

# TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy  
November 9, 2016

## Looks Like [Stormy Weather](#)

In New Orleans, when it rains, it pours. Although our roads temporarily turn into rivers and we get soaked to the bone running from the door to the car, [the rain we can expect over the next couple of days is actually much needed](#). Gulf States, including [Alabama](#), Florida, and Louisiana, have been experiencing the effects of low rainfall for several weeks now. On the plus side, the water is “[as clear as the Caribbean](#),” making sportsmen and tourists happy, as they can see as far as 60 feet into the water. On the negative side, oyster health will soon be in decline due to rising salinity levels in some places and too much fresh water in others. It is not just the drought that is impacting the health of the Gulf, but also a lack of state water management in Gulf and upstream states. For example, Alabama has no plan for managing its diverse body of rivers that drain directly into beachside towns. This debacle matches the [arguments made this week](#) in the case between Florida and Georgia. Florida is claiming that the lack of fresh water streaming down from Georgia is negatively impacting its oyster crops. Georgia counters that overfishing and under-regulation of the oyster industry after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill is to blame. This is just one of several controversies between states over water, with more to come. Stay tuned for news on what that means for us down here at the bottom of the river bend.

## And a River Runs Through It.

Meanwhile, here in Louisiana, we continue to cultivate a wealth of water management, coastal restoration, and disaster relief [experts](#), and it's paying off. Recently, we reviewed the role that fresh water plays in diversions, and we are finding that less may actually mean more – sediment, that is. Similar to our neighbors, LA fishermen were [concerned](#) that drastic changes to how much water is flowing into the Gulf due to diversions would kill oysters and relocate shrimp and fish. So, our friends over at the Water Institute of the Gulf took matters into their own hands, [researching the best way to make diversions work for us](#). They have found out a whole lot more about where sediment is, how to get it where we want it, and what that means for when and how long diversions will be open. This type of forward thinking is essential to keeping our city above water and getting our shorelines healthy. Thanks,

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:

[Water Challenge Series: Integrating Resilience into Local Operations](#)

New Orleans, LA

November 14, 2016

[Breakfast with the Newsmakers](#)

New Orleans, LA

November 17, 2016

[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:

[Water Program Senior Research Associate](#)

The Pacific Institute

Oakland, CA

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guys. Now if only we are all smart enough to do something with this.

### **Grass is Always Greener**

[Water \(or fresh water, at least\) is becoming scarcer over time globally.](#) Populations are growing, agriculture is more water-intensive than ever, and increasingly unstable weather is changing the composition of the water that we do have. This is confusing who has rights to what, what counts as public use, how much water should cost, and how available it can be. And, when combined with conflict, water, particularly potable water, can be the first thing to go. We've seen that this week in Aleppo, Syria. Over 2 million people are now without access to potable water or sanitation services, [the UN reports](#), despite attempts to repair power lines servicing the city's water pumps.

It's easy to forget that this isn't just a problem for folks outside of the United States. We've seen water scarcity impact our Western neighbors over the past several years in a pretty drastic way, particularly in [California](#). However, it can be a little easier to forget that times were dry when water runs again. In California, eco-friendly lawns are becoming less common because [people miss their grass](#), and water woes appear to be looking up. In Texas, San Antonio officials are not recommending water conservation programs, despite recently investing in a 150-mile [pipeline to pump water](#) into the desert landscape. Technology and infrastructure projects are pretty neat, and we're [probably due for more of them](#), but making changes can be complex and take time. Let's not forget to conserve what we have, as well.

### **What Goes Up...**

Nestle is expanding its bottling efforts, applying for a [permit](#) to open a new extraction facility outside of Flint, Michigan. This is an expected response to a [growing demand for bottled water](#), despite the fact that it is coming from municipal sources in many cases. Because the pumping would take place through a private well, under Michigan law, Nestle will only need to pay a \$200 filing fee for the groundwater withdrawals of 150 – 400 gallons per minute. Despite the fact that over pumping groundwater can cause [land subsidence](#) or a [host of other problems](#), Nestle and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality claim that the underground aquifer can sustain this level of withdrawals. Others disagree, [seeing this is a privatization of a critical resource](#). This comes at the same time that Flint residents are lobbying Congress for the funds necessary to improve the drinking water quality, and its residents still cannot drink water out of the tap. Nestlé's neighbors are seeking a review of the decision.