

# TUWaterWays

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

April 1, 2014

## **Draft UN Climate Report: Troubles Ahead and Time to Adapt to Climate Change**

Floods. Droughts. Disease. Displacement. Lower crop yields. A draft of the latest [report](#) from the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change [predicts that serious consequences](#) are already unfolding due to climate change and that the time has come to focus more on adapting to those changes than to avoiding them. The dire tone of the draft is not shared all of IPCC team; [Dr. Richard Tol](#) who withdrew from the report due to concerns about the severity of its conclusions. [Others](#), on the other hand, still contend that there is not much to really worry about and that the jury is still way way out on the topic. Given the level of uncertainty, pace of change and the immensity of any adaptation effort it would not be irrational to hope for the latter and plan for the former.

## **Save the Coast, Make Big Dollars**

Everybody seems to like the idea of restoring ecosystems (curiously often more that conserving them) but the work tends to be frightfully expensive. Finding the dollars to do “restoration work” (often times “rehabilitation” would be a more accurate term) is hard to do in these days of tight budgets (case in point the [proposed cuts in federal water spending](#)) and deep skepticism of governmental programs. But a [new report](#) issued by former University of New Orleans Chancellor and economist Timothy Ryan, PhD. makes the case that restoration spending will yield jobs and revenues well in excess of the cost the restoration work—in coastal Louisiana at least. Without commenting on the report itself we do note that it does commendable service for the putting the cost of implementing these public works efforts into their context. The ultimate question should not be what is their cost but rather is there a benefit worthy of the investment. The [report](#) was commissioned but, according to Dr. Ryan, not influenced by the advocacy group [Restore Louisiana Now, Inc.](#)

## **When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Need Water Lawyers**

As the competition for water heats up, it seems clear that there will be a need for wisdom, patience, robust science and engineering and clarity of purpose. And according to one prominent online news source, we are going to need [more water lawyers](#). Really. We did not make this up (though we must note that the author is the sister-in-law of our current post graduate fellow).

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:

**[April 7-11, 2014](#)**

**[Meetings of Mississippi River Commission](#)**  
Tiptonville, TN, Helena, AR, Greenville, MS, &  
New Orleans, LA

**April 8, 2014**

**[Horizon Initiative Water Committee](#)** Meeting  
Garden Study Center, City Park  
New Orleans, LA

**Tulane Institute**  
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### **Hey Kids Read All About It: Clean Rivers and Lakes Matter**

Give a man a fish, and he will have a meal. Teach a man to fish, and he will eat for a lifetime. Teach kids to understand and care about clean water, and there just may be fish to catch forever (as well as lots of other good things). That third kind of thinking lies behind a new book by Ellen Lawrence called [Poisoned Rivers and Lakes](#). The title may make it a less than likely choice for bedtime reading. However it is coming out at the same time as a massive [oil spill](#) in Galveston Bay and the growing realization that a missing airliner just might be masked by the “[plastic soup](#)” that makes up a significant part of our oceans. It might just be worthwhile reading.

### **Surf's Up—Colorado River Reaches Its Delta**

Dateline: Sea of Cortez, Mexico. It doesn't happen often and it hasn't happened in a long time, but water from the [Colorado River is flowing](#) into the River's long parched delta in northern Mexico. The flows are due to the release of 100,000 acre feet of water from Lake Meade (behind Hoover Dam) via Morales Dam in Baja California (Mexico) accordance with a water banking agreement between Mexico and the United States. The water, which does not impinge on any U.S. water rights, is intended to resuscitate the wetlands and riparian habitats in River's delta. Just how much can be expected from this eight week release remains to be seen, but it is exciting all the same.