

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy

[October 18, 2019](#)

Please Sir, May We Have Some More?

Once, in a simpler time when we knew so much less than we know today, the United States made it its business to protect the City of New Orleans from hurricane storm surges. Not against all storms or the worst storms but certainly against a "[hurricane that may be expected from the most severe meteorological conditions reasonably characteristic in the region.](#)" Roughly speaking, that meant a storm equivalent to a Category 3 storm or 1 in 200-300 year event. That's what New Orleans had (or was supposed to have) and that's what failed in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina blew in. In response, the federal government whipped into action and built a mostly brand-spanking new system aimed at protecting against a 1 in 100 year event (as defined for purposes of the National Flood Insurance Program). Come again, you say? How could a system that was supposed to protect against a 1 in 300 year event be replaced by a 1 in 100 year system? Let's just say it is complicated and that returning the City to insurability was a critical first step, one that was accomplished. Good job, but what's next?

In the minds of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East, [it is time to move to a higher level of protection in the 200 to 500 year level](#) and [they are asking for Congress to authorize a study into just that.](#) If that study is authorized, and if it finds the benefits to be cost effective, and if the improvements are authorized by Congress (presumably with a 25% state/local cost share), and if the [funds are found](#), then maybe safer, saner storm defenses will be at hand. Of course while all of that is happening, seas are rising, Louisiana's coast is collapsing, and storms are expected to be more intense and frequent.

Maybe that's how it must be, but maybe it isn't. Sure, after Katrina [Congress told the Army Corps of Engineers to build a 1 in 100 year system](#), but it said other things too. It also instructed the Army to restore the region's storm and flood defenses to the "level of protection for which they were designed, at full Federal expense" ([Public Law 109-148, page 119 STAT 2762](#) for our curious readers). Maybe, just maybe, that counts for something and the effort doesn't need to start at square one. [After all, asking for more doesn't mean getting more](#), at least any time soon enough to matter.

Big Doings at the Air-Water Interface

It almost goes without saying that the air-water interface is hugely important in the chemical, physical and environmental sciences—not to mention being at the heart of so many [family holiday traditions](#). If you are like us, you have been [frustrated by the limitations of conventional spectroscopic methods](#) and thought to yourself, "Surely

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:

[CPRA FY 2020 Conservation & Restoration Partnership Fund Request for Proposals Deadline](#)
October 18

[Bayou Bonfouca Marsh Restoration Planting](#)
October 19; Slidell, LA

[Documentary Screening: Last Call for the Bayou](#)
October 21; New Orleans, LA

[Ocean Commotion](#)
October 24; Baton Rouge, LA

Public Input Meetings re state's Action Plan for CDBG Mitigation Funds; October [24](#) & [29](#)
West Monroe & Mandeville, LA (respectively)

[LA Watershed Initiative Regional Capacity Building Grant Program Webinar](#)
October 30

[Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation Conference](#)
November 3-7; Mobile, AL

[The Green New Deal Talk](#)
November 4; New Orleans, LA

[Virginia Coastal Policy Center Resilience Conference](#)
November 15, 2019; Williamsburg, VA

Water jobs:

[Freshwater Project Manager](#) or [Stormwater Retention Project Manager](#)
The Nature Conservancy; Harrisburg, PA and Bethesda, MD (respectively)

[Postdoctoral Fellowship](#)
National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC); Annapolis, Maryland

[Director](#)
Red River Management Institute; Shreveport, LA

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there has to be a simpler computational approach to calculating the time-dependent, frequency-resolved vibrational sum-frequency generation spectrum (TD-vSFG) of the air-water interface.” If we have said that once, we have said it a hundred times. As if in response, [the current issue of the Journal Nature](#) brings welcome news from authors Ojha, Kaliannan and Kühne of just such a technique. It is about time. We could explain it to you but you will learn it better if you read it for yourself.

Meanwhile, in the Buckeye State . . .

[Red may have been the color that bummed the Beatles out](#) but if you live up Cincinnati way it is probably blue and green that have you depressed. Because [blue and green are the colors that the algae wore as the Ohio flowed by your door](#). It is true, yes it is its true. Though normally associated with lakes, ponds, and coastal waters, rivers are not immune from pesky algal blooms, particularly when the temperatures and nutrients are up but the flows are down. So far, the algal blooms are not posing an immediate threat to human health but officials in Hamilton County are keeping tabs on the situation, a task undoubtedly made harder by the mystery of the [abduction of the bust of Ohio icon Orville Wright](#). So far no links have been drawn between the two situations but the investigations remain open.

And You Thought the Food and Seats were Bad

Sometimes we get so tired of dealing with the frequent boil water advisories that our crumbling water infrastructure blesses us with that we just want to [hop on the next plane out of town](#), kick back and relax in our airborne cocoon of comfort. Ever feel that way too, like you’d [like to see America](#)? Well, if you do, you might want to avoid the tap water—which is often used to brew tea and coffee—since it may be way worse than your tap water at home. Or so suggests a [report](#) from Diet Detective and the Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center at City University of New York that sampled water on a wide range of national and regional airlines. The results? Not good, at least not if complying with [Aircraft Drinking Water Rule](#) is the goal. Even worse if a “helpful” level of cooperation was expected from the airlines. While a few airlines stood out (kudos Piedmont, Alaska Air, and Allegiant) most of the rest got ratings that ranged from less than stellar to awful. The bottom line according to the report: Don’t [drink tea or coffee](#) or even wash your hands on a plane, and never drink the tap water. Geez, we could have done that at home.

The Adult Version of a Science Fair Project

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) is accepting project ideas that Louisiana citizens, governmental bodies, and concerned organizations would like to see evaluated and considered for possible inclusion in the next *Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast* that will be submitted to the Louisiana Legislature in 2023. New projects can be proposed by any source, including academia, parishes, elected officials, agencies, NGOs, landowners, business/industry, and the general public. Emphasis should be on projects that continue to provide benefit in the face of sea level rise and subsidence without continued maintenance, those that make a contribution to maintaining estuarine gradients in future decades, and those that provide storm surge-based risk reduction at the community or regional scale. Check out the New Project Development Program Guidelines and Criteria [here](#).

All proposals must be delivered electronically (PDF format) to MasterPlan@la.gov or mailed to the 2023 Coastal Master Plan Project Development Program at P.O. Box 44027, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70804 and received by February 14, 2020 (inclusion of Valentine’s Day cards with project proposals is optional). Questions may be directed to MasterPlan@la.gov. Please include “2023 Coastal Master Plan Project Development” in the subject line of the email. Proposals should be no more than seven pages (one page for the Cover Sheet and Contact Information, three pages for Project Description, one page for the Map, and one to two pages for Project Attributes).

A Friendly Reminder

A couple weeks ago, TUWW had an [announcement](#) about submitting public comments regarding the state’s [draft Action Plan](#) for spending \$1.2 billion in [Community Development Block Grant Mitigation funds](#). The draft Action Plan, which describes the state’s approach to funding projects, data collection, modeling and policy measures, aligns with the [Louisiana Watershed Initiative](#)’s long-term resilience objectives. The public comment

period began on Wednesday, October 16 and continues until 5 p.m. on Friday, November 29 (AKA Black Friday for [shopping enthusiasts](#)). There are several ways to submit a public comment:

Online: Review the draft Action Plan and provide comments [here](#)

Email: watershed@la.gov

Fax: Attention of Janice Lovett at 225.219.9605

Mail: Attention of Janice Lovett
Office of Community Development
P.O. Box 94095
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095