

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
September 16, 2022

How Dry I Am...

[Hiking Arizona's Grand Canyon can raise a powerful thirst](#), a thirst that is harder to slake these days thanks to limited or nonexistent supplies at some campgrounds and along some trails. Just more evidence of a dying Colorado River and the end times? Not quite. [In this case the problem is just a good old fashioned leak](#). When it seems like the sky is falling, it can be a real relief to learn it was really that you were [beaned by a mundane acorn](#). How bad have things gotten when you feel blessed to learn you just have some busted pipes that we know how to fix ([contra the bigger plumbing woes in Jackson, Mississippi](#))?

A Briefcase Full of Blue

Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink was the lament of the [Ancient Mariner](#) as he looked out on the endless expanse of undrinkable sea water. If only there was some way to change that. [Well now there is! \(Maybe\)](#). Working with researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, [noNa Technologies](#) has developed a radical new way to desalinate and purify water. No more bulky energy intensive systems like your father might have had (oh, Dad and all his brine jokes), a noNa desalinator can fit in any mariner's brief case and can be powered by cell phone charger. [But we're not done yet!](#) Not a fisher you say, well there is no reason that you, tomorrow's [Don Draper, need to drink your whiskey neat](#) when you're are sitting in their den next to your saltwater fish tank. Just take your desalinator out of your attaché case, dip your glass into the tank, and you will be sipping your whiskey and water in no time—anything's better than getting out of that dad chair. Of course, the high-minded among us will say it could also be used after natural disasters and to allow people with salt-compromised wells a chance to fare better, too. Honestly, though, given how long it could take to scale up the tech, you might just be better off depending on it one tumbler at a time. For now.

That's Some Water Treatment Plant

Now that we have lulled you into thinking that securing drinking water isn't such a big deal, it's time to drop the other shoe. Securing drinking water really could be bad, and climate change may be making it worse, but not necessarily in ways you may have thought. It isn't hard to see why droughts, climate change related or not, get so much attention. After all, if there's [no rain](#) there's less water to fill rivers, lakes and reservoirs. But that is not the end of the story, at least not according to researchers at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research in Germany. [Their research looks at the role](#)

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:

[Louisiana CPRA 2023 Coastal Master Plan Outreach Meetings](#); September

[ABA SEER 30th Fall Conference](#); September 21- 24

[Trap Bingo: Justice for Jackson Fundraiser](#); September 24; New Orleans

[MissTrivia Night](#); September 29

[Louisiana Climate Initiatives Task Force Fall Meeting and Workshop](#); October 29

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

Water jobs:

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

[Coastal Resource Scientist](#); Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority; 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

[Climate Risk Legal Fellow](#); Environmental Defense Fund; Boulder, CO

[Summer Associate 2023](#), Sher Edling LLP, San Francisco

[California Resources Control Water Board](#); Sacramento, CA

[P3 Campaign Manager, Water History Tour Manager, and Administrative Assistant](#), The Water Collaborative; New Orleans, LA

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[forests play in protecting drinking water](#). [Ant that role can be quite big](#). Based on studies of the forests and a reservoir in the Harz region, climate-related forest disappearance (e.g., forest fires, pest infestation and such) can have demonstrable negative impacts on reservoir water quality. That is because forests filter water and bind up nutrients that otherwise would end up in surface waters causing things like algae blooms. You could say trees were the original water treatment *plants* (probably shouldn't, though). And what forests don't do, water utility plants then have to do at substantial cost. We bet you never think of water treatment plants quite the same way. Thanks, Germans.

Visit to a Small Wet Planet

How about wrapping up with some good news? For all of the worry and [handwringing](#) about running out of water, rest easy knowing that there is plenty—and we mean plenty—of water available out there. The rub is that it is not on this planet, or in this solar system. [Scientists have discovered a planet that is half rock and half water](#), just waiting for some bold entrepreneurial types to make the right connections. How hard can that be? After all, we have Space Force, and we know how to find and [mine dilithium crystals on remote worlds](#) so what's stopping us? Cautionary [tales of oceanic planets](#)? Well, maybe if [some prior appropriator gets there first](#).