

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
March 15, 2017

God Speed Big Puff

Sometimes we miss something in the news cycle that common decency won't let us fail to mention when we do learn about it. This is one of those times.

John "Big Puff" Hankinson Jr. died March 3 at the age of 68 after a life full of music, friendship to human kind and nature, and public service. John played harp (harmonica) in two legendary bands Johnny Matanzas and the Hombres and the Nonessentials. His harp was a constant companion as was his willingness to lend people and nature a helping hand whenever he could. He could grill, paddle and swap tales with the best of them and he wore his love for his home state of Florida on his sleeve (which often as not was short and floral print). Indeed, he loved that state in a way that perhaps only a kid born in Ohio can.

In his spare time, John served as Administrator of EPA's Region 4 in Atlanta, Chairman and Federal Representative of the Sabine River Compact Commission (Texas and Louisiana), and Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force that President Obama set up following the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

A memorial service was held March 7 in Ocala. His broader memorial will be the places and people he touched and left better off for it. Good bye John.

Draining the Swamp

It's the most wonderful time of the year... and by that we mean festival season in Louisiana, not budget wrangling time in the nation's capital. As the new administration familiarizes itself with the budgets and processes of our federal agencies, we are getting a better idea of where the fat might be getting a trim. Not surprisingly, many of the proposed budget cuts are aimed at environmental programs, especially ones that deal with climate change. The EPAs already thin budget will be cut further, eliminating major pollution remediation programs, including a 90% cut to funds dedicated to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay and 97% cuts to Great Lakes pollution cleanup.

Even more alarming, a recent memo from the White House indicates that NOAA, a federal agency dealing with oceans, the weather, and pretty much everything else we take for granted, will be facing a 17% cut in their funding. Yep. It's true. The gang who let you know whether to wear a rain jacket or a parka may be getting (some of) the ax. While there are cuts

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:

[CRCL Coastal Restoration Road Show](#)
Abbeville, Lafitte, Cameron & Lacombe, LA
February & March, 2017

[Mississippi River Commission High-Water Inspection Trip](#)

Hickman, Memphis, Greenville, Baton Rouge
April 3-7, 2017

[New Water Music](#)
New Orleans, LA
April 8, 2017

Water jobs:

[Project Specialist \(Enviro. Initiatives \(Temp\)\)](#)

World Economic Forum
Geneva, Switzerland

[U.S. Government Relations Coordinator for Water Policy](#)

The Nature Conservancy
Washington, DC

[Assistant Analyst \(Climate Finance\)](#)

Climate Policy Initiative
San Francisco, CA

Tulane Institute
on Water Resources Law & Policy

6325 Freret Street, 1st Floor
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-865-5982

tulanewater.org

TWITTER: [@TulaneWaterLaw](https://twitter.com/TulaneWaterLaw)

across the board to the agency, the proposed budget specifically targets coastal programs, including an educational partnership called [Sea Grant](#), which supports coastal research at 33 universities across the country, including here at LSU.

This a major deal for coastal Louisianans because we rely on these folks [expertise \(and funds\)](#) to help us with our coastal programs, including the execution of the Master Plan. Most of you don't need reminding, but just in case - Coastal land loss, rising sea levels and subsidence are [threatening our homes](#) in ways we are scrambling to prevent. And, our situation isn't looking sunnier either [financially](#) or in light of [rising climate threats](#). Funds are limited, and everyone wants them. [Scientists from Florida](#) are pushing back on the cuts to NOAA, writing to President Trump hoping to appeal to his love of Florida, Governor Edwards has [asked for Louisiana coastal projects](#) to be prioritized in Trump's budget allocations, and the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative is hoping for an [\\$8 billion](#) drop in their infrastructure bucket. But, this may not be enough without our friends at NOAA. Put simply, if coastal and climate research programs aren't preserved, the Bayou Bengals may soon be the Gulf of Mexico Bengals, and that doesn't have quite the same ring to it (nor tax base).

[The Dog Ate Our Homework](#)

This week the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the whole country a [report card](#) we won't be showing our parents. We got a D+ on our infrastructure, and no amount of white out, typewriter, and/or red-pen skills will turn it into a B+. While this might give a needed boost to support for President Trump's infrastructure investment plan, experts are noting that [getting the funds](#) to fix these problems is going to be pretty challenging. Failing water infrastructure is making waves in [California](#) and [Michigan](#), to be sure, but it also is affecting us in the Gulf Coast region. St. Joseph, La. made the [national news](#) this past December for its drinking water looking less than drinkable, and causing enough concern for a state of emergency to be declared. While that news coverage came and went quickly, the situation has progressed a much slower rate. As early as [January of this year](#), the Louisiana National Guard was delivering bottled water to residents twice a week. In good news, [a new water system is underway](#), breaking ground in the last week. Hopefully, this means that, for at least the residents of Tensas Parish, clean water is in the foreseeable future. But how to fix this problem nationally? That's a question for a much longer newsletter (or just a much shorter [tweet](#)).

[Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes](#)

Is all of this bad news bumming you out? Need a nautical change of pace? Us too and now Jimmy Buffett's here to save us from (or with) [the blues](#). If [you're a pirate looking](#) at 55 or better, you can spend your final [Mondays](#) in [Margaritaville](#) (also known as Daytona Beach, Florida), in the first ever [retirement community for Parrottheads](#). No longer will you need to wait for Buffett's next tour date to hear [Fins](#) or [Volcano](#), you can do it all while [enjoying some cocktails](#), or better yet, a [cheeseburger](#), with 7,000 of your closest friends as early as Fall 2017. We confess that we are more than a little saddened that the refrain, "wasting away in Margaritaville" has come to mean this.