



TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy

Authors: Christopher Dalbom, Mark Davis, and Haley Gentry

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Flood Protection Starts at Home

Louisiana's St. Tammany Parish has got a lot to offer. A lot of water, among other things. Over the past several years, the Army Corps has been crafting a \$4 billion dollar plan to protect the parish from severe flooding risks. Under the [initial plan from 2021](#), the Corps had slated 8,500 structures for elevation, along with the construction of additional levees and floodwalls. However, the Corps recently announced it would be dropping 2,000 buildings from its list of structures that were going to be elevated. Under the new plan, the Corps is proposing to lengthen the levees surrounding the parish. However, the Corps still has to finish up the planning phase with a round of [public meetings later this month](#). After that, the plan will go to a vote before Congress on whether to authorize the project. These updates help to improve the cost-benefit ration required for civil works projects. If it does get approved, it's likely construction wouldn't begin for at least three years, depending on [whether Congress appropriates the funds, which isn't promised](#). But some residents are concerned about who will qualify for protection.

Deciding what areas to include in the levee system and which structures to elevate have very real impacts at the household level. It is yet another factor in the flood insurance puzzle. Premiums depend not only on federal floodplain mapping and special hazard areas, but also on local management practices and infrastructure. Because land use is a matter of local concern, FEMA offers premium discounts to communities that opt into the [Community Rating System](#). This program encompasses a wide range of local programs and regulations that, if implemented successfully, improves that community's score, resulting in a preset discount for insurance policies within that jurisdiction. As premiums begin to climb under the Risk Rating 2.0, local efforts to improve floodplain management are receiving more attention. In [Jefferson Parish, flood insurance premiums come at a 25% discount](#). Jefferson has the best community rating in Louisiana, tied with Mandeville (maybe they're setting a good example for the rest of St. Tammany). Now that the new rating methodology has been in effect long enough to conceptualize initial impacts, [lawmakers are looking at new approaches](#) to community rating and affordability concerns. Want to know how your community sizes up? You can find out [here](#).

One Last Call For Aperol

[Venice](#) has long been one of the most popular destinations in Europe for romantic getaways and cultural experiences. [That's a more](#) of a curse these days for the city of water. UNESCO, which oversees the United Nation's cultural and heritage efforts, [recommended that Venice be placed](#) on the [World Heritage in Danger List](#). Citing climate change impacts and overtourism, the draft resolution deciding Venice's status urged the Italian government to step up its efforts to address these long-standing problems. There hasn't been an official response from the city, but former officials have taken issue with UNESCO's criticisms. The city has undertaken numerous measures over the past several years [after UNESCO warned city officials of the dangers from cruise traffic](#) back in 2019. The recommendation is not yet final and will be debated at UNESCO's 45th session next month.

Overtourism, often discussed in the context of harms to native and indigenous communities that reside in popular travel destinations, has [increasingly become a problem in places like Hawaii](#). Now, it's also popping up more frequently in the [context of climate change](#). Just last week, [Amsterdam's city council approved a measure](#) that will ban cruise ships from docking at the city's main terminal in an effort to address vessel pollution and other sustainability concerns. Across Europe, [governments are considering tourist taxes](#) to address overcrowding. Many places already have these. It may sound weird, but these taxes are minimal, likened to the price of a drink at a local pub (we'll take this [beer made from recycled water](#)).

If You Can't Take the Heat, Stay Out of the Basin

The water in the Colorado River seems to have heeded the warning. Between 2000 and 2021, the Colorado River Basin [lost 10 trillion gallons](#) of water to aridification. That's enough water to fill [Lake Mead](#). During this same time frame, the region has experienced a 0.48°C and a 3.1% decrease in precipitation. While [the study's](#) findings highlighted the dire conditions from the past two decades, it looked at conditions dating back much further. Since the 1880s, warming temperatures and vegetation changes caused runoff in the basin to decrease by 10.3%. The impacts to water resources are widespread but are considerably worse for some. In [snowpack regions, which makes up only 30% of the drainage basin, aridification caused an 86% decrease](#) in runoff. Meanwhile, a [newly formed task force](#) created by the Colorado legislature met for the first time to begin crafting legislative and policy proposals to address the megadrought. It's no easy task for one state to try and figure out on its own, then add the [tensions between the upper and lower basin](#) states.

Speaking of hot water, parts of the ocean around Florida topped 100°F. These [hot tub](#) temperatures threaten coral reefs, and [the current heat wave is causing the worst mass coral bleaching in the state's history](#). Florida's estuarine environments are already under massive pressure from development and agriculture. Just this year, coastal communities have dealt with red tide, drug-contaminated fish, staggering losses of seagrass, and harmful algal blooms. A team of university research scientists have launched a [new study to pinpoint nutrient and other pollution sources in Tampa Bay](#). Researchers hope to inspire lawmakers to take action to address growing water quality concerns. We hope law and science will join forces.

Coming Up:

Tulane Environmental Law Summit, New Orleans,
February 23 & 24, 2024 (save the date!)

Water jobs:

[Program Director, Southern Aquatic and Coastal Programs](#); National Fish
and Wildlife Foundation; Washington, DC

[Senior Attorney](#); The Nature Conservancy; Remote



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 legal stewardship of water.

6325 Freret Street, 1st Floor
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-865-5982

tulanewater.org

