TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
July 16, 2014

GNO, Inc. and Business Leaders form New Coalition Backing Coastal Restoration Efforts

The Coalition for Coastal Resilience and Economy is banking on present environmental investments rewarding economic growth down the line. The coalition, funded by the Walton Family Foundation, plans on focusing on coastal restoration and both structural and non-structural flood mitigation. Specifically, they are interested in seeing the RESTORE Act dollars putting fines from the *Deepwater Horizon* spill to good use. If they want any further issues to focus on, we could certainly supply them with a list.

It's (not) a Gusher! Roundup of Texas Water Happenings

As Texas' extreme drought continues into its fourth year, responses and repercussions can be seen and felt across the Lone Star State. In Midland, the heart of the oil fields, new technology will be used to clean produced water from oil wells to make it useable for injection into fracking wells. This could help relieve the thirst of one of the state's larger industries.

In San Antonio, where they are already planning to pipe freshwater in from Central Texas, construction has begun on a new $411 million desalination plant. The plant will take brackish groundwater from the Wilcox Aquifer, clean it, and pump the leftover brine back into the Edwards Aquifer.

Dow Chemical has a multi-billion dollar plant at the mouth of the Brazos River where it needs 100,000 gallons of freshwater per minute to operate. When it doesn't get that, bad things happen. Bad things that lead to Dow asserting its senior rights to the Brazos and shutting down water use for upstream cities, farmers, and industries.

Many are worried about potential water shortages for people who depend on water from the Brazos for drinking. Others are worried that if other companies see Dow's struggles for consistent water, they would take their own water-dependent operations away from Texas. This, in a nutshell, is exactly why Louisiana is in the initial stages of getting its house in order – to be able to avoid these water-related problems and take advantage when they happen elsewhere, like in Texas. Luckily for Texas, it has a Water Plan for getting its own house in order.

However, that Texas Water Plan has come under some fire for not accounting for climate change. The drafters of the plan, it seems, are taking into account Texas' continuing, mandated-by-God population growth, but not the possibility that climate

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:

Louisiana Water Resources Commission Meeting
July 30, 2014, 9:00 a.m.
LaBelle Room, LaSalle Building
617 N. 3rd Street
Baton Rouge, LA

Restore America's Estuaries and Coastal Society Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration
November 1-6, 2014
Washington, DC

Chicago Water Summit
July 21, 2014
Chicago, IL

Water jobs:

Water Resources Manager
National Wildlife Federation
Water Protection Network & MS River Network
Washington, DC

Communications Director
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
Baton Rouge, LA

Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
6329 Freret Street, Suite 155G
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-865-5982
http://www.law.tulane.edu/tlscenters/waterlaw/
TWITTER: @TulaneWaterLaw

change could cut water supply in the state by 15% in the next fifty years. The Texas Water Development Board "does not have an official position on climate change" but, if Dow Chemical has anything to say about it, they just might in the near future.

Finally, the oft-reported-upon use of treated wastewater for drinking water in Wichita Falls has finally begun. The sky did not fall, but residents continue to wish rain would.

"Mardi Gras Pass" Could Soon Just be Mardi Gras Pass

Two years ago on Mardi Gras, the Mississippi River created a new breach in its east bank levee south of Pointe a la Hatche in Plaquemines Parish. The future of the breach is still somewhat up in the air, but for two years it has been referred to as "Mardi Gras Pass." The state is going to request the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to officially give it a name. A few months ago, the Coast Guard listed the pass as a navigable waterway. Every one of these steps helps ensure the permanence of the pass that is the kind of distributary that the state CPRA is planning on spending billions of dollars creating. Except this one was free.

Meet New Mexico's Newest Crop – Cottonwood Trees

New Mexico has gotten creative in crafting a new water market to return water to suffering riverside habitats. The Rio Grande through southern New Mexico has been confined by levees for decades, and floodplain habitats have suffered. Now, the state, environmentalists, and irrigators have worked together to figure out how to get water back to those habitats. It was all well and good for irrigators and environmentalists to agree to return water to the riparian habitats, but state and federal water law required a couple of unusual steps. First, cottonwoods and floodplain plants had to be categorized as agricultural crops. Second, the irrigation district had to allow the water transfer to take place. Kudos to all parties for finding some flexibility in a very inflexible water law system.

New Report Highlights Water Risks to U.S. Corn Production – Gasoline, Breakfast Cereal, and Hamburgers Could be Affected

If this doesn't get people's attention, nothing will. A new report from Ceres shows that 87% of irrigated corn is grown in areas with high or extremely high water stress and 27% of rainfed corn is produced in areas of high or extremely high water stress. Additionally, several ethanol refineries are using corn grown in areas experiencing extreme groundwater decline. Because corn is in almost everything these days, these water risks only have the potential to impact multiple trillions of dollars of revenues. No biggie.

East Coast, No, You're Not Crazy. Your Ankles are Wet, Your Roads are Flooding, and Your Coast is Sinking

First of all, good on ya, Reuters, for initiating your own investigation into flooding on the U.S. East Coast. Second of all, coastal cities from New York to Georgia are getting flooded much more often than ever before. Sea level rise combined with subsidence is now putting hundreds-of-years-old cities underwater without even needing storm surges or heavy rains. Cities like Annapolis, MD are now flooding at high tide. Annapolis and several other cities now flood more than twenty days a year. The reasons for the flooding are known—sea level rise, subsidence, and even the slowing of the Gulf Stream—but the solutions, beyond rolling up pants and investing in galoshes, remain frustratingly underdeveloped.