Microbeads in the Crosshairs

What do New Jersey, Maine, Colorado, Wisconsin, Oregon, and a growing number of states have in common? No, not subscribers to TUWaterWays (though that may well be true). They have all banned or are in the process of banning the use of tiny pieces of plastic called microbeads as scrubbing abrasives in “personal care products” like toothpaste, body wash, and face cream. How did something so tiny become such big thing? In the case of microbeads, it is because they may be tied to some pretty big problems. Specifically, they can gum-up the digestive tracts of creature like fish and coral and ultimately gets passed on to the rest of the ecosystem, including us where it is not clear what they might do.

Conventional water treatment techniques cannot filter out the tiny particles, so the proposed solution is to keep them out of the water by keeping them out of personal care products. The apparent availability of more natural substitutes seems to be buffering the impact on the personal products industry.

To Hell in a Handbasket—Or Not: New UN Water Report Paints a Mixed Picture

According to a new report published by the United Nations (who are starting to consider water and climate change issues as two sides of the same coin), the world is getting more crowded, drier and our water supplies are only going to be 60% of what they need to be. But there is no call for gloom and doom according to its lead author. And there you have it.

Let There be Peace—Could Florida and Georgia be Calming the Waters?

If Iran and the international community can seek common ground on Iran’s nuclear programs and the U.S. and Cuba can begin to resolve old differences, why can’t Georgia and Florida talk out their troubles involving the Apalachicola River? Why not, indeed. According to published reports, the longtime adversaries and occasional (and current) litigants might be seeking to resolve their decades old dispute by talking instead of litigating. The latest olive branch was extended by Georgia Governor Robert Bentley in a letter to Florida Governor Rick Scott. Of course, the offer to talk follows the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision last November to hear a law suit filed by Florida against Georgia over the river. The prospect of the Supreme Court, with nary a water expert among them (albeit aided by a Special Master), settling the hash between states can be a powerful incentive to talk. We should note that prior
to Governor Bentley sending his letter, Georgia flatly denied the claims made by Florida in its suit.

To Golf or Not to Golf, That is the Question – Whether ‘tis Nobler in the Drought to Suffer the Slings and Arrows of Non-Potable Water, or Take Up Putters Against the Sea of Shortage, and by Opposing, Maintain Par for the Course?

If it seems like there’s a piece about California water every week, it’s because there is. Massive water infrastructure, population, and economy plus severe drought equals water news. Now, with a 25% reduction mandate for municipal users, things are really heating up. It comes as little surprise that rich people use more water, and getting them to conserve via rate hikes doesn’t work well. But now that restrictions are coming, how will they respond in Beverly Hills? In the desert, golf course managers are conserving water where they can, but taking a wait-and-see approach to the 25% restriction. They should be grateful they’re not in that other bastion of unending growth, China. There, dozens of illegally built courses have been shut down thanks to a variety of reasons, including excessive, bourgeois water demands, despite all the water from imported from California.

File Under “WHAT IS THIS I DON’T EVEN”

A small Norwegian town north of the Arctic Circle used to produce solar panels. That factory closed down a few years ago, but now they might have something to get that old factory going again – ice cubes. Specifically, ice cubes mined from the country’s second largest glacier, the nearby Vestre Svaritsen. They plan to market the glacial ice as a pairing for high-end cocktails around the world. They are lining up clients in Dubai and New York. Smaller markets, like Huaraz, Peru, or the Canadian Rockies, may be ripe, as well.