

TUWaterWays

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

[June 11, 2021](#)

“But [Where Do The Children Play?!?](#)” They Cry on Facebook, Presumably

The quick and dirty and lazy headline is “Nevada Bans Grass!” (ignoring the legalized marijuana jokes for now). The reality is more nuanced. [The Nevada legislature did pass a law to ban some lawns](#), but only in part of the state and only about 31% of the lawns in that area. So, where? The Las Vegas metro area – specifically, the area under the jurisdiction of the Southern Nevada Water Authority (a state entity that cuts across local boundaries, hence the state legislation). So, when? By 2027. So, which lawns? The “non-functional” ones. That means the ones that have to be watered and are not really used by anyone – lawns in medians, office parks, or subdivision entrances. So, don’t throw out your Scot’s TurfBuilder just yet, whoever bought [Wayne Newton’s house!](#) Your lawn and other private residences’ lawns – and parks and golf courses, of course – are still considered to serve some function! (Though, do throw out your [triazine weedkillers.](#))

Of course, there will still be restrictions on watering those lawns that remain, there’s [a real water supply crisis](#) on the Colorado River. That’s why they’re instituting this ban in the first place. Expect more scrambling, innovative solutions, and [juking the stats](#) from everyone drawing water out of the Colorado in the very near future.

Do You Know Where Your Water’s Been?

Well, if you’re in the US, now you can! There’s a [cool new tool](#) called [River Runner](#) that runs USGS data through a display to show water’s course from where it falls through to its final destination at the ocean (or some saltpan within the Great Basin). Enjoy watching your water flow past parks, islands, farms, and sewage treatments plants! The [whole shebang!](#)

A New Flow In [The Longest Main Street in the World](#)

When left to its own devices, the bottom end of the Mississippi River flops around like a [Wham-o Water Wiggle](#). In doing so, it’s created pretty much all of south Louisiana over the last 7,000ish years, building up a lobe around its main channel for hundreds of years before flopping over to a new area with a new main channel. What’s left behind are often distributaries still connected to the river, especially when it’s in high water. One of those main channels turned distributaries is Bayou Lafourche (one of the state’s bayous without a [mercury poisoning](#) warning!). Lafourche now runs from Donaldsonville down to the Gulf of Mexico at Port Fourchon, linking many small towns along the way. When a lot of those towns were settled, the Bayou still connected to the Mississippi River. But in

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:

[AWWA ACE21](#); June 14-17

[NCWA H2O Virtual Event](#); June 14-15

[Climate Change in the West: Land, People, Markets, and Law](#); ABA Virtual Conference; June 17-18

[Basics of the Clean Water Act](#); June 22

Water jobs:

[Senior Attorney, Fossil Fuels Program](#); Earthjustice; New Orleans or Texas

[Staff or Associate Attorney \(2 positions\)](#); Sierra Club; Oakland, Denver, or Washington DC

[Environmental Policy Specialist or Environmental Attorney](#); Miami Waterkeeper; Miami, FL

[Water Policy Manager](#); Conservancy of Southwest Florida; Naples, FL

[Law Clerk](#); San Francisco Baykeeper; San Francisco, CA

[Guidance and Regulation Program Coordinator – Water](#); Virginia DEQ; Richmond, VA

[Senior Policy Advisor, Natural Climate Solutions](#); The Nature Conservancy; Arlington, VA

[Blue Bonds Strategy Advisor](#); The Nature Conservancy; location flexible

[Water Policy Advisor](#); Tuvli; Washington, DC

[Senior Manager, Environmental Policy \(EMEA\)](#); Amazon; Brussels, Belgium

[Program Officer – Plastics Initiative](#); The Ocean Foundation; Washington, DC

[Strategic Program Director – Water, Climate Change, and Resilience](#); International Water Management Institute; Colombo, Sri Lanka or other regional office

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1903, the connection was cut off. That made water levels in the Bayou easier to control, but led to various issues cascading over the decades since. The lack of freshwater and sediments made for saltwater intrusion and wetlands loss. Residents along the bayou built structures on land that wasn't exposed before, creating interesting questions for the handful of Louisiana property lawyers who find these things interesting ([hello there!](#)). That saltwater intrusion made water supply more difficult to control [leading to a weir being built](#) and [a severely mucked-up supply](#) after Hurricane Gustav. Without the flow from the Mississippi to flush Lafourche out, boil water advisories lasted for months. Well, that mistake that was supposed to be a temporary dam back in 1903, has taken decades of work to undo. This is why there's permitting and red tape, friends – a moment to screw something up and decades to [unscrew](#) it. [The work to remedy the situation is nearing an end](#). Not only will the Bayou be able receive much more river water now, lots of work downstream has taken place to ensure that new water will have somewhere to go and enhance life rather than disrupt it. Huzzahs for all involved!