



# TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy  
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## Water Takes Center Stage at COP16

For the last two weeks, collectives of environmental advocates and policymakers met in Cali, Colombia, to engage in critical natural resources management discussions. The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity ([COP16](#)) ends today. This COP, as opposed to the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference ([COP29](#)), meets every two years to discuss the [conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of their components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of using genetic resources](#). With this very lofty goal in mind, [representatives](#) from almost 200 countries came together to negotiate solutions and figure out how to [pay](#) for this global conservation effort, which experts say will be a respectable [\\$700 billion](#) a year. Like a party with [Mishka the Bear](#), the [U.S. remains notably absent](#) from the Convention.

As nation-states continue to negotiate funding, Indigenous communities worldwide are [advocating for the recognition of Indigenous rights](#) as part of the [solution to the Earth's biodiversity crisis, which impacts water resources around the world](#). Indigenous voices from two major river systems (the Amazon and Mackenzie – one you know the other is in faaar northern Canada) were present and advocated for the rights and recognition of Indigenous and local community members in water resources management. This global movement has [Indigenous organizations from nine Amazonian countries](#) launching an unprecedented alliance to defend the Amazon. The [Amazonian River system contains almost 20%](#) of the planet's freshwater and has seen both extreme flooding and drought in the past 5 years, weird but, [alas and alack](#), that's climate change for you. This [G9](#) alliance demands governments worldwide [recognize that traditional peoples are the leading moral authorities in conserving biomes, protecting species diversity, and regulating the climate](#). This demand [echoes the](#) sentiments of UN Secretary-General António Guterres as he called for more diverse solutions (traditional ecological knowledge) to offer essential insights for biodiversity conservation efforts.

Further North, an Indigenous community group called the [Keepers of the Water](#) is a [coalition of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and environmental groups concerned about water quality in the Mackenzie River Basin](#), also known as the *Deh Cho*, which translates to the “Big River.” The watershed is the second-largest drainage basin in North America (second to the one and only [Mississippi River Basin](#), of course) and is recognized as a globally important area for climate change and mitigation. The Keepers of the Water are deeply concerned that releasing effluent from [oil sands](#) and tailings ponds into the Basin will harm the *Deh Cho*. At the COP16, the Keepers of Water advocated for better river system management, highlighting the urgent need for action. They believe the government has mismanaged its fresh water and demand that the government commit to no more tailings ponds.

As Indigenous and local communities were put at the forefront of biodiversity solutions and water resources management, Colombia unveiled an [alternative model for water management](#). As the COP16 host country, Colombia aimed to set a global environmental protection standard by establishing the country's first Water Police, the “Policía del Agua” [division](#). The new force has 8,000 agents specializing in protecting water resources, with national and transnational approaches to responding to environmental crimes in the Amazon region. According to the Director of the National Police, the agents “have the technical capacity and specific knowledge to generate educational, operative

and anticipatory actions in the face of the main risks that may materialize against bodies of water such as rivers, lakes, reservoirs, moors, and wetlands.” The COP16 was a global stage for environmental advocates, whether through global political negotiations, Indigenous stewardship, or policing. Here’s hoping these defenders will see positive change in their local and international communities, and kudos to their efforts!

## Water Fans, [Mark Your Calendars!](#)

This upcoming summer, the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy will be bringing some of those important global water conversations to the Big Easy. “*Water in Americas’ Human Landscapes: A Tulane Law and Policy Symposium*” will take place from **June 16 to June 18, 2025**, at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Symposium will bring together experts and practitioners from around the world to discuss and share their experiences and expertise on a wide range of topics related to water law and policy, including the status of the human right to water, flooding, water-driven insurance challenges, mining and climate economy, agriculture, and more! Check out the [event site for registration information and more details](#) about the Symposium.

### Coming Up:

[Tulane Environmental Law Summit](#)  
March 28-29, 2025

[Water in Americas’ Human Landscapes: Tulane Law & Policy Symposium](#)  
June 16-18, 2025

### Water jobs:

[Water Resources Program Manager; National Wildlife Federation;](#)  
Washington D.C. / Mississippi River states

[Engagement Manager; National Audubon Society; New Orleans, LA](#)

[Community Science and Environmental Education Manager;](#)  
Pontchartrain Conservancy; New Orleans LA

[Sportsmen Outreach and Policy Specialist; National Wildlife Federation;](#)  
New Orleans, LA

[Visiting Professor \(Clinical Assistant Professor\); Tulane Environmental Law Clinic; New Orleans, LA](#)



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.

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