Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum/Friends of Leelanau State Park

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September 13, 2022

Village of Northport, Waterfront Committee
116 W. Nagonaba St.
Northport, MI 49670

Dear Waterfront Committee:

On behalf of the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum Board of Directors we are interested in doing historical boat tours in Northport Bay during the summer of 2023. We would be using our historic 1940's U.S. Coast Guard cabin motor launch. We would provide historical maritime history information of Northport and the surrounding area, including the shipwrecks. The funds raised from the tours would sustain the continued maintenance of this historic boat and then fund our shipwreck expeditions. There are 14 shipwrecks between Northport Bay and Cathead Pt. (by the Lighthouse). Seven have been located and we are looking to find the remainder. Once found they will be documented and then their story will be highlighted in the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Fog Signal Building for everyone to enjoy. We have teamed up with the Grand Traverse Bay Underwater Preserve, NMC and Northport Public School for these shipwreck expeditions.

Max. Passengers: 6
Age Restrictions: 6+
Operation Dates: Memorial Weekend-Labor Day Weekend (Wednesday-Saturday)
Length of Tour: 30-45 (we are still working on this)
Times per day: 3 (with the option to increase to 5 if needed)
Special or private tours as requested

We would like to do this out of Northport Marina and are seeking complimentary dock space as we are a local non-profit.

I have attached additional information about the boat and our shipwreck program. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

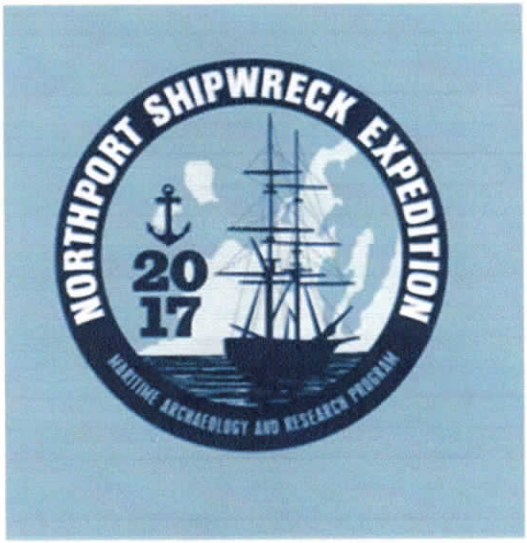
Sincerely,

Stefanie L. Staley

Stefanie L. Staley
Executive Director

Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum
USCG 26' Launch Proposal

The Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum was created in 1984 as a non-profit organization. We have a long-term lease with the State of Michigan, Department of Natural Resources for the historic buildings and surrounding property within the Leelanau State Park. Our mission statement is as follows: The Purpose of the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum is to provide educational opportunities that enhance the understanding of the area's maritime heritage. Towards this goal it must effectively restore and maintain the cultural landscape for the benefit of the community.

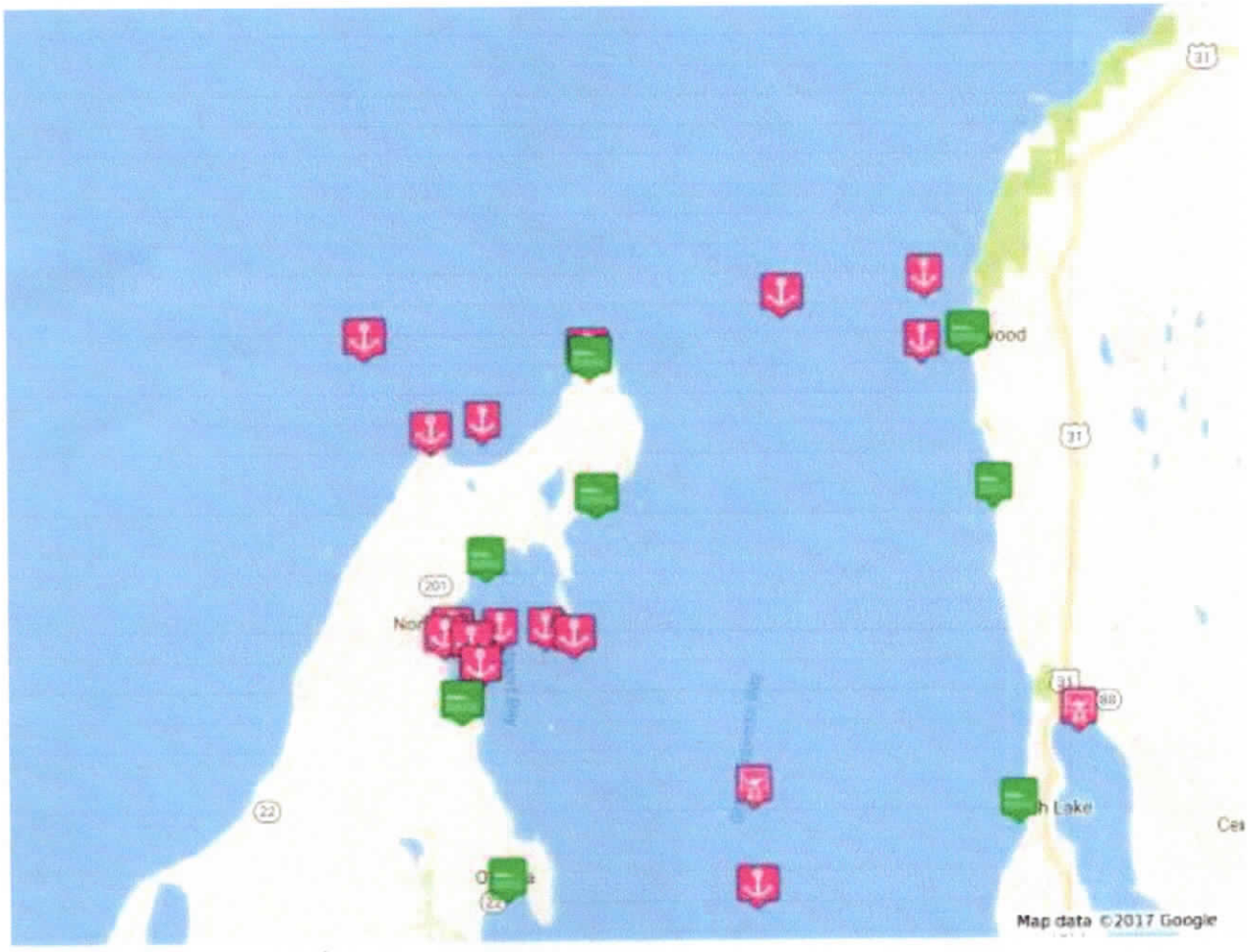


In 2017, we created a new educational program called the Maritime Archaeology and Research Program (MARP). We partnered with Northport School, Grand Traverse Bay Underwater Preserve and NMC Water Studies Institute to do shipwreck expeditions. There are 14 shipwrecks between Northport Bay, Grand Traverse Lighthouse and Cathead Pt. that we are aware of based on historical research. Only 7 have been located. The mission of the program:

- Locate the shipwrecks between Northport Bay. GT Lighthouse and Cathead Bay.
- Investigate and document the wrecks with photographs and video, to better understand the sites.
- Do regular monitoring to help protect and preserve the sites, and to gain insight into how they are affected by their natural environment and invasive species.
- Develop an annual exhibit on shipwreck research findings.

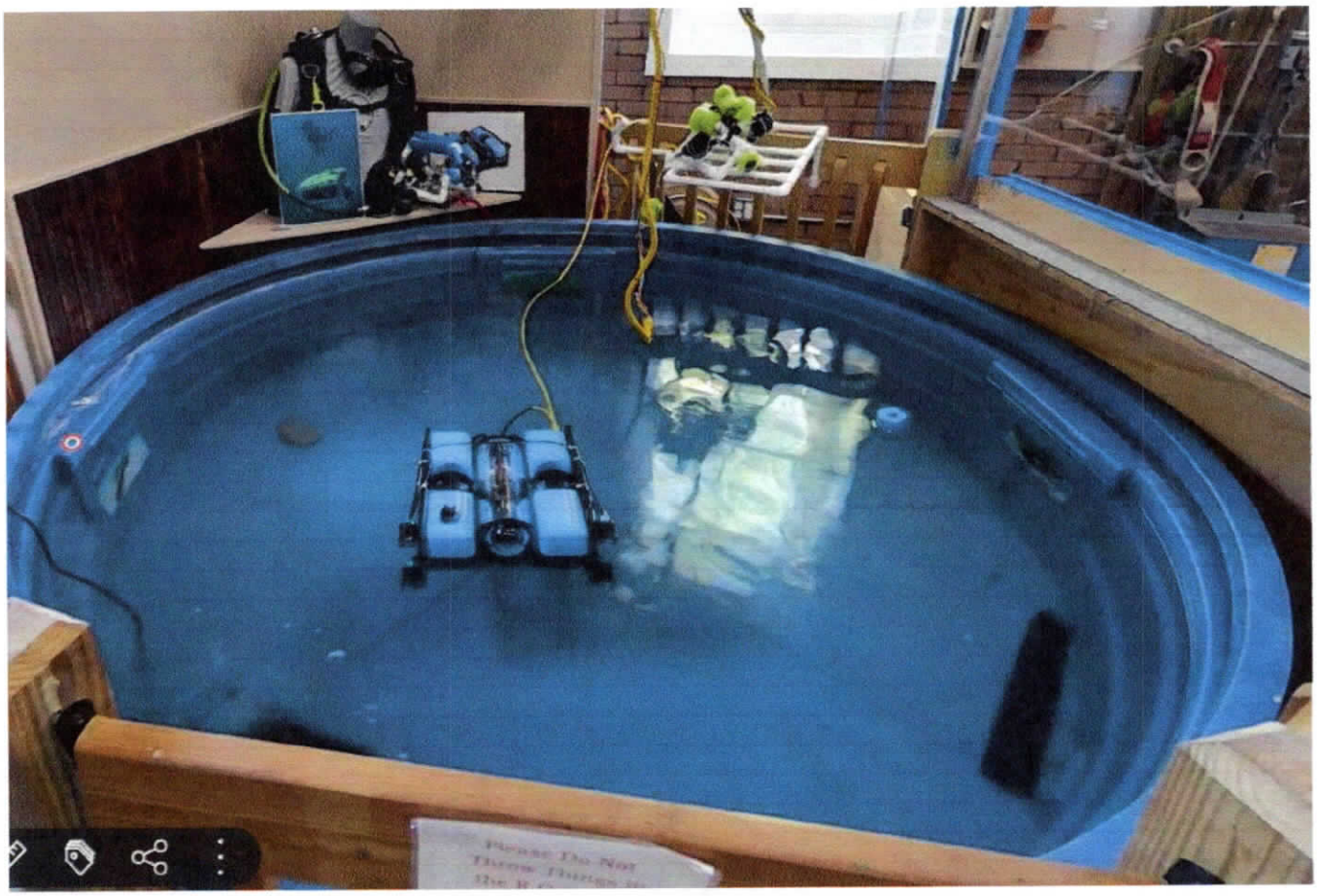
Initially, we rented the boat from NMC Water Studies Institute for $1000 per day. The cost continued to go up over the next couple of years. We decided to invest funding into our own USCG 26' launch and use this vessel for the shipwreck expeditions, giving us more opportunities throughout the summer and more flexibility being closer to Northport. Along with lesser expensive operating costs. The boat restoration will be complete this winter and ready to splash in the spring. We are looking to do two things with the boat.

1. Use as a vessel for hire to do history tours of Northport Bay. Northport has such a fascinating maritime history that we share with our community and visitors. We can even show them the three known shipwrecks as well. The funds from this part will be used to maintain the vessel and then fund our shipwreck expeditions.
2. Shipwreck expeditions. We would continue to look for the remaining shipwrecks, including one in Northport Bay. We have several targets the students have found over the years and 2023 we will be working to use our ROV (remote operated vehicle) to send down to see exactly what those targets are. We are also looking for a Model T that went through the ice between the marina and Northport Point around the turn of the century.

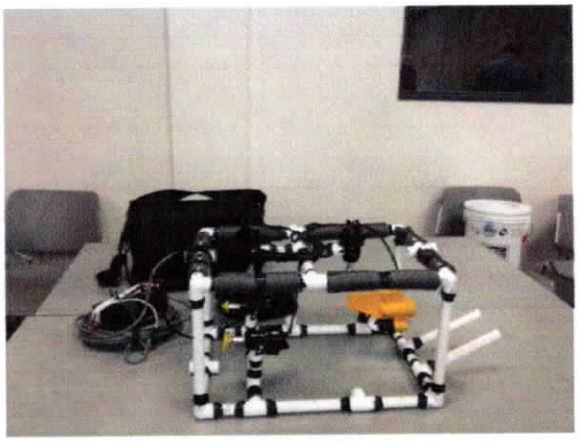


Grand Traverse Bay Underwater Preserve

In addition, we are looking to bring our ROV (remote operated vehicle) into Northport to do several community days throughout the summer and show how it works.



Also, we have a 10' inflatable pool that can be brought into Northport and our community/visitors can build a pvc pipe rov and drive it in the pool.



U.S. Coast Guard Cabin Motor Launch History

The U.S. Coast Guard Launch was donated to the GTLM in December, 2007 by the Northport Bay Boatyard. The Launch is twenty-six feet overall on the trailer.

The Cabin Motor Launches were built at the Curtis Bay Boat Yard (U.S. Coast Guard facility) between the 1930's to the late 1940's by the U.S. Lighthouse Service and later for the ATON branch of the U.S. Coast Guard. Some of these boats were also attached to rescue stations if the station crew had the responsibility of servicing offshore light stations in their area of operation.

This particular wooden boat (the one donated to GTLM) was constructed in 1944/45 with a grey marine engine for the North Manitou Shoal Light located just off Leland, Michigan. The Shoal Light was constructed in 1935 and automated in 1980. The foundation is a concrete crib with a square tower shape, 63' tall. The original optic was a fourth-order Fresnel lens. This is still an active aids-to-navigation (ATON) and is maintained and owned by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Launch was used at the North Manitou Shoal Light from 1945 until it was given to the Michigan Department of Conservation in 1959 as a workboat. It is assumed the Coast Guard decommissioned this wooden vessel to replace it with a more modern fiberglass boat. It is unknown in our research how long the Department of Conservation held this vessel. We do know that it has been sitting at the Northport Bay Boat Yard in storage for the past thirty years.

It was the intent of the owners to restore the vessel and some work had been done a number of years ago. However, the project was never completed and they have now given it to GTLM to continue their passion.