

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
August 13, 2013

Farmers and Gardeners Coping With Changing Water and Climate Picture

From the gardens of Kansas Governor Sam Brownback to farms in Sri Lanka and Uganda, the new realities of growing crops in an increasingly tough water environment are taking hold—and sometimes the future looks more like the past. As [Kansas](#) watches its ground water dwindle, Governor Brownback foresees more conservation and a shift toward “dry weather” crops such as milo and cotton. In [Sri Lanka](#), a shift to more traditional, less water intensive, irrigation is under way, while in Uganda [concerns](#) are being raised that production agriculture and a growing reliance on genetically modified crops might inhibit the flexibility that Uganda and other African nations will need to pursue to adapt to a changing climate.

And Texans, We Can't Forget Texans

Kansas may be trying to avoid the sorts of water troubles facing Texas, but just what is happening in Texas? More than we can get to in this space actually, but one increasingly harsh reality is that in some west Texas towns wells are [going dry](#). Stressed by drought, demand and now the new demands of oil and gas frackers, towns are facing a future in which they have more oil than water, and where access to the oil is water dependent.

Dateline Iowa: Nutrient Pollution Spurs Calls for Federal Action, And Less

The “Dead Zone” in the Gulf of Mexico may get more ink but the folks in Iowa (where some of the Gulf's problems start) are also worried about the effects of nutrient pollution and just who should pay to deal with it. At a public [meeting last week in Des Moines](#), more than 100 people packed a meeting called to hear about the nitrogen levels in the waters flowing into the City and the plans of Des Moines Water Works to remove nitrogen from water. Aside from broad agreement that the nitrogen levels should be lower, views differ on just how to do that and who should pay. Many in attendance at the meeting supported tighter federal controls over agriculture. Iowa Governor Terry Branstad has favored a more congenial approach that avoids “burdensome regulations”.

River Science as the Army Sees It

Science is not river management but river management without science is down-right scary. So in the spirit of upping our collective knowledge about the Mississippi River and its possible role in the restoration of Louisiana's coast, we are pleased to provide this link to a PowerPoint presentation called “Mississippi River Diversion Science: The State of Our Understanding”, which was developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Two caveats are in order. First, the state of the science as seen by the Corps may not be the state of the

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:

[September 23-26, 2013](#)
U.S. Water Alliance
[One Water Leadership Summit](#)
Los Angeles, LA

[October 24-26 2013](#)
Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation
Basics of the Basin 2013
New Orleans, LA

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science as seen by others. Second, this is an informative power point but it lacks the context of its supporting oral presentation. Accordingly it has some interesting information but should not be taken as gospel or as representing the views of the Corps. For that, you would need to contact them.



Lower Mississippi
River Science Overview

In Search of Solomonic Wisdom: Rising Seas Threaten Displacement in the Solomon Islands

We in south Louisiana know something about the challenges of living with rising seas. So it is with interest, concern and empathy that we watch the unfolding displacement crisis the South Pacific's [Solomon Islands](#) where rising seas (three times the global average), salt water intrusion, and collapsing fisheries threaten the viability of tens of thousands of residents. Compounding the relocation challenge are cultural issues and the basic fact that needing to relocate does not itself create a place to relocate to. We note that increasingly these problems are not confined to remote places in the developing world.

Sporting Groups Urge Action on Wetlands Guidance

Gridlock over wetlands protection was common place before governmental gridlock was cool. Citing more than ten years of limbo and some 2008 promises by then candidate/Senator Obama, fourteen leading national hunting and fishing organizations have sent a [letter](#) to the Obama administration calling for the release a new guidance to clarify the protection of the nation's wetlands and waters. The revised guidance document has been pending for more than two years.

Falling River Levels and Falling Property Values: Is This the Future for the Colorado? Is the Future Now?

As the Bureau of Reclamation mulls the possibility of declaring a shortage of Colorado River water and a [recent report](#) (well, December of 2012) paints a tough future for the River, the effects on property values are also on the examining table. Not surprisingly, there is a link between water and property values, especially in part of the country where water law is really not so much about water as it is about putting property to some economically beneficial use. A [report](#) by Southwick Associates, Inc. (released in July but dated April 13, 2013) concludes that property values could drop by nearly 10% if Colorado River flows decrease as predicted in a recent Department of Interior study. Despite recent rains the flows in the Colorado, which are shared among 7 states pursuant to the [Colorado River Compact](#), the water levels in Lake Mead remain critically low. So low in fact that the some are [expecting](#) the Bureau of Reclamation in its August 24-Month [Study Report](#) to declare for the first time ever that there is a "water shortage" in Lake Powell and Las Vegas water managers are asking for a [federal disaster declaration](#) as well considering some very expensive plumbing changes to the river's reservoirs. A declaration of shortage is not a dramatic gesture but a managerial one. In times of shortage, the flows available to California, Nevada, and Arizona would be reduced. The interests of Mexico and a number of Indian tribes would also be affected.