



TUWaterWays

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

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Is It Me or Is It Feeling Too **Hot Hot Hot?**

Just when everyone thought brat summer was over and [pumpkin spice lattes](#) were just around the corner, [intense heat waves have persisted across the U.S.](#), from the South to the North. Besides obvious direct impacts that [major heat waves](#) bring, like heat strokes, high temperatures have also impacted cities by exposing [sensitive power grids](#) and causing other infrastructure-related issues, like [metro and Amtrak delays](#). And when temperatures go up, energy demand goes up. In order to beat the heat, people blast their air conditioners, which further strains [power grids](#), [something which was not foreseen](#) when most of this infrastructure was built. Maybe it's time to lay off the a/c and take a history lesson from the beautiful [architecture around Southern Cities](#).

Another consequence of the [high temperatures and climate change are wildfires](#). Wildfires have been in the news for months now - and asking for rain to calm down these fires isn't even a viable option anymore—[just ask Ruidoso, NM](#). Places known to be wetter than others have started to dry out as a consequence of climate change, which puts them at risk for uncharacteristic wildfires. In Brazil, [the world's largest wetland – The Pantanal – is on fire](#). The Pantanal spans over 68,000 miles, about 20 times the size of the Everglades, stretching across Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia. It's home to [more than 4,700 plant and animal species](#), making it one of the most biologically rich-environments on Earth. So, what happened? Lack of rain. A [study by the World Weather Attribution](#) argues that the hot, dry and windy weather conditions we're seeing are a consequence of human-induced climate change, making this June the worst one on record. The fires in the Pantanal that started early in June have escalated to an area around the size of New Jersey and are expected to last until October, when the rainy season begins in the area. To make matters worse, the Brazilian government is planning a navigation project along nearly 500 miles of [the Paraguay River into the Hidrovia Paraguay-Parana waterway](#). A [paper published by forty scientists](#) warn that the navigation development, the expansion of industrial farming, and climate change threaten the wetland ecosystem, expressing that the dredging that will be used for the project will reduce the floodplain and shrink the wetland area, which would result in severe degradation and increased fire risk.

The consequences of the fires in the Pantanal cannot be quantified until they stop. But just up north, a [new study from Nature](#) found that last year's wildfires in Canada produced more carbon emissions than every country except for the United States, China, and India. Wildfires aren't abnormal, but what is shocking is the fact that these [forests aren't regrowing](#) at the pace they're supposed to. This is specially unsettling because typically, [Canada's forests absorb more CO₂ than they release](#). So, what does this mean? Well, it sure gives [scientists and researchers](#) a lot to study in the coming years.

Well, If We're Not Gonna Pump Gas, We Need to Pump Something Else

The [Army Corps has decided to revisit an environmental permit it issued to Hyundai Motor Company](#) for its electrical vehicle and battery manufacturing development in Bryan County, Georgia. The permit authorizes permanent impacts to 221.36 acres of wetlands, finding the project would result in negligible impacts to municipal water supplies. Despite that, the Army Corps stated that no additional water withdrawal permits would be required from the Georgia

Environmental Protection Division. However, Georgia EPD issued draft permits for four wells in Bulloch County, which sits next to Bryan County, to withdraw water for the project. This would potentially mean that [6.6 million gallons of water per day would be pumped from the Floridian Aquifer](#), which the Army Corps had not considered in its previous environmental review because the state did not include this information in its Clean Water Act permit application. This came to light after the [Ogeechee Riverkeeper filed a letter of intent to sue](#) the Army Corps earlier this year, alleging that the agency failed to consider project-related groundwater withdrawals, among other arguments. According to the Army Corps, they relied on the information provided by the Georgia Department of Economic Development in their permit application. Which explains our [trust issues](#). Now, this doesn't mean that the original permit has been revoked. With no deadline or timeline for the reevaluation, Hyundai may continue its development.

Despite its name, the [Floridian Aquifer](#) does not only sit in the Sunshine State. While the aquifer does cover the entirety of Florida, it's also found under parts of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina, and a little into the Gulf of Mexico. The aquifer is used for public water supply and agriculture across the states, being the primary source of drinking water for almost [ten million people, with 50% of its withdrawals](#) going to agriculture and industrial purposes. So why is the pumping of this aquifer so concerning in this scenario? Groundwater regulation and protection are much needed tools to prevent saltwater intrusion (something most [Louisianans know about](#)), since the aquifer sits [in close proximity to rising seas](#). This has rung alarms to regulators for years, and now with sea levels rising and lack of rain, the aquifer may be more at risk than previously thought.

But water in Florida can be used for much more than that. With its beautiful landscapes and biodiverse environment, the perfect outdoor experience could only be made better with one more thing – a golf course! At least according to some. Last week, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection announced the new [2024-2025 Great Outdoors Initiative](#) to “increase public access, recreation and lodging” at Florida’s state parks. The Great Outdoors Initiative was established in an executive order signed by Governor DeSantis to encourage Floridians to go outside and enjoy their beautiful state parks. The plan included [half-priced annual state park passes and half-priced sportsman licenses](#), among other things. So, by the time the 2024 fiscal plan came about, everyone had their kayaks, fishermen hats, and sunscreen ready, but no one expected the plans to be this... well... so water consuming. Besides proposing camping sites, cabins, and lodges on park property, the initiative also includes recreation opportunities at the state parks like pickleball, disc golf, and golf. Facing unexpected bipartisan opposition to the initiative, one of the groups looking to develop the [Jonathan Dickinson State Park golf course](#) in southeast Florida backed out. The agency had planned public hearings for last Tuesday, which were postponed. Now where will we golf with [only 1,250 golf courses](#) left in Florida?

Coming Up:

[Army Corps Neptune Pass Draft Environmental Assessment Public Comments; Deadline August 31, 2024](#)

[CRCLecture – Boyce Upholt; Baton Rouge, LA; September 5, 2024](#)

[State of the Coast 2025 Proposals Deadline September 23, 2024](#)

Water jobs:

[Community Science and Environmental Education Manager; Pontchartrain Conservancy; New Orleans, LA \(deadline today!\)](#)

[Policy Fellow; Louisiana Public Service Commission; Southeast LA](#)

[Water Quality Fellow; The Water Collaborative; New Orleans, LA \(deadline today!\)](#)

[Principal Counsel, Environmental Law; Berkeley Lab, San Francisco Bay Area, CA \(deadline today!\)](#)

[Attorney-Advisor \(General\); Department of Commerce, Silver Spring, MD](#)



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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