

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
November 1, 2013

Water Resources Reform and Development Act Passes House and Headed for Conference with Senate

Last week the House of Representatives passed the WRRDA bill that will go to conference with the Senate's WRDA Bill. Louisiana lawmakers are [fixated](#) on the fact that the Morganza to the Gulf project would be unauthorized under the House version. Both versions avoid earmarks and do look to cut the backlog of projects that have been authorized and to "streamline" by accelerating project review. Neither version seems to have an answer for accelerating congressional measures needed to approve a project study, adopt a study report, authorize a project, and appropriate funds for a project. Give House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Bill Shuster (R-PA) credit for [pointing out](#) that Congress's recent record of passing a WRDA every seven years is insufficient and calling for a return to passing a water bill every two years.

The Corps of Engineers is already trying out a version of the streamlining provisions included in the WRDA bills. They call it SMART Planning and are using it in on the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain storm levee planning when making their draft environmental impact statement (Draft EIS). However, it's unclear whether or not the Draft EIS can be done in a satisfactory manner under the restraints of the SMART Planning. EPA Region 6 has written a [letter](#) to the Corps stating just that.

Treasury's Inspector General Turns the [Eye of Providence](#) to the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund

The Treasury Department's Office of the Inspector General recently released an [audit report](#) of the trust fund set up by the RESTORE Act. The report noted that deadlines for the Initial Comprehensive Plan were not met by the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council and the Plan does not contain everything required by the RESTORE Act. It also recommends that the Council takes the next steps in developing the Plan as soon as practicable. It is noticeably silent on Treasury's failure to meet its own deadlines required by the RESTORE Act.

Treasury's OIG also released its [Annual Plan for FY 2014](#). Included in the Plan is Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund Oversight (page 85) and it notes the potential integrity risks for Gulf Coast Restoration. Also, Treasury notes that it will assess state and local government's internal controls on grants processes, provide technical reviews of state and comprehensive plans, and of Treasury's own management of grants directly

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:

[February 21-23, 2014](#)
Tulane Environmental Law Summit
Tulane Law School
New Orleans, LA

Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy

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[http://www.law.tulane.edu/tlscenters/
waterlaw/](http://www.law.tulane.edu/tlscenters/waterlaw/)

administered by Treasury. On the whole, it appears that Treasury will be highly invested in happenings on the Gulf Coast this coming year.

Hey, Got Any Ideas About Louisiana Water? Louisiana Water Resources Commission Calls for Public Input

As Louisiana starts to grapple with its growing water challenges/opportunities, the Louisiana Water Resources Commission is [seeking thoughts](#) from the public about what they think Louisiana water management should focus on. The input follows on a [work shop](#) held in Baton Rouge on October 17.

“Politicians, ugly buildings, and whores all get respectable if they last long enough.” The Los Angeles Aqueduct Turns 100

One of the country’s most high profile water projects turns 100 years old, and we couldn’t pass up the chance to work in a “Chinatown” quote. The [Los Angeles Aqueduct](#) drained Owens Lake and made the expansion of Los Angeles in the early 20th century possible. Since then, water has continued to be an issue time and again across California. Currently, Los Angeles gets its water from several sources besides the LA Aqueduct, and water recycling, groundwater recharge, and possibly even desalination could prove answers to the city’s continuing problems. But when it comes to water in Southern California, nothing comes easy. A patchwork of water authorities cover the state and relations aren’t always warm; the San Diego County Water Authority is currently [suing](#) the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California because their rates were jacked up after they searched for a water source from a third party. It’s part of the complicated water issues that continue and why we’re shopping our script for “Chinatown III” around the studios right now (“III?” you’re asking, but that’s because you forgot about [“The Two Jakes”](#)).

Planning for Action: California Prepares for Its Water Future

When three state agencies come to together to issue an Action Plan can action be far off? Time will tell, but that is what is in the offing in California where the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture have issued a [California Water Action Plan](#) for public review and comment. The plan aims to set five year course for dealing with the state’s urgent water needs. Interested folks should take the time to review and comment, others may take in other sights.

Whatever Happened to the Hittites? It Seems They Ran Out of Water

It’s too bad the Bronze Age didn’t have a [William Mulholland](#) of its own. The late Bronze Age saw the collapse of several civilizations that just 150 years earlier were all thriving. In the past, [theories](#) as to why have included plague and earthquake, but a new [study](#) shows that it was climate change. A team of scientists mined the pollen records buried underneath the Sea of Galilee, and they have found a climatic history recorded deposited pollen. That history shows a sudden and sharp decrease in tree pollen – evidence of the drought. Drought combined with cold spells is now thought to have caused widespread famine that was the end of the Mycenae and others.

Will the Resource Curse Hit African Groundwater as well?

Huge aquifers have been [discovered](#) in Kenya and Namibia, but whether or not they will be able to be utilized without causing other harm is yet to be seen. Competition for the reserves is expected to be fierce by those automatically assuming them to be the answers to drought, famine, and [climate change](#), but accessing the water without creating conflict – either international or intertribal – and without impacting regular surface hydrology will pose a challenge. Elsewhere in Africa, Egypt, Libya, Chad, and the Sudan have progressed in their cooperation managing the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer by [adopting](#) a Strategic Action Plan. So there is hope and an example in the region of aquifer management going hand in hand with international cooperation.

Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy Hires New Postgraduate Fellow

We are pleased to announce that Tulane Law School class of 2013 grad Harry Vorhoff has begun his twelve month fellowship this week. Harry is a native New Orleanian (because fellow New Orleanians are asking in their heads right now, he went to Ben Franklin HS) who already has varied experience with water law and water management in New Orleans. Harry worked with us as a student researcher and did extensive work as part of the team who crafted the [Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan](#) for managing water in the city. He is also on the board of Friends of Lafitte Corridor. Welcome Harry!