

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
July 30, 2015

Amoebas, West Nile, and Toxic Algae Come Back With Hot Weather

The same amoeba that has killed three people in Louisiana since 2011 is popping up in water supplies in Louisiana and around the country. [Naegleria fowleri amoeba](#) “eats brains,” which it accesses when water gets up the nose, and it’s recently been found in [Ascension](#) and [St. Bernard](#) Parishes (or [maybe not](#)) in Louisiana. It’s killed in [California](#) and maybe [Minnesota](#) this summer, but there it’s been in lakes and ponds, not municipal supplies.

Communities around Lake Erie are bracing for another severe toxic algae bloom this summer. NOAA researchers announced their [forecast](#) in early July, and have made their harmful algal blooms ([HABs](#)) [tracker](#) available online. On a scale of 1-10, last summer’s bloom that poisoned Toledo’s drinking water was a [6.5](#). This year’s bloom is predicted to be an 8.7 to 9.5. Let’s just hope the water treatment systems are prepared.

New York City is [on the lookout](#) for West Nile virus, and a senior citizen has died of the illness in [California](#), where there are [concerns](#) that the drought will increase exposure to the disease. At this point, knowing what’s out there, one has to ask “why do we even go in the water at all?”

Bayou St. John – at Least THAT Water is Clean, Right?

Well, the water seems to be, but what about what’s in or under the water? [Bayou St. John](#) is why New Orleans exists where it does. Today, it’s a scenic waterway in the middle of the city and site of multiple outdoor festivals and celebrations, but most New Orleanians are [afraid to swim](#) in it. However, the people who actually monitor the bayou’s water quality say it is safe (which is not the same thing as saying it is a good place to swim). Every week, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation [measures](#) fecal coliform in the water, and they say it has consistently been safe for more than a decade. Additionally, the Flood Protection Authority now [opens the floodgate](#) at the bayou’s mouth, allowing for a [healthier ecosystem](#) in the bayou supported by freshly oxygenated water. However, alligators are part of that ecosystem, and although there are now many fewer [submerged cars](#) in the bayou, sharp objects and debris are a danger. At least the bayou’s water is far removed from its industrial days.

What about the sediments under the Bayou? The stuff left over from its time as an industrial corridor? It’s been a while

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:

[18th Annual Conference on Litigating Takings Challenges to Land Use & Environmental Regs.](#)

September 25, 2015

University of Maryland School of Law
Baltimore, MD

[Coastal Candidates Forum](#)

August 18, 2015

4:00 P.M.

Nichols State University
Peltier Auditorium
Thibodaux, LA

[Public Forum on Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico](#)

August 13, 2015

9 A.M. till Noon

University of New Orleans

Water jobs:

[Southern Environmental Law Center](#)

Virginia Energy Attorney
Charlottesville, VA

[Attorney](#)

Community Water Center
Sacramento, CA

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since it was [measured](#). Just like the mercury contamination in Louisiana water bodies hasn't been measured for a while. From 2004 to 2008, [the state tested soil, water, and fish to monitor mercury](#) contamination. That stopped with the current administration. Oh well, as George Pettie said, "[so long as I know it not, it hurteth mee not.](#)"

You Have Only a Few Weeks to Perfect Your [Monorail](#) Pitch!

While it's still not a post-settlement world, details of the BP settlement continue to leak out (very much unlike the oil that gushed out of the seafloor at the Macando well site). [Local governments](#) along the coast are reaching their own settlements for slices of that pie – although Plaquemines Parish (the land closest to the blowout) and the town of Jean Lafitte are not taking settlements and proceeding with their cases – and BP has been given an August 26 deadline for paying out to local governments. Meanwhile, the Louisiana Attorney General's office has made a [presentation](#) to State Senate committees [explaining](#) what all these funds are and how they can be used, and the state's coastal czar, Chip Kline, is [stumping](#) for responsibly using the funds to jump-start restoration efforts across the coast. Of course, it's always possible that the most "fiscally responsible" parties, in an effort to balance budgets (on paper, at least) will simply choose to not spend the money at all. It's something to keep an eye on, especially in a region that apparently still has [unspent funds](#) from hurricane Katrina recovery. To see breakdowns of where local funds are headed, see this (in progress) [spreadsheet](#) the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana has cobbled together from various media outlets.

[No Time to Lose!](#) Multiple Reports of Climate Change and Flooding Impacts on the US

A new [report](#) combining the study of both coastal storm surge and major rainfall events shows the two combining for an [increasing rate of flooding](#), where impacts on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts are greatest, but the Pacific isn't left unscarred, either. Additionally, the Chesapeake region is dealing with the [increased relative sea-level rise](#) associated with the land that was pushed up by the [Pleistocene](#) ice sheet now subsiding. All this climate change and flooding will cost the Southeast United States (including Texas) hundreds of billions of dollars. So [says](#) the Risky Business Project, helmed by Michael Bloomberg, Henry Paulson, and Thomas Steyer. Hopefully, all this adds up to some pretty good incentives for smart use of those BP settlement funds (not to mention major policy shifts in the region).

TUWaterWays Goes Tabloid

It's time to bow to the clickbait-listicle zeitgeist and give the people what they want. Therefore here are the top 5 trashy, tabloid water news items for the week (aka, a bunch of stuff that was too good to pass up):

1. A utility worker in Michigan offered a "[sex for water](#)" deal and now faces a lawsuit, though the utility claims the lawsuit is [meritless](#).
2. The cult formerly run by Warren Jeffs, currently a lifetime guest of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, has apparently relocated to South Dakota, where they are sparring with locals over an [application to withdraw 200 gallons per minute](#) from the aquifer under the Black Hills to serve an [undisclosed number of people](#) living on the polygamist compound.
3. Congratulations silly rich people, you can now pay [£26 for a bottle of water](#) at a swanky Belfast Hotel! The Merchant Hotel now boasts a [luxury water menu](#) curated by two water butlers. There, they can drink water from aquifers, glaciers, and springs from around the world. The most costly bottle boasts a miniscule amount of total dissolved solids as its selling point, apparently. At this moment, the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy would like to announce it will [produce](#) and hand-deliver bottles of water with virtually no dissolved solids at all for the very exclusive price of \$50 per bottle (plus s/h). Just drink it fast, you wouldn't want it to [go bad](#)!
4. Naked people are stealing water! Owners of a nudist resort near San Jose have been [charged with a felony](#) for conspiring to steal water from a local creek. Where were they going to hide it?
5. Relax, [Californians](#), enjoy your drought with this [playlist](#) from KQED, San Francisco's PBS affiliate. It's got the Temptations AND Selena Gomez!