



# Michigan Waterfront Alliance

## *Legislative Advocacy for Inland Lakes and Streams in Lansing*

Presentation to Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership

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# Who are we?

- The Michigan Waterfront Alliance (MWA) is a nonprofit corporation formed to protect, preserve and promote the wise use of inland waters in Michigan
- Membership currently includes 22 lake associations throughout Michigan
- Karoub Associates is a “multi-client” lobbying firm, one of Lansing’s oldest and largest
- Diverse client base, 9 full-time lobbyists
- Karoub has represented MWA interests in Lansing since 2012

# What is lobbying?

- Merriam-Webster Definition: “'Lobbying' (also 'lobby') is a form of advocacy with the intention of influencing decisions made by the government by individuals or more usually by lobby groups; it includes all attempts to influence legislators and officials, whether by other legislators, constituents, or organized groups”

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# What do lobbyists do?

- Everyone “lobbies”, almost everyone in this room has a “lobbyist”....even if you don’t know it
- Institutional knowledge in the era of term limits
- Direct advocacy, advice and counsel, association management, committee testimony preparation and development, access and much, much more
- More on this later...

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# What we hope to cover today:

- DNR Land Strategy and “Good Neighbor Policy”
- Funding the Fight Against Invasives
- AIS Legislative Initiatives
- How to make a difference in Lansing
- Feel free to ask questions at any time



# DNR Land Strategy and “Good Neighbor Policy”

- Public Act 240 of 2012 enacted a cap on DNR acquisition of surface rights on up to 4.626 million acres of land until May 1, 2015
  - Beginning on May 1, 2015, cap shifts to prohibit DNR from acquiring surface rights on more than 3.91 million acres north of Mason-Arenac line
  - Acreage cap does **not** apply to a number of sub-categories:
    - Conservation easements
    - Land platted under the Land Division Act prior to July 2, 2012
    - CFA land prior to July 2, 2012
    - Land acquired via gift or litigation
    - If acquired on or after July 2, 2012: Land with an area of not more than 80 acres, or a right-of-way, used to access other DNR land
    - Trails

# Land Strategy and DNR “Good Neighbor Policy” cont.

- Requires DNR to develop a strategic plan for acquisition and disposal of land, with legislative intent to repeal land cap once a strategic plan is developed and approved by Legislature



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# Land Strategy and DNR “Good Neighbor Policy” – HB 5210

- House Bill 5210, sponsored by Rep. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City), repeals the land cap and approves the new DNR strategic plan for acquiring and disposing of land
- DNR Strategic Plan issued on July 1, 2013:
  - Divides state into regions
  - Identifies DNR-managed land in each region
  - Establishes measurable strategic performance goals with respect to availability of access points to water and land, outdoor recreation, forests, and wildlife and fisheries
- “Good Neighbor Policy” - Improved coordination with other public lands to achieve mutual goals and multiple uses, but holds DNR accountable
- Strategic plan cannot be approved without removal of land cap per 2012 statute – one cannot happen without the other



# Funding the Fight Against Invasive Species



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# Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget

- In February, Governor Snyder proposed \$6 million to fight both terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. Of this amount:
  - \$2 million is for one-time grants to cooperative weed management areas, \$4 million ongoing to support 16 Full-time Employees (FTEs) dedicated to invasive species management within the DNR.
  - Governor's budget proposes doubling the \$2 million in one-time grants to \$4 million in FY 2015-2016.

# FY 2014-2015 Budget, cont.

- \$5.5 million included for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.
- Senate:
  - DNR Budget (Senate Bill 744) passed 34-4 this past Wednesday
  - Retains Governor's recommendation for \$4 million in ongoing funding for the 16 new FTEs
  - Retention of the proposed \$2 million in grant funding.
  - Actually increases funding for this line-item by another \$170,000

# FY 2014-2015 Budget, cont.

- House:
  - Budget is pending on House floor within the House “Omnibus” budget, House Bill 5313
  - Appropriates \$3 million in ongoing funding for 16 FTEs, a \$1 million reduction from the Governor’s recommendation
  - Retains \$2 million in one-time grant funding
- Budget work should be completed by mid-June, with summer recess to follow

# AIS Legislative Initiatives

- SB 444
  - Efficiencies and streamlining AIS permit process
  - Timeliness in treating and controlling AIS through creation of multi-year control permit/certificate of coverage
- Language in previous draft of SB 444 shelved for time being:
  - Create a means by which a local government authority could enact ordinances to ensure that all public water surface users share in the cost of Aquatic Invasive Species control funding on the particular water body
  - Legislative pushback
  - Sen. Casperson has committed to working on this issue in the future

# AIS Legislative Initiatives, cont.

- SB 795-802
  - Increased penalties for transport and/or release of invasive species, such as fines, license suspension and seizure of equipment
- Recreation Passport Opt-Out

The logo for MWA (Michigan Watershed Association) features a light green map of Michigan with a white outline of the state's coastline and internal water bodies. Below the map, the letters "MWA" are printed in a light gray, sans-serif font.

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# So, what can you do to make a difference?

- Democracy is not a spectator sport - “The world is run by those who show up.”
- Contact your state and federal legislators
  - Quality, not quantity
  - Another quote: “How to win friends & influence people” – a right way and a wrong way learned from experience
- Attend public meetings held by governmental units
- Join the Michigan Waterfront Alliance!

# Thank you! Questions, compliments...complaints?

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