

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
September 23, 2022

Ready, Set...Read

A keystone part of Louisiana's coastal Master Plan moved closer to a decision point this week when the Army Corps of Engineers [released its final Environmental Impact Statement for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion](#) project. The project would reintroduce river water and sediment to one of the largest, most productive and threatened estuaries in the world with the aim to rebuild some of the wetlands already lost to relative sea level rise and to hold on to as much existing land as possible. In the absence of bold action much of what is left of this land mass and ecosystem will be lost within a generation. [So, is it the best plan and is everybody on board? Maybe not and nope](#), but perfection is not required for the Corps to decide whether to issue the permits or not, and they plan to do that by the end of 2022 after considering [one last round of public comments](#). If you plan to comment you better read fast and act soon since the comment period only lasts 30 days and the EIS is a couple of thousand pages long. In case you have been wondering what adapting to climate change and sea level rise will be like, take a look. This is probably as good as it gets for an organized governmental response. Gulp.

Transfusion Profusion

In recent weeks, TUWW has spent more time than maybe we should have on [dreams of using the Mississippi River \(250,000 cubic feet per second\) to supplement the dwindling flows of the Colorado River](#) and refill Lakes Mead and Powell. Sort of a continental scale transfusion. A lot of this has been coming from folks in the Coachella Valley, home to cool music festivals and [Frank Sinatra's adopted home](#), Palm Springs. Did we say this is a desert? Well it is a desert, and it is hard to live in a desert without bringing water in from somewhere. In this case, that has been the Colorado River and groundwater, neither of which is up to the task these days – a state of affairs that is increasingly common. For that reason, resources like the Mississippi River are [finding new suitors](#). After all, there is so much there to share, and what [water](#) would not aspire to moving to Palm Springs or [sharing the bill with Lizzo at Coachella?](#) Hell, you would be doing it a favor. The trouble is nobody knows if there really is surplus water in the Mississippi or how to figure what's "surplus" since the river supports so many communities, economies and ecosystems—with more on the way. Two recent developments may shed light on that however.

First, the Army Corps is about to kick off a [study of the Lower Mississippi River that promises to be the most comprehensive look at the river and what/how it serves in a long while, maybe even ever.](#)

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:

[Trap Bingo: Justice for Jackson Fundraiser](#); September 24; New Orleans, LA

[MissTrivia Night](#); September 29

[Louisiana Climate Initiatives Task Force Fall Meeting and Workshop](#); October 29

[Restore America's Estuaries, 2022 Coastal and Estuarine Summit](#); December 4-8; New Orleans, LA

Water jobs:

[Project Manager, Louisiana Political Affairs](#); Environmental Defense Fund; Remote

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

[Water Quality Technician](#); Pontchartrain Conservancy; Metairie, LA

[Clinical Instructor](#); Tulane Environmental Law Clinic; New Orleans, LA

[Associate Attorney, Senior Attorney, and Paralegal](#); Earthjustice; Multiple Locations

[Climate Risk Legal Fellow](#); Environmental Defense Fund; Boulder, CO

[Summer Associate 2023](#), Sher Edling LLP, San Francisco

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

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Spoiler alert: Don't be surprised if the states that border the river think that the best use of river water is to propel their own growth and prosperity.

Second, just what high-value uses are in mind for the scarce waters of Coachella Valley? A hospital for children? A research center to study the impacts of extreme heat on people, plants, and critters? [Enough of that crazy talk](#), how [about a new development with a wave pool](#)! Because when the going gets tough, the tough go surfing, right? To be fair, that is not a done deal, but when spending billions to move somebody else's water seems more plausible than saying "no" to a planned development, you have to wonder if there isn't something in the water. Besides, [we already know how this water park thing ends](#). BREAKING NEWS: [the desert surf park \(well, one of them\) has been rejected by city council](#)! Stay tuned for the next bad idea.

Be Water Smart, Win Big Prizes

If you [think about it really hard](#), it becomes clear that water is very important and that dealing with it (or not) in the same old ways just is not good enough. Fortunately, there's a new generation with new ideas. Yes, they're the young generation, and they've got something to say... about water. And not a moment too soon. [So raise a glass of water and toast this year's winner of the Stockholm Junior Water Prize Winner, Annabelle Rayson of Canada whose idea for preventing harmful algal blooms](#) is, quite frankly, more inspiring than a couple of decades of output from the [Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force](#).

And raise a second glass to toast [Team WatApp, the winners of the Xylem Water Challenge at HackZurich](#). WatApp developed a gaming app that promotes sustainable consumption. Can a collaboration with CATAN be far off?

[So, hats off to the winners](#)! And for all of you readers grumbling to yourselves that you thought of these ideas years ago, well you can't win if you don't enter. Oh, and the runner up in both competitions—surf parks in deserts.

Tulane Environmental and Energy Law Summit—[It's Baaaaack!](#) Mark Your Calendars, March 17 and 18, 2023

Spring was less spring-like since COVID-19 relegated America's favorite student-run environmental conference to being a mostly virtual affair. Those were still great and there is much to be said for doing things virtually but there is no substitute for doing some things in person. So write it down and make plans to be at hand. More details to follow.