

# TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy  
December 17, 2013

## **Raising the Curtain: Louisiana and Water Institute Announce Plans for Baton Rouge Water Campus**

Begging the question of whether you can actually have a campus in Louisiana without any sports teams, the State of Louisiana and The Water Institute of the Gulf have [announced](#) plans for a 26 acre campus on the banks of the Mississippi River in Baton Rouge. The Water Institute of the Gulf (not to be confused with this Institute) is an independent coastal and water research organization created in large measure to facilitate the understanding, conservation, and restoration of the wetland and water ecosystems of coastal Louisiana. This all fits into the growing awareness that Louisiana needs to [up its game](#) in the water management field. The campus will be home to a physical model of a portion of the Mississippi River and to scholars from the Water Institute and partnering universities (including Tulane). The state expects the facility to spawn 20,000-45,000 jobs in the water management sector of the economy over the next two decades.

## **Hey! You With the Big Ideas, Yeah You—Design Competition Names Semifinalists for Restoring Mississippi River Delta**

When undertaking something on the scale of fixing a broken delta it might be a good idea to bring the best talent and thinking to bear before making too many final plans. That certainly is the notion behind the [Changing Course](#) design competition being led by Environmental Defense Fund and a 17 member public/private team. The competition has been soliciting participants since September and now has settled on [8 semifinalist teams](#). The finalists will share a \$400,000 prize to more fully develop their ideas for saving the delta and coastal Louisiana.

## **Back to the Drawing Board? Court Rejects Las Vegas' Water Import Plan**

Big needs often give birth to big plans and fewer needs are more apparent than those of Las Vegas and Southwestern Nevada for new water supplies if they are going to continue to grow. And few plans were bigger or more audacious than the Southern Nevada Water Authority's plan for a \$15 billion 285 mile pipeline to import ground water from eastern Nevada to the Las Vegas region. Such a plan is bound to raise hackles, and this one did among ranchers, farmers, tribes, environmental groups, folks in neighboring Utah, and even the Mormon Church who argued that project was improperly approved by Nevada's state engineer. A Nevada district [court has now agreed](#). This is almost

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:

**January 14, 2014, 5:30 PM**  
[Early NRDA PEIS Public Meeting](#)  
Belle Chasse Auditorium,  
8398 Louisiana 23, Belle Chasse, LA

**January 15, 2014**  
[Early NRDA PEIS Public Meeting](#)  
Warren J. Harang Jr. Municipal Auditorium,  
310 N. Canal Blvd, Thibodaux, LA

**January 16, 2014**  
[Early NRDA PEIS Public Meeting](#)  
Spring Hill Suites Lake Charles  
1551 West Prien Lake Rd, Lake Charles, LA

**February 21-23, 2014**  
Tulane Environmental Law Summit  
Tulane Law School  
New Orleans, LA

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certainly not the last word in this saga, so we stay tuned.

### **Tis the Season—For Redrawing State Boundaries**

It would hardly be a week of water news without something from the Texas and Oklahoma border, and this week does not disappoint. This time Texas is attempting to reset its border with Oklahoma—last set just 13 years ago—and as one might expect, water is the reason. Unlike recent dust ups, [the latest story](#) is not so much about getting access to water as it is about reactivating a pumping station on Lake Texoma that provides water to a number of North Texas towns. The pumping station straddles the Texas/Oklahoma state line (a result of that boundary agreement 13 years ago). Things were fine until 2009 when the Federal government ordered the station shut down to avoid violating the Lacey Act, a federal law that prohibits the shipment of invasive zebra mussels across state lines. The idea behind the Texas plan appears to be that by redrawing the border to put the plant back in Texas, the mussels will be tricked into not being pumped across state lines and the Lacey Act problem will go away. There will undoubtedly be more to this story.

### **Florida Department of Environmental Protection Commits Act of Environmental Protection: North Florida Utilities Say “Not So Fast!”**

Almost four decades after it was directed to do so, Florida’s DEP has established minimum flows for two north Florida streams and their feeding streams. Apparently surprised by the swift action, a group of nine utilities in the area are [pressing for a delay](#) of the action. The Lower Sante Fe and Ichetucknee rivers are already well below the minimum flow needed to avoid significant environmental harm, and springs, like Poe Springs, that once brought tourists from across the country have stopped flowing. Taking a strong stance, some of the utilities are considering a challenge to the new regulations if no delay is granted.

### **What Could be Better than Soap with Scrubby Microbeads? Maybe Soap That Doesn’t Lead to Plastic Pollution**

It is widely known that plastic from litter is congregating in the oceans into floating [patches](#) larger than Texas. But maybe you did not know that your choice of soap might also be putting troublesome amounts of plastic into watery ecosystems. [News from the Great Lakes](#) reveals that tiny plastic beads the size of the period at the end of this sentence have become a popular additive to soaps and entering the Lakes. They go down the drain, through the sewage treatment plant unscathed, and right out into the water. More troublingly, the small bits can become coated with other substances that are less than benign from an ecological and human health standpoint. Major soap makers have pledged to remove the beads from products, but that may take a while. In the meantime consumers have a choice to make when they buy soap. We will admit that between this news and warnings about [antibacterial soaps](#) your responsible choice of soaps may be more limited than anybody would like.

### **Jupiter Moon May Be Wastefully Spouting Water**

Timed almost as if it were intended to infuriate water stewards in Texas, Oklahoma, Nevada, Utah and everywhere else, comes [news](#) that there is one place that apparently has nothing better to do with water than to shoot it into the atmosphere. That place is one of Jupiter’s moons, Europa. According to a [report](#) in the Journal Science, “surpluses” of hydrogen and oxygen in the atmosphere my signal plumes of water. The presence of water would bolster the possibility of life existing on Europa, life that undoubtedly has no modesty about its water use.

### **TUWaterWays Will Be Back in 2014**

This will be our last edition of the year as Tulane goes on hiatus the last week of the year. They even turn off the heat in our offices! So although we’d love to come in and make sure you’re all kept up to date on the latest “water news and more,” you’ll have to make do without us for the next couple of weeks. Have a Happy New Year!