

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
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Implementing Groundwater Regulation is HARD, people!

In late 2014 the California legislature joined the rest of the American West and passed a [law](#) to regulate groundwater. Now they're finding out that implementing the law might be even harder than passing it. The law called for dozens of local groundwater sustainability agencies to form and create management plans by 2022, and that management becoming sustainable by 2042. So, how do you do that? And what do you do in the meantime? Well, some researchers at Berkeley Law School's Wheeler Water Institute put together a [study](#) that [basically](#) says to pay attention to agency design for plan implementation, technical ability, hydrological boundaries, and stakeholder needs. [It's not going to be easy](#); these will be new agencies with broad powers to regulate a most-basic need. And this is just the difficulty of forming agencies, not even the plans the agencies will be implementing! As for what to do while all this is getting up and running, it seems as though it'll remain all (pumping) systems go for the next few years. That's because a [bill](#) designed to keep from making things worse before they can be made better has [stalled](#). So the vulnerable resource will remain vulnerable for a few more years. On the other hand...

Eureka! Stanford Researchers Discover Vast Amounts of California Groundwater, Promptly [Run Naked Through the Streets](#)

One hopes, anyways. A recent [study](#) of deep aquifers in the state shows that California has [three times more groundwater](#) than previously believed. Good news, right? Well, [it's a bit complicated](#), since this is deep groundwater that will take more money and energy to pump up to the surface, when extracted could lead to ([more](#)) subsidence, hasn't been regulated (see above) or protected, and seems to be pretty well entwined with the state's oil and gas deposits. It just goes to show again that yesterday's [unknowable thing](#) can be today's big discovery and tomorrow's major asset. Expect someone to have a really groovy idea to bring it all to the surface soon, like some vertical version of [NAWAPA](#).

American Water Sector in Precarious Position

A new [study](#) from the Department of Homeland Security says our country's unwillingness to reinvest in infrastructure has [left water supplies vulnerable](#) to black sky events beyond the capability of our emergency response systems. These

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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:

[The 18th Annual Conference on Litigating Takings Challenges to Land Use and Environmental Regulations](#)
New Orleans, LA
November 4, 2016

[RAE/The Coastal Society Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration](#)
New Orleans, LA
December 10-15, 2016

Water jobs:

[Associate Attorney](#)
Northwest Office of Earthjustice
Seattle, WA

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events range from earthquakes to cyberattacks and they could make the Flint water crisis look like small potatoes. They could make water supply for an entire region of the United States look more like [Caracas](#), [Sao Paulo](#), or...

Karachi the Latest Example of Water Sector Failure

A water crisis is a simple formula. If demand > (useable) water, then crisis. However, there's a variety of ways to end up in that situation. Take [Pakistan's largest city for example](#). Its parched state comes from several contributing factors: a drought and empty reservoir, yes; a large population booming with new migrants, yes; crumbling infrastructure, yes; water utility that is so ineffective that ¾ of the population refuses to pay their bills, yes; a long distance supply line that is subject to poaching by water mafias who mark it up and sell that water on to Karachi residents who should have received it in the first place, yes. Though the city is building another water supply, it will be a couple of years before it can help, but even then it may not solve the crisis. The lesson for those concerned with the story immediately above might be to simply not let the situation get out of hand in the first place.

Algae Feasting on Nutrient Pollution Choke Florida's Waters (Again)

Smack in the middle of Florida (non-panhandle division) lies Lake Okeechobee. To the lake's north, farms. To its south, more farms, then the Everglades. To its east and west, some of Florida's larger river and estuarine systems. Inside the lake, waters laden with runoff pollution. Holding that polluted water in the lake, an antiquated dike system. So, when that dike system gets overwhelmed, where to put the lake's polluted water? Can't put it to the south, even though former Gov. Crist struck a deal to buy farmland south of the lake to create an avenue for the water to go south to the Everglades because current Gov. Scott let that deal lapse. Gov. Scott seems to think they just need a better dike system, never mind that such a system isn't fully funded and that it would just be a bigger bandage on the same infected wound. So, the Corps of Engineers (who controls that dike system) has to send the water east and west towards the coasts. The results aren't very pretty. [Toxic algae blooms suffocating ecosystems and making waters unsafe for humans, as well](#). All that's left are state politicians blaming the feds, the feds pointing out the state politicians' lack of action, and seemingly no one pointing out that the waters of Lake Okeechobee shouldn't be so foul in the first place. For a good investigation, check out the work by the [Tampa Bay Times](#). Comic readers would surely agree; it seems like this should be one of the first missions for the new [Champions](#) team. Save the manatees, Ms. Marvel!