

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
December 3, 2013

Lawyering Up: Louisiana Seeking Coastal Erosion Lawsuit Against Army Corps?

The Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MRG) that once linked New Orleans to the Gulf of Mexico is now closed, a victim of Hurricane Katrina and economics. But the MRGO's near perfect record of never missing an opportunity to create discord and conflict continues with the State of Louisiana [possibly heading to court](#) to seek a ruling that the federal government is solely liable for funding to restore (an overly ambitious term if there ever was one) the ecosystems damaged by the MRGO. Congress authorized that work in the Water Resources Act of 2007, but the Army Corps of Engineers and the State can't agree on how to read the authorizing language. The State contends the feds are to pay the whole \$3 billion freight, while the Corps contends that the state must contribute thirty-five percent of the cost.

Sound the Hunting Horn: Feral Hogs Running Amok on Levees

While there are some five million [feral hogs roaming](#) the United States and causing headaches for farmers, the hogs in South Louisiana are now compromising the area's ever-important levee system. Officials believe that the flood waters from last year's Hurricane Isaac pushed the swine north from their coastal habitat. This higher, drier land is easier to forage, so the [sunder of swine](#) is growing. Each female hog can produce up to twenty four piglets each year. And as is too often the case with critters that people introduced, they have few natural predators, which makes controlling them our business. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has published a manual on how best to [cope with feral hogs](#) and the Naval Air Station in Belle Chasse has a hunting club already in action. More destructive than nutrias or armadillos, the hogs are eating into the operations and maintenance budgets of the region's several flood protection authorities. As Guiseppe Miserendino, regional director of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-West, put it, "We can't keep up with them." If that isn't a call to arms, and possibly barbeque sauce, we don't know what is.

Minnesota Moving Forward with Nutrient Reduction Strategy

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is currently [seeking comments](#) on its Nutrient Reduction Strategy. According to agency hydrologist David Wall, "The strategy looks at the big picture of where the nutrients are coming from and how to reduce them." The goal is to reduce nitrogen levels in the

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:

[February 21-23, 2014](#)
Tulane Environmental Law Summit
Tulane Law School
New Orleans, LA

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Mississippi River basin by twenty percent and phosphorus by thirty-five percent over twelve years. Phase I targets wastewater treatment and farming practices. The comment period ends December 18 and the agency plans to finalize the strategy draft by the year's end.

Natives of Borneo Jungle Stand Up Against Dam Projects

Manning blockades on two roads leading into a remote region of the Sarawak state of Malaysia, tribes and local NGOs are [banding together](#) in protest of government plans to dam the region's wild rivers for hydroelectricity, an attempt to promote foreign industrial investment. In a region that already has three dams including one of the world's largest, natives are not relocating without a fight. Failed attempts in the 1980s to block timber operations are seared into the minds of tribal elders as Malaysia became the world leader in forest loss between 2000 and 2012. Indigenous activists claim that one of the proposed dams will flood an area half the size of Singapore and displace an additional 20,000 people. The decision will largely depend on Taib Mahmud, Sarawak's chief minister for the last thirty-two years. Opponents of the dam fear that his cousin's position as chairman of Sarawak Energy, the state-linked company spearheading the campaign, will play into Taib's decision. Whatever the final decision, the opposition's resolve appears strong. As one indigenous man explained it, "Whatever millions they give, I don't want it. Money vanishes, land does not."

More than a Quarter of World's Agriculture Grown in Areas of High Water Stress

The World Resources Institute (WRI) recently revealed an [interactive map](#) that shows the tension between water resources and food production. Looking within the twenty-five percent of the world's agriculture grown in areas of high stress, over half of the irrigated cropland is located in areas of high water stress. To put that number [in perspective](#), irrigated cropland produces forty percent of the global food supply. Water availability varies by region and by crop, and these nuances can be investigated on the map. The tension is projected to increase, as some estimates expect demand for water to rise fifty percent by 2030. Considering agriculture accounts for more than seventy percent of all human water withdrawal, WRI will continue to map the nexus between water availability and human needs.

Great Lakes Water Levels Improve But Still Pose Problems for Business

Due to heavy rains and snow, Lakes Huron and Michigan [water levels rose](#) twenty inches in some areas this year. While water levels in other areas are still below historic averages, monitors are encouraged that the lakes are no longer at their historic lows. The low water levels are still [negatively impacting](#) fish-spawning areas and shipping lanes. Though the low water levels are mainly thought to be the result of natural weather cycles, dredging of the St. Clair River has accelerated the flow of water southward out of Lakes Huron and Michigan. Studies attribute a 10-16 inch drop in water levels to dredging over the years. The Army Corps issued a list of water-slowing solutions in 1972 and is authorized to take action, but Congress has not appropriated money to update the study or take action.