

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
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Whoever Delta Smelt it

California's Central Valley is one of the most productive agricultural regions on the planet. That productivity depends on an irrigation infrastructure that, [you may have heard](#), is drying up. A significant amount of the Valley's much-needed water comes from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, where a tiny fish is at the middle of a [big controversy](#).

The Delta Smelt is a small endangered species that is only found in the Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta. Around this time last year, a [survey found just 6 of these little fish](#) swimming in the much-depleted waters of northern California, but some people think that's 6 too many. The Endangered Species Act protects the smelt by restricting water withdrawals from its habitat, keeping the fish alive at the expense of agriculture. While Fish and Wildlife Service is bound to obey the law, the ESA does contain a provision that allows the Endangered Species Committee, commonly known as the [God Squad](#), to remove the protections. For the farmers, the loss of one species already on the verge of extinction seems a small price to pay to feed millions and employ thousands. Ecologists, for their part, point out that the web of life is amazingly intricate, and we are woefully limited in understanding its complexity. Removing a species, even a seemingly insignificant one, from that web could have drastic unforeseen impacts.

If the God Squad is called in, they'll have a tough choice. It may be [good to be the king](#), but [it's tough to be a god](#).

In Like Flint?

As the nation's attention is focused on water crisis in Flint, and the government mismanagement of the problem, it is worth remembering that Flint is far from the only city where lead levels in the water are an issue. No, New Orleans does not have a public health crisis in its water system as bad as Flint. But the toxic metal has been detected in enough tap samples around the city to raise concern.

A [three-year study](#) by the LSU School of Public Health released its preliminary findings earlier this month. Out of 154 buildings sampled, the researchers found only one with no detectable levels of lead. None of the samples found levels higher than 15 parts per billion, the EPA's threshold for drinking water safety. Still, scientists like [Adrienne Katner](#), the principal investigator on the study, maintain that there is no level at which lead is safe, especially for children. Infant exposure to the toxin has been linked to irreversible health

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:

[Center for Natural Resource Economics & Policy](#)

New Orleans, LA

March 20-22, 2016

[River Rally](#)

Mobile, AL

May 20-23, 2016

[State of the Coast 2016](#)

New Orleans, LA

June 1-3, 2016

[Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration](#)

New Orleans, LA

December 10-15, 2016

Water jobs:

[Clean Water Advocate](#)

Environment America

[Staff Attorney](#)

Tennessee Clean Water Network

Knoxville, TN

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effects and neurocognitive impairment. The study authors recommend water filters [certified by NSF](#) to remove lead. Anyone in New Orleans concerned about their own water safety can and should contact Dr. Katner.

[Water's For Fighting!](#)

You know the old saying: it's all fun and games until someone loses most of their annual harvest to drought? Oh, you don't know that one? Well, folks in Bangkok do. They're celebrating Thai New Year with the annual Songkran Festival, also known as the [world's biggest water fight](#), a little differently in 2016. Ordinarily, the city-wide splash-fest would run late into the night with water pistoleers dueling in the streets until dawn. This year, however, the government is [restricting the revelry](#) to show solidarity with farmers in the north of the country who are dealing with the [country's worst water shortage in 20 years](#). The festival's usual four days are being reduced to three, and a cease-fire (or cease-water) will be in effect past 9 PM. With these measures, the government hopes to save 5 billion liters of water (1.3 billion gallons).

What's On Tap?

People have used the "bar" concept to serve all sorts of non-alcoholic (even non-liquid) items to patrons. There are hookah bars, [oxygen bars owned by Woody Harrelson](#), and even [milk bars](#). Now, a bar in Minneapolis is bringing it back to the basics, serving its customers water. We're not talking about high-end artesian well water, or even water [from a glacier in Alaska](#) that's always cold. No, the proprietors of [Water Bar](#) are serving up plain old tap water for free in the hopes of starting conversations about the vital resource.

The concept is the brain-child of Shanai Matteson and Colin Kloecker, two artists from Minnesota who honed the idea at pop-up events across the country. They recruit scientists, water resource managers, experts, and activists to volunteer as [bar-tenders](#). They are opening their first permanent store-front as a water bar & public studio to educate the public. Matteson and Kloecker also envision the new location as an "itinerant open space for conversation and connection around the life-sustaining, precarious, communal activity of drinking tap water." So, next time you're up purifying yourself in the [waters of Lake Minnetonka](#), and a friend invites you out for a beer, tell him to leave that junk alone and drink [cool H2O](#).

The Land of Milk, Honey, and Water—Seth Siegle Explains

The nation of Israel has faced all sorts of challenges but few were more daunting than the fact that it is plunk in the middle of a desert, bordering the Mediterranean Sea with no major rivers to call its own. Despite those facts, Israel today is a nation of more than 8 million people with thriving agricultural sector and – drum roll please – a surplus of fresh water. How? Several reasons, which author (and other things) [Seth Siegle](#) lays out in his book "[Let There Be Water](#)". Why care? Because smart water management is now everybody's business and because successful models are in fairly short supply. Not time to read? No problem, Mr. Siegle will be a guest of the Institute at **Tulane Law School on April 12 at 5 pm**. So make plans to make a date and make tracks for [Tulane Law School](#) for some knowledge and inspiration.