



Michigan Waterfront Alliance
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HELP SAVE OUR INLAND LAKES and STREAMS

Dear Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, Members and Friends: CALL TO ACTION

Your inland lake, pond, stream and associated waterway may already, or soon could be, seriously impacted by Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)! The rate of AIS infestations in Michigan have not shown a decline over the last decade, despite communications, educational efforts and studies.

In view of the increasingly grim condition of our lakes and waterways, the Board of the Michigan Waterfront Alliance has resolved to take on a daunting task: **The improvement of State of Michigan policies and laws concerning the identification, confirmation, protection and management of AIS in our critical inland lakes and waterways.** Our focus will be on:

- Development of a fair, shared cost burden to manage inland lakes
- Confirming AIS has had negative impacts to the MI environment and economy
- Identify and Advocate for real solutions to remedy the “Pathways” for infestation
- Effect real changes in the DNR, DEQ, Michigan Waterways Commission, other groups, and the Michigan Legislature.

To help your Michigan Waterfront Alliance and its Lobbyist convince the Michigan Legislature, the Michigan Waterways Commission, the DNR and Governor Snyder to take more direct action, Your Mission is to fill out the Support information at the end of this paper and send it to the Michigan Waterfront Alliance Lobbyist: Karoub Associates, C/O Matt Kurta, 121 W Allegan St, Lansing MI 48933. **It is vital that we have the support of as many of individuals and Lake and Stream Associations as possible!!** Informal contact with key members of the State Legislature and Agencies have signaled their willingness to explore desired solutions once they are aware of the magnitude of interest by Michigan Property Owners and organized groups.

Background: Tourism contributed an estimated \$22B of dollars of annual revenue to the state economy in 2015. Inland lakes also contribute a large value to the economic vitality of the Michigan economy (especially in rural areas). A 2008 study estimated the value of shoreline property on MI inland lakes at \$200B and annual tax revenues of \$3.5B which directly contribute to local schools, local, county and state governments and services- (N. Keven-Project Report-Value of Riparian Property on MI Inland Lakes-MCNALMS). In addition, substantial state revenue is added rental fees, owner upkeep, maintenance, and support industries associated with inland lake properties (rental, real estate, groceries, supplies, marinas, boat repair etc.) at Michigan’s 10,000 inland lakes.

Tourism, fishing, boating and lake ownership depend on maintaining the ecological and visual vitality of Michigan’s inland lake environments. People do not want to visit, rent or own property on a lake or water body choked by nuisance weeds, zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS). These AIS are plants, animals and even microbes that are introduced from other regions and can aggressively out-compete native species. AIS are spread mostly as a result of human activities such as putting unclean boats, fishing gear and bait into uncontaminated lakes, streams and wetlands.

Status: AIS are rapidly spread throughout Michigan’s Great Lakes and 10,000 inland lakes and is recognized as a significant ecological, economic/fiscal, and quality of life THREAT. The State Government is aware of the AIS issue and possible solutions and funding options; August 21, 2013 report-MI Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Council-Report and recommendations. The MI AIS State Management Plan 2013 Update (pg-15) listed a \$5.7B annual impact due to AIS!

However, there has been no coordinated or sustained state and local level effort to track and identify the spread of AIS, share data with residents, agree on statewide solutions, nor invest in proven ways to halt the spread of AIS on the Great Lakes AND our 10,000 lakes and ponds, rivers and streams. The current AIS State Management Plan (SMP) is a start but it places the entire burden of AIS management on lake property owners. Property owners and residents currently spend more than \$25 million annually (2013 MI AIS Management Plan, 2013-pg-15) on lake management programs in an attempt to stem the spread of AIS, while the DNR and DEQ dedicate limited funding to reviewing lake treatment permits, research and education. AIS is spreading and will cause further damage the quality of our inland waters and having property owners pay for all of the inland lake management is not sustainable.

The Michigan DNR Division of Parks and Recreation continues to recommend the development of new Public Access sites, as well as the renovation and expansion of existing Public Access Sites on Michigan inland lakes, despite the known fact that boat launch sites are the top “Pathway” of AIS to inland lakes! Do we have data or scientific analyses to justify this expansion when there is no boat wash protection to reduce the spread of AIS? For many existing boat launch sites, we do not have accurate counts of the number or types of boats that are launched. Therefore, the State cannot scientifically assess boating demand or the adequacy of the supply of launch capacity on Michigan inland lakes. It may be possible that some existing Public Access Sites should be closed because use does not justify the capital and operating costs. Nor could we identify or obtain a comprehensive analysis of the estimated operating costs and needed capital improvements for all public access sites that the Parks and Recreation Division operates. The Michigan Parks and Recreation Division has not made available a scientific, data-based Public Access Needs Assessment, nor plans (other than education) to finance efforts to reduce the introduction of AIS and to control them in lakes where they operate Access Sites. Ironically, while state departments claim they lack resources to provide even minor assistance to local residents to stem the spread of AIS in inland lakes, the state still spends resources expanding state boat launch sites on lake after lake without evaluating objective criteria such as whether additional launch facilities are needed and how can we protect from the spread of AIS and/or support lake management efforts to reduce AIS impact?

Suggested Actions: We need to change the way we do business and make critical investments if we want to save Michigan lakes, waterways and sustain our tourism and lake economies! An honest airing of the real issues needs to take place at the highest levels and solutions identified.

- Development of a fair, shared cost burden to manage inland lakes is long overdue. Encourage the passing of Michigan legislation similar to that in the States of MN, WI, IN, ME, NH, WA, VT, FL, CA, LA, TX, and ID requiring owners of boats registered and unregistered in Michigan to acquire and attach to their boats or trailers a sticker with all of those revenues going toward the prevention and eradication of AIS in inland lakes
- We are well behind compared to neighboring states with respect to state investment in AIS treatment and eradication. Learn from other states that have developed comprehensive AIS programs.
- Admit there is a problem with the spread of AIS and that responsibility for management and eradication should be shared by state government, local government, the boating public, and lake/water property owners, not just the latter!
- Identify and quantify the AIS problem at local and statewide levels, determine the threat to the Michigan economy of this danger!!!
- Determine realistic options to slow the spread of AIS. All state agencies and associated contractors need to adopt a DO NO HARM approach to protect the Great and inland lakes. This includes inspections and boat wash stations at all public boat launch site as other states do.
- Develop a plan involving state, and local agencies to undertake direct, concrete actions to halt the spread of AIS, such as boat wash stations, carrying capacity studies, responsible management of boat launch access sites, and lake monitoring and management.
- Focus on protecting the public trust, riparian interests, and all the recreational and economic benefits of Michigan's inland lakes, rather than concentrating on expanding boating access at all costs and without regard to eliminating AIS pathways to our lakes and streams.
- Strengthen the provisions of MCL 324.41325, Boat, boating equipment, or boat trailer with aquatic plant attached; placement in state waters prohibited; order to remove aquatic plants; notice; posting; violation as civil infraction penalty.

Reform of the Michigan Waterways Commission.

The Michigan Waterfront Alliance supports recreational boating and recommends:

- Representation of inland lake owners on the WW Commission
- Redirection of a portion of existing state funding from various sources such as boat sticker fees and the Marine Fuel tax for lake and water preservation
- Creation of a cost-sharing grant system for AIS management for all lakes and streams with AIS infestation
- Evaluation of current launch sites state-wide before funds are spent on expansion
- Evaluation of Capital Investments needed to eliminate current launch sites as Pathways to future spread of AIS in Michigan

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For Lake Associations

I confirm that the _____ Association supports the above resolution. Our lake community has _____ Property Owners/residents.

I hold the position of _____ for our Association.

Our Lake Association mailing address is:

The email address or phone number to contact me is:

Date signed: _____

Mail signed resolution to:

Karoub Associates
C/O: Matt Kurta
121 W. Allegan Street
Lansing, MI 48933
