



Photo by Scott Brown

Welcome to the Michigan Waterfront Alliance

Update for Monday, March 2, 2026



Michigan **W**aterfront **A**lliance

P. O. Box 392

Mecosta, MI 49332-0392

michiganwaterfrontalliance.com

Michigan Waterfront Alliance (MWA) is a 501(c) 4 non-profit corporation formed over twenty years ago in order to effectively advocate for the creation or preservation of state laws, and/or policies designed to protect, preserve, and promote the sustainable and wise use of our state's immense treasure of high quality freshwater resources. Our primary mission will be accomplished by proactive participation in Michigan's legislative process (lobbying), by participating in court cases whose outcomes may have significant statewide

ramifications, and/or by direct involvement with natural resources management, or environment focused state agencies or departments.



LEGISLATION RESTRICTING WATERCRAFT OPERATING

IN "WAKE SPORT MODE" INTRODUCED IN THE MI STATE SENATE

by Scott Brown

MWA e-Newsletter Editor

Introduced by MI State Senator Rosemary Bayer (District 13) on Thursday, February 26, Senate Bill 812 has been referred to the MI State Senate committee on [NATURAL RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURE](#) for analysis and consideration.

The language of MI Senate Bill 812 defines "wake boat as a vessel that is equipped with wake-enhancing equipment. Wake boat includes, but is not limited to, a wake surf boat and a ballasted boat."

If passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Governor Whitmer as introduced, MI Senate Bill 812 would prohibit the operation of vessels operating in "wake sport mode" in "waters of this state where the water depth is less than 20 feet and to a distance of not less than 500 feet from the shoreline or a dock, a raft, a buoyed or occupied bathing area, or a vessel moored or at anchor."

It is important to note that MI State Senate Bill 812 has been introduced in an era 'when a dramatic upsurge in the number of wake boats operating on the inland waters of the Laurentian Great Lakes region has resulted in a significant increase of confirmed reports of enhanced wake inflicted damage to docks, moored boats as well as to developed and natural shorelines. Studies have shown that all wake boat passages that occur within 984 feet of shore are capable of contributing significant energy to naturally occurring waves. The impact of wakes created during boat passes is "directly and inversely" related to the distance between the passage and the shore. Wakes generated in close proximity to shore, and/or within shallow waters are known to possess the greatest potential to impact ecologically sensitive aquatic habitat. In contrast to wakes created by vessels operating in deep, open waters a great distance from shore that are unlikely to disturb shallows and shoreline habitat, wakes created in close proximity to shore, and/or in shallow waters are

not allotted the time, distance, and/or depth that is necessary for their energy to dissipate before disturbing vulnerable benthic habitat, and/or both natural and developed shorelines.

The significant potential for wakes generated by passing boats to cause severe erosion, and/or to otherwise substantially harm nearby shorelines has been clearly demonstrated by the fact that even small, light-weight outboard motor propelled aluminum fishing boats passing at moderate speeds within 500 feet or less of shore are capable of creating wakes of sufficient magnitude to inflict damage to shoreline property and natural habitat. It is also important to note that the most significant occurrences of damage to shoreline infrastructure and natural shorelines often take place during periods marked by high water levels due to the fact that enhanced wakes are capable of coming much closer to shore before they break, resulting in rapid dissipation of their energy. Lakefront property owners in particular are likely to be painfully aware of the fact that during the past several years many inland lakes located within the freshwater inundated Great Lakes region continue to experience the combined destructive influences attributed to a steadily increasing number of wake boats operating on inland lakes that are experiencing historically high-water levels.

To download a copy of MI Senate Bill 812, [click here](#)

To download a detailed wake boat issue focused Power Point presentation, [click here](#)

Legislation to Establish a First Ever Statewide Septic Code Introduced in the Michigan State Senate

If Passed into Law, Senate Bill 771 Would Help Protect Michigan's Fragile Inland Lakes, Rivers, Streams and Ground Water from Raw Sewage Flowing from Hundreds of Thousands of Failing Septic Systems in Michigan

by Scott Brown
MWA E- Newsletter Editor

Introduced by MI State Senator Sam Singh (D-28) and referred to the MI Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Agriculture on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, if passed into law, **Senate Bill 771** would establish Michigan's first-ever comprehensive framework for the oversight and on-going maintenance of septic systems (on-site wastewater treatment systems). As the only state in the United States of America without a statewide septic system code, the language of Senate Bill 771 will serve to modernize Michigan's substantially outdated approach to septic system over-sight and help protect the health of communities and the tens of thousands of freshwater resources that serve those communities.

The steadily escalating environmental and public health threat in Michigan is derived from the that fact that approximately 20%, or 280,000 of the 1.4 million septic systems that were constructed during the residential building boom of the 1950's and 1960's throughout Michigan are now failing. The issue of failing septic systems has been exacerbated by the fact that many Michigan homes and their now antiquated and often dysfunctional septic systems were built prior to the construction of sewer systems that now serve most towns and villages. The significance of the problem in Michigan is also illustrated by the fact that between calendar years 2013 and 2014 an estimated 5.7 billion gallons of untreated (raw) sewage from failing septic systems flowed unabated into our inland lakes, river, streams, and groundwater aquifers.

The language of MI Senate Bill 771 recognizes that while properly functioning septic systems are an effective and affordable wastewater solution, failing septic systems pose a serious risk to public health, safety, and to Michigan's freshwater resource inundated environment. If passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Governor Whitmore, Senate Bill 771 would require the MI Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to develop a uniform performance-based standard defined Statewide Sewage Code for both conventional and alternative septic systems within three years.

The key provisions of Senate Bill 771 as introduced are as follows:

- High-risk or older residential septic systems (20+ years and within 500 feet of any surface water or within a high-risk erosion area, critical dune, or 100-year floodplain would be evaluated first, followed by 10-year inspections and checks before any change or increase in use would be approved.
- The language of Senate Bill 771 defines a septic system “failure” and authorizes local health departments to inspect, evaluate, and enforce compliance.
- If passed into law, the legislation would require the establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of a group of highly qualified experts that will help guide MI EGLE in developing a comprehensive set of rules and performance standards.
- The establishment of a new Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Administration Fund which would provide grants to local health departments, support digitization of septic records, fund public education campaigns, and assist low-income homeowners with inspection and/or repair costs.
- The language of Senate Bill 771 also authorizes the use of approved alternative and innovative treatment methods to meet state standards and therefore ensuring a high degree of flexibility for communities and property owners.

To download a copy of MI Senate Bill 771, [click here](#)



**PASSING MUCH NEEDED WAKE BOAT AND SEPTIC CODE RELATED
LEGISLATION WILL REQUIRE YOU TO WEIGH IN WITH YOUR STATE
LEGISLATORS**

The passage of Senate Bill 771 which would establish Michigan's first-ever comprehensive framework for the oversight and on-going maintenance of septic systems (on-site wastewater treatment systems); and Senate Bill 812 which would prohibit the operation of vessels operating in "wake sport mode" in waters of this state where the water depth is less than 20 feet and to a distance of not less than 500 feet from the shoreline or a dock, a raft, a buoyed or occupied bathing area, or a vessel moored or at anchor are well written, reasonable pieces

of legislation that, if enacted, will make important contributions to helping preserve and protect Michigan's wealth of inland lakes, rivers, and streams.

It is important to note, however, that Senate Bill 812 and Senate Bill 771 represent only the most recent attempts to enact common sense state law - past attempts to rein in out-of-control wake boat operators and at least begin to repair the 330,000 failing residential septic systems that pour billions of gallons of raw, e-coli inundated sewage into our lakes, rivers, and stream each year have failed in the past due to the well-funded efforts of professional lobbyists that seem to lurk around in every corner of our state capitol. We also know that the well-funded efforts of state lobbyists in preventing the passage of legislation that does not meet the needs of their profit driven employers is made much easier due to the fact that only a tiny fraction of Michigan voters ever attempts to communicate with their respective state senators or representatives.

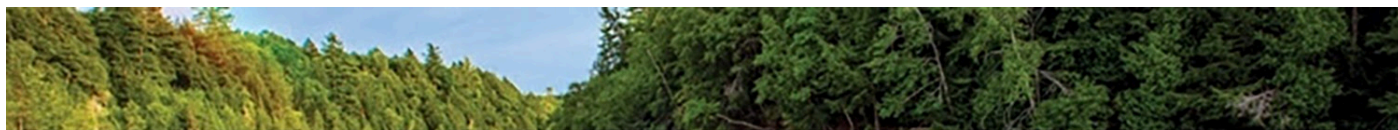
The readers of the this newsletter need to know that the latest straight forward, scientific evidence-based attempts to rein in out of control wake boat operators (Senate Bill 812); and establish a first ever statewide septic code (Senate Bill 771) will again each meet with failure in the next few months if those of us concerned about preserving the quality of our incredibly valuable inland lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater do not devote the relatively small amount of time and effort that is necessary to write, call, message, or e-mail their state senators and representatives in the very near future.

To identify your MI State Senator and their contact information

[click here](#)

To identify your MI Representatives and their contact information

[click here](#)



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY



To visit the MI Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and

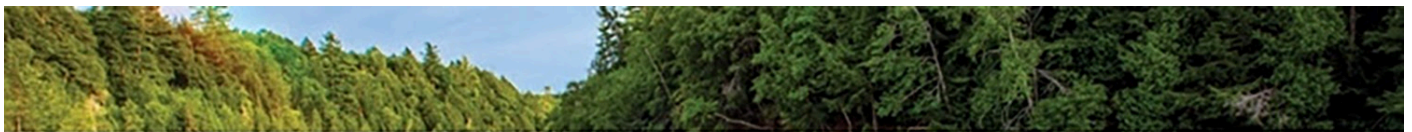
Energy web page dedicated to providing information about

MI EGLE's outreach programs

[click here](#)



To download a copy of the MWA
2026 Winter Newsletter,
[click here](#)



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY





January 27, 2026

The Department of Natural Resources is committed to providing Michigan residents the opportunity to share input and ideas on policy decisions, programs and other aspects of natural resource management and outdoor recreation opportunities.

One important avenue for this input is at meetings of the public bodies that advise the DNR and, in some cases, also set policies for natural and cultural resource management.

Frequently check the [DNR boards, commissions, committees and councils webpage](#) for updates.

The links below will take you to the webpage for each group, where you will find meeting details such as location and agenda (when finalized).

NOTE: Please check these pages often, as meeting details may change and sometimes meetings are canceled.



To visit the MI Department of Natural Resources
website page dedicated to learning about programs
and resources for educators

[click here](#)



Invasive species pose a threat to Michigan's environment, economy, and sometimes even human health. What is at stake? What is being done? This webinar series will explore how agencies, universities and locally led organizations are working together to protect Michigan's natural resources through the Michigan Invasive Species Program.

If you are concerned about the impacts of invasive species or interested in the techniques used to control them, join us as we examine species-specific actions, innovations in research and technology, and programs designed to help communities prevent and manage harmful invasive species. A question-and-answer period will follow each presentation.

Upcoming webinars

March 25

[Old Data, New Insights: Tracking Invasive Plant Trends in Michigan's State Parks](#)



Michigan's Invasive Species Watch List

Invasive species on the watch list have been identified as posing an immediate or potential threat to Michigan's economy, environment or human health. These species either have never been confirmed in the wild in Michigan or have a limited known distribution.

If you think you have found any of these species in Michigan, please report the occurrence via the methods given below by clicking on an individual species name.

View the watch list as a printable PDF - [InvasiveSpecies-WatchList](#)

Invasive Species Watch List Viewer

Use this mapping tool to find out where watch list invasive species have been confirmed in Michigan and where they have been successfully eradicated.

[Invasive Species Watch List Viewer](#)





Our long-term vision is to address Michigan's most pressing lake, stream, and watershed conservation and stewardship challenges and provide research-based, timely support to clientele and partners.

The Michigan State University Extension Center for Lakes and Streams stream lines lake and stream research, engagement, and education activities at the university and highlights the many programs MSU Extension and its partners offer throughout the state. The MSU Extension Center for Lakes and Streams is not a physical center with a brick-and-mortar headquarters. It is a team of Extension educators and outreach faculty based throughout Michigan with a shared mission of advancing the conservation and stewardship of Michigan's inland lakes and streams.

To achieve this vision, the Center will welcome affiliated faculty from various departments at MSU and will invite external stakeholder input. Affiliates and stakeholders will support the work of the Center by identifying emerging issues and assisting with the prioritization of research and education activities. The Center will welcome stakeholder input from diverse perspectives, including state agencies, tribal partners, other Michigan universities, local and regional decision makers, agricultural producers, and nonprofit, community and riparian organizations.

Want to learn more?

Reach out to the Center for Lakes and Streams Director

Dr. Jo Latimore at latimor1@msu.edu.



Photo by Scott Brown

NORTHERN LEOPARD FROG

Scientific Name: *Lithobates pipiens*



What We Would Like Readers of this Newsletter to Know about Michigan Waterfront Alliance

Our Mission:

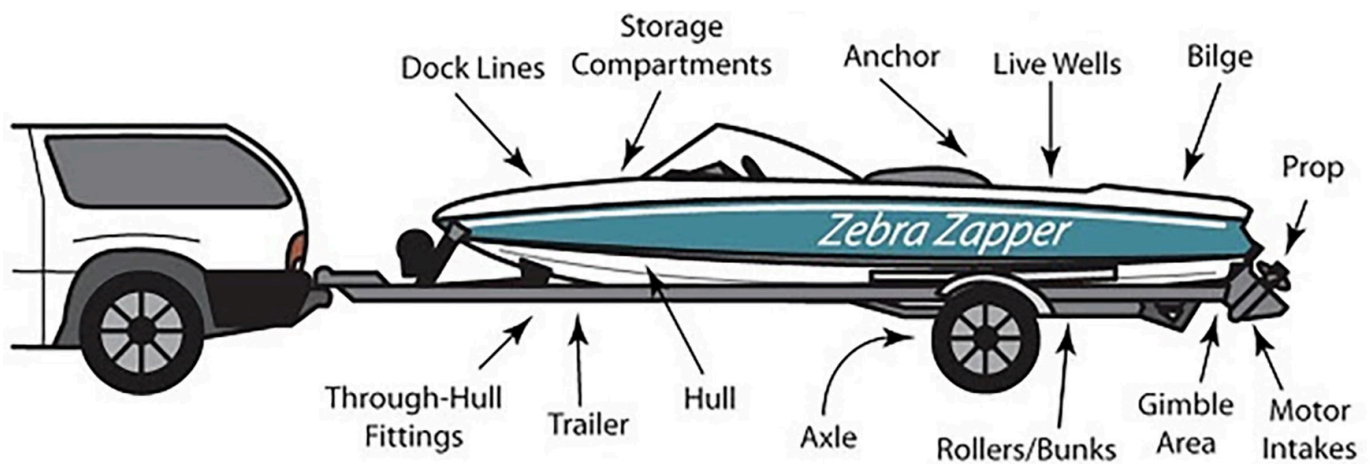
Michigan Waterfront Alliance (MWA) is a 501(c)4 non-profit corporation formed to protect, preserve, and promote wise use of the inland waters of the State of Michigan. Our mission will be accomplished by active participation in the legislative process, court cases, and/or direct involvement with related state agencies or departments. This membership-enabled corporation maintains the ability to influence legislation through lobbying, an action that is not permitted by 501(c)3 non-profit organizations.

- Michigan Waterfront Alliance is one of just a few non-profit organizations that is permitted by law to influence our state's legislative process in regards to the enactment of state laws, regulations, or policies whose implementation and enforcement ultimately have a direct impact on Michigan's vast natural legacy of high**

quality freshwater resources by lobbying. Lobbying is defined as the act of attempting to influence decisions made by government officials. Enabled through direct communication and pro-active advocacy, lobbying involves various activities aimed at persuading policymakers, especially state legislators, to support or oppose specific legislation, regulations, and/or other government actions.

- The vast majority of the revenue derived through membership or by donations to Michigan Waterfront Alliance is utilized to compensate our Lansing-based lobbyist - Michigan's longest serving multi-client lobbying firm, Karoub Associates.
- Not a single person who works for Michigan Waterfront Alliance, including the Officers and Directors of our Board of Directors, receive any form of monetary compensation.
- Those who work to enable the day-to-day operation of Michigan Waterfront Alliance are motivated by the desire to contribute in some modest way to the conservation of Michigan's extraordinary valuable natural legacy of high quality inland lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands.
- It is important for our readers to understand that most of the revenue we receive through the payment of individual, association, or corporate dues as well as donations to Michigan Waterfront Alliance go directly to support our Karoub Associates enabled Lansing-based lobbying efforts that occur on behalf of our freshwater resources, associations, and lakefront property owners (riparians). A small percentage (about 10%) of our total revenue goes to fund the payment of non-discretionary administrative expenses.
- The fact is, only a small fraction of the thousands of readers of this newsletter have thus far chosen to become individual, association, or corporate members, and/or to donate to Michigan Waterfront Alliance.
- In order for Michigan Waterfront Alliance to sustain our commitment to working on behalf of the preservation of our precious inland lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands, and the protection of the riparian rights of lakefront property owners, we desperately need many more of our readers to make the wise decision to become Individual, Association, or Corporate members,

and/ or to make a generous donation to our efforts by becoming a Bronze, Silver, or Gold MI Healthy Lakes Champion today!!!



Bringing a boat

When a watercraft is part of your fishing routine, remember to “Clean, Drain and Dry” boats, trailers and all equipment and gear after each use on any lake, river or stream. State law requires:

- Making sure watercraft and trailers are free of all aquatic organisms and plants before transporting or launching.
- Removing drain plugs and draining all water from bilges, ballast tanks and live wells before transporting watercraft over land.

Drying boats, trailers and gear is an important step to ensure live organisms, like hard-to-see zebra mussel larvae, plant fragments and didymo cells, don't travel to the next fishing

spot. Between sites, do one of the following:

- When possible, dry boats, trailers and gear in the sun for five to seven days.
- Wash boats and trailers with a pressure washer.
- Apply a chemical disinfectant like those listed above.
- Dry surfaces with a towel.

Preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species is the responsibility of everyone who uses Michigan's valuable fresh-water resources. For more information on invasive species and prevention methods, visit Michigan.gov/Invasives.

Michigan's Invasive Species Program is cooperatively implemented by the Michigan departments of Agriculture and Rural Development; Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; and Natural Resources.





Events Listing

All times Eastern. "\$" indicates there may be a cost to participate.

March 10, 1:00 PM: Integrating groundwater resource awareness into planning. Host: Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

March 11, Noon: From barriers to brookies: What dam removal means for Maple River trout. Presented by Amy Schrank, Minnesota Sea Grant. Host: Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council.

April 8, Noon: Septic system ordinances in Northern Michigan. Presented by Abbie Hawley, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. Host: Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council.

April 15-17: 2026 Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention. (*In-person conference with virtual attendance option*). Host: Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Partnership. \$

You may also wish to explore these websites for additional events, recordings of past events, and more:

Michigan Inland Lakes Convention presentation recordings

Michigan Lakes and Streams Association

Michigan State University Extension Center for Lakes and Streams

Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership

North American Lake Management Society



Please join Michigan Waterfront Alliance!

**We Need the Support of People Like You Who Care about
Preserving and Protecting our Extraordinarily Valuable
Freshwater Resources for Future Generations Now!!!**

- **Are you tired of funding the management of aquatic invasive species on your lake that were introduced by recreational boaters using the local MI Department of Natural Resources owned and operated public boating access site?**
- **Are you just a bit angry that recreational boaters using your lake are not being asked to contribute their fair share to combat the negative influences of aquatic invasive species?**
- **Are you worried about the fact that your lakefront residential property values are being negatively influenced by the steadily increasing presence of aquatic invasive species?**
- **Are you concerned about the fact that it is nearly impossible to find an inland lake in Michigan that does not currently host one or more potentially harmful aquatic invasive species?**
- **Are you aware of the fact that inland lakes are Michigan's most valuable natural resource, and that our state legislature has thus far appropriated almost nothing in the way of budget resources to help ensure they remain healthy and viable?**

If your answer is **YES to any of these important questions, please help ensure that your voice is heard in Lansing by joining Michigan Waterfront Alliance today.**

[Click here](#) to join Michigan Waterfront Alliance today !!!



---The Problem is Real---

***The loss of natural shorelines is the biggest threat
to the overall health of Michigan lakes***

National Lakes Assessment

Shoreland development is impacting Michigan's lakes causing issues such as poor water quality, erosion, and loss of fish and wildlife habitat. Taking action on your property now can help reverse these effects and protect the health of your lake.

To learn more about the mission, goals, and unique educational opportunities provided by the

Michigan **N**atural **S**horeline **P**artnership

[Click here](#)



**MICHIGAN
WATERFRONT
ALLIANCE**

BRONZE

MI Healthy Lakes

Champion

\$250

Donate

SILVER

MI Healthy Lakes

Champion

\$500

Donate

GOLD

MI Healthy Lakes

Champion

\$1000

Donate

**PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A MICHIGAN WATERFRONT
ALLIANCE MI HEALTHY LAKES CHAMPION TODAY!!!**

**YOUR GENEROUS DONATION OF \$250, \$500, or \$1,000 WILL
AMPLIFY OUR CAPACITY TO LOBBY FOR THE PASSAGE
OF COMMON SENSE LEGISLATION THAT IS PENDING IN
LANSING IN REGARDS TO REGULATING WAKE BOATS AND
SEPTIC TANKS!!! AS OUR READERS ARE WELL AWARE,
OUT**

**OF CONTROL WAKE BOATS ARE DAMAGING OUR LAKES,
AND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DYSFUNCTIONAL SEPTIC
SYSTEMS ARE DEGRADING OUR LAKES, RIVERS,
STREAMS,
AND GROUNDWATER!!!**

**TO BECOME AN MWA MI HEALTHY LAKES CHAMPION
[CLICK HERE](#)**



Please Consider Donating, and/or Becoming a Dues Paying Member of Michigan Waterfront Alliance Today

Please don't count on others to support the only organization in Michigan that is completely dedicated to voicing your legitimate concerns to our state legislators in Lansing.

We hire professional lobbyists - Karoub Associates - who understand the intricacies of dealing with state government - to reach out to our legislators. As you might imagine, the cost of hiring a professional, highly respected Lansing-based lobbying firm whose downtown Lansing office is

located within a literal stone's throw of Michigan's state capitol building is expensive - we believe, however, that to have someone in constant contact with our state senators and representatives it is more than worth the significant on-going expense.

To put it in blunt "no ifs, ands, or buts" terms, without your generous support we will be unable to continue our erstwhile efforts in Lansing.





If not **you**, then **who**?

We need **you!**

Michigan Waterfront Alliance (MWA) is the only all-volunteer non-profit organization in Michigan that is dedicated to reaching out on a daily, pro-active basis to our state representatives and senators about their on-going need to act **now** to protect our precious inland lakes, wetlands, rivers, and streams.

Please do not expect other lake associations, other individuals, and other corporations to fund MWA's efforts in Lansing.

If **you** want your voice to be heard in Lansing **you** need to be the other lake association, the other individual, and the other **corporation** to make a generous contribution to helping fund our on-going efforts in Lansing.

Please don't count on others to support the only organization in Michigan that is completely dedicated to voicing your legitimate concerns to our state legislators in Lansing.

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To put it in blunt "no ifs, ands, or buts" terms, without **your** generous support we will be unable to continue our erstwhile efforts in Lansing.

Please also remember that with the exception of a few relatively minor expenses related to keeping our website updated, and on-line, and a few relatively minor costs associated with distributing our e-newsletter, **all** of our membership and donation derived income goes to paying our downtown Lansing-based lobbying firm, and our attorneys. No exorbitant employee salaries or fringe benefit packages to pay!!!!!!!!!!

It is also important to note that last year **Michigan Waterfront Alliance** lawyers took a case all the way to the Michigan Supreme Court in order to get the State of Michigan to do it's job in protecting our lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands.

Thank you for reading and considering this hopefully convincing appeal for donations - **no amount is considered too small** - all donations of money are happily received and acknowledged within the context of the generous spirit that prompted them!!!!!!!!!!

[Click here](#) to become a dues paying member of MWA

[Click here](#) to make a generous donation to MWA
