TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
July 18, 2017

Peace in the Middle East, Piece by Piece

In much of the world, water features serve as easily identifiable boundary lines – convenient demarcations between nations, regions, and states. And yet, even as they divide us geographically, they can also bring us together as a finite resource requiring cross-border cooperation. Water's power to bring people together was on display in one of the world's most dispute-riven regions last week. Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian officials announced their cooperation on a massive water infrastructure project that will benefit all three and, to some extent, bind their economic interests together.

The Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal Project will carry water from the Red Sea through the Kingdom of Jordan to a desalination facility on the southern edge of the Dead Sea. In exchange for the right-of-way, Israel will build a pipeline to the Jordanian capital of Amman and provide 32 million cubic meters of treated water to Palestine. Practically, this will go a long ways to alleviating the region's water woes. Symbolically, it is the first time in a long time that representative of Israel and Palestine have sat together at a joint press conference to announce good news. Of course, there is still a long way to go to brokering the ever-elusive lasting peace in the region. Nevertheless, we will raise a glass of Red Sea water and toast to the hope that this is a sign of things to come.

Proto-RoboCop Meets Watery End

It's a stressful time to work in our nation's capital. Stalled legislation, looming budget battles, John Wall's possible departure in free agency, these all take a toll on the District's residents. For one upstart security robot, the distractions of beltway life may have caused it to lose track of its surroundings. The security robot, made by Knightscope, had just begun patrolling an office complex in Georgetown when it apparently forgot the Asimov's third law of robotics and tumbled down a set of steps into a shallow fountain. The internet, as it is wont to do, had a field day.

Get in the Zone

The AutoZone? No. You mean the no-spin zone? The Bohn Zone? The Game of Zones? No, no, and no. Ohhhhh, you must be talking about the Twilight Zone. Unfortunately, no, we're

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:

July 19, 2017
CPRA Board Meeting
Chalmette, LA

Water jobs:

Research Fellow in Urban Flood Resilience
University of Leeds
Leeds, United Kingdom
Arizona Water Projects Admin Coordinator
The Nature Conservancy
Phoenix, Arizona
Planning Division Manager
Puget Sound Partnership
Tacoma, Washington

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talking about the Dead Zone. Ah yes, the short lived (and highly underrated) Anthony Michael Hall TV show that aired on the USA network! …NO!

Ok, forget the zones…we're talking about the massive zo…er, area…of hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico, an ecological disaster largely caused by nutrient runoff. Nutrient-rich fertilizers applied on fields from Montana to Pennsylvania make their way into the mighty Mississip' and on to the Gulf of Mexico. Those nutrients (mainly phosphorous and nitrogen) feed blooms of algae that quickly die off. Bacteria helps decompose the algae and in the process sucks up all the dissolved oxygen in the water. That's bad news for the creatures and the fishing industries that depend on the dissolved oxygen to live. The lack of oxygen can inhibit the growth of fish and shrimp and kill off stationary species like oysters. This year, scientists predict the hypoxic zone to be the largest ever, roughly the size of Vermont.

So, what can we do? Well, a lot…if we're willing to pay for it. Improving irrigation can reduce runoff from America's agricultural heartland. Restoring wetlands can help suck up nutrients before they reach the Gulf. The EPA has grant programs to encourage such measures, but much of that funding is absent from the Trump Administration's budget proposals.

Breaking Away

A Kramer vs Kramer-esque separation years in the making finally reached an end last week. One of the largest icebergs ever recorded calved off the Larsen C ice sheet into the Antarctic Ocean. After the parting, the iceberg will go by A86. The iceberg is the size of Delaware and made up roughly 12% of Larsen C's size. Mapmakers will have to redraw the charts to reflect the altered shape of the southernmost continent. Scientists predict the newly liberated mass of ice will make its way to warmer waters as it melts and breaks up further. Shipping companies will closely monitor the new 'berg as it slowly splinters over the coming months, with some pieces possibly floating around for years.

The timing of the event strikes some as ominous, coming a little over a month after Pres. Trump pulled the US out of the Paris climate accords. While scientists are not ruling out global warming as a contributing factor, they caution that calving is a natural process and that Antarctica is not, as of yet, falling apart. Further, because ice sheets are already floating, the partition will not contribute to sea level rise in any detectable way. On the other hand, it could be a prelude to an accelerating collapse of all Antarctic ice sheets. Much of the remaining ice *is* on land, and if that spills into the sea it will necessarily lead to sea level rise. That collapse would dramatically reshape our world in ways we can only begin to predict.