

# TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy  
September 8, 2015

## More Water, More Problems

California just can't win when it comes to water. After being issued the daunting task of reducing water use [by 25%](#), residents rose to the bar, then hurdled over it, 6% over it in fact. Urban water use was reduced by 31% in July. You go, California! Right? [Wrong](#). The reduced flow of water through the infrastructure is clogging, cracking, and smelling up a whole slew of new issues. Brown lawns, shorter showers, and [bricks in toilets](#) mean that less water is flowing through the pipes to push sewage sludge through. And slow moving sewage means corrosion and some really unpleasant odors. Unfortunately for California, its infrastructure was not built on the ideals of conservation, but rather the use-it-or-lose-it theory of Western water use. Cities in low-lying areas that cannot rely on gravity to push the sewage along, such as Sacramento, are now dealing with more repairs, diffusing odors, and having to flush and clean their pipes far more frequently. New Orleans knows something about those things too. Some fear that the damage to the infrastructure could surpass the economic damage of the drought (maybe they should follow [Malaysia's lead](#) and build something with all that sludge). Other problems popping up include thirsty trees invading pipes and water reuse facilities (an earmark of potable drinking water in Cali) diverting water just to keep the facilities functioning. As a wise woman once said, "If its not one damned thing its another." Poor California, maybe they really should move to [Buffalo](#).

## Water Wars, The Real Kind

The latest weapon of choice in the ongoing civil war in Syria is, disturbingly, [but not surprisingly](#), water. Citizens in the City of Aleppo, numbering around two million, are being deprived of both water and electricity as the government and the opposition attempt to put pressure on one another. Water in the city depends on pumping and electricity, and unfortunately, each is [controlled by a different warring party](#). Damascus is facing similar problems, and on top of deliberate cut-offs, the water infrastructure itself has been heavily damaged from bombing and shelling. The [Red Cross](#) fears that the collapse of the system will bring outbreaks of typhoid and cholera. The Red Cross continues to provide aid workers to help the water boards maintain their aging infrastructure, but with no end of fighting in sight, the future of water in Syria

The **Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy** is a program of the Tulane University Law School.

The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and stewardship of water.

## Coming up:

[18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Litigating Takings Challenges to Land Use & Environmental Regs.](#)

September 25, 2015

University of Maryland School of Law  
Baltimore, MD

[Capital Region Water in 2050: Opportunities & Challenges](#)

September 17, 2015

Pennington Conference Center  
Baton Rouge, LA

[RAM Coal Export Terminal Public Hearing](#)

Belle Chasse Auditorium  
Belle Chasse, LA

## Water jobs:

[Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#)

Restoration Programs Director, Habitat Restoration  
Program Coordinator, Science/Technical Director  
Baton Rouge, LA

[Virginia Energy Attorney](#)

Southern Environmental Law Center  
Charlottesville, VA

[MRD & Natural Infrastructure Economist](#)

(Two Year Postdoc Position)

Environmental Defense Fund

Washington, DC, New York City, or Boston, MA

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looks bleak.

### **Is Mardi Gras Pass Really as Fun as the Name Suggests?**

In March of 2012, the Mighty Mississippi took a stand and punched a hole through its banks just below Pointe à la Hache, and began to do what it was always supposed to do: deposit sediment throughout the wetlands. Well actually it pushed its way around a smaller hole (a water control structure) that had been built there years before, as we will discuss below. Some, including [John Lopez](#) of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, see this as a head start on the [plan](#) (The Coastal Master Plan that is, you may have heard of it) that Louisiana has yet to come up with the funds for. Recent studies show that the Pass has already built about an acre of marsh and has carried sediment all the way to the Breton Sound. Rather than spending millions on building a diversion system right next door (one of the proposed diversion locales is quite near to Mardi Gras Pass), supporters of the Pass suggest simply modifying and maintaining what the Mississippi has already managed to do. Although the state has yet to claim the Pass' water bottoms as public property, the Corps of Engineers has already [declared](#) it a navigable waterway, after all.

The Mississippi's independence, however, is causing some unplanned for and certainly unwanted effects. Landowners have lost property, roads have been destroyed, trees uprooted, and oyster beds saturated with fresh water. A few have argued that this isn't nature's work at all, but rather the result of abandoning a canal that was built to preserve oyster beds following the BP spill. It was managed with culverts that have since been filled with sediment and had been closed off from the Mississippi until the river broke through. Should the state decide to move forward with the nearly half-billion dollar new diversion just down river, Mardi Gras Pass will be closed by the state (if they can find money for that too). With a much cheaper price tag, perhaps the state should explore letting the Mardi [party on](#).

### **Waterboys Without Borders**

Spearheaded by the St. Louis Rams defensive end, Chris Long, NFL players are breaking borders, both team and international, in an effort to bring safe drinking [water to sub-Saharan Africa](#). Long's organization [Waterboys](#) aims to raise money to clean up the filthy wells he witnessed on a [recent trip](#) to Tanzania, which will ultimately make for healthier, happier communities. If you can't donate, Long is encouraging people to post pictures of drinking water with the hashtag #Drink4water to raise as much awareness as that other watery social media campaign (ahem, #icebucketchallenge). But if you are so inclined, you may donate money to one of the 23 NFL players, each representing their team, to help the organization reach its goal of \$45,000 to build the village a new well. It wouldn't be the NFL without some competition of course. The page lists the top 23 [waterboys](#), notably missing the Saints. But don't despair, unlike actual NFL rankings, you can pay to change this one, and for a good cause.

### **Tulane Law School Just Can't Get Enough of that Water Policy**

Water is such a hot topic right now (because sometimes the world is a just and righteous place) that water events are coming up that aren't even affiliated with this Institute. Join Tulane Law School on September 14, for a talk from Tulane Law alums Texas State Rep. Rafael Anchia and General Counsel for the Lower Colorado River Authority, Tom Oney on how they have shaped Texas policy on air, water, and other issues at 5:30 in Weinmann Hall Room 257, Tulane Law School.