

ATTORNEY WRITES

By Clifford H. Bloom, Esq.
Law Weathers

“Why ML&SA and MWA?”

I have been legal counsel for the Michigan Lake & Stream Associations, Inc. (“ML&SA”) for nearly 20 years. I have also been co-legal counsel for the Michigan Waterfront Alliance (“MWA”) since its formation. What are these organizations and why are they important to riparians?

ML&SA is the largest organization in Michigan that represents riparian property owners and their interests. It has existed for 50 years. ML&SA is a Michigan nonprofit corporation. ML&SA has three general types of memberships—lake associations, businesses (or governmental units), and individuals. ML&SA is an educational, advocacy, social, and environmental organization. Some of the benefits of being a member of ML&SA include:

- Free subscriptions to this magazine.
- A wonderful website at www.mymlsa.org.
- The great annual convention (usually held up north).
- Regional meetings and seminars on lake, river, and stream issues.
- Great source of information about lake, river, and stream matters and issues.
- It helps educate not only its members about lake, river, and stream issues, but also governmental officials and members of the public.
- Periodic email newsletters that are interesting and informative.
- Legal resources for riparians.
- ML&SA has a statewide network of collaborative partners (including various colleges and universities) that helps the riparian cause.
- ML&SA is a member of the Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership (www.michiganlakes.msue.msu.edu).

- ML&SA also belongs to the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership (www.mishorelinepartnership.org).
- ML&SA has partnered with the Michigan Clean Water Corps (“MiCorps”), which involves one of the most successful and largest citizen voluntary water quality monitoring programs in the country.

Above all, ML&SA advocates in favor of Michigan waterfront property owners and protecting water resources. ML&SA has joined in numerous court cases to support riparian landowners. ML&SA has also funded and filed many amicus curiae briefs with the Michigan appellate courts in support of riparians. Although the direct lobbying efforts of ML&SA are limited due to its type of nonprofit status (MWA does the formal lobbying), ML&SA’s other efforts benefit riparians throughout Michigan.

MWA is also an advocate for waterfront property owners throughout Michigan. Individuals and lake associations can join MWA on a membership basis. MWA lobbies the Michigan Legislature and executive officials on behalf of riparians statewide. In fact, MWA retains the services of a lobbyist in Lansing. MWA is constantly reviewing proposed legislation to determine whether it will help or hurt riparians (and lobbies accordingly), as well as helping initiate litigation favorable to riparians. MWA has also helped fund amicus briefs in Michigan appellate court cases in support of riparians. MWA’s website is at www.mwai.org.

This magazine, *The Michigan Riparian*, is produced by the Michigan Lakes & Streams Foundation (the “Foundation”), which has ties to ML&SA. The Foundation is a charitable organization that also accepts donations and bequests for many matters and projects that benefit riparians. The magazine’s website can be found at www.mi-riparian.org.

While ML&SA, MWA, and the Foundation are separate organizations, they work together cooperatively to support Michigan riparians and to protect the lakes, rivers, streams, and water resources of Michigan.

As Ben Franklin said, “We must, indeed, all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.” Everyone knows there is strength in numbers. Riparian rights throughout Michigan are under assault virtually every day. The greater the number of riparians who belong to ML&SA and MWA (as well as subscribe to *The Michigan Riparian Magazine*), the stronger the unified voice for Michigan riparians will be.

For more information about ML&SA or *The Michigan Riparian Magazine*, please contact Sharon at swagner@mlswa.org or (989) 831-5100. For more information about MWA, please contact Bob Frye at skibones@aol.com or (989) 821-6661.

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This issue of the *Michigan Riparian* marks two important milestones for me. First, this column represents my 100th article for the magazine. My, how time flies! I am gratified to both the management of the magazine and the magazine’s readers for their support over the years. Second, this issue of the magazine also announces the publication and release of my new book entitled *Buying and Selling Waterfront Property in Michigan*. This is the second book that I have authored for ML&SA (the first being *Michigan Lake Associations—The Nuts and Bolts*, which was released two years ago). ML&SA and I are very proud of this new publication, which we believe will have state-wide interest.