

Sailing in Grand Traverse Bay – Fall 2020

More trips are documented at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1htHXQ_FYEIqUH6ASLFQtZ_KNjWCtuvON/view?usp=sharing

In late September /early October 2020 we chartered a Jeanneau 379 from [Great Lakes Sailing Company \(GLSC\)](#) and they were great to work with. We hired a captain for the first day to get some training on the boat since this was the first time that Corrie and I were chartering on our own, and this boat was larger than the Jeanneau 33 that we chartered in June for sailing the Apostle Islands. We ended up with this boat because it was available when we booked the trip on short notice. The 25% off end of season discounts certainly helped. The 379 turned out to be easier to handle than the 33 since it was equipped with an auto-pilot, an electric windlass, and in-mast furling. We started at the Centerpointe Marina in Traverse City and made our way to various parts of the Grand Traverse Bay. We didn't have any particularly long or ambitious days since didn't want to push it on our first time out with just Corrie and I on a bigger boat. There's plenty of room to explore in the bay since it is 32 miles long and 10 miles wide. It is up to 620 feet deep. It's divided into two arms by the Old Mission Peninsula. We had some extended family join us for one day of sailing and after the trip we got to spend more time with them at their cabin on Little Glen Lake. I also got to meet another Rhodes 22 sailor who keeps his boat on Portage Lake, which is a bit further south. Like many of the coastal lake, Portage Lake empties into Lake Michigan. In summer of 2021 we plan to go back and hope to make it out of the bay and perhaps over to Beaver Island, which is halfway across Lake Michigan.

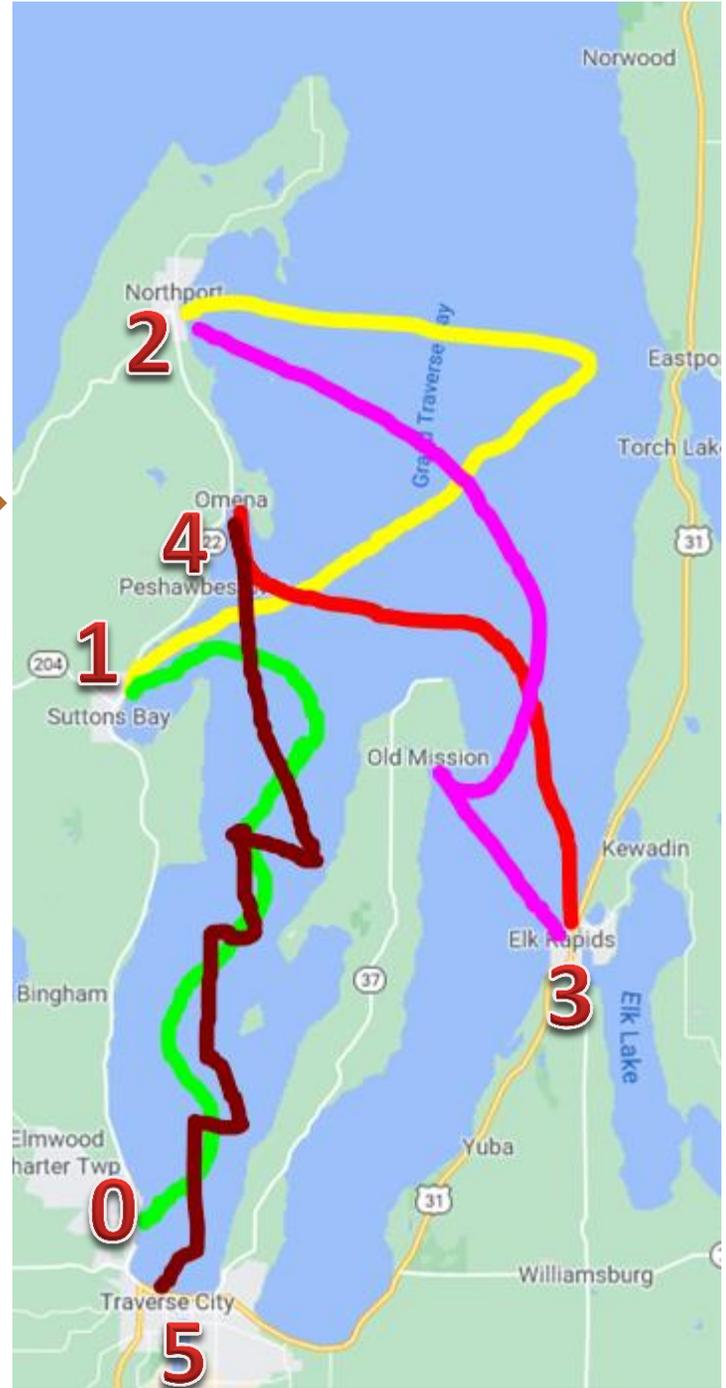
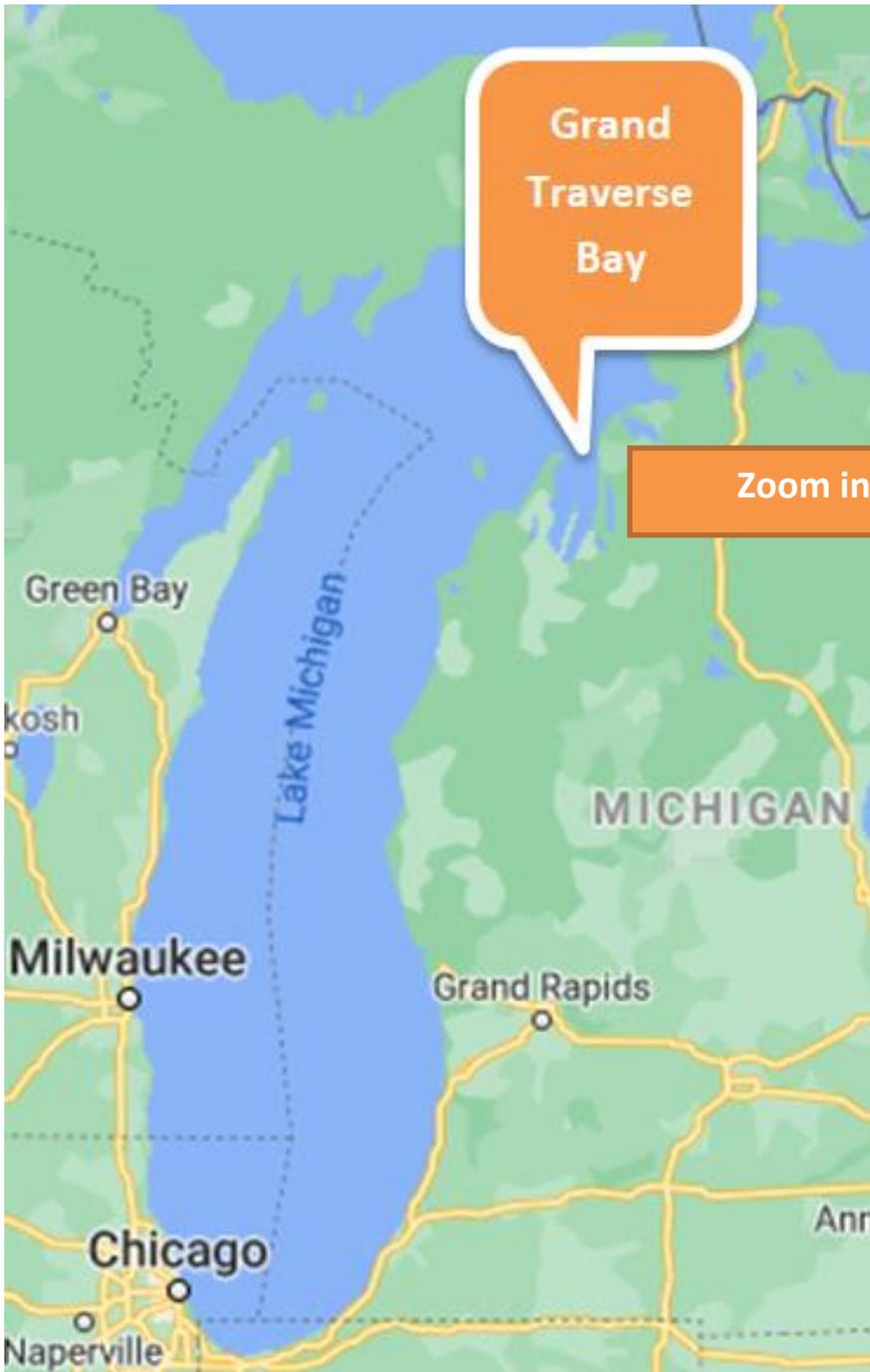
A brief summary is below. On the page following you can see the paths we took, with a different color for each day and numbered in the order of which places we stayed for the night. In addition to charts onboard, we used Navionics for navigation and found that to be very helpful. Some planning resources and highlight photos from the trip are on subsequent pages.

Date	Wind Direction	Wind Speed	Wave Height	Dept Time	Arriv Time	Nautical Miles	Weather	Overnight Location	Notes
9/24							Sunny and warm	Centerpoint Marina - Traverse City	Training day with captain
9/25	SSW	8-20	1-3	0845	1315	19.1	Mostly Sunny and warm	Marina at Sutton's Bay	Warm weather, smooth sailing on broad reaches until the wind picked up and became very gusty as we pulled into Sutton's Bay. Our slip at the marina was on the end and very exposed. Had the wind at our back pushing us into the slip and we were grateful for the help of marina staff to grab our lines. We walked around Sutton's Bay and stopped by the ice cream shop for a snack. Jim came to visit that evening and brought pizza for dinner.
9/26	SE	8-12	1-3	1115	1615	20.2	Mostly Cloudy, moderate temperature	Marina at Northport	Mike and Jim joined us for the Northport to Sutton's Bay. We got a late start due to morning thunderstorms but then we had a nice day of

									moderate winds. Jim had his truck parked in Northport so after arriving there we drove across the peninsula to Leland for dinner and to check out the view of Lake Michigan. Northport had very nice facilities that were designed by Jim who is an engineer.
9/27	WSW	6-20	2-4	0915	1400	20.7	Overcast at first, switching to partly cloudy in the afternoon Cold in the morning but warmed up in the afternoon	Marina at Elk Rapids	The wind overnight had been very strong and was still strong when we left, with waves up to 4 feet. The wind was at our starboard quarter. We chose to keep it simple and motor. After we got around the tip of the Old Mission Peninsula (giving it a wide berth due to shoals), we tucked into Old Mission Bay and anchored there for lunch. After a windy rainy morning, the sun came out while we were anchored in the protected bay and we warmed up. The wind dropped and we motored across East Arm over to the Marina at Elk Rapids. Elk Rapids also has a very nice marina and we walked around town.
9/28	SSW	5-13	0-2	1000	1240	12.2	Cloudy and light rain off and on, cooler	Mooring ball at Omena Bay	Made our way over to Omena Bay and took a mooring ball for the first time. Corrie was at the helm and I was at the bow. We arrived early because storms were on the way. In between storms, there were some amazing skies and we saw a double rainbow.
9/29	SW	9-23	0-2	0830	1400	21.8	Partly cloudy, chilly	Clitch Marina – Traverse City	This was our most exciting day of sailing by far. We were sailing into the wind at a close haul or close reach the whole day. We started with all the sails out and gradually reefed as the day progressed. We hit our max speed of 7.9 knots. Even with only half the sails out later, we were mostly above 6 knots and increasing to over 7 with the strong gusts. We walked around downtown Traverse City and got takeout for dinner. This was an excellent way to spend my 40 th birthday!
9/30								Return boat	

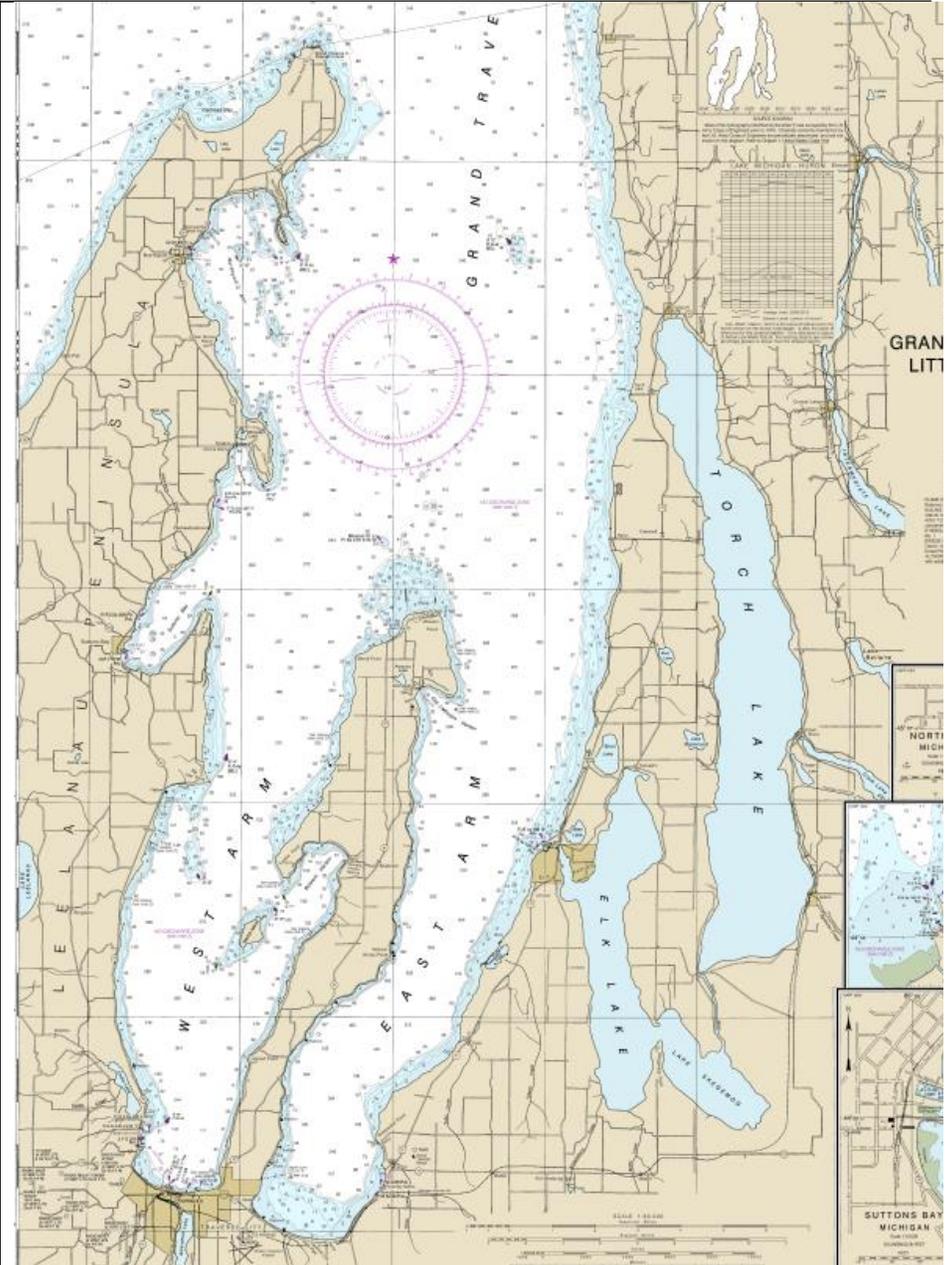
Notes for sailors planning a trip

There are numerous smaller bays within Grand Traverse Bay. We tended to see larger boats out in the main bay and smaller boats in the little bays. Grand Traverse Bay is much more protected than Lake Michigan, but it's still big enough for wind and waves to build and result in small craft warnings, which were present on several days we were there. We mostly stayed at marinas on this trip since we wanted to keep it simple and did not take a dinghy. There are lots of places to anchor as well.



Planning Resources

- NOAA Chart 14913 (shown on the right)
<https://charts.noaa.gov/PDFs/14913.pdf>
<https://www.charts.noaa.gov/OnLineViewer/14913.shtml>
- Cruising guide from 2020:
<https://www.greatlakessailingco.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/GLSC-Cruising-Guide-20.pdf>
- Cruising guide from 2016: <https://americansailinginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016-Anchorage-of-Northern-Michigan1.pdf>
- Michigan Harbours Guide:
https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/Publications/PDFS/RecreationCamping/boating/harbor_guide_small.pdf
- Reserving transient slips online at marinas that receive state funding:
<https://www.midnrreservations.com/>
- Interactive map of destinations:
<https://www.greatlakessailingco.com/charters/destinations/>
- Sample itineraries:
 - o <https://www.greatlakessailingco.com/charters/four-day-sailing-itinerary/>
 - o <https://www.greatlakessailingco.com/charters/seven-day-sailing-itinerary/>
- Articles about sailing in the area:
 - o <http://www.sailmagazine.com/charter/destinations-charter/sailing-michigans-grand-traverse-bay/>
 - o <http://sailingmagazine.net/article-1216-freshwater-delights.html>
 - o <http://www.cruisingworld.com/destinations/unsalted-island-hopping-great-lakes>
 - o <http://www.cruisingworld.com/destinations/four-easy-trips-great-lakes-northern-michigan>
 - o <http://mynorth.com/2015/08/four-days-on-grand-traverse-bay/>
 - o <http://sailingmagazine.net/article-1608-catamaran-cruising-on-michigan's-grand-traverse-bay.html>
- Tales of dinghy sailing adventures in Grand Traverse Bay:
https://www.uswayfarer.org/cruising_logs/grand/grand.html





Our boat for the week – I backed into a slip for the first time



Nice view for the start of the day!





Beach by the marina in Sutton's Bay



Here we are on the first day with warm weather and the wind coming from behind



Classic schooner in Sutton's Bay



Side view of *Meander*, our boat for the week



Found this while on a walk in Sutton's Bay. A view worthy of an advertisement for Northern Michigan



Mike on the left and Jim on the right, joining us for the Sutton's Bay to Northport day. Both have done plenty of sailing in the area



View while anchoring for lunch in Old Mission Bay



View at the edge of town in Elk Rapids. There is a dam upstream (to the right) which gives the town its name



Still have some sun before the impending storm at Omena Bay



We chatted (had to speak up!) with our neighbors briefly in Omena Bay and saw them again back at Traverse City



Saw this double rainbow between storms at Omena Bay



Still moving fast after significantly reefing

**Top two photos are from Omena Bay,
bottom photo is from Traverse City**



After some cold days sailing around the Apostle Islands on Lake Superior in June, we invested in some foul weather gear and this kept us warm on the last day which was windy and chilly. I'm on the high side and Corrie is all the way down by the water on the leeward side





This photo is from the shore of Lake Michigan at a lookout point on the way to visit Bob in Portage Lake



I got to meet another Rhodes 22 owner, Bob (on the left). We took his mast down for the season along with McCord (on the right)