

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
November 29, 2016

Freeze Boil Alert

The folks at MIT are at it again and just in time for your holiday plans. We all know that water boils at 212 Fahrenheit and freezes at 32 degrees. (For our Centigradian readers, we think that translates into ~~1 million degrees~~ 100 and zero degrees. We thought we knew that until a [report](#) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology says [it ain't necessarily so](#). According to the report, at the nano (really small) level the freezing and boiling points are variable—very variable. So much so that water can be solid (frozen) at its normal boiling point. At this point we will have to take their word for that as well as its possible practical importance. But if you have the chance to buy a nano-sized lunch box for a friend for Christmas, then this could be the perfect freezer pack companion.

Are You Sitting Down?

When you hear those words you know you are about to hear something you would rather not hear. And so it is with a new article from Bloomberg that looks at sea level rise and coastal communities and asks whether it is time to admit that [some communities are going to be effectively abandoned](#). This is not really news to those who follow this stuff closely (indeed, Louisiana's state coastal planners have acknowledged as much as they work toward an update of the state's coastal master plan), but it when it comes from the mainstream media it signals that we are coming to a reckoning. The Bloomberg piece looks at communities in coastal Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida's Atlantic coast. The report finds that they account for a significant percentage of disaster assistance claims—claims that cost money. It goes on to wonder if (more likely, when) the public appetite for providing that assistance will be tested. This is not a deep dive and the possibility that public investments (even repeated ones) may be worthwhile in some of those places isn't discussed. It would be easy to dismiss stories like this for that reason, but that would only mask what is unfolding, not change it. Sooner or later these questions are going to be a much bigger part of America's public discussion. The longer we wait to have it, the worse the options will be.

Two Droughts, Worlds Apart

The Southeastern part of the USA [is heading back into drought](#) and folks are buckling down as they prepare for

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:

[Urban Water Series: Technical Master Class](#)
New Orleans, LA
December 8-9, 2016

[RAE/The Coastal Society Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration](#)
New Orleans, LA
December 10-15, 2016

Water jobs:

[Emmett/Frankel Fellowship in Environmental Law and Policy](#)
UCLA
Los Angeles, CA

[Attorney, Water Enforcement Division](#)
US EPA
Washington, D.C.

[Anthony A. Lapham River Conservation Fellow](#)
American Rivers
Washington, D.C.

[Climate Change Post-Doc Research Fellow](#)
Columbia University
New York, NY

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brown water showers, crummy boating and fishing, and maybe even restrictions on lawn watering. On the harsher side, the dry spell has helped fuel wildfires in the Smokey Mountains that have plagued towns like [Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge](#). Drought has come to Somalia again too. There the impact is measured not so much in discolored water and brown yards as it is in kilometers—the number of kilometers you might have to walk with a jerry-can on your head to fetch water for your family. [It can be up to 60 \(roughly 40 miles\)](#). The point here is not compare miseries but to remind ourselves that these things still happen and whether it happens to people we know or not it is still our business. And to remind ourselves that the way droughts play out depends a lot on the robustness of the civil institutions and notions of justice in the affected communities. Our best wishes to all.

Martian Water—Its Huuuge!

We have noticed a trend. Just about every news cycle now has a story about water shortages and droughts somewhere on Earth and in the same breath there is a story about water on some other planet. This time that planet is Mars (again) where it seems that there is an aquifer with about as much water as there is in Lake Superior. At least that's according to a head turning item in [Geophysical Research Letters](#), based on information from NASA's [Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter](#). For those of you with subscriptions to GRL, please forgive us for not picking this up on its original September 28 publication. We could say that we held off to assess the responses to the paper. It would not be true, but we could say it. More likely, we were busy checking out other aspects of [Mars Water](#).

Ground Water for \$200 Alex

It could happen. You could be a contestant on Jeopardy (perhaps its Bizzaro World doppelganger [Half Wits](#)) and the final answer topic could be on American ground water law. What do you do...what do you *do*? Well courtesy of a recent update of the Water System Council's [Who Owns the Water](#), you just might stand a chance. The report is meant to be more informative than it is comprehensive and scholarly, which means it's actually readable. The [Council](#) does have a point of view and an agenda, which are most apparent in the paper's recommendations which readers should be aware of. That said, if you are looking for a reasonably concise summary of American ground water law (and who isn't) this might be worth a look.