

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
September 6, 2017

Calling All Movers & Shakers

Recent flooding has shone a bright light on New Orleans' environmental and infrastructural vulnerabilities when it comes to flood risk, and the need for well-informed leadership on storm water management. To that end, the Urban Conservancy is partnering with the Greater New Orleans Foundation to host this mayoral forum on "Flood Risk and Environmental Adaptation." This moderated forum gives candidates the opportunity to answer questions on issues pertaining to: New Orleans' role in Louisiana's coastal land loss crisis and restoration efforts, the City's flood protection and the future of living with water, and the City's role in committing to climate change adaptation and the principles delineated in the Paris Climate Accord.

The forum will be held Thursday, September 14 at 5:30 pm at the New Orleans Jazz Market, 1436 Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard. You can [RSVP here](#), just [show up](#), or stream the forum live on [TheLensNOLA.com](#). However you get there, we hope to see you there!

Wish Someone Would Care

In case you missed it, a massive hurricane turned tropical storm devastated southeast Texas last week, [leaving 36 dead and around \\$100 billion in damage](#). Houston's Mayor has [announced](#) that the city is back up for business, but some are questioning how long the return to normalcy will take. Folks are very concerned about [what's in the water](#) floating through city streets, and what diseases it might be spreading. On top of [the regular stuff](#) – fecal matter from overflowing sewers, pesticides from lawns, and a huge amount of debris and garbage – 13 Superfund sites, large numbers of oil refineries and facilities, and [other chemical plants](#) were in the path of the storm. Moreover, parts of Texas still do not have access to clean drinking water at all, including still-submerged Port Arthur and Beaumont (leading to [sanctioned warehouse heists](#) like these). If able, you can continue to help relief efforts through a donation to the [Red Cross](#), or [another able-bodied organization](#).

While we know that the physical impacts of climate change [may not be the first](#) to devastate communities, when they come, they strike at the heart of our humanitarian nature and push us to improve our planning process to better prepare for the next, inevitable event. (See, i.e. [Irma](#), and not the one who has [time on her side](#)). As Puerto Rico, Florida, and others in the path of Irma (again, [not this one](#)) prepare for the most massive storm ever seen in the Atlantic, which just [devastated St. Marten](#) this morning, questions are rising about how in the world the United States will be able to fund such a broad disaster recovery. And, the impact of Hurricane Harvey on Houston in particular has brought to light the

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:

September 8, 2017

[Fourth Annual River Symposium—Teche-Vermilion Watershed: Building on Regional Progress](#)

Vermilionville
300 Fisher Road
Lafayette, LA

September 27, 2017

Louisiana Water Resources Commission
11:00 a.m.

LaBelle Room, LaSalle Building, 617 N. 3rd St
Baton Rouge, LA

September 14, 2017

[Mayoral Forum on Flood Risk](#)

5:30 p.m.
New Orleans Jazz Market
1436 OC Haley Blvd

Water jobs:

[Senior Policy Advisor, Intl. Climate Policy](#)

The Nature Conservancy
Washington, DC

[Conservation Director](#)

Friends of the Mississippi River
St. Paul, MN

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vulnerability of our sprawling coastal cities in the face of climate change.

Even if we set aside the billions of dollars necessary to fund cleanup, we're still in a pickle. FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program is wayyyy in the hole with Congress and guess what it's spending the most the money on – hurricane related flood damage. A recent report from the CBO found that the subsidized program is encouraging people to live in high-risk flood zones that are particularly prone to storm damage, and raises the same concerns we've been dealing with for some time now – what happens when the coast is uninsurable, and the disaster fund is depleted? As Congress comes back in session for September, it will be dealing with beaucoup requests for disaster assistance, and reevaluating its commitment to the NFIP. We need to clean up, and we need to rebuild, but, as these events become increasingly common, the dollars that fund disaster cannot continue to finance our future. We need, also, to better prepare. The importance of proactive and resilience oriented urban planning should not go unnoticed in the wake of these disasters. While that can mean anything from shoring up our drainage systems to full on relocation, we cannot afford to put off the discussion any longer.

The Boys (& 19.3% Women) Are Back in Town

Congress is back, y'all, and boy, oh boy, do they have a whole lot on their agenda this session. There are even a couple environmental issues to tune in for, because, as Questlove knows, it's pretty messed up not to care about the environment. First up, actually funding the government! Even the EPA! Because, you know, there are several things the EPA does to make your life better: Clean up Superfund sites. Go to the Superfund sites after disasters (like Harvey and Irma) and make sure they aren't leaking everywhere. Clean air. Clean water. Chemical-free food. That's all the EPA! Rumor has it that there are other parts of the Federal government worth funding, too. Also, Congress (likely) will be reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program this session. Even if there are ~~a few~~ many problems with the program, it is helping people like you, and you, and you, to afford homeowners insurance. So, whether we like it or not, we may need it to stay afloat just a little bit longer.

Come One, Come All

The 5th Biennial State of the Coast Conference (SOC18) is coming up, May 30- June 1, 2018 right here in the beautiful Crescent City, and the team over at the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana is looking for your brilliant ideas for panel topics. Submit away, but do it soon! The deadline is September 11.