

Frank Krist

Oral History Interview  
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Carson G. Prichard  
May 18, 2021  
Frank Krist's house  
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

*There is no introduction at the beginning of this interview. The interview took place beginning around 7:45 p.m. outside in Krist's backyard.*

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PRICHARD: So that's recording now. It picks up everything pretty well.

KRIST: I got one very similar (Prichard: Okay.)—couple of them very similar to that. They do work well.

PRICHARD: Yeah.

KRIST: Yeah, my goal—every time I hear about, “Oh, we’re going to do impacts on communities when a fishery changes. We’ll talk to the charter captains.” Well this—the impacts go way beyond charter captains. That’s why I made an effort to kind of work with you and see if I couldn’t get you in contact with people [to] give you a different perspective. I was lucky because I was involved on the fishery science end, and being an activist, trying to get fish here, but also, being the county health officer, environmental health officer and inspector for thirty-two years—retired about ten years ago—I got to

meet a lot of people in a lot of different roles. People moving up, people living here. Contractors that dealt with those people. And like I say, the impacts went way beyond just tackle shops and motels. And hopefully when you talk to—were you able to talk to Todd Curtis at all?

PRICHARD: I still haven't gotten ahold of him. I've—I spoke—well I called the number you gave me and whoever answered told me to try to, like you said, call him real early (Krist: Right.) in the morning.

KRIST: He's actually doing this for the city here. But I mean he's got crews all over the place. They normally check in early in the morning. And I bet he would want to—. But anyway, the point is there's a lot of people that moved up here. You get up north of town here, Hammond Bay area, there's about three thousand lots there that were developed back in the fifties, and there's kind of lanes that go down to Lake Huron—many of those people that bought that property were, like, police officers from southern Michigan, workers in the auto plants, and areas like—some of the people living in town moved here because of the salmon fishery. And of course they bought lots. Some of them built second homes. Some of them bought homes. And of course, if you buy a home, even if it's your second home you want to repair it. And of course what happened is these contractors would be much more involved, and provided a lot of opportunity. Real estate people. And I don't know if you got a chance to talk to Lisa Petz yet.

PRICHARD: I haven't yet.

KRIST: Yeah. But, like I say, her husband was a charter captain. He fished totally out of Rogers City. (Prichard: Okay.) And she can kind of look at it from two points of view,

and how it impacted—. But that was my main goal, is to try to see what kind of response you get from the others. And hopefully you've been able to get a little bit different point of view. I think lots of time biologists really aren't looking much beyond the fishery. In fact, if you look—you're probably involved somewhat—maybe a lot with developing attitudes of the—like the American Fisheries Society's a good one because you've got just tons of biologists in there—is, “How do we interact with the public? Should we be advocates? Should we just provide the science?” Well you should at least know the impacts of your decisions and what they may have down the line. You look at the harbor here. First thing that happened is, okay, we're going to really increase the amount of people at this fishery. We looked at the harbor—and you read some of that stuff—we've got to do something. Because it's not going to be something that we're going to like, and neither are the people. So the city, as you know, put a lot of investment into all that. And then when that changes, and you don't have all those people coming back, then you've got to scramble and try to utilize that resource the best you can. And you've still got to pay off some of the bills. And there's just a lot to going through that. (Prichard: Yeah.) I mean a good community, really, to look at, too—and maybe you've thought about it—is Harrisville. (Prichard: Yeah.) Because they had just a thriving, bouncing fishery there and it just came to a complete end. In fact, I've been rather surprised, being on that Lake Huron Citizens [Fishery] Advisory [Committee] since 1989—that's a long time; I've seen a lot of things happen—and how they were so involved in the salmon fishery and the recreational fishery. And now they're just down to a trickle.

PRICHARD: You mean Harrisville? Or the—

KRIST: Harrisville. (Prichard: Yeah.) Harrisville, as far as the importance of the recreational fishery in their community. They still catch some lake trout, but not that many. And then they catch some walleye. But their focus is no longer on—more of the boaters, and other users of that facility. But I mean that was really, really an interesting community for several—well, it started in late August and ran all the way through into November.

PRICHARD: Yeah, I talked with Randy Claramunt, like, maybe a year ago, and he expressed that Harrisville was like a total collapse, whereas in Rogers City, there was still—well, the way he said it was you had more of those species that still persisted and have resulted in that there's still a fishery in Rogers City more so than there is—

KRIST: Actually, (Prichard: —in other places.) it's one of the best fisheries as far as if you look at the amount of fish you catch per hour. Like I was out here yesterday with a friend of mine. In a matter of four hours we had eight fish on, we caught six. And you do have variety. We still—here we're fortunate. We catch salmon. They usually start showing up in end of July or early August. But we don't catch a ton of them, but we're catching fish almost every day towards the end of the season. Lots of lake trout, of course. Some years we're catching some Atlantics thrown in. And of course the committee and the DNR's [Department of Natural Resources] working hard to expand that fishery. Steelhead fishing was really good last year. You could almost catch a steelhead a trip there towards the middle of summer and into October. So anyway, the fishing is actually good. And I noticed, from my experience dealing with a lot of charter captains from different ports around the lakes—you go over to Lake Michigan, for example, and you look at, maybe, Ludington or Manistee—*Wow. Salmon. This is it.* This

is it. This is the big thing. But then you go down into the southern part of the lake—get south of the Grand River, South Haven, Grand Haven, even a little further south—you get up towards Leelanau, Grand Traverse Bays, Petoskey—lake trout are extremely important. But those captains—and some of them are my friends—they know how to market that fishery. They take the family out. A good day on the water they're catching lots of fish. Like out here, we're going out there fishing two rods most of the time, maybe three. You hook onto a lake trout, you stop the boat—we've got fly rod blanks on our spinning rods—and you're just taking your time, and you can really enjoy that fishery. It's a matter of marketing. Salmon doesn't have to be as important as some people make it out to be because they *make* it out like that. And it's too bad.

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PRICHARD: That's something I've wondered about strongly is the degree to which charter captain's perceptions of whether or not we're having a good time influences the client's enjoyment or willingness to (Krist: It does!) buy a charter, than if—you know, they might not know any better if you weren't—I've been out—well, I used to volunteer for a couple years for a 4-H Great Lakes youth and natural resources camp that Michigan State [University] (Krist: Oh, okay.) Extension would put on (Krist: Yeah.) over on Lake Esau, (Krist: Oh, yeah. Yeah.) and they would take out a charter every day with the first-year campers (Krist: Sure.) and we would go with (Krist: Probably Ed—) Ed Retherford. Yeah. (Krist: Yeah. Captain Ed.) And, not to be disparaging to him at all, but we would be fishing for mostly lake trout, and then we had one bite that he was just convinced was a salmon and was acting all—I guess, very angry (laughs) that we didn't (Krist: Yeah.) hook a salmon. It's like, these kids don't know any better.

KRIST: Well, and you can have a good time if you—like you say, it's a matter of education more than anything. And I think some of the charter captains over there brought it on themselves back here a couple of years ago when there was this big disagreement going between the State [of Michigan] and the Great Lakes Salmon Initiative and that. And what's interesting is, I also sit on the Lake Michigan [Citizens Fishery] Advisory [Committee] representing Lake Huron, and we listen to the charter captains and some of them are saying, okay, you get on the boat. You've got maybe five clients on there. Four clients. Even three. And you get into a salmon. And you get into a great, big salmon. Well the problem is it takes a while to land that. In the meantime, here your charter time's going away and the other people don't have that much opportunity to even play a fish. And the other thing about salmon—other than this port was different—but most ports on Lake Michigan, they'll show up for three-four weeks here, two weeks there—depends on the year—and then they move. And they're migrating all around. And so what do you do in between? If you look at the charter data, like Donna Wesander—I don't know if you've dealt with Donna (Prichard: Yeah.); she's got some great charts—in fact, I can send them to you if you're interested. And anyway, even the big salmon ports like Manistee, Ludington, places like that, the lake trout are a huge part of their fishery. Most of the time it's more than half of the number of the fish they catch. So when you have those slower periods with salmon, you can always—almost always catch fish. You can go out there and have a good time and you—otherwise, how can you run a business if half the time you go out there you're not catching anything? So a diverse fishery is the best fishery.

But when the salmon fishery started here—I moved up here in '74, and we got up here in June and went down to Seagull Point (Prichard: Yep.)—that's the point just on the edge of town, there; and this was in August—we're sitting on the bank there and we're seeing these boats out there. They were small boats back then, you know. People were out in fourteen-footers and stuff. And salmon jumping everywhere. That's when we got initiated to it, really. We did a little bit of [fishing] inland on the rivers when they were running when we were—I was in graduate school at Central [Michigan University]. And anyway, we started fishing. And, you know, we didn't know much. And then I'm hearing, "Oh, the DNR—they're going to stop the salmon plants at Rogers City." And they only planted fifty thousand, as opposed to the million they stocked originally up here. And it was a tremendous fishery. We actually caught more fish then by shore, by far. They were going to stop it. So I said, "I've got to get my information together," and that's when I got involved in fishery issues. And it's been a long time, but what I've found is if you can get educated—and I'm talking about getting informed with the researchers that know what they're doing—that's why, if you ever have a chance—this year was online—Theresa [Krist] and I, we've been going to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission meetings, the lake committee meetings they have each March. And that's tremendous because you can not only listen to a lot of these researchers, but you get a chance to meet them and know them and kind of debate issues. And that's the neat thing about it is, they're always willing to debate, and nobody giving you a hard time because you question them. Good scientist—you always should do that. So, that's what we've been doing ever since, you know, is got involved and jumped to this thing, that thing. And of course now we're involved with the tribes, trying to come up with an agreement

to share the fishery, and that's been a real challenge. When you've got seven parties, seven sovereigns, and plus us, we're called amici, amicus, because we've got a status in court that allows us to provide input, but we've got to do it through the state. Anyway, there's just a lot of planning that went into it. And you've got to adjust as times move on.

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PRICHARD: Can we focus in on just the start of the initiative to stock so many salmon here? What do you remember about those initial discussions, and how did they arrive upon the number of fish that they stocked here? And what was it like being on the committee that Mayor [Fred] Lewis, here, appointed to the fish advisory commission to kind of think about planning for what that stocking would do to the city?

KRIST: Well, actually, I remember that clearly because what happened—I think what I was going to tell you is the fishery was different here because the other places on Lake Michigan, they're migrating up. Well back in the early eighties—probably '81-'82—we'd go out here end of June and we'd start catching immature salmon. And they'd be anywhere from a couple pounds up to maybe eight-nine-ten pounds. And thought, Well, okay. Maybe they're coming from Oscoda. Maybe they're coming—well, what we learned later, they were probably coming from Georgian Bay, the rivers up there.

Nottawasaga River's a big one. And so we're catching these salmon. I mean, we're going out there catching salmon every trip. And that would start at the end of June, usually about the third week of June, and we caught them all the way up through the summer, and into October. In fact, we—you get into the October the wind is really bad out here. But you can get out maybe once or twice a week, and we were catching them all the way

up to deer season. By then you start getting snow and it's hard to get in the harbor. And so we kept saying to the DNR, "You know, you're planting fifty thousand—you need to plant more so we can really get a good fishery." Well, they always brought up, when they first started stocking salmon—I think it was in '69 in the Ocqueoc River—if you've ever been up there to look at it, and you can—if you go to the access site, and park your car there in the access site you can get up on a platform and you can see the lake right there—right at the mouth of the river is privately owned. Well, they planted the salmon and next thing they noticed is when they came back, people got crazy. (Prichard: Oh.) They trespassed. They were breaking the guy's trees down. Damaging his property and everything else. So, anyway, the point was, How can you plant more? You can't control the return. Your harbor's not big enough. You can't do this. So we argued. Steve Swan, have you ever talked to him?

PRICHARD: I haven't. I was wondering about—I know he was the biologist at the time.

KRIST: If you can—Steve's a good guy and he'd love to talk to you.

PRICHARD: I think Jim [Johnson] might be able to get me in contact with him, or maybe you can.

KRIST: Well, what I could do is I can ask—have you talked to Cwalinski yet? Tim?

PRICHARD: Cwalinski?

KRIST: He's the area biologist (Prichard: Okay.) for here. Anyway, I'll see what I can do about—and I'll copy that (Prichard: Okay.)—write them and I'll copy you. But we were going back and forth with Steve Swan, he was the area biologist. And Myrl Keller, he

was a Lansing guy that kind of oversaw stuff, and Fishery Chief down there John Robertson. And we just kept harping on them and taking all these pictures. Okay, so then about 1983 or so, “We’ve got to come over and meet with you.” This was after about three years of just pestering them. “Okay. Come on over.” And we sat down, and they said, “We’ve been thinking of a way of dealing with this is to—,” and apparently they talked to Calcite to see if they would go along with it, “—well, we’ll put a weir on private land and we’ll just control the access from shore in the fall.” Worked great. And that’s what really got that going is we were just constantly persistent. And been real involved—we got real involved with the tribal issues back then. In ’79, that’s when Judge Fox made his ruling and there was a lot of tribal fishings, so we were communicating a lot with the DNR and the other parties. So we were real visible in the community. And so okay, we got them convinced, and of course when that happened—you probably read that article I sent you that Glen Shep[pard] wrote, and that kind of summarizes: okay, the community took it seriously and they got ready. And I give them credit, they did a great job on the harbor. And to this day it’s a great harbor. And you just never know biologically what’s going to happen to the lake. It’s still dynamic, still changing. And then we’ve got to see how we come out with the tribes and go from there. That’s pretty much how it turned out, as far as working with the city. We always encouraged parties—you know, like I’m trying to do with you, because I can see a lot of good from what you’re doing, and I can see a lot of positive things coming. And it’s amazing if you get your facts together and you try to educate the people, they’ll do a lot to come around. And that’s what we did with the biologists to get them to go with this thing. You’ve just got to get your facts. Educate them. Keep open-minded in case things change.

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PRICHARD: In—so 1983 was the year that they first stocked (Krist: Right.) as many as they did. And then already by 1986 they're putting together the first Rogers City Salmon Tournament. And so I'm kind of curious about your perspective, and maybe involvement in the promotion of the fishery. And then how that tournament came about. And how well it met, or maybe exceeded or failed to exceed expectations.

KRIST: [It] brought a lot of—two things: it brought a lot of people to the community at the time—although, I could go out, like today, this time of year back in the nineties and there would be eighty-ninety boats out there in the middle of the week. That's how much. So not only did it bring people to the community during the tournament, but it brought them back several times a year. They liked it here because you can go out a mile or less and start fishing for salmon. You don't have to go out there five-ten miles. And plus the wind here, especially like now through mid-August, you can fish here almost every day. And so it brought a lot of people into the community, and kept them coming. Not only did they come to fish, but they came, like I said, a lot of them bought lots and property. Some of them moved in. The president of our Hammond Bay [Area] Anglers [Association] that were that ones that have been involved with all this, his dad and mother moved here because he liked to salmon fish. And they still live here in town. As far as—I didn't get into the promotion end too much. I was more into getting the fishery here, concentrating on the biology, and making sure things are running smoothly. But I mean it was a big event. Not only did the harbor fill up with boats, but we had cars and that parked on the street. And then the sewage plant, they had a lot of overflow parking, people were parking down there. And we all adjusted. I mean, us that lived here we could

fish during the week. We fished early, late in the season. Fishing was just *good the entire season*. And that was true before they stocked the fish here. We're catching these immature fish and we knew they can't be all the fish that were stocked here, there weren't that many. And that's what happened. We had lots of smelt and we had lots of alewives. And then when the alewives would dip a little bit the smelt were still high. I was involved with a study with Jim Diana—

PRICHARD: The diet study?

KRIST: —this was back in the eighties. And we turned in a lot of samples there for a couple years. And what he found is about—the statistics, anyway, were showing about almost 70 percent of the diet in Lake Huron those years back in the mid-eighties were alewi—not alewives, but smelt. (Prichard: Okay.) So if you've got smelt you've got a pelagic species, you're still in good shape. But anyway, even today we still have tournaments. We've got about four or five tournaments that are happening here. We've got one in September and then we've got a ladies tournament, and then we've got a couple organizations putting on tournaments. I don't know, it brings people out of the community, they go down there at the pavilion and see what's going on. People come through town and there's a lot of positive with that.

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PRICHARD: That's been something I've gotten varying thoughts about is what was the impact of the salmon fishery, and then, what was lost, as far as impact on the community, when that fishery went away. And depending on who I've talked to, they've expressed a sentiment that was more like, Well, I don't know how much the fishermen add because

they come to Rogers City, their boats full of gas. Yeah, they launch. They go out. They trailer their boat back up, they leave. I don't know what they add other than having been here. And then, another big part of the story that I've heard from people is like you were describing earlier, the fishery created interest and brought a lot of people up here who bought properties, and now who have stayed. So you've got that whole aspect that is different than the transient, you know, person who launched their boat here and then left. So, just the total impact on the city is hard to nail down exactly, but it's deeper than I think some people have appreciated, probably, when you think about who it brought up here, who bought property, or who chose to live here because of that type of opportunity.

KRIST: Well, yeah, I had a unique situation because I was communicating with people throughout the county, and sometimes beyond because we're a four-county health department. And so I got out and met a lot of these people. Of course some people knew me just because of my involvement and stuff like that. People like to talk about, Yeah, we were up here—. And then of course through our association we got members from the different communities, they know the people that live in their communities, and you begin to realize this is a lot bigger than what you normally hear: Well, yeah, it only helps the bait shop, the motel room, and that's it, maybe a restaurant or two. But it went way beyond that. And just like construction business—people come up here and if the fishing's good, they might come up four or five times a year and their cabin, well the first thing they want is, Hey, that needs to be fixed. We've got to get a new roof on there. We want it more convenient. Next thing you know some of them are building a new home. And if that's your goal is to keep your community up—it's one nice thing about Rogers City, we've been all over the country and I can't find a place that I would rather live than

here just because—and people have different attitudes—but it's quiet, there's very little crime, and it's nice and clean. People keep up with stuff. And you like to see it maintained. You don't want it to go so far backwards that you're not a city anymore. So, we felt this would be real helpful and it was. That's why we're working hard for a diversified fishery is to keep it going. And it's really a good fishery if you want to go out and catch fish. I mean I get out there between sixty and eighty trips a year and about the only day you don't catch a fish you go out there and the next thing you know a storm's coming and you're coming back in. I mean it's amazing. I went out there second week of April, thirty-nine degree water top to bottom, and I was back in in an hour [with] my limit of lake trout. Gol[ly], fish should be scattered all over the lake that early. But anyway, it's been a real good fishery. And it's way beyond what some people think because they're not in a position to know that. Just because I've worked with so many individuals, I've been to probably, in my thirty-two years, half the houses outside the city, visiting one time or another. They've either got problems with their water, they need a new sewage system, they've got complaints, or whatever. So we got to know a lot of people.

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PRICHARD: Kind of, going from the impact to what you were saying about the fishery still being really good out of Rogers City, something that came up when I talked with Bruce Grant and also with Jayme Warwick is, the story of Lake Huron salmon fishing was told in such a way, maybe because of how it was studied from a biological or ecological end of things, but there's a collapse of salmon and alewife in Lake Huron. And Lake Huron got cast in this really negative light, (Krist: Right.) and all of—a lot of the

media attention went to Lake Michigan, (Krist: Right.) and that has played an outsized role in its impact in Rogers City relative to the fishing opportunity that still remains here.

KRIST: That hurt us a lot. (Prichard: Yeah.) That's right. Because they're always pointing to Lake Huron—the salmon fishery crashed. Oh, it's horrible. We don't want to be like that. But you really do want to have a fishery—and a lot of Lake Michigan the fishery's like that. Even Lake Superior. Now they don't stock salmon in Lake Superior anymore, but they still catch some, but lake trout, and a diverse fishery. And that's what we've got here, we've got a diverse fishery. And we're working hard for the southern part of the lake, get more Atlantic salmon, and add some additional diversity. Yeah, that did hurt us quite a bit. I'd say yeah, there's a decline. But we've still got a lot of good fishing up here. (Prichard: Yeah.) And the creel data shows that. I mean you've got Tracy Claramunt, does a good job with the creel data. And of course Donna [Wesander]. And I keep tables going all the way back to '86 every year of Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, what's caught at each port, and enter the data. We can't complain.

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PRICHARD: Yeah, it seems like, you know, given how popular walleye are, and them—whatever, the fight, or whatever attraction there is to going fishing because of the fight, is not something that walleye have, and they're extremely popular. It just seems like lake trout are cast in a negative light, or are perceived negatively, even though they don't exhibit qualities that don't also exist in walleye that people are really enthused about fishing and it can really generate a lot of—

KRIST: I think a lot of that came out of—you're probably familiar with the Great Lakes Salmon Initiative.

PRICHARD: On Lake Michigan, that group, (Krist: Yeah.) yeah.

KRIST: And I'm not blaming it all on them, I'm just blaming it on people and anglers in general that, Oh my goodness, lake trout, those greasy things. But you know what's interesting is, I'm in the diet study again at MSU [Michigan State University], (Prichard: Yeah.) and so I'm catching a couple hundred lake trout a year, and I mean, well how many can Theresa and I eat, right? My neighbors, I've got neighbors all over the place I'm giving fileted, skinned—and they love them. Oh my goodness, we just love it. I think it's a matter of that just got out there that they're negative. And most people, depending on how you cook them and how you like fish, but generally they're good. We had them last night. We like them. They're on par with salmon. And that's where it gets back to these ports where you have to market what you have. That's what these charter boats are doing in Grand Traverse Bay and Leelanau and up through there. Hey, you want a great day of fishing? We go out and we catch fish. Take the family out. Whatever. So it's—and, I don't know, have you ever fished for salmon?

PRICHARD: I have gone on a few charters. I do a lot of river steelhead fishing. (Krist: Okay.) So I catch salmon that way. But most of those I'm not so interested in eating.

KRIST: Well, if you ever want to go lake trout fishing you let me know. (Prichard: Okay.) We'll take you out. I'm not a charter captain. I obviously don't charge or anything, be happy to take you out. But one thing, you go out and you catch lake trout, like we were catching them yesterday, they were running from four to nine pounds. And

you got it on, you're playing it, it's a nice fight for about five-ten minutes. You get into these salmon—I mean *they're a pain*. (Prichard laughs) They really are. I mean, here you've got a salmon. Maybe it's fifteen pounds. It's underneath the boat. You're just pulling. It's not coming up, it's not going anywhere, here's forty-five minutes. To me that's, you know, they make a nice run—a good one will run a lot and get tired quicker—but I mean, to me, I'd almost rather catch a lake trout. You know, they're both fine, but anyway. (Prichard: Yeah.) It's just a matter of how you perceive it, (Prichard: Yeah.) and they are good to eat. Of course now they're feeding more on a diverse diet. They don't feed on alewives much, obviously, but [they] eat a lot of gobies. There's still a fair amount of smelt. Right now they're eating quite a few midges. The ones that we caught yesterday were (Prichard: Just the—) loaded with midge pupa. (Prichard: Huh, okay.) Yeah. Oh, what was the doctor's name? I took a course with him over that at MS—not MSU; that's where I got my under[grad] degree. Over at Central [Michigan University]. You know, they had the foremost midge expert there for years. Can't—trying to remember his name, took a course from him back in the seventies.

PRICHARD: I know that my aquatic insects guidebook was Merritt and Cummins, (Krist: No.) but I think one of them was at [the University of] Michigan, one was at Michigan State [University], or I might—

KRIST: Yeah, that new book that came out. No—it was neat because you had to dissect the larva, and you know, some of those midges depending on the species (Prichard: Yeah.; laughs) are only a couple mil[limeters]—and you'd have to get the mandibles out, mount them, and then look under the scope. We were raising them from larva through the

pupa to the adults and then associating—because most of the keys were for the adults, so you had to work backward. It was pretty neat stuff. I know I'm getting off your—

PRICHARD: No, it's okay. (laughs)

KRIST: I'm sure you can edit most of that out.

PRICHARD: Well some of the things we've talked about, or that I—

KRIST: Dr. [La Verne L.] Curry, was it?

PRICHARD: I'm not sure.

KRIST: Yeah. Well I got (Prichard: Okay.)—he published a couple books. I'll have to look it up and let you know.

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PRICHARD: I was kind of curious about focusing, kind of, on you, if you don't mind, (Krist: Sure.) because you're somebody whose career is not dependent on the fishery. (Krist: No.) So what motivates you to invest as much time and energy, maybe more than anybody whose job—it isn't tied to the fishery—what motivates you so strongly to participate at the level that you do?

KRIST: Well, I did get my degree, Michigan State, in fishery biology, and then over at Central I got into aquatic biology and stuff to back it up. Got another degree in chemistry. I guess what interests me—especially now, I mean, it's a tremendous time to be involved—is the dynamic nature of the food web out there. And how everything's changing, trying to figure out what's going on, what's going to happen in the future.

More of a mystery. I mean people like games. They like to gamble. They like to do this. And that's sort of what you're doing here is you're trying to figure out, okay, this biology's pointing this direction, maybe these Atlantics will work. And being in the situation I've been over the years, knowing all these people, learning all the biology and having a chance to talk to other people, bring people together, try to go in a certain direction, it just seemed like an interesting direction to go.

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PRICHARD: When you're interacting with the biologists at these meetings, or different people within the various government organizations, do you feel yourself as acting more of a representative of, like, the Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association? Or the City of Rogers City? Or more of a personal representative of, like, your own interests? Or, just kind of—

KRIST: Way beyond that. My goal is to see—because I like to—I know people on all five of the Great Lakes. And I'm really involved in learning as much as I can about the five Great Lakes. By the way, the *Journal of Great Lakes Research* is really neat. And I suppose you probably read that, coming out every few weeks. And—. Go ahead, phrase that question again.

PRICHARD: So when you're interacting with the researchers or with people—

KRIST: Okay, yeah, is it—no. My goal is to see the best fisheries we can get. Whether it's in Lake Michigan when I'm sitting on a Lake Michigan committee, sitting on this committee. And being a chair of a committee—I chair this one for the DNR for Lake

Huron and I also chair this inland one that's the big lakes up here—Burt, Mullett, and Long, Grand—I can't focus on just Rogers City, Hammond Bay Anglers, the City of Rogers City. In fact, that's the most difficult time is when you're talking about your community because you can't be provincial, you've got to look at the whole lake. So my goal is not to represent myself or anything but let's represent the science. What can the science—what can we bring from the science [to] increase our chances? If you ever played horses—I'm not a gambler, but when I was in high school I had a friend that played horses so we went down and played horses. And what you'd do is you look at a history of every horse. Okay, it's going to rain today, how did that horse do every time it ran when it rained? You're looking at all the science. You're bringing it together. And then you got politics involved. You've got work through, Okay, how can I get these people to understand that we should talk about this direction? There's some real potential here. Let's get our experts. Let's get so-and-so from USGS [United States Geological Survey], or somebody from Department of Ag[riculture] Wildlife Services, or whatever to our meetings. And then I'm, of course, working with our basin coordinators real closely, like Randy Claramunt. And of course Jay's involved, [Jay Wesley] and others. So I guess it's just a matter of being able to try to bring together the science from the scientists, work with the public, and let's—increases our ch[ances]—just like with the Covid, I mean. The best thing that happened is—that's why the US goofed up. They didn't bring the science together and really focus on it early on. They did towards the end. And same thing with the fishery. And today the biggest challenge is really people are coming out with information that just—pulled out of somebody's ear, you know? And a lot of people listen to that on social media and other sources and they really don't want

to listen. They're not seeking the information. So anyway, my goal is to bring all the parties together that—the public, the scientists, the managers. And then you work with the managers, too, and you try to see, Okay, what do they need? Well one thing we need in the State of Michigan for hunting and fishing is a sustainable funding source. The Covid in one sense was beneficial as far as funding because it just flooded even the DNR with a lot of extra money. But up until that time, soon as you get a fee increase, think about it, that's pretty much it, you got a fee increase. Well the next year, because you hired all the people you can, you've got to talk about cuts. The year after that it's another cut. Year after that it's another cut. You need sustainable funding. So we really need a better system. So the goal is to learn what the biologists need. Learn what the public's interested in. Then you take the science and you increase your chances of success by bringing out the information. And I found, too, that if you're involved, the closer you are to the decision makers the better chance you've got of affecting that decision. And then sometimes I sit back and I think, I don't have any spare time, (Prichard laughs) maybe I should just retire and let somebody else take over.

[00:44:13]

PRICHARD: Well I want to come back to this, maybe, generational difference in civic participation (Krist: It's huge.) kind of thing, but I wanted to ask you about—when did you say the Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee started?

KRIST: There was a big push by John Robertson back about 1989. (Prichard: Okay.) That's when that started. Lake Michigan and the others (Prichard: Okay.) started right around there.

PRICHARD: Because I was wondering about the role that the changing fisheries and ecosystem in Lake Huron played in the bringing together of public interest groups, and the Michigan Sea Grant, and outreach, because, I know that in like I think 1992 and '99 you had stocking reductions in Lake Huron, and then you had the major alewife collapse through 2002 to 2005, and having spoken with Ed Roseman and him talking about the importance of the meetings that Michigan Sea Grant held in conveying information to the stakeholders, I was wondering about your perspective on—from the—with respect to increasing communication between biologists and stakeholders, did what happened in Lake Huron with the alewife and salmon play a role in making that whole framework better, or closer to what it is now than it was before?

KRIST: Well, one of the goals of the committee, the advisory committees, DNR advisory committees, what good is it if you're just meeting amongst a few people? So we've always been real vocal about anybody that's interested can attend and so forth. And we love the idea of being able to meet during most of the year but then take those ideas out to the public. Well when it came time to deal with the salmon issue, if you think about it, back in 2010, we're looking at the stocking in the southern part of Lake Huron, and out of the hatchery, fish that could be documented that actually showed up in the creel, it was only like fifteen-twenty—I think one port had a hundred hatchery fish that actually creeled. I mean it was showing there was just a total collapse of that, and it didn't make sense to stock the fish south of basically Alpena, this area. So how do you get that idea across? How do you get people to wear a mask? What do you do? Well, we thought—and I always liked working with Sea Grant; they're just great great people to work with—and we said, hey, we understood it because we were looking at the biology and could see it—

we've got to take the message out to the public. And it was a tremendous success. Not only the workshops—the workshops were key because that gave us three or four meetings a year, and we already had a following, and people came to the meetings. And they were actually ahead of the DNR. When we finally explained—I say “we,” the managers and that, and our group was there; I've attended, Theresa and I attended every one of these meetings over the year—and people understood it and bought into it. Then special communities that were really involved, like up in Cheboygan we met there and we had a couple other meetings beside the Sea Grant meetings, and the people were ahead. They were saying, “Hey, okay—,” this is about 2010, “—we've got to cut them right now. And let's put the resources into looking at something else.” And I know Kelley Smith—I don't know if you've talked to Kelley yet or not.

PRICHARD: I haven't. No. But I—

KRIST: He's fishery chief. He lives over in Charlevoix. Maybe you'd want to talk to him; maybe not. But anyway, he wanted to wait another year. But, it worked extremely well. And if that would have happened with Trump—I don't care if you're Democrat, Republican, Independent, or anything else—but if he would have gotten right into the science—okay, we understand that these masks could help. We don't know all the answers but we think they could help. Let's really push that. I'm sure the people would have bought into that and things would have been a lot different. And I think of that often that just the opposite, how well that went. And we've done quite a few things. We had to stop the brown trout plant in Lake Huron because they weren't surviving. It's just total money down the toilet. And we did the same thing. And there wasn't anybody beating—I'm talking legislators—beating the doors of the DNR and the governor down saying,

“Hey, keep planting those fish regardless.” The public understood it, and it works well. So if you can get the message out—and it’s really important, like this year with the Covid, we couldn’t have our normal Lake Huron advisory meetings. But Brandon Schroeder, I don’t know if you know Brandon. (Prichard: Yeah, I do.) And Megan Gass, wow, she’s an expert, really an expert at getting these meetings together, these Zoom meetings. And people loved them. I mean, we had—there’s people—it’s interesting, there’s two types of people. There’s some that love the virtual meetings and it’s hard to keep them from not asking tons of questions. There’s other people that I noticed at some of the meetings that we normally have in-person—or the meetings in-person, they’d speak a lot more, so they’re a little bit less comfortable. So hybrid meetings might be something of the future because you can get a lot more people participating. I mean it’s handy. The meeting’s over and I’m out in the yard or I’m going somewhere else. Theresa’s got an arboretum, a twenty-acre—she’s got about seven hundred trees, so running out there. Anyway, I would say it was a tremendous assistance, and it continues to be a great relationship. And I’m hoping that Sea Grant—I’m an external Sea Grant advisor; there’s another thing I got into—and I plan on letting them know that I think these virtual meetings—I’ve attended the Lake Erie, the Lake Superior ones. I couldn’t drive all the way up there, and down there. The problem is you’ve got to put a limit on it. I mean, there’s (laughs) so many meetings coming up that it gets too easy. So what was your feeling about Sea Grant, and getting involved, getting the message out? You know one thing I see—go ahead, I’ll let you answer that, I don’t want to—

PRICHARD: Well I don’t have an idea of how much communication there was between general public, stakeholders, and the agencies, and the researchers until recent years—

basically until I started going to the meetings, you know, within the past ten years. So I wondered what it was like when they had to start talking about stocking reductions in Lake Huron. I've seen, from being involved more with Lake Michigan research, in the past ten years, seems to be contentious over there, or—

KRIST: It wasn't always that way. (Prichard: Okay.) When this first came up that was about 2011, and the first cuts that were made, I can remember sitting there at the Lake Michigan advisory meeting—I mean it was [a] real serious situation, emotional. And there was people that are actually saying, “We should cut them all.” And it was more, I would say an environment similar to what happened probably about as we got into, what, maybe late summer of last year, this is serious business this Covid, and we've really got to push the mask and stuff. And then, got great support. We had a meeting where people from all along Lake Michigan met, different states, and it was really accepted well. And then, it seemed like as time goes on, even with the Covid as time went on, I think people started getting a little more relaxed. Of course now there's reason to be relaxed, it's not like the alewives are coming back. But they just got tired of this. And one of the biggest problems you've got in Lake Michigan is that originally before the alewives crashed they could survey—USGS did most of the surveying, DNR helped a little bit—but you'd find alewives all over the lake. But still there's some there, but they concentrate nearshore and sometimes by the ports, so some of the people going out, Oh my goodness, there's just millions of these things. Yeah, but why don't you look at the total amount they're finding? Once they get offshore they're not seeing them. And so, with social media and that, I've got tons of alewives off Ludington. Okay, he goes on social media, Yeah, there's alewives everywhere in the lake. Next thing you know they're going to their

politicians. And it's much more challenging because of the social media (Prichard: Okay.) than it was prior to that. I see this as a huge challenge for this country. If they can't deal with facts—if we can't get the serious—a whole party that's not looking at facts—and not only one party, but extremes and everything else, and people in general, there's always some that just want to hear what they want to hear. That's a problem. I mean, how can you solve anything if you're sitting down seriously looking at a problem and you've got—here's the facts and here's the b.s., and a lot of the people won't want to listen to it, your chances of doing something successful are diminished greatly. That's what happened with Covid. We had a lot of dead people in this country because we didn't need to. We probably could have got by with maybe half or a third of the number of people that died. I mean it's just stupidity. And one thing that really alarms me more than anything, being involved all these years, forty-seven years, is you look around the room and it's interesting, I see too many people that look like me. We got, here, we've got a tournament, salmon tournament here that's run by mostly younger people, (Prichard: The Fat Hogs?) in their forties. Yeah, Fat Hogs, and there's a couple of others. And they won't get involved. They won't get involved. Well, I guess if it doesn't mean that much to you or you just don't understand that getting involved—and you talk to them and you say, “Hey, come on to our meetings,” and—. It seems like when I got involved there was a whole bunch of us, and we all looked alike. We were in our thirties, forties, twenties, fifties. A few old timers, of course. And then, we kind of went through the system and now we're all dying off, getting too old, or moving away, and there's nothing coming up. And it's not only here, it's almost every meeting I go to. I go to meetings all over the State. I've been over in Wisconsin. I've been over [to] Canada a lot. It's all the same

thing. Now maybe you can answer that. You're younger gen[eration]—and I've got a son and daughter-in-law that are fifty each.

PRICHARD: Well I wonder about that, too. And I don't know—I think with my generation—you know, I'm in my thirties, people younger than me, I think if they—it seems like if they have an interest in being outspoken or active with respect to issues like that it's more social issues with respect to people than environmental—well, I really can't say. I don't know.

KRIST: Are you talking about, like, Black Lives Matter? And gay—

PRICHARD: Yes. Yes.

KRIST: Yeah. And I agree with them. I think that's great and refreshing for people to look around. But still, you've got to run society. And you've got local governments, and you've got—if you're interested in fishing or hunting or anything else—trails—if you don't get involved, somebody else is going to do it and maybe mess it up. (Prichard: Yeah.)

[00:58:03]

PRICHARD: Well, kind of, so segue into—another thing I wanted to ask is, I wonder how unique of a scenario you had in Rogers City, starting maybe in the seventies and eighties where a lot of the people that were involved in more prominent roles were also environmentalists or people really interested in fishing and the fishery, where you had yourself. Harry Whiteley. John Pridnia, you know, had a—

KRIST: John was a great guy.

PRICHARD: —bait store in Harrisville and was connected to the fishery and the county. And then Gary Chappell also owned Adrian's Sport Shop.

KRIST: Did you ever have a chance to get Gary's contact info?

PRICHARD: Unh-uh.

KRIST: I don't know what happened—

PRICHARD: I need—well I am, I had to—you suggested asking Joe Hefe about that, and I was supposed to do an interview online with Joe a while back when I had Covid, and so, rescheduled. And then he had a big grant due so we had to reschedule again.

KRIST: Oh. Yeah, he probably got busy, yeah.

PRICHARD: So I will still ask Joe about getting Gary's contact information. But it seemed like, you know, reading the history of Rogers City from the eighties, there were a lot of people that got involved, you know, even with the newspaper, Terry Fitzwater and Mike Modrzynski, they were members of the community that wrote and gave voice to those interests.

KRIST: Ted Plank. You probably heard Ted Plank's name.

PRICHARD: Ted Plank.

KRIST: Ted Plank was a charter captain and—. You mentioned John Pridnia. (Prichard: Yeah.) I don't know if you know this or not but John Pridnia really is the one that started

the precursor to the advisory committees. (Prichard: Okay.) John, he set up [an] advisory committee for Lake Huron, especially northeast Michigan because he represented this area, and we had meetings just like the advisory where you'd have representatives, there was about five or six of us, we had some all the way down to Hubbard Lake then up to the Straits [of Mackinac], and we would meet about three times a year—this was prior to '89—with DNR people, and we did exactly the same thing. We sat around and we talked about our concerns and we listened to the biologists. And lo and behold, we ended up with these advisory committees which was an expansion of that (Prichard: Okay.) throughout the State, and that was great. Yeah, Bill Saunders, he's gone. But we were able to—it wasn't only the Hammond Bay Anglers, we started with the Presque Isle County Sportsmen's Club. And then a few years later we evolved into the Hammond Bay Area Anglers. But, if you really think about it, it goes back to them wanting to stop the salmon plants here and people from the community—because we got good newspaper coverage. And Harry Whiteley was obviously an important player just because of all the work he did over the years. And those people jumped on and we all tried to work together, and some of them moved or pulled out. And a lot of them died. So your question specifically pertaining to that?

PRICHARD: Well I was wondering if Rogers City was unique in that you had people with an interest in the fishery who also had those prominent roles, either with the newspaper or in the local government, and over time, people that held positions like that were not so connected or didn't have as much of a personal interest in the fishery or in natural resources. And I wonder if that's a progression that—well I wonder about your perception of my characterization of that. But then also, if that's something that has

similarly gone on in other places, and that's more of a—it's more systemic across, maybe, the Great Lakes or the county, or just, those people with an interest in fisheries such as what you had in Rogers City just aren't undertaking those roles in society.

KRIST: Well, the main role is is if—because I—obviously I know a lot of advisors because they're on the committee, and the most effective advisors are people that are able to go back home, communicate with their community, get people like your mayor and your city manager, and other players in your county supportive of what you're doing. And then you go back and you create those contacts. You think about it, Hammond Bay Area Anglers, we're down to fifty people. We're sitting around the table with groups like MUCC [Michigan United Conservation Clubs], Steelheaders, Charter Boat Association and everything, and we've got just as much clout as far as our ability to provide input into those decisions. And so you need people that can develop the contacts—at least one person in your community—and then you've got to do your homework back home and get them to support it. For example, if you look at the biology there's a chance that Rogers City could have one of the best Atlantic salmon stocking ports there is. It's deep water. Anyway, I won't go through all the science. So, my goal—and it wasn't easy because that means I've got to talk about Rogers City and I live here—but the goal was is to bring up the science at the advisory committee. We brought the science up. Here's the reasons why we think it would do very well. Okay. The important thing is you can't go to a meeting and say, "Well, here's the science." Well they're going to say, "Well, what do they think back in Rogers City? [Do] they think that's going to be a good idea? Do they even want them?" And so I work with the city manager and the mayor and they put together just a tremendous package documenting why they needed it, why they wanted it,

why they thought about it. They had all kinds of—I can even send you that if you're interested. But the point is is they did their job and we got real good support. One of the things that's holding us up, the committee actually voted to do some stocking, plus maybe they can get a second egg source at the weir over here. But the tribal negotiations, because they're negotiating, parties just don't want to get sidetracked. But that's the key is you've got to have somebody in your community that's willing to develop those relationships. First thing is get to know your local biologist. Then after you get to know the DNR framework—of course I know everybody all the way down to—because I've known these people forever. And then you spread out. If you think some of the other agencies—USGS is a tremendous resource. I mean they do all kinds of stuff out here on the lakes. [US] Fish and Wildlife Service. Wildlife Services over at United States Department of Agriculture. Even certain people in the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency]. Is that what you were meaning, like—?

PRICHARD: Well, yeah I don't know. I just—like, you were here in the eighties, and so, did you think that it was fortunate or special to have John Pridnia and Harry Whiteley here and that was kind of something that set Rogers City apart in terms of getting the type of support or interest in the natural resources issues here?

KRIST: I think the key is is to have somebody in your community that's got that attitude and that will make it spread. Simple as that. (Prichard: Okay.) I think that—I mean I've been persistent forever. You think about it. How many people's done that for forty-seven years? (Prichard: Well, right.) Believe me, I don't get discouraged. And I've been trying to encourage you to keep going on this because I think there's a lot of potential there. And I'm really fortunate that people jump on it. You get some good information and you

get it out there, all of a sudden, yeah, (Prichard: Okay.) people think it's a good idea. The problem I'm seeing today is not enough people, whether it's—running the city. We're seeing some of that. Younger managers. Kids in their thirties and forties running for city council and other positions. That's what we need. I mean, you can't let these old codgers run it. And you were saying social issues are a problem. Well one of the biggest problems is people my age are so goofed up on that. I'm not saying all of them. There's a lot of them like me. But there's a lot of them that, you know, good riddance when they get out of here. It seems like people just go out of their way to make life miserable. (Prichard: I want—well—) Needlessly. (Prichard: Yeah.) Needlessly. Come on, let's get along.

|1:08:11|

PRICHARD: Another thing that I've noticed in Rogers City is that a lot of people have been here a long time. A lot of people that I've spoken with, born and raised here, and I don't think that that happens as much with the younger generations is having a long connection to a single place like that.

KRIST: You think kids are moving more than they used to?

PRICHARD: I think they are. And I just don't know if they're as interested in getting involved locally as—maybe that's something that's changed over time.

KRIST: But you figure, like me, I grew up in Jackson with Theresa. Got out of Michigan State, went right to—well I went to community college for two years in Jackson then went to Michigan State. Graduated. Was in the army for two years. Came back to Central, I had the GI Bill, went three years there, and I came here.

PRICHARD: And then immediately you were involved, and so was Bruce [Grant].

Yeah, I guess you're right.

KRIST: This was a brand new community. (Prichard: Yeah.) Just like Bruce, brand new community. It wasn't like I had (Prichard: Okay.) ties here or anything—

PRICHARD: Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

KRIST: —and got involved. It's just, I thought, Golly, you know, this is a great thing we got here. Why would somebody want to take it away? Okay, I've got to do more research, figure it out. And back then it was easy to get people more involved in what you were doing. That's what I see today is you've got a cause and you want to get your community involved—of course, I don't know, we're seeing people coming out in these marches and stuff which is good, but I'm just not seeing it on the local level enough.

PRICHARD: Right. Yeah.

KRIST: Just get involved in running things. I hate to see people my age running everything when we should get some new—I see young people like you, but you know what it is? I'll go to MUCC, for example. They do a great job over there. The people running the organization are your age. But all the people that come to the meetings are my age. Almost all of them. Now what does that tell you? I don't know. What do they do when they go home? Do these kids that work for these organizations, do they get involved in their local communities, or—? I don't know. Maybe they're so tired after (Prichard laughs) they deal with all the stress that—like here, the Lions Clubs, they did a lot for people with eyesight problems. And some of these other service organizations—

not only here, but they're dying out all over the place. Nobody wants to get involved anymore. Now maybe there's better organizations, but I don't see them being started.

PRICHARD: I don't, either.

KRIST: So what do you think's the solution? Is there one? Do you think the future is going to bring us some better stuff?

PRICHARD: I don't know. I haven't put a lot of thought to it, I guess.

KRIST: Just like voting. I mean, young kids, they've got good ideas, but why don't they get out (Prichard laughs) and register and vote? (Prichard: Right.) I mean how hard is that?

PRICHARD: It's not. (laughs)

KRIST: I mean now the Republicans are trying to make it harder, but how hard is it? You can do it. Especially college kids, they don't have any problem.

PRICHARD: Yeah. I don't know. (laughs)

KRIST: See, I'm a hard guy to get along with.

PRICHARD: I didn't know we were going to talk about—(laughs)

KRIST: I know. Well, hey, you can always throw it away. (Prichard laughs)

PRICHARD: No, but it's all connected to—

KRIST: Well you're asking some of the—you're kind of curious about some of those things. (Prichard: Yeah.) That's the heart of the problem. That's the biggest challenge today is getting the right information out there.

PRICHARD: Well, you know, like I interviewed Jayme Warwick earlier and I asked him if he was a member of Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association and he said, "No. I always planned on being but I just never signed up."

KRIST: Yeah. Lot of them are like that.

PRICHARD: Yeah.

|01:12:18|

PRICHARD: I was going to ask you about, maybe, what the future of the Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association is, do you think?

KRIST: My guess is we get through with the tribal negotiations, and we're getting close to the end. I mean, it's a shame because this community has so much—they're fortunate. They've got such a tight connection with all these people in the State. And not only from the DNR, but USGS, all those other agencies I mentioned. And how do you get—? I only got so much energy and right now I don't have hardly—as you can see, trying to get things set up. I'm getting to the point where I'd rather monkey around in the garden, doing some fishing and stuff. But the problem is, you walk away, that's the end. And right now, until we can work out an agreement we can all live with on the Great Lakes here, that's my goal. And our organization has already spent over a hundred and fifty thousand on the four decrees we've had so far. And we're just too old. We can't raise

money anymore. When you've got a board that's supposed to be a ten board-member and you've only got five. So, I don't see a lot of a future.

|01:13:56|

PRICHARD: How much of an effort was it to raise all that money?

KRIST: Well back when we raised most of it—the last agreement we were in was the 2000 [Consent Decree], so—we were in the '85 Great Lakes, and then the 2000 Great Lakes, and then the '85 agreement. I went back and checked that. We raised thirty-five thousand just for the 2000 agreement. Of course we got other groups that added to that like the Grand Traverse Sportfishing Associations and a few others. And it took a lot of effort, but we had a lot more members. And we would raffle boats off, so you had to sell a lot of tickets. And when you've got four or five people that are on the board and active—a lot of our members are older than I am. I'm seventy-four, they're older than I am. You can't expect them to take on all these things. So, just getting people involved.

PRICHARD: Was it easier when the salmon fishery was bigger here, or did that have anything to do with it?

KRIST: I don't think so (Prichard: No.) because we got organized in '74, and that was way before the salmon fishery. We had good followings because we were concerned about the lake trout, we wanted to keep them coming. It was interesting. They planted splake in '73. And then they switched right away to lake trout in '74. Well, when I got here in '74, the splake, we were already catching them. They weren't very big. We go, Wow, this is great. We've got to get involved and make sure—see what's going on. And

then the '74 lake trout plant, the agencies finally figured let's just stick with lake trout. There wasn't any competition for them because they had all these smelt and alewives and there wasn't any other predators in the lake, and oh my goodness they were growing. And so we got all excited. Got our organizations going. And then we started catching these immature Chinook like I told you back there in the very early eighties, maybe as early as '79. Wow, we've got to push the State to stock more of these. So we started before the salmon. The salmon wasn't the key to anything. (Prichard: Okay. Okay.) Because we were happy with the lake trout there, then all of a sudden we're catching salmon. Well, this is even more fun, and more diversity. And so, no, it's the times, I guess, more than anything.

|01:16:48|

PRICHARD: One of the things that I was surprised to hear different opinions on in talking with people is kind of when the peak in the fishery—the salmon fishery—was, and the chronology of what you might call the decline, (Krist: Right.) and one of the first things that kind of surprised me was, reading back through the newspapers and seeing, I think it might have been as early as 1990 or '91 or '92, Jim Johnson being quoted as expressing concern about the balance of predators (Krist: Right.) and prey in Lake Huron, and I thought, Well, that's a lot earlier than I thought that that was a thing that was on people's radar. Then, I spoke with John Bruning who did a lot of first-mating (Krist: Right.) on charters. And then he went to college, I think around—well, the late-eighties, early-nineties, (Krist: Right. Right.) and he described that time period there as when things started to decline. And in my mind, my understanding of the fishery, and then reading back through tournament participation and the size of the winning fish, and it

seemed like maybe the size of the winning fish started to go down in the mid- to, yeah, mid- to late-nineties. And I knew of the survey showing the collapse of alewife between 2002 and 2005, and pictures of long, emaciated-looking salmon—

KRIST: That didn't happen until 2004. Go ahead, you finish, and then I'll answer.

PRICHARD: —but then speaking with Jayme [Warwick], he didn't recall, around the time of the alewife collapse, catching that many salmon that looked emaciated like that, so that made me think, Well, was that around the time when a lot of the salmon that you might be catching in Rogers City were the ones that had spent time in Lake Michigan and were coming back, but the more emaciated ones that were caught in that 2005-2006 period more resident to Lake Huron? And just trying to get a sense of what people were thinking about the state of the salmon and the balance between salmon and alewives in Rogers City and in Lake Huron because—and I'll speak with Jim Johnson tomorrow—

KRIST: Oh, you didn't speak with Jim today, did you?

PRICHARD: No, I'm meeting him (Krist: Oh, okay.) down at the museum tomorrow. And he kind of told me the story about when they did the mass-marking with oxytetracycline, and then he's—

KRIST: The wild fish. Ninety percent.

PRICHARD: Yeah. Yeah, and then doing an estimate of how many wild fish there must be and how little control we have even if we do reduce stocking.

KRIST: See, the people didn't really have anything to point to. You do now, you can point to Lake Huron. Look what happens if you have too many predators. And if you think about it, up until 2002, actually going into 2003, people were happy. There's a couple reasons fish can get smaller, right? One, there's not enough food. Well that's a problem. Big problem. The other is density. There's just too many of them, and there's plenty around, there's just, there's only so much food, and you catch a lot of fish. In fact, they can get stunted, perch and bluegills, stuff like that. Two thousand and two was the best harvest rate we ever had, and the fish back then weren't looking bad. Two thousand three—we were concerned in 2002 because the smelt and alewife numbers were down and people were thinking, Well, the reason we did so well biting is because they were kind of hungry. But, in 2003 we had a tremendous hatch. Better—it was at least double of what they've ever had before of alewives so we figure, Well, I guess we can relax. And so there was really no panic here. And if you go back over the years, it was kind of up and down. We weren't out of the norm or anything. And I don't know what John was thinking. Maybe the only thing he was concerned about was the size, these great—you don't need thirty-five-pound fish, you know? Or even thirty-pound fish. And so then we got into 2003 and we were feeling better. And then it didn't happen. Most of those alewives just didn't survive, whether they got eaten or they just died over the winter. That's when we saw—and people began to panic in 2004. I mean here we're getting the big heads, skinny bodies, they're looking horrible. And then the State got excited and we got excited as our advisory committees and we generated a lot of support. There again, talking to the public through Sea Grant's workshops, and then a couple public meetings. And they cut the plants from, what was it, 3.3 million? Cut it in half. And then the

number continued to decline. We were around about, got around about sixteen thousand fish a year and stuff. And then it worked down to seven thousand. So then we got into 2010 and we talked about that, how we were able to get the public to go along with, Hey, we might as well just stop stocking these southern ports. Central ports. And it was just a matter of education, and worked well. So, here, I mean, people just dealt with it. What else can you do? Then a lot of the businesses—it's too bad—oh, I forget his name. The guy up there at the motel.

PRICHARD: Rich?

KRIST: Yeah, Rich Hamp. He would have been a good one. (laughs) He didn't want to talk to you.

PRICHARD: Well I called him a few times. And he would talk to me. And then you'd try to nail him down for an interview and he'd, Oh, I don't have time, or, Oh, I don't want to—. He was—

KRIST: Colorful. (Prichard: Yeah.; laughs) Very outspoken.

PRICHARD: He was very outspoken. (laughs) Yeah.

KRIST: He had a swimming pool and I was up there inspecting it at least once a year—

PRICHARD: Yeah, he told me that.

KRIST: —and he was always talking about the fishery and stuff. Things like that.

PRICHARD: Well it really influenced him. I mean, that's why—

KRIST: You can see—

PRICHARD: —he left. Yeah.

KRIST: —yeah. Yeah. And the motels, we had North Star went out of business. And some of the other motels haven't done nearly as well. Like I say, it did impact building. For a while I worked with the health department. Our building permits went down even more. And yeah, it had an impact that way. But we reacted. I mean, when the numbers went down, the forage went down, our advisory committees, we worked hard to find out for sure what we could. Jim was a big leader. He published a paper that talked about he estimated up to fourteen, fifteen, eighteen million wild recruits came down when the salmon declined like that, back 2003 or '04, out of the Canadian waters. Plus we were still stocking some fish. But I mean you get that many wild smolts, you've got a problem. So we reacted. And we educated the people here. Of course you can see, you probably read the newspaper, they, we were talking about things, and I didn't have anybody beating my door down saying, "You crazy person. Why're you getting them—why're we cutting them?" or doing this. Never had that, other than recently in Lake Michigan (Prichard: Right.) there's been a lot of resistance to that because they're seeing some forage in one kind of localized spot.

PRICHARD: Yeah, but that's—social media's playing a big part in that, I think.

KRIST: Well lo and behold, look who's coming here.

*At this point in the interview, Krist's son and daughter-in-law arrive, apparently at least somewhat unexpectedly. Although the conversation continues for nearly an hour, the*

*topics of discussion are too varied to be of value for this project, thus concluding the interview recording.*