

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
[July 10, 2020](#)

The Mississippi River Flood Fight Is Over! (Until It Isn't)

The Corps of Engineers is kind of like [alcohol](#) around these parts. But, the Corps marked a momentous moment recently when they announced [the end of six months of Mississippi River flood-fight readiness](#). The river gauge in New Orleans has measured the mighty river at a height below 11 feet for the first time in 176 days. [Hooray!](#) This kind of extended flood fight has become the norm as climate change and water management across the river's basin has shifted water flows, but, at least for the moment, the double danger of river flooding and storm flooding isn't something the Corps (or anyone else in South Louisiana) has to deal with. [Double hooray!](#)

New Name, Same Mission. Let's Take a Moment to Celebrate Some Friends.

A couple of weeks ago an organization that we think is pretty great announced a new name and logo, so it seems as good a time as any to point out the good work they've done over the years. But, first, a quick history and geography lesson.

The Mississippi River is the reason why New Orleans exists, but Lake Pontchartrain is the reason for where New Orleans exists. The [portage between the Lake and the River](#) meant the treacherous hundred-plus miles of Mississippi River down to the mouth in the Gulf of Mexico could be avoided. Later, as the city grew, the Lake became [a useful fishery and a place to go](#) to avoid the congestion, heat and yellow fever in the city. In the 20th Century, [dredging of the clam shells](#) to make substrate for roads and infrastructure became common practice – such a common practice that it crashed the entire ecosystem of the Lake. It turned out that those clams were a keystone species to the functioning of the entire lake. By 1972, the Lake was off limits for swimming or bathing. It was akin to [swimming in raw sewage](#). After a couple of decades of action from rabble-rousing scientists, environmental groups, and even Paul Newman (at least for a moment), the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation was formed and joined the fight to stop dredging in the Lake. As the fight against dredging was won, it was the LPBF that became the lens through which everyone who cared about the Lake acted. That turned out to be a lot of people. As wildlife increased, fishing came back, and people could swim in the Lake again, LPBF's "SAVE OUR LAKE" stickers could be seen everywhere. As the Lake was saved, attentions turned to the coast. How could they not after Hurricane Katrina had wiped out so much of the ecosystems, habitats, and infrastructure that were the parts of the Basin below the Lake?

All of that is a not-so-brief lead up to the [announcement](#) that the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation is changing its name to 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 less stewardship of water.

Coming up:

[ELI Webinar: A State Approach to a Just Transition](#); July 10
[ELI Webinar: Monthly Climate Change Briefing](#); July 13
[The Climate Crisis Report In Focus](#); July 14
[CPRA Board Meeting](#); July 15; Baton Rouge, LA
[State of the Water Sector: An Interactive Workshop](#); July 16
[ELI Webinar: Environmental Justice](#); July 21
[Drinking Water Webinar: Small Systems Compliance](#); July 28
[Water Reuse for Agriculture Purposes Webinar](#); July 29
[Association of California Water Agencies Virtual Conference: Resiliency Rising](#); July 29-30

Water jobs:

[Staff Attorney](#); Western Environmental Law Center; Taos or Santa Fe, New Mexico
[Mississippi River Coordinator](#); National Caucus of Environmental Legislators; Washington, D.C.
[Program Coordinator](#); Save the River; Clayton, NY
[Senior Legislative Counsel/ Representative](#); Earthjustice; DC
[Policy Director](#); Environmental and Energy Study Institute; Washington, DC
[Beveridge & Diamond Diversity Law Clerk; Jim Rubin International Fellow; or Law Clerk](#); Environmental Law Institute; Washington, DC
[Resilience Planner](#); Dewberry; Fairfax, VA
[Erosion Control / LakeSmart Coordinator](#); 7 Lakes Alliance; Belgrade Lakes, ME
[Public Policy and Justice Organizer](#); Waterspirit; Rumson, NJ
[Senior Conservation Project Manager](#); The Freshwater Trust; Sacramento, CA
[Drinking Water Data Research](#); EPA; Cincinnati, OH
[Vice President \(Global Operations\)](#); Lifewater International; Bentonville, AR

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[Pontchartrain Conservancy](#). It only makes sense to keep Pontchartrain at the center of its name; not only is it the beloved place through which their work is focused, it is one of the great conservation victories in the history of Louisiana, and they have played a big role. Good for them! Besides, it can be exhausting working with long titles like “The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation.” There are only so many of us who can carry around a name like “The Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy.” (Of course, with the right donation, that could change for us, too. [You know what to do.](#))

Wash Your Hands to Fight COVID-19! But with What Water?

The Guardian’s [ongoing series covering America’s clean water crisis](#) was probably in the works even before the pandemic took hold this spring, but the cracks (chasms) in our fight against the virus have laid bare what those who work in environmental justice have long known – that those things many of us take for granted are simply not available to everyone. One glaring example comes from [the Navajo Nation, where one third of the homes don’t have access to running water](#) and where COVID-19 infection rates are some of the highest in the nation. These two facts aren’t a coincidence. Coronavirus has amplified a situation made worse by a couple of hundred years of ignominious history including forced marches, a river compact that ignores their presence, and uranium mining. Groups like the Navajo Water Project are figuring out how to serve people with better solutions than bottled water (Dumping out bottled water for 20 seconds of hand washing? [Fuggedaboutit!](#)). And hopefully [this bill in the House](#) will help implement response funds allocated by Congress. Here’s hoping one of the things we improve through all of this is access to clean and affordable water for all. After all, as a wise young man with floppy hair once said, [we’re all in this together](#), right?