

**Historical Marker - L1167C - Great Lakes Sport Fishery / Great Lakes Sport Fishery  
(Marker ID#:L1167C)**



**Front - Title/Description**

**Great Lakes Sport Fishery**

Great Lakes sport trolling was pioneered off Northport in the early 1920s. Traverse City native George Raff was the first to discover that lake trout could be caught by trolling in Grand Traverse Bay's protected waters. Prior to this, trout fishing was mainly a commercial enterprise, in which large quantities of the species were caught by net. Traverse City restaurant owners eagerly bought Raff's catches. Starting with one small boat, about sixteen feet long, Raff later began the area's first sports charter service. He charged each angler one dollar an hour and guaranteed success. Methods he and his wife, Nell, developed for catching trout and other game fish species have spread throughout the Great Lakes.

**Significant Date:**

Two World Wars and the Depression (1915-1945)

**Registry Year:** 1984    **Erected Date:** 1984

**Marker Location**

**Address:** 105 Rose St

**City:** Northport

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:**

**County:** Leelanau

**Township:** Leelanau

**Lat:** 45.12971100 / **Long:** -85.61315000

**Web URL:**

**Back - Title/Description**

**Great Lakes Sport Fishery**

Sport trolling for lake trout almost vanished in the 1940s due to over-fishing by commercial netters and sea lamprey attacks on the trout. Chemicals finally controlled the lampreys, while state laws outlawed gill nets. In the 1960s the Michigan Fishery Commission planted Coho and Chinook salmon for a new sport fishery. Using the methods developed near Northport in the 1920s, plus other techniques--such as using piano wire, wooden and metal reels, and lures made from tin cans and bicycle spokes--trollers again began catching salmon, brown and lake trout, and steelheads throughout most of the Great Lakes. In 1981 sport fishing brought Michigan over \$3 billion in tourist revenues and attracted seven hundred thousand licensed anglers in the Great Lakes.