

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
November 15, 2017

Live and Let Flow

Water can be complicated. It is world-renowned for the ability to ignore the will of human beings and do its own thing, often at the peril of our carefully laid plans. But, that doesn't mean that we can't learn to live in a way that works with it, not against it. In the Netherlands, water experts are taking their understanding of our slippery friend and turning it into a profitable, exportable business. The Dutch are taking their technological developments and policy practices and applying them across the globe (but not at the World Cup) to teach communities that living with water is much easier than keeping it at bay. As New Orleans celebrates its tricentennial and releases a plan to welcome a new tech firm to bolster economic development, now seems a good time to remember that we also have one of the most advanced master plans for coastal restoration in the country. This means that New Orleans and Louisiana as a whole are well positioned to become the North American leaders of the movement towards living with water. So, this week, we invite you to celebrate the creativity and uniqueness of New Orleans, and imagine what could come if we applied that to create a water-centric city and state.

The Great American Desert

The Ogallala Aquifer is drying up, thanks to over-pumping and growing need from the land above it, an area that contains 27% of the irrigated land in country. In part, the withdrawals are due to a large number of irrigated farms located on top of the aquifer. Farmers, striving to feed the growing populations of cities like Denver and Boulder, are hard pressed to afford the technologies that could help them save water, such as irrigation drip tubes. No surprise, there are also complicated legal and political factors in play, as well. These include the historic compacts between the states overlaying the Ogallala, such as the Republican River compact between Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. This compact, signed in 1942, has been in dispute for some time now, with Kansas claiming it's not getting its fair share. So, in 2013, the parties agreed to pump water from the Ogallala Aquifer to Kansas through a pipeline to go back in the river. Yep. The same water body that is suffering from too many withdrawals is being used to meet flow expectations in another water body suffering from too many withdrawals. However it happens, once it runs out, it will take 6,000 years to replenish from rainfall alone. This means that our High Plains friends need to start thinking about ways they can work together to more sustainably manage the limited and dwindling water resources they share, hopefully before time runs out.

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:

November 18, 2017

[Cook-Off for the Coast](#)

Violet, LA

December 9, 2017

[Lights at the Lake Holiday Bash](#)

New Orleans, LA

March 1-2, 2018

[Coastal Law in Louisiana](#)

New Orleans, LA

Water jobs:

[Program Director for Land, Water and Nature Program](#)

Resources for the Future
Washington, DC

[Senior Water Resources Management Specialist](#)

World Bank
Washington, DC

[Intern for Water Policy](#)

Northeast-Midwest Institute
Washington, DC

[Senior Manager, Investor Engagement, Water Program](#)

Ceres
Boston, MA

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A Little Fishy

This past week, Mr. Trump took a trip to Asia, visiting a number of countries and navigating a series of photo ops. He also had the privilege of enjoying loads of delicious meals. Some criticized what the President ate, worrying that it engaged very little with the cultural fare of the region. However, when countries did choose to serve traditional seafood dishes, rather than the preferred meat, they were met with controversy. Eyebrows raised when, in South Korea, he was served a prawn hailing from the disputed Dokdo/Takeshima islands, which both Korea and Japan claim. But, the real trouble came at Vietnam's state dinner, where the fifth course consisted of shark fin soup. Shark fin soup is considered a delicacy in the country, but it necessitates a practice called "finning". Shark finning is where one cuts off the fin of a shark while it is alive, preserving the fin, and throws the body of the shark back into the ocean to die. It has been outlawed in the US since 1990, and is generally frowned upon globally. While we do not know whether Trump decided to eat the eclectic fare, we do know the practice of finning is compromising biodiversity and oceanic stability, and has been attributed to decreasing shark populations by up to 60%. Can anything be tasty enough to justify that?

Bonn-Bonn

World leaders are convening upon the German city of Bonn this week to discuss the progress made since the Paris Climate Accords in 2015. Notably - we are not any closer to making our carbon reduction goals; the US is the only country in the world not participating in the Paris Agreement and is, in fact, promoting increased carbon emissions from coal; and, carbon emissions from industry are predicted to increase by 2% this year. What does all this mean? It means that ocean temperatures will continue to rise, increasing ice melt and sea level rise. Think worst-case scenario. The good news is that we still have time to change our course. We can learn to live within our changing environment, and support policies underpinned by science.