

# TUWaterWays

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

[November 26, 2019](#)

## [Brother, Can You Spare Some Drinking Water Infrastructure?](#)

According to a new report titled "[Closing the Water Access Gap in the United States](#)" from Dig Deep and the U.S. Water Alliance, over 2 million Americans lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation. The report includes case studies from communities in the Central Valley region in California; the border region in Texas; rural areas in the South; Appalachia; and Puerto Rico. Researchers acknowledged that these communities are not the only ones struggling with water access issues. Rather, they are symbolic of a broader struggle that affects communities throughout the nation.

The report also brings up environmental justice issues as it concludes that race is the strongest predictor of water access. In particular, Native Americans are more likely than any other group to not have access to a reliable water supply. Along racial lines, the rates for households lacking complete plumbing are 5.8% of Native American households; 0.5% of African American and Latino households; and 0.3% of white households. For example, for the Navajo Nation in the Four Corners region, some residents [must drive miles](#) to water stations every few days to purchase and collect water in buckets for drinking, cooking, and bathing. Much of the groundwater where they live is not potable because it is contaminated by [more than 500 Cold War-era abandoned uranium mines](#) and Superfund sites. (Quick aside about Superfund not being "[super fun](#)": a new [report](#) from the Government Accountability Office concludes that hundreds of Superfund sites are [threatened by climate change](#) impacts, such as flooding, sea level rise, and wildfires. But we digress.) When the U.S. government [invested in modern water](#) and sanitation systems a century ago, many Native American nations did not have access to funding for infrastructure in the same way that it was available to cities and states. Today, funding remains an issue because it is expensive to build pipelines across remote sparsely populated tribal nations. Really, the tragedy with all of these situations, from the Navajo Nation to the hills of West Virginia, is there is a known solution, but an unwillingness to fund it.

## Recycled Water? [Thank u, next](#)

In other drinking water news, a new study titled "[Influence of Internet-Based Messages and Personal Motivations on Water-Use Decisions](#)" in the journal of *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* finds that if people are educated on recycled water, they may come to agree that it is perfectly safe and tastes as good as (or better) than their drinking water in a blind taste test. Didn't they learn anything from Ms. Frizzle? [All water is reCYCLED!](#) Regardless, even after being educated on the safety and benefits of recycled water, people still

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:

[Public Comment Deadline: LA Watershed Initiative's proposed Action Plan](#); November 29

[Association of Levee Boards of LA Annual Meeting](#)  
December 3-4; New Orleans, LA

[LA Wildlife & Fisheries Commission Meeting](#)  
December 5; Baton Rouge, LA

[Coastal Science Assistantship Program Application Deadline](#); December 6

[Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Application Deadline](#); December 11

[CRCL T-Shirt Art Contest Deadline](#); December 11

CRCL Urban Swamp Habitat Planting Events  
December [11](#) & [12](#); Violet, LA

[Teaching Environmental Justice through Transactional Law Webinar](#); December 12

[LA Watershed Initiative Grant Program: Phase II Application Deadline](#); December 13

[Latoya Ruby Frazier: Flint is Family Exhibit](#)  
Now – December 14; New Orleans, LA

[Audubon Nature Institute Career Fair](#)  
December 16; New Orleans, LA

[CPRA Board Meeting](#) and [NFIP & Coastal Insurability Subcommittee of the CPRA Board Meeting](#)  
December 18; Baton Rouge, LA

### Water jobs:

[Attorney](#); Water Resources Ctrl. Bd; Sacramento, CA

[Intern](#); Global Water 2020; Washington, DC

[Assistant Professor- Environmental Science & Policy](#)  
University of California-Davis; Davis, CA

[Postdoctoral Fellowship](#); The Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia; New York, NY

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refuse to use, let alone to drink, recycled wastewater out of “[disgust](#).” Wouldn’t it make more sense if they avoided it out of distrust? (See above!) [Other factors](#) that lead people to refuse recycled water include misinformation, ignorance, and peoples’ desire to conform to social norms.

Contrary to previous findings, the results of these new studies indicate that while internet messaging may encourage people to view water sustainability more positively, they do not encourage more sustainable water behaviors. Here we were thinking that [the internet](#) could do no wrong.

### **And the Award for Oxford Dictionary’s Word of the Year Goes to . . .**

[Climate Emergency](#). This isn’t too surprising considering all the disheartening climate emergency stories in the news on a daily basis. Last week we brought you a story about Venice and the city’s still unfinished flood protection system known as [Mose](#) (wait a different [MOSE](#)). And, Venice, of course, is not the only city to struggle with flooding associated with the effects of climate change, such as high tides, severe storms, glacier melt, and sea level rise. For example, [Great Fox Island in the Chesapeake Bay](#), which was formerly in the shape of a [fox](#), is no longer aptly named because rising water has claimed the fox’s head, legs, and part of its body. In the Chesapeake Bay, the sea level is rising faster than almost anywhere else in the United States, and the land is sinking at the same time (we know a thing or two about that [in New Orleans](#)). According to a new report from *The Lancet* titled “[Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change](#),” children born today will face a lifetime of climate change-related health problems. Climate change will have a [negative impact](#) on economic growth over the next decade, particularly in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, which have been deemed “least resilient”. And, to add insult to injury, Coldplay announced that, in light of climate change, [the band will cease touring](#) until its shows can be done in a sustainable way. A world without Coldplay certainly is not [paradise](#). (Unless you’re [Dave Grohl](#), that is).

With stories like these, the climate emergency oftentimes has us feeling [desperado](#) and [angry](#). However, some things give us hope. For one thing, there’s a [new theory](#) that Greta Thunberg is actually a time traveler who is here to save us from the climate emergency. Last week, Maryland [announced a public-private partnership](#) benefiting the aforementioned Chesapeake Bay through advanced stormwater control technology that can help reduce pollutants and curb local flooding. Moreover, regarding flooding issues, a new report titled “[Mitigation Matters: Policy Solutions to Reduce Local Flood Risk](#)” from the Pew Charitable Trusts includes 13 policy briefs about effective or innovative ways to deal with flooding. For example, Maryland’s living shoreline helps communities to become more resilient; an Illinois village offers rebates for flood mitigation projects; and Minnesota uses bonds to support flood-ready infrastructure. Also, this isn’t related to the climate emergency per se, but Central Arkansas Water has hired its first [water leak detection dog](#), Vessel. What a good boy.

### **Cue the Coastal Collective Sigh of Relief**

The 2019 Atlantic hurricane season officially ends on Saturday, November 30. This season has been the [eighth most-active](#) in named storms based on records going back to 1851, and it has caused about \$13.9 billion in damage across the basin (which is well below the estimated \$50 billion from last year and the \$220 billion in 2017). While the lower damage total might seem promising, the concern is that systems have been slowing down, resulting in much heavier rainfalls even when they are weaker storms (e.g., Tropical Storm Imelda was the weakest storm, but it caused \$2 billion in damages after sitting over Texas). This could be an indicator of what warming waters will continue to bring in the future: a new [study](#) published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* poses that climate change is partly to blame for stronger hurricanes. A [poor trio of cows](#) can attest to this: they swam up to 5 miles during Hurricane Dorian away from their herd’s home of Cedar Island and were recently discovered on North Carolina’s Outer Banks. Who knew cows could swim at all, let alone 5 miles?

### **[Bueller? Bueller? Bueller? Bueller?](#) Attention students!**

Louisiana Sea Grant has three opportunities for students with upcoming deadlines:

- The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) continues its support of a graduate assistantship opportunity called the Coastal Science Assistantship Program (CSAP). This program provides graduate assistant stipends for up to three years to Master of Science students both enrolled full-time at Louisiana colleges/universities and involved in research relevant to Louisiana coastal protection and

restoration efforts. The application deadline for 2020 assistantships is **December 6, 2019**. For more information, [click here](#).

- The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) provides talented undergraduate students interested in pursuing advanced studies in coastal-related disciplines with hands-on research experience which can: increase competitiveness as a graduate student; help with career-related decisions; and establish a working relationship with a faculty mentor. The application deadline for the year 2020 funding is **December 11, 2019 at 4:00pm CST**. For more information, [click here](#).
- The Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship provides a unique educational and professional experience to graduate students who have an interest in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. The Fellowship matches highly qualified graduate students with “hosts” in the legislative and executive branch of government located in the Washington, D.C. area, for a one year paid fellowship. The application deadline for 2021 fellowships is **February 21, 2020** (preparation takes up to a month!). For more information, [click here](#).