

# TUWaterWays

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

[December 4, 2020](#)

## [Can You Dig It?](#)

There is nothing new about dredging, but coping with sea level rise and ecosystem restoration is bringing new and broader interest in what dredging and dredges can do. Truth be told, there are so many dredges in the United States and they are designed to handle so many jobs. Are they up to the tasks ahead? To find out, check out this [Building Resilience in America's Coastlines](#) webinar on December 15. Cohosted by our shop and the European Union, the webinar will try to read the tea leaves. If you need a little help getting up to speed, take a look at [this paper](#) published through our Deep End series, in which we publish select papers featuring independent (from us) perspectives on water issues.

## **New Man River, that New Man River**

It is not every day that we find new rivers; after all they are pretty much just sitting there waiting to be seen. Pretty much, but not always. Case in point, Hawaii—the island, not the state. It turns out that when it rains, as it often does, the water runs downhill and into the ocean. But it was always a mystery as to why the flow of the island's rivers and stream did not seem to account for all that water. Thanks to science [we may now have the answer](#). According to a [paper published in journal Science Advances](#), the answer is underground rivers. They found this out using some nifty tools and the knowledge that saltwater and fresh water have different densities. [This matters because decreasing precipitation and an increasing population have raised questions about the security of the island's water supply](#). In other words, while [Hawaii may be the island of love](#), it is not the island of overly abundant water. Of course this is not the first time [a scientist has done good, important work on an island](#), but it is nice to see that the tradition continues.

## **What Could Go Wrong?**

When you take water from one place and dump it somewhere else, shouldn't it all be the same? After all, it is just oxygen and hydrogen right? Hardly, at least when it is water from places Lake Lagoda in Russia, and its release in Lake Superior. When ships loaded up with ballast water in Lake Lagoda, they took on not just water but whatever was in it, which included [spiny water fleas](#). Those "fleas" arrived in the 1980s, and it turns out [they are really really good at eating the plankton and Daphnia that are a big part of the base of the food web in the Great Lakes and they have changed the Great Lakes in fundamental and likely irreversible ways](#). Funny how small things can make big changes. If this was a one-off maybe this could be ascribed to bad luck, but when you add to this other induced invasives like [sea](#)

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 legal stewardship of water.

## **Coming up:**

[Remarkable Cities and the Fight Against Climate Change](#); Dec. 3-4

[NOLA Gulf South: The Seaway Movement](#); December 7

[CPRA: Living Shoreline](#); December 9

[Building Resilience in American's Coastlines](#) webinar: December 15

## **Water jobs:**

[Associate Attorney](#); Earthjustice; Seattle, WA

[Senior Specialist \(Water Stewardship\)](#); Gap, Inc.; San Francisco, CA

[Hydraulics and Hydrology Lead](#); Dewberry; Raleigh, N.C.

[Great Lakes Equity and Justice Partnerships Senior Coordinator](#); National Wildlife Federation; Chicago, IL

[Surface Water Storage Fellowship](#); EPA; Cincinnati, OH

[Watershed Specialist](#); Bayou City Waterkeeper; Houston, TX

[Environmental Specialist](#); Metropolitan Water District of Southern California; Parker Dam, CA

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[lampreys](#) and [zebra mussels](#), it starts to look like out and out carelessness and an inability (or lack of desire) to learn.

### **It's Baaaack!**

If you said parting words over a grave and then found out that the dearly departed was really buried 8 miles away, would it make them any less departed? In the realm of mortal, maybe not; but in the world of water projects, maybe it does? Case in point, the Yazoo pump project in Mississippi. For as long as almost anyone can recall, it has been the dream of some in the Delta Region of Mississippi to drain wetlands in the Yazoo River basin to reduce flooding and create more farm land. One person's dream being another person's nightmare, this led to years of conflict that culminated (or so many thought) back in 2008, when EPA vetoed a permit issued by the Army Corps of Engineers that would have allowed the project to be constructed. EPA's "final words" seemed to end the saga. But not so fast. This week, EPA sent a [letter](#) to the Corps saying that its veto would not extend to a revamped version of the pumps that would put them 8 miles away from the vetoed version. This is significant apart from the pump project itself, since EPA vetoes are extremely rare and this action raises the question of just what such a veto really means. That said, will the pumps get built? We really can't say, but at the least it will likely give [proponents and opponents years of agitating](#), as it did for their parents and grandparents. Who says America is losing its traditions?