and get health department checks, I'm not against somebody being an entrepreneur. No different—I'm against you going putting an addition on for the guy next door and you don't have a builder's license. I don't have a problem with a guy with a builder's license from Gaylord coming over here and putting an addition on my neighbor's place. But he's got insurance. He's going through the costs—and then this business of stopping your help—or running into them in the grocery store and wanting to know if they'd clean the cabin for cash—and we're paying the darn insurance, and workman's comp, and all the stuff you've got to do. And that's why—like I say, Rich [Hamp] at Huron Shores [Motel] is a great guy—he had to move back to Colorado because the only time he had business was in the summertime when the crowd was here. The rest of the time he was empty. I mean he was empty. And the same people he would have in the summertime would go to the Driftwood and pay a little more money, or across the street. But him and the guy across the street, I know they fought down to thirteen bucks a night. Richard told me that himself. “Oh, I had to take a guy for \$13 last night. They offered him fifteen across the road.” You can't survive like that. And that's a problem—that's why I still think, a community, if they would just put business people, a city or county person, a few restaurant people, a few motel people, and have an advisory board. Just meet once a month. Or if the city, the county says, “Hey, we've run into this issue. How would you people take it if we chose to do it this way?” Talk it out

and have something agreeable. Like we go to the city or county and say, “Hey, you’ve got to come with an ordinance because they’re renting town out and people don’t have insurance. They’re not charging sales tax.” “Well, we’re not going to get into that.” That’s not good. It causes problems. Kind of funny, too, you can go to a city meeting at city council, anything they do they beg you to come volunteer. Festival. Fishing tournament. Anything that’s going on, please come and volunteer. Please sit on this board. You bring up your hand and you bring up something. “Don’t even listen to him, he doesn’t even live in the city.” Communities have got to work together and it will all work out. You don’t want all the people, you want the best people. And communities have to realize that. I mean, they’re there. You take that mentality over—from Harbor Springs to Charlevoix, you can’t rent a cottage for a twelve hundred a week. You pay three thousand a week because they know there’s people out there that will pay the price if you give them what they want. And small communities that have a boom for something need to understand that early on, and they’ll last longer. How many places do really well and then you go through the town and it’s quiet? You know, like the bad thing the outdoor writer said. The fish are gone, the alewives are gone, last one out of Rogers City please shut the lights off. You don’t want that to happen. You don’t want that to happen. Alpena—fabulous brown trout fishery—it went right down. They learned enough—they still have a Brown Trout Festival and it’s still big and it’s going strong because they’ve added to it. They make it a weekly event. Locals can fish through the week and try to out-fish the guy that comes up from down below. But they still have a good event and they went to other species. Lake trout, wall[eye]—it’s not just brown trout now—they moved to walleyes, lake trout, salmon.

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GRANT: And right now we've got a walleye fishery out here—and I hope things stay quiet for a little while because this walleye fishery out here is building, and building. And once it starts coming back—once we get some people here that are writing about the place—they'll go out here and you can target and catch walleye. Only the locals know that. Or that guy that catches an odd fish, he'll say to the local, "I didn't know we had walleyes here." "Oh, you caught an odd one." They don't want anybody to know. But they're—the stock is building. (Prichard: Yeah.) And it's going to happen. We're going to have a targeted walleye fishery here, I'm going to say in another four or five years. Because now you go out there and you can catch walleye.

PRICHARD: Walleye bring people. Just look at Saginaw Bay or the Detroit River.

GRANT: And from my understanding, from fish biologists and people like you, that the fishery expanded out of Saginaw Bay. And then it boosted up in Oscoda. I fished in Oscoda thirty-five years ago and caught a few walleyes. And you had the river. Well that was a big issue because they were planting salmon in the river and the walleyes were eating the salmon before they got out to the lake. So that tells you something. And then that expanded to Alpena. And now Rogers City's getting the benefit. You can go to Presque Isle and target walleye. I can't say I could go out here and catch you a limit of walleye, but I wouldn't be surprised if we went out and fished and we didn't come back with a couple walleye. And the other thing is, I won't say things are changing, I'm saying, people are getting more educated. You don't go out in the summertime and fish

for walleye in 110-feet of water. You get on the rock structure at forty-five feet and you'll catch some walleye.

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GRANT: There's a new fishery—I think, a new way of fishing, because we never did it here. I tried to establish fishing out of a charter boat for whitefish from the Grand Traverse sportfishing guys—had some real good friends there—they came over and fished with us because they know how—they do it there. We couldn't do it here. We tried. We tried, we tried, we tried. And we've got more whitefish than anybody. Our commercial fisherman has a four hundred thousand-pound allotment right here. We have too much current. No matter what you use, your line—before your line gets down fifty feet it's already out straight. I don't care if you put an ounce and a half or two ounces on. It slowly comes up. You can't fish where they're at. But I—

PRICHARD: Is that like an inshore current? From the—? Or, what is it?

GRANT: No. Current moves down through here about twelve miles an hour. This probably sounds stupid to you. This is my thought. Two or three of us would take off in the spring, leave here, and you go to the end of our road here, I've got a—there's an old block building down there. You put that between your shoulder blades on your back, put your compass on north, and you'll go right dead center up the St. Marys River. (Prichard: Okay.) I mean you go right up to DeTour and Drummond Island. You get in a current that you have to adjust all the way across. Now if you come out of Rogers City and go, you just go, you get out into the lake a couple miles, and then you can't get too close to it on the side because they've got rocks the size of this building, but we learned if we just

come up here and go north we don't have to worry about structure, or running across some of them rocks. But—it probably sounds stupid—but I think Hammond Bay was formed over the thousands and thousands of years from the current from the St. Marys River. Because you've got Lake Superior that's, what, twenty-five-, twenty-four-, twenty-five-feet higher than Lake Michigan and Lake Huron—? That water's not coming down here—and you fish that current up there. We go to Munuscong Bay and I used to be able to tell—come out of the lake and go in the river and my fuel flow meter would go up two or three gallons an hour. You're fighting the current you can't feel. That current that's coming out here—are you familiar with Port Huron and the Blue Water Bridge?

PRICHARD: Oh, god yeah. That's scary current there. Yeah.

GRANT: Alright. Have you ever seen the current there? (Prichard: Yeah.) When I lived down there I used to fish a walleye boat right there, just about five miles below the bridge. And I hand-line fished. You fished current all night long. This current's the same way here. (Prichard: Okay.) And you get where the whitefish go in the daytime—now if you went out here and fished at night and got in the thirty-forty-feet water where those leads come, like on a trap net, you might do some good. But I've never done it, and I just got onto it this year, I saw an outdoor program out of Wisconsin where they're jigging lake trout on the drop-off shelf. We got that all over out here and you got lake trout like crazy out here. And I think I'm going to go out with some good, heavy jigs, little heavier line because with whitefish you've got to be real finesse-y, real—like four-pound test line, real small jigs bounced on the bottom—these lake trout don't care. I'm going to go out and as soon as it gets a little better, a little safer, I'm going to launch and go out there and just take my light stuff and try to jig on the drop-off—and we got a rock shelf that



runs out there that's just pure rock—and out to forty-five feet I can go on a bright summer day, and if I'm going fast I can see bottom all the way to fifty-feet of water. And a lot of times you'll see it on your graph going out slow—I'm going to go out and try to jig them lake trout. That would be a new way of doing it. That will be a different way. And people can do it with smaller boats.

PRICHARD: You could easily catch and release, doing that, too. (Grant: Yeah.) I've wondered about that because lake trout—yeah.

GRANT: Well I'm going to try it and if it works, come on up and I'll take you out (Prichard laughs) and do it because I just catch and let them go, but (Prichard: Yeah.) you go out there and—I'll tell you now, look, for two people, you go out there and catch a ten-eleven—well, salmon's the same way—you've got enough meal for three meals for heaven's sakes. But I don't know why we never tried that here. I went out there jigging trying to catch whitefish. But again, when I came here there was no lake trout fishery. (Prichard: Right.) Commercial fishermen and the tribes destroyed it. Then the State came back—I think it's the—I think it was the Senecas out of Lake Ontario [a genetic strain of lake trout] (Prichard: Yep.)—and they're completely different fish. (Prichard: Yeah, they occupy a different—) They don't live on the bottom.

PRICHARD: They say they avoid sea lamprey better.

GRANT: Exactly. And they grow faster, and they grow bigger. And they're not stuck on the bottom. In fact—you probably never got to meet the guy—there used to be a guy that managed—it was after Dr. [James] Seelye left—they put Roger Bergstedt in charge of the sea lamprey station. I don't know if you've ever run across Roger—

PRICHARD: I've never met him. I've seen his name a million times. Yeah.

GRANT: Okay. Well Roger—I used to be Roger's lookout for when the carp spawned (Prichard: Oh.) when they came around the shore, fins out and spawning, (Prichard: Yep.) because they kept track of that. That told them when the temperature was right to put the lampricide in. And then when they started getting—we got a few people that whenever we'd catch a lake trout, pretty decent one, we'd keep it alive and take it up and give it to Roger. I'd give it to the neighbor right across the road—he was the chemist there—and they take it up. They'd tag them. Well they start watching these tagged Senecas, and in the wintertime they stayed that far below [just below] any ice cover. And they figured it was more of an oxygen content there. They weren't down in thirty-nine-degree water laying on the bottom, which they thought they would be. And they would stay suspended. Sometimes in—a couple times a day they would leave, and they figured they were going to feed. But they'd come back and suspend. And out here now, in 100-200-feet of water you're catching lake trout at 50-55-feet down. Just find the temperature and you're going to catch them.

PRICHARD: Yeah, I remember—I don't know if they wrote up these results—but I remember—I think I saw a presentation—he was putting thermal tags in lake trout and throughout the course of the day they would experience these huge temperature changes because—

GRANT: Well Roger wrote papers on that. I read them, but I never got to keep a copy because he had to turn them in. But he used to—and that was another—we have a great fishing club up here, it's kind of dwindled down.

PRICHARD: The Hammond Bay—

GRANT: The Anglers [The Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association]—but we used to get Dr. Seelye to come, Roger to come, but they couldn't get involved because it—Seelye almost—I don't know if you've heard of Dr. Seelye, but—

PRICHARD: I've seen the name. Yeah.

GRANT: —he was the gun here. He was the one that got all this started—

PRICHARD: With the sea lamprey control—

GRANT: —with Harry Whiteley. (Prichard: Oh.) He kicked him in the butt politically to get the sea lamprey funding. But Jim Seelye got too close to the sportsmen, and they shipped him right to Washington State. One of—a great—fish and wildlife's—  
Washington—Seattle, Washington—he was down from Seattle. He almost lost his job. The reason: he got too close to the fishermen. So Roger was very skeptical, but Roger lived here. He was inland. What Roger used to do was go to the schools and put on seminars for the kids. And we did river cleanups and things like that. No, Roger had that—for that tag to figure where the trout were going. But that Seneca—I think it's Seneca strain—was a new strain, and they didn't know a whole lot about it. And then as the new technology came along—and they actually had a thing here, because we did it in the charter boats—if somebody caught a lake trout with one of those thermal tags in it, you take it up there and they give you a hundred bucks. And that worked out good. People were starting to catch them. But they had their own boat and they were fishing from kind of Cheboygan down, and they were out there fishing all day long, but they

were tagging those fish. And anything that we could turn over to them they tagged. And that information that he came up with, I wouldn't be surprised if Frank Krist hasn't got some copies of that and he could tell you the story on that. But after I watched those guys—if they're fishing out of Wisconsin they're fishing Lake Michigan—and they're out there on the rocks at spawning time just jigging, and just using a regular jig with a dead smelt or a plastic silver minnow on it, and their catching twelve-fifteen-pound fish. And the nice part about it—you fish them on light tackle, you let them run. You fish them here with our big stuff—and I mean you know when you got a lake trout on—but most people don't, and learning fishermen don't—and they crank them up to catch that fish—it's dead when it gets to the boat. (Prichard: Right.) This way here you can go out and have fun and catch them and watch them swim away. That's exciting.

PRICHARD: I think that's the future, too. I do. (laughs) Or I've wondered about it.

GRANT: Well, I think that could be a new developed fishery here. And I'm going to go out and try it and if it works I'm going to pass it on to a few people. But, well really, we've got a lot of—and the Indians are taking lake trout—and you can go out there and catch three lake trout anywhere from six to fifteen pounds. And in Alpena during the Brown Trout Festival this year they got several lake trout twenty pounds. That's a pretty good (Prichard: Yeah.) comeback. And like I say, in '85-'86, they were like that, and they were right on the bottom. And most of the time you only caught one because you were checking lines to see if you had a lake trout on. Either that or you'd see maybe the rod—they couldn't even pull it—couldn't even pull a line out of a release they were so small.

PRICHARD: But that was before you were up here in Rogers City—

GRANT: That was when I first got here.

|01:51:36|

PRICHARD: Do you know what it was like before you got up here? And had it—did it go—was there a better fishery and then it got worse around the early eighties?

GRANT: No. Locals only fished lake trout in the spring. And a few of them—there's a smallmouth [bass] fishery right at the quarry (Prichard: Okay) down towards Thompson Harbor. That's what Jim Johnson fishes real hard. Never got any publicity. But no, they'd come out and fish lake trout. I know two people in town, born and raised here, they got their charter license, they made boat payments—they worked in the quarry—they made their boat payments by catching lake trout, any size, and taking them to town and selling them for a buck a pound to the old establishment. That's how they made their boat payment. And they were out there either every night, or every morning before they went to work, and they did that. And they never got caught. They got away with it. And that's what the fishery was. And, before the boat fishery got here, like I said, when they planted some fish in the Ocqueoc—I lived downstate then, I brought my sixteen-foot wood boat up—when they—because I just went through some old pictures of—I had a one and a half-ton stake truck—and a half a dozen of us came from Onaway, and we went down there, and at that time everybody snagged, that's how you got fish, you snagged them—and we had that truck with one-foot sideboards level with salmon, took them back to Onaway, gave them to all the old people, some to churches, and then what we wanted for—. Black, nasty fish you wouldn't even think of. After that run started—and you learned that you go down there—there was still people snagging all over—all you had to

do was go out by the mouth and fish with some salmon eggs. But more people got here that knew how to do that, and then a fishery started. But most of it was in the river snagging in the fall. I went out in the lake—I would say it would have been '69 up to about '75—with my old wood Thompson boat, and we would troll with pike lures. And to this day I could never—and what would you fish with back then? Daredevles.

(Prichard: Yeah.) Could never catch a fish on a Daredevle. Never. Because they were red and white. You get in the river and you catch a pike right away in the Ocqueoc. And there's some big pike in the Ocqueoc. Salmon don't bite red and white. I don't know what it is. (both laugh) Anyway—and that's interesting, Doc Seelye told me a story, when he was young and just starting off he worked in Alaska, and they were working on commercial nets for a salmon run, and they dyed nets different colors, and red nets the salmon wouldn't go in. Other colored nets they would go in, but red nets they wouldn't. Who knows why. But then I did a Sea Grant thing one time and they did that color study—and I've got it in one of my files here someplace—you go down zero to thirty feet and the fish can see. Thirty to sixty they can see certain colors. (Prichard: Right.) Sixty to a hundred, the only thing they can pay attention to or react to is chrome when the sun is shining—for a flash, you know. Kind of different. But I do think the fishery is coming back. It's going to get strong. I'll be gone and out of here probably, but I do hope that the city gets more adjusted for it and they work to get it because it makes the businesses go. It makes the local business healthier and it provides work. You know, a kid up here gets out of school, he hasn't got a car to drive to Detroit to go get a—or Saginaw or Bay City—and he doesn't want to leave anyways. If they—and it's getting better. You've got Moran [Iron Works]. You've got Cadillac Products. When I came here, a good friend of

mine worked at Calcite. He'd been here for about ten years. He worked there ten years. His annual wage was about \$17,000 a year. Now it's up—these guys are making forty, fifty. Actually they're doing better than that. What changed it was the sailors were making fifty grand a year and his brother that worked in the quarry was making thirty grand a year. So you've had these ownership changes in the quarry. Now they're making real money. I mean they're making a standard that you can live on. And it's keeping more people here. It wouldn't hurt to have a few more. (Prichard: Yeah.) And then a town would get established. Not have to go through these rollercoasters. You know, good now—this town had it. Boy, I tell you I couldn't believe. And then they started stealing from the harbor fund to pay bills. Now they don't have enough money to pay their harbor payment and they're crying. And the people in town are bitching because, "Why do we have to make more taxes to pay for the harbor?" They had that money there. They didn't have a rainy day fund. That's common sense. That's gone on since—eons. If the squirrels don't store nuts they ain't got anything to eat all winter. (Prichard laughs) They haven't learned that yet in a lot of cases. And so, a fishery can come back. They're going to have to get people to go out and get the writers to come make an issue out of it. It's free advertising, and it's better advertising. An ad in one of those magazines doesn't produce hardly anything. But an article in one of those magazines keeps you busy.

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GRANT: The other thing that's changed everything here is the internet. After we got a website—and we were the first one up here—the guy at the—

PRICHARD: For the resort, you mean?

GRANT: —yeah, at the Alpena newspaper came to town and gave a big spiel and a meeting and nobody bit for it. My wife and I couldn't do a meeting. I can't remember what the reason was. But he knew we weren't there. And he called us and he says, "I'd like to come out and give you an opportunity to understand what's going on." So he was here for an hour and a half explaining how the internet worked and the search engines. I didn't know anything about it. And his fee was a couple hundred bucks. And then he had a guy that did a website. We'll try it. *Never had to put an ad in the paper again.* Colleen and I went through three or four years. Finally the businesses in town are saying, "How come you're not advertising in anything?" Okay—we turned the stuff down. We had to change our whole way of life. You run an ad or a writer was up and did an article, you stayed by the phone. As soon as that website went out we changed—and the calls came after five o'clock at night and on the weekend—when our website went on we had to change our hours completely. Our calls were coming from nine o'clock in the morning until five o'clock in the afternoon. People at work (Prichard laughs) checking things out. Everything changed. And we never spent another penny. And then the Alpena paper fell out of it. And one of the writers owns a big business—he used to do all the DNR's video work—and he started a company in East Lansing—Okemos—called Future Media. And then they started doing websites. In fact that's him in the—oh, I had a picture of him holding a big fish. He started this and he hired a real tech guy that knew what he was doing. And so I check—he was up here and we fished together and he said—I said, "Bob, I might have a—*Alpena News* is quitting doing it. They've got a guy doing it part-time and he's hard to catch and every time you want to upgrade it takes—you're out of the season by the time you can upgrade." I said, "What would it cost?" Well with *Alpena*



*News* we paid like three-four hundred bucks and maybe fifty bucks when you made a change once or twice a year. Bob said, “I can get you in something probably halfway decent for six thousand bucks,” and I about fell out of the boat. I can’t afford six thousand bucks. And my wife convinced me—let’s stick our neck out and do it because look at the change we had by somebody that really didn’t know what they were doing. So we coughed up the money and had him do it and I haven’t—I’ll do a donation in town, but I won’t do an ad. I don’t have to. Our phone rings off the hook and we’ve been shut down for a year, since she got sick, and put ourselves up for sale. I’ve got people calling on our website because we called him and said, “Just put ‘for sale’ on the website.” It’s crazy. And I tell you what, that six thousand bucks came back the—I *know* it came back the first year. And that’s how it changed. You go here and try to get somebody to do a decent website. “Oh, my daughter-in-law does it.” Or, “We’ve got a lady that will do it for fifty bucks.” That’s what you get. But those professional people—it makes a difference. If these communities—it used to be a videotape—now it’s just that website. People stumble on you. And then getting the writers up here. Perfect example, you ever watch “Under the Radar”? You know what [the] “Under the Radar” TV program is? (Prichard: No.) It’s—CMU [Central Michigan University] sponsors it. (Prichard: Okay.) And they go to different communities all the time and just pick up on unique things. They read an article—

PRICHARD: Actually, I think I do know what you’re talking about. Yeah.

GRANT: —they read an article in a magazine about here [Manitou Shores Resort] and they called and wanted to know if they could come up and do a show. This was ten years ago. Sure, why not? So they came. We had them stay. They did a show. Everything

changed. Our phone rang—because they did it—they did it in the summertime, but they went through the fall thing. The winter thing—they went out to Ocqueoc Falls, looked at the trails—they came back and did some winter footage. And then they did Alpena and they did out west of Mackinaw City. Every time they do a rerun our phone rings off the hook. For the last month our phone has been ringing off the hook because CMU is in that pledge thing right now (Prichard: Yes. Yeah.) with all the things. So they took ten shows that they enjoyed doing over the years for this year's CMU pledge thing and all of a sudden we're getting messages on the recorder, "Saw you on TV last night." What the hell? Nobody's been around here for three years. What are they talking about? Well then I caught it, and here it was they took ten different things from around the State for this year's pledge. Our phone's been ringing off the hook having to tell people we're shutdown, we're closed. And that's free advertising. You can't buy that. You can't buy that with an ad you put—people hate ads. But they watch that stuff. And that's what communities need to do. Get in with a writer. Harry Whiteley was very close to the AAA people—Len Barnes [editor, *AAA Michigan Living* magazine]. He had those people up here all the time. It made people aware of where Rogers City was. And then when the fishing hit like it was it just made a big—even Eric Sharp from the [*Detroit*] *Free Press*, when he was there, came up and did stories. You can't buy that in advertising. That's a big thing communities have to learn. Make a plan. Even if it goes to fail, if the goldmine doesn't turn out, at least you were prepared. They weren't prepared here. We weren't prepared. I moved up here because I read about what was happening in the *Detroit News* on Sunday articles.

And there's going to be more goldmines. There's going to be more things like salmon plants. They may—well a perfect example—I think Alpena, or, they went to Oscoda—in the quarry here they were going to do a space thing for—I'm sure you've read some of that. I think, now Kincheloe [Air Force Base] got it, for SpaceX. For places to launch (Prichard: Okay.) spacecraft and satellite maintenance and stuff like that. And they were thinking about doing it out of the quarry here because it's not populated. (Prichard: Yeah.) And I think it's Oscoda that got it, and Kincheloe. (Prichard: Okay.) Like I say, there's more goldmines coming. And the more people that go out and fight for these kind of things, and promote, the better off you are. I mean, I—as my trade—and I did that after I moved up here—I built commercial swimming pools. And I did almost—the Holiday Inn Express and Best Westerns. Those people go by population. And everyday they've got people out studying. And if a guy's going to do a business—if they're just building a Best Western or Holiday Inn there—they're doing it because they know people are coming. I've only seen one Holiday Inn Express not stay that way and that's the one in Indian River, and I think it's location. It sits too far—right alongside the expressway, but you go past it before you know it's there. But they changed over into a ma and pa operation. They're still surviving. But things like that are going to keep happening. The other thing—Alpena gets overflow. They think I'm crazy on the Chamber of Commerce and [the] Tourism Council—I want to go to Alpena and put up a billboard because if you're crowded here, take a little ride up to Rogers City and have a look. (Prichard: Yeah.) Because people are there. We get people here—what do you drive around and look at? You have a list, let them go look at a thing.

We get people here that don't want to be staying by a casino. They come here, they stay—and we couldn't figure this out. We'd have people come here and their cabin didn't move all day, and at seven o'clock at night their car was gone. I leave to go to work at five in the morning and their car's just coming back. For a whole week. And this was—different times it was happening. Finally you get to know these people, especially when they win. They worked the casinos late at night, and they don't want to stay around the casino. They'd stay here. They go to Bay Mills. They go to St. Ignace. They go to the Soo [Sault Ste. Marie]. And they go to Petoskey. They go to a different casino just about every night. That business is there. We should have a billboard by a casino. (Prichard: Right.) But they put them out on I-75. That's the other thing—what good can a billboard do on I-75 going north on Friday night?

PRICHARD: You're already going somewhere.

GRANT: You already know where you're going. (Prichard: Yeah.) I'd say—I try to tell them, I'd put a billboard on the southbound side. Light it up on the weekend when you're going—if you weren't satisfied with your weekend, try Rogers City. Because people, Friday, know where they're going. They leave Detroit, Flint, they know where they're going. Coming home they'll take time to read that sign. But it's all how people advertise. And it'll come back. Our fishing is still very good out there.

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PRICHARD: You wouldn't really—I would say you wouldn't want it to be what it was—

GRANT: Never.

PRICHARD: —in the eighties or nineties.

GRANT: No, because like I say, look at the problems you have with too many people.

PRICHARD: Right. Okay. So you—

GRANT: When the newspaper comes out, and the magazine comes out—and that's a problem we had at the motel—if an article would come out in the *Detroit News* or the [*Detroit*] *Free Press* that they had a landslide on the fishery in Manistee, on Wednesday night they called and cancelled. They went over there fishing because they followed the articles. You want the people that come back on a regular basis enjoying themselves. You can control your fish cleaning station. Even with a tournament or something small, you can get your volunteers to come back. You're still going to have the odd problem, but it's not going to be a crisis like they've got on the border right now. You don't get yourself to a crisis. (Prichard: Yeah.) When it comes back—that's what I meant by a management plan to say, Let's just take this back at this level. Everybody will do good.

PRICHARD: More of a quality of experience.

GRANT: Yeah, quality. Not quantity.

|02:11:55|

PRICHARD: Would you ever say that the salmon plants in Rogers City was too much, too fast? Or too much? Something like that?

GRANT: No, because it's a learning experience.

PRICHARD: Yeah. Okay.

GRANT: It's a learning experience. I'm one that believes you don't have real success until you have a lot of failures. And once you hit that success, you know how to keep it. But people say, "Oh, I've failed, I'm disappointed." Again, to me, that's like, I don't believe in giving a kid a trophy because he showed up. And I don't believe that winning is everything, either. But you need a plan and need to stick with it. What Dr. [Howard] Tanner did, and those guys, they stuck their career and their jobs on the line to do what they did. And then it exploded. And they solved their problem. (Prichard: Yeah.) It's just that—and how could they control? Maybe if they'd have had a smaller plant. Now if that happened again someplace else then the biologists would read the history. You don't destroy history, *you keep it in the file*. And you make good by the mistakes that didn't work. And by god, a community can start—what if you had a big inland lake? What if these damn carp got in here and they had to destroy them all, start all over again? You take Dr. Tanner's records and stuff, and you start with bait fish, and you start with a forage, and then when you maintain that then you bring stuff in to do it. I know it sounds stupid. But what they did was, I mean, it was a fantastic thing. I don't think you could have controlled that until they had some history. I mean, what do you think?

PRICHARD: I think the expectation of control should not be conveyed as strongly as it sometimes is. I mean, like you say, it's an experiment, and you have to learn.

GRANT: Yeah, and then the other thing—what I mentioned earlier on—then when you get something going then politics steps in, that control the money for the scientists, and then you've got a whole new problem again. And then they've got to keep people happy. One of the things that I've always said since I've been here, and I'll say it today and I'd say it right to the governor's face, the DNR director—Lake Huron's a stepsister to Lake

Michigan. They get the money, they get the grants. Way more so. But I'm at a point that I don't mind that because I like living here uncrowded. But if I really pursued that feeling we would be too crowded. But it's just beautiful right now. Fourteen thousand people in the county. I can go out here fishing and catch my fish. I can go to an inland lake and I'm not pushed off. I go to Petoskey, take my wife to the doctor in Crooked Lake, there's no place to park a—they put the boats in at the launch there. They're full all the time, people waiting to get in. I mean it's crowded. (Prichard: Yeah.) I mean, we have it beautiful here. And then you've got jet skis and you've got skiers. The fisherman's lost. If you really like the outdoors—I'm not saying outdoor entertainment—if you like outdoors, you like to hunt and fish, you like to sit and watch deer eat in the fields, you like to see eagles in the tree coming down to get a fish out of a pond or eat one of these dead fish on the beach—man this is the place to live. It would be nice if you could control it. And it's changing, more people. But we do have good quality people. But, I just think the fishery, a couple more years, it's going to get back where you can fish a hundred boats, a hundred and fifty boats a day. Everybody can go home happy. And here's the other thing—and I do say the DNR failed there—why do you want—the fishing's good in Lake Michigan and Lake Huron—why do you want a thousand boats sitting in Lake Huron and the ports over in Lake Michigan are empty? They don't do enough balance. Pure Michigan is out there advertising. They're good, but they've got their phony spots, believe me. You know what I'm talking about, Pure Michigan? (Prichard: Yeah. Yeah.) The advertising group. They should be doing all the ports. They should be working with the “Under the Radar” people and “Destination Michigan” and say, “Hey, we will sponsor you and support you if you go do these things.” “Under the Radar” is living proof that that works. It really

does. But to have everybody run to Manistee and Ludington, and you've got ports from Oscoda north that are looking for people—that's not good management. A lot of that's politics. I learned that—and a man that—I think it's Dave [Lorenz; ed. note: the surname that Grant stated was incorrect], the guy from Pure Michigan, they're really good people. But after you look into their program, little communities get scammed by our own State, and I'll tell you why I believe in that. I watch national news and I watch local news. Pure Michigan comes in—and our little community here had to work hard to come up with \$5,000 to be on Pure Michigan, okay? So, Oscoda, Tawas—a little easier for Alpena—Rogers City, Cheboygan, they come up with their five-ten thousand dollars to be in the program. Alright. I watch our local news and, Hey, here's our Pure Michigan ad. This is neat. Go to Alpena. Go to Rogers City. I watch CNN, I watch Fox News that goes all over the United States, and I see a Michigan ad. Come to see us on Mackinac Island. Come to see us in Traverse City. So I got to looking into that. Why don't I see Alpena, Rogers City, and Cheboygan on the national? Well we have this program but it takes \$25,000 minimum, and usually around fifty thousand to advertise, and then we do nationally. That's not a fair shot. Tell everybody it's \$10,000. We'll work a little harder, but we get the same shot. I'm sure you're familiar when we had Sunrise Side here. Sunrise, that was—first we had East Michigan Tourism Group, and then we established the Sunrise Side. That establishment came right out of the Rogers City Chamber of Commerce. It got taken away. We were going to be the Gold Coast. We wanted to start the Gold Coast. I actually started that, but it wasn't my idea. Outdoor writer Tom Huggler, very well known—Tom stayed here a lot and we fished. Tom wrote a book, a big book in a series, and it was a series of fishing books. It was done by a big outdoor



group in Minnesota. And he did a big story—and somebody stole my book. I had the whole book set. But I let somebody use—I shouldn't say stole it. I never got it back. And he wrote an article about the silver coast. The west side was the gold coast, come fish the silver coast. That whole book section was from Tawas to Mackinaw City. So we're fishing and Tom said, "You know, why don't you go and,"—I used to be involved with East Michigan Tourists. They did good for the business, and when I first moved here it was East Michigan, "—why don't you start something and call it the Silver Coast? We're not gold, we're affordable. We're silver." I thought it was a great cause. I went to Alpena, I went to Cheboygan, and I went to Mackinaw City. The Mackinaw City guy was wonderful, but do you know what he told me? "Our tourist group, our budget is a million dollars a year. We're not going to share it with Cheboygan, Rogers City, Alpena, or anybody else down the line. If you want to come up here and try to funnel them down the way, that's fine. But we keep our mouths shut. We've got a million dollars to spend, we don't have to share it with anybody." He was very honest. Alpena right away invited Oscoda, Tawas, and Harrisville. We had the next meeting in Alpena. They took it over because they wanted it to be the Sunrise Side. So that's fine, it went along and it worked. And it's like anything else, something gets going good, somebody starts stealing the money and then you have nothing like we have right now. We have nothing. I don't think there is any more Sunrise Side tourism group. But that information that we got from Tom Huggler proves the point of what Mackinaw City said. See they've got a million dollar budget, but they pay fifty thousand and they're on national news. The guy that paid five thousand gets advertised in the thirteen counties that our TV program goes. (Prichard: Right.) And everybody goes around the world. And I think they shammed us. And I don't

see—they get somebody like Tim Allen talking it, and they're talking Greenfield Village, Muskegon, Saugatuck. These people have got money. But for the base, they came to the little towns and got \$5,000 to get established. It's just an unfair thing. Even our state—I just get so tickled by guys like you that are on the biology line that keeps things in order because it gets to the State, their politicians destroy it for everybody. You know you mentioned before you knew John Clevenger.

PRICHARD: Well I know who he is and I've met him several times, but, yeah.

GRANT: He's quite the guy. But I'll tell you what, there was a biologist [Clevenger] that was a biologist from his big toe to the top of his head. Because it was the resource that he dug and dug and dug. Do what they had to do, and put the records—right or wrong, let them know what's happening. But in his situation, he stays a fishery biologist in Charlevoix his whole career. And John's the kind of guy, that's what he wanted. But guys that get too aggressive—like Jim Johnson, he was a fantastic—you're going to enjoy him—but he couldn't say what he really felt. He couldn't say what the data told him because he'd get in trouble. It's just—communities need a master plan and to kind of stick by it. Just use the history for reference, that's all you can do.

PRICHARD: Yeah. Well hopefully that's what we're trying to help create here, but, yeah.

GRANT: Well that's—to me, when you told me that I said, “Gee, I can't believe somebody's actually willing to do that.” But it needs to get out to the communities. If you stick something—a paper—in a library—. Is that [the recorder] still on?

PRICHARD: Yes.

GRANT: Why don't you shut it off for a minute?

*end of interview*