

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
March 25, 2022

Water Wars—Same as It Ever Was

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is now entering its second month, and each day seems to bring news of a new dimension of the tragedy or way the war is being fought. Water is one of those dimensions. As the war grinds on and civic infrastructure is damaged or destroyed, access to potable water for eastern Ukrainians is a growing problem, [according to Project CARE](#) (younger readers can ask an elder about [CARE packages](#) – or [vice versa](#)?). There is growing evidence that much of that destruction is not collateral damage but is part of Russia’s plan for waging a “special military operation.” The role of water in the war is also expanding. [Recent flooding of the Irpin River basin north of Kyiv \(Kiev\)—cause not currently known—is being discussed as possibly an act of hydraulic warfare](#) designed to slow the Russian advance. That would hardly be the first time a [dam was built or destroyed](#) to achieve a military goal. That has [been done in the Netherlands several times](#) and just recently [Russia captured and removed a dam built by Ukraine](#) to cut water flows to Crimea after Russian annexed the region. Whatever the reason, the relationship between water, war and tragedy is as strong ever.

World Water Day—How Did You Spend March 22?

It should not take a tragedy to make clear just how important water is to everything we care about. There are plenty of things that happen every day to remind us of that. But apparently, they don’t, so we have World Water Day to make sure it does not slip our minds. WWD was March 22 and was marked by a large number of quiet lunches, invisible parades and [social media posts](#), many that referred to water by its code name “Taylor Swift.” WWD actually [did take on the invisibility issue by focusing on groundwater](#) and the need to make it better understood and better managed. [The growing problem of groundwater pollution, especially from persistent pollutants](#), got heightened attention, which is actually quite welcome, though it will take a lot more than WWD to fix. As long as the trend in our [courts](#), [agencies](#), and [legislatures](#) is to focus on how few waters and pollutants we regulate and manage instead of which ones need the attention, WWD will continue to be a missed opportunity to mark actual progress. Which really should be the point, shouldn’t it?

A Reed of Hope for Some Pretty Freaking Awful Stuff (PFAS)

Not so long ago, most folks had never heard of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) though they had come to appreciate what they could do to keep their Hush Puppies waterproof and fight fires. Today there is growing evidence and concern that those indisputable benefits have come at a very high—and largely

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:

[69th Mineral Law Institute](#), March 31-April 1

[ABA SEER 51st Spring Conference](#), April 6-8

[California Water Law Symposium](#), April 9

[University of Denver Water Law Review Symposium](#), April 14-15

[Coastal Law in Louisiana \(CLE\)](#), April 21- 22

Water jobs:

[Western Water Policy Specialist](#), The Nature Conservancy; flexible within the Western US

[Water Justice Specialist](#), Bayou City Waterkeeper, Houston, TX

[Sustainability/ESG Director](#), PwC; multiple locations

[Research Associate](#), University of New Orleans; New Orleans, LA

[Research Associate 1](#), University of Louisiana Lafayette; Lafayette, LA

[Campaign Manager](#), Sierra Club; New Orleans, LA, Houston, TX, flexible

[Advocacy Director](#), Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana; New Orleans, LA

[Policy Advisor, Mississippi River Basin Floodplain](#), The Nature Conservancy; LA, MS, AR, TN, or KY

[Attorney](#), California State Water Resources Control Board; Sacramento, CA

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

[Sportsmen Outreach coordinator](#); National Wildlife Federation; New Orleans, LA

[GCC Justice Fellowships](#); Georgetown Climate Center; Washington, D.C.

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unaddressed—cost. It turns out PFAS are really persistent and pervasive in our environment and that they carry [health risks to humans](#). Bad as that sounds the situation is made worse by the fact that PFAS show up in the waters and foods that so many people consume. While those health impacts may be hard to peg in specific cases it is not at all hard to see how they reduce the value of [water supplies](#), [farm lands](#) and [fisheries](#). It took ingenuity to create PFAS, so can it help get rid of them? Maybe, if a study from [Flinders University pans out](#). According to that study, [at least one type of wetland plant \(Juncus sarophorus\) can be effective at removing PFAS and other pollutants from waterways](#). That would be good news and maybe even be reason to care more about protecting and restoring wetlands. Sorry, that's just [crazy talk](#).

Coastal Law! Getcha Hot Fresh Coastal Law!

Interested in Louisiana coastal issues and the laws and policies that surround them? Looking for some CLE credit this spring? Need something to fill your social calendar the week before Jazz Fest? Well, we've got just the conference for you—featuring our very own fearless leader, Mark Davis, discussing nutrient management, Mississippi River resources, as well as surface and groundwater rights. The Seminar Group will be putting on the [“Coastal Law in Louisiana”](#) conference April 21-22 in New Orleans, with expert panels on topics including flood management and levee issues, oysters and aquaculture, offshore wind energy, environmental justice and coastal planning, and more. So check out the current agenda [here](#) and register if you're interested. We hope to see you there!