

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
October 14, 2022

If the Opposite of Love Isn't Hate, but Indifference, Does That Mean the Opposite of Water Isn't Drought, but, uh, Also Indifference?

Really, drought and water scarcity are as big of drivers of water law and policy as anything. And though TUWaterWays just covered drought [a couple of weeks ago](#), that somehow didn't end drought worldwide. In fact, it continues as if this newsletter wasn't the arbiter of world climactic events. [God, aye, so it does.](#)

Locally, Louisiana joins [most of the country in drought or abnormal dryness](#). The Mississippi River is at [its lowest flow in a decade](#) and running an oceanic blue instead of its usual sediment-laden brown. It's constricting navigation at a time when the world needs its grain export infrastructure as much as ever, and the lower river's [distributaries are doing their part to help by reversing course](#) and feeding back into the main channel.

New Orleans' infamous below-sea-level bowl and cracked streets and pipes are due to a combination of factors, but most prominently groundwater (mis)management and infrastructure (dis)investment. Nowhere is this currently playing out as obviously as in the neighborhood of [Village de L'Est](#). Although its main driver of groundwater withdrawal has been eliminated, less [groundwater replenishment from the Mississippi River](#) isn't helping.

California's drought, or "[megadrought](#)," continues to have massive effects locally and globally. Locally, there are [towns like Coalinga](#) that are running out of water. Globally, it's leading to increases on the [prices for fruits and vegetables](#).

Over in Europe, the Dutch (Louisiana's fellows in "get that water outta here!" infrastructure) are having to [figure out how to keep that water around](#) and slow it down to give it a chance to sink in and do some good. One strategy the Dutch are embracing is [giving rivers room](#) to do the work they naturally do. A strategy that can be so effective, [they're even trying it in Missouri](#), of all places.

However, they're embracing it up on the Big Muddy because, as a [new study](#) confirms, more than ever, [when it rains it pours!](#) When any of these droughts do break, they're likely to do so in dramatic and dangerous fashion. So, what we're saying is now we have to have infrastructure that can stand up to both droughts and floods more and more. [What a time to be alive!](#) At least [somebody](#) thinks the best way to do that might not be just throwing concrete and rebar at it.

Only (13)90s Kids Will Remember This

Of course, people have been coming up with solutions to climate and drought for millennia. Some of them might even qualify for "nature based" grants! Water-sowing systems like [the acequias in Spain](#) and elsewhere encourage groundwater penetration to turn

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.

Coming Up:

[Restore America's Estuaries, 2022 Coastal and Estuarine Summit](#); December 4-8; New Orleans, LA

Water jobs:

[Project Manager, Louisiana Political Affairs](#); Environmental Defense Fund; Remote

[Assistant Professor of Marine Affairs: Fisheries Management and Policy](#); University of Rhode Island; Kingston, RI

[Restoration Programs Director](#); Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana; New Orleans, LA

[Regional Watershed Coordinator](#); Capitol Region Planning Commission; Baton Rouge, LA

[Water Quality Technician](#); Pontchartrain Conservancy; Metairie, LA

[Clinical Instructor](#); Tulane Environmental Law Clinic; New Orleans, LA

[Associate Attorney, Senior Attorney, and Paralegal](#); Earthjustice; Multiple Locations

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

tulanewater.org

TWITTER: [@TulaneWaterLaw](https://twitter.com/TulaneWaterLaw)

INSTAGRAM: [@TulaneWaterLaw](https://www.instagram.com/TulaneWaterLaw)

seasonal flows into dependable resources. [Ancient irrigation structures in China](#) have recently been recognized as world heritage sites, and a [variety of ancient water management strategies](#) have been revived in the face of India's shortages.

In the less-ancient category, [century-old steam loops](#) creating district energy systems could hold a key to flexible, efficient answers at the water-energy nexus for many US cities. The [main offender](#) standing in their way might be [our permitting structure](#). Don't get the wrong idea; this means, in addition to creating more nimble permitting goals and policies, we need to better fund permitters, not lower the barriers on permitting.

Attention Tulane Environmental Law Students and Alumni!

Homecoming weekend is coming up, and those handsome fellows over in the Tulane Center for Environmental Law would love to see you on October 21st! They'll be hosting the 3rd Annual Environmental Law Shindig and Dessert Competition. The event will be at noon at 6325 Freret Street. The TCEL will supply lunch and you're encouraged to bring an environment-themed dessert for the competition. You don't have to bring a dessert, but there will be a prize for the winner! If you can make it, please RSVP to Jane Johnston at jjohnst1@tulane.edu. You can be pretty sure you won't have to [battle a Basque hitman](#), but there might be [a dance number](#).

Tulane Environmental and Energy Law Summit—[It's Baaaaack!](#) Mark Your Calendars, March 17 and 18, 2023

Spring was less spring-like since COVID-19 relegated America's favorite student-run environmental conference to being a mostly virtual affair. Those were still great and there is much to be said for doing things virtually but there is no substitute for doing some things in person. So, write it down and make plans to be at hand. More details to follow.