



The Michigan Waterfront Alliance (MWA) is a non-profit corporation that was formed over twenty years ago in order to contribute to the creation or preservation of state laws and/or policies designed to protect, preserve, and promote the sustainable use of inland water resources located in the State of Michigan. Our primary mission will be accomplished by pro-active participation in Michigan's legislative process, certain court cases, and/or by direct involvement with natural resources management, or environmental quality focused state agencies or departments.

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## Michigan Waterfront Alliance President's Update for March 2019

by Bob Frye

Dear MWA Members and Friends,

I am pleased to report the following information regarding the MWA / DNR Parks Task Force teleconference meeting that was held on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**A.** Attending were: Ron Olson (Chief of Parks - DNR); Tammy Newcomb (DNR); Vicki McGhee(DNR); Sarah LeSage (DEQ); Jacklin Blodgett (DNR); Anna Sylvester (DNR) ; Dennis Nickels (MI Waterways Commission Chairman); Bob Frye (MWA); Scott Brown (MWA); Lon Nordeen (MWA); Christina Baugher (DNR); Barbara Graves (DNR); Mike Gallagher (MLSA)

**B.** A new Michigan Boating Law ([SB 1072 of 2018 \(PA 0451 of 2018\)](#)) went into effect in December 2018:

The new law indicates that a person **shall not**:

- Launch or transport watercraft or trailers unless they are free of aquatic organisms, including plants;
- Transport a watercraft without removing all drain plugs and draining all water

- from bilges, ballast tanks, and live wells;
- Release unused bait into the water

**C.** The MI Secretary of State Office has agreed to include in each boater registration packet (close to 1 million over the course of the next 3 years - starting this year) the attached "New Boater Law Effective 2019" card.

**D.** Michigan Waterways Commission has made combating AIS one of its top five priorities for 2019. Dennis Nickels, Chair of the Waterways Commission, and a Task Force member, will keep the Task Force updated as to what Waterways is doing to help combat AIS in 2019.

**E.** MWA and MLSA have been asked to compile an accurate tally of all Michigan Lake Associations and Lake Groups costs for combating AIS.

**F.** The passage of Bill 1136 ([SB 1136 of 2018 \(PA 671 of 2018\)](#)) is a start for the DEQ to establish an AIS funding program. For 2019 there is one million dollars allocated to help Lake Association and Lake Groups cover costs associated with invasive aquatic plant control efforts.

**G.** The following Draft Points of Consensus from the October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 Task Force meeting were agreed upon by the Task Force members:

1. Michigan needs to strengthen statutory legislation and enhance resources for managing and preventing the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species.
2. If there are considerations of new public access sites by the DNR, part of the process of due diligence will include evaluation and implementation of best management practices for the prevention of AIS.
3. Not only the state but public and private access point managers and marinas need to work together to reduce the introduction and spread of invasive species, and implementing best management practices at all launch sites.
4. A method should be developed to share the costs associated with managing AIS on inland lakes to maintain recreational and environmental sustainability.
5. Form a public/private coalition with the Michigan Waterfront Alliance and other interested organizations to provide guidance to the DNR in facilitating the steps noted above.

**H.** The following "Steps Forward" proposed by MWA were read and discussed by the Task Force:

**Step I.** The DNR and MWA agree that Michigan's environmental statutory and administrative framework needs to be enhanced in an effort to mitigate the introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS) into Michigan's lakes and streams.

- MNREPA (Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act) should be amended to compel a boat owner to submit to inspection and or wash his or her watercraft immediately prior to launching the watercraft into a body of water.

- Sanctions should be imposed for an owner's failure to comply with MNREPA as amended.
- All marinas and launch sites (public and private) should be required to have qualified boat inspection personnel, and/or boat washing facilities on-site.

**Step II.** The DNR and MWA recognize that to effectively combat the spread of AIS, it will be necessary to secure material funding sources from the public and private sectors.

- The DNR, with the support of MWA, will lobby the legislature for a meaningful line item budget to initiate the funding of a campaign to mitigate the introduction of AIS into Michigan's lakes and streams, and to fund AIS remediation efforts in Michigan's lakes and streams.
- The DNR, with the support of MWA, will initiate a user fee at all public launch facilities which will be earmarked for AIS prevention and remediation.
- The DNR, with the support of MWA, will implement a fee structure to be levied on private commercial marina operations that will be earmarked for AIS prevention and remediation.

**Step III.** The DNR and MWA will coordinate AIS efforts with local units of government to ensure local government participation in the mitigation of AIS.

- The DNR will provide positive and enthusiastic technical and scientific assistance to local units of government that wish to establish special assessment districts or lake improvement boards to combat AIS.
- MWA will provide technical assistance to local units of government to establish lake improvement boards.

**I.** Scott Brown invited all present to attend the Starry Stonewort conference hosted by MWA that will be held on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at the offices of Karoub Associates located in downtown Lansing.

**J.** The MWA and MLSA have agreed to participate in the following AIS awareness efforts:

1. Placement of **Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose** signage at private and public boat launch sites with stencils provided by Parks.
2. Landing Blitz DNR and MWA/MLSA challenge
3. Social media blitz DNR and MWA/MLSA challenge - promote the New Boating Law / Boater Card info through MWA and MLSA contacts list, the MI Riparian Magazine, and social media.

Sincerely,

Bob Frye

Michigan Waterfront Alliance, President