

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
December 22, 2017

Permanent Canal Gates and Pumps in New Orleans Just About Finished. So, Who's Going to Run Them?

After Hurricane Katrina and the levee failures the Corps of Engineers got to work on "[HSDRRS](#)" (imagine Madea saying "his dress") to ensure that that whole thing would never happen again. Waaay over there along the Lakeshore ([we from Uptown](#)), where New Orleans' drainage canals meet Lake Pontchartrain, they're finishing up the Permanent Canal Closure and Pumps ([PCCP](#)) part of that system.

Well, like with many Corps projects, once construction is done, they turn operations and maintenance (O&M) over to a local partner. In the case of HSDRRS, that local partner is Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA). CPRA then turns it over to a more-local partner. Much of HSDRRS O&M is going to the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authorities (FPAs) – East and West; they were also born of Katrina and the floods from the soggy ashes of individual parish levee boards.

However, PCCP was intended to be taken over by the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO). That would make sense since they're the ones in charge of everything getting pumped into those canals, so why not let them also handle pumping the water out of those canals? Well, as you may have heard, SWBNO has had [a rough 2017](#) (welcome to New Orleans, [Marcie Edwards!](#)).

So, [maybe the FPA-East is going to take over O&M of PCCP](#). FPA-East and SWBNO are working out the details, but many might find this a more reassuring arrangement, since approximately zero New Orleanians are fans of SWBNO right now (expect them to be target #1 in this year's satirical Carnival parades, our mayor-elect will just have to wait her turn). However, FPA-East brought their famously [ambitious](#) or famously [frivolous](#) lawsuit ([RIP](#)) against oil and gas companies for wetland loss largely because they're already struggling under the HSDRRS O&M burden. So, we're left with a federal project built by a federal agency that someone's always mad at given to a state agency working under a broad and overwhelming mandate and turned over to a regional body searching for adequate funding or to a city agency struggling for an entirely new identity and culture. This is an important project that can help keep water out of tens of thousands of homes and businesses, but it's starting to feel more like Dolly's [Coat of Many Colors](#) – only if her mother was a cruel, cruel woman who thought Jimmy Kimmel's "[I ate your Halloween candy](#)" videos weren't mean enough. There's got to be a less schizophrenic way to build, delegate, and fund.

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:

March 1-2, 2018
[Coastal Law in Louisiana](#)
New Orleans, LA

March 9-10, 2018
[23rd Annual Environmental Law and Policy Summit](#)
Tulane Law School
New Orleans

Water jobs:

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National Wildlife Federation
Washington DC

[Intern for Water Policy](#)
Northeast-Midwest Institute
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Interstellar Asteroid Might Contain Alien Water!

How long until we can bottle it and sell it for \$50 a liter? A couple of months ago, an object entered the Solar System from, well, somewhere else. We've got hundreds of thousands of asteroids and comets in our Sun's system, but astronomers have never before [documented](#) one coming in from another system; they named it 'Oumuamua. So, it's a special lump of rock. But it's even more special than just being interstellar! It's [long and skinny](#) and looks like something out of [Marvel Comics](#), [a Star War](#), or some other intellectual property Disney owns. It's so unusual in origin and shape that it's been monitored for sounds of alien origin by a telescope named for Sen. Robert Byrd. It hasn't made any sounds. So [the guy who used to be in Blink-182](#) and [the guy who used to work for the Pentagon](#) will have to keep on looking for that big moment. But what all this probing HAS found is that the interior of the asteroid [might contain a whole bunch of water](#). It seems it's very similar in make up to other icy bodies within the Solar System that have a thin carbon-heavy crust on the outside and ice on the inside. Let's catch this thing, bottle it, get [P Diddy](#) on board, and make a fortune! Super high priced alien water - it can't be a sadder commentary on our world than [bottled water for babies](#).

2017 – What a Year!

This is our last TUWaterWays of the year. It's been a busy year for our Institute, [for water at Tulane](#), and for [water around the world](#). So, we'd just like to take this opportunity to thank you for reading. Please keep the comments and suggestions flowing. Have a happy New Year, and see you in 2018.