

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
June 28, 2016

[Green Rolling Hills](#) and [Country Roads](#) Washing Away

[West Virginia](#) has been added to the growing list of states that have experienced deadly flooding this year. Last Thursday, torrential rains caused widespread flooding that knocked out power, gas, and bridges, closed roads, trapped people in shopping centers, and destroyed hundreds of homes. It also claimed the lives of at least 25 people, with some still missing. This is the third deadliest flood in West Virginia history and adds to the growing tally of deaths from flooding in the last year and a half. According to [one report](#), at least 235 people have been killed by flooding in the United States in the last 18 months. These deaths are attributed to more frequent heavy rains that have been linked to climate change. The number of days with heavy precipitation [has increased](#) 1 to 2 percent every decade in both wet and dry climates. Unfortunately for West Virginia, the nightmare may not be over as rain is again predicted early this week, accompanied by flash flood warnings.

But while many states have experienced heavy flooding, others are worried about drought. Last week New Hampshire towns enacted [water restrictions](#) as the southern portion of the state experiences a moderate drought. The driest of the areas is 4.65 inches below its usual annual rainfall as of late June. One thing is certain, for unusual weather patterns, these things are becoming awful common.

[Olympic Glory](#) Comes at a Price: Water Borne Illness

Ahh, the Olympics. A time when the world comes together to watch the best of the best (or at least the [most juiced](#)) swim, run, flip, shoot things, etc., all for their beloved homelands. We all instantly become fans of, and experts on, [obscure sports](#). It's so great. And this summer we get to experience it again when the 2016 Summer Olympics opens in Rio de Janeiro on August 5. Admittedly, Rio has struggled with its preparations for the prestigious event with a laundry list of [problems](#) and [complaints](#). And two of the major issues deal with water. First there is extreme concern—to the point that athletes are [staying home](#)—over the mosquito-borne zika virus that is known to cause severe birth defects. [Mosquitos](#) breed in standing water, and it doesn't take much. And Brazil [has a lot](#). Second is the sewage and other unfriendly guck polluted bay in which the [boat sports](#) are to take place. Independent studies have shown that the water has high levels of viruses and bacteria (including [drug-resistant super bacteria](#)), as well

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:

The 18th Annual Conference on Litigating Takings Challenges to Land Use and Environmental Regulations
New Orleans, LA
November 4, 2016

[RAE/The Coastal Society Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration](#)

New Orleans, LA
December 10-15, 2016

Water jobs:

[Associate Attorney](#)
Northwest Office of Earthjustice
Seattle, WA

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as a pretty significant build-up of trash. Sailors have downplayed the dangers posed by the water and say they are taking precautions, but after a test event last August, a German sailor was hospitalized and underwent surgery after contracting skin infections. But the backdrops are [pretty!](#) Officials [insist the water will be safe](#) and clean-up efforts are underway to ensure the health of the athletes. Maybe if water continues to be an Olympic problem, water law-ing can be a new Olympic sport! We can learn to [juggle things](#) while directing policy! We too will find obscure Olympic glory!

Environmental Justice for None

A few months ago, we reported on the murder of [Berta Caceres](#). She was killed in her home for opposing a dam that would have destroyed an indigenous people's ancestral home. She is far from alone. Last year has been declared the [deadliest year ever](#) for the world's environmental activists. While this may not be directly water related in every case, it certainly will be as water resources become more put-upon and less dependable and populations, especially the less fortunate ones, continue to grow. The recent report entitled "[On Dangerous Ground](#)," found that 185 people were killed in 2015 for opposing logging, mining, and dams in an effort to protect land, water, and forests. This is a sixty percent increase from the previous year. In Brazil alone, fifty people were killed. What is even more appalling is that the group that authored the study fears that this is just the tip of the iceberg, as these are the only deaths that have actually been reported. In many countries, they are never mentioned. Most appalling is the fact that nearly forty percent of those killed were from indigenous groups. As climate change continues to wreak havoc across the globe, with the pressure felt most by indigenous, poor, and marginalized people, the environmental activists that work tirelessly to protect them will be vital. But who will stand up for them?

Britain has Left the Building

As many of you know, because the whole world pretty much lost it, Britain has voted to leave the EU. It [remains to be seen](#) what this will mean for the world economy, the British economy, [fisheries](#), [the Paris Agreement](#), [Donald Trump's golf course](#), and the [Premier League](#), but one thing is certain, it will be very interesting, and [very British](#) (of course, the Dowager Countess said that BEFORE [the Iceland game](#)).

Correction

A couple of weeks ago, we [noted](#) that the State of Louisiana and the Federal Government were fighting over who has to pay what for wetlands restoration associated with the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet. We said they were fighting over "\$3 million" when the actual cost of restoration is more like "\$3 billion." Apologies for any confusion.