

From: WEF SmartBrief <wef@smartbrief.com>
Sent: Aug 29, 2025 19:47:05.000000000 UTC
Subject: Upcoming EPA rule may curtail wetland protection
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August 29, 2025



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Today's News

Upcoming EPA rule may curtail wetland protection



(Tayfun Coskun/Anadolu via Getty Images)

The Environmental Protection Agency is preparing to propose a new rule under the Clean Water Act that would narrow federal jurisdiction over wetlands, according to an internal presentation obtained by E&E News. Under the proposal, wetlands would only be protected if they contain surface water for the entire wet season and are directly adjacent to waterbodies that also flow during the wet season. "The agencies plan to take final action on the rule by the end of the year," said an EPA spokesperson.

Full Story: [E&E News](#) (8/28)

Hurricane Katrina recovery still underway 20 years later

The Mississippi Gulf Coast has faced a slow and challenging recovery 20 years after Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the region with a 30-foot storm surge and 120-mph winds. Towns like Waveland and Pearlington still bear scars, with significant population loss and many empty lots where homes once stood. Even after two decades, some areas remain in a state of partial recovery, with residents adapting to a new normal and striving to rebuild their sense of community.

Full Story: [CBS News](#) (8/29), [National Public Radio](#) (8/29)



Zeldin: Lead exposure prevention, safety an EPA priority

The Environmental Protection Agency is working on multiple fronts to reduce exposure to lead, including addressing contamination at Superfund sites and working closely with states, communities and partners to communicate exposure risks and increase blood lead testing. "As a country, we've made great progress in lowering children's blood lead levels over the last 50 years, but potential exposures to lead in the home and our environment still present a risk, especially for our children," said Administrator Lee Zeldin.

Full Story: [Bloomberg Law](#) (8/28)



Fla.'s springs face threats from pollution, development

Florida's iconic freshwater springs are facing mounting threats from multiple sources, including agricultural runoff, rapid urban development, phosphate mining and climate change. Increased use of fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture, combined with expanding construction and population growth, has led to polluted runoff, algae blooms and diminished water quality in the springs. Over-extraction of water from the Floridan Aquifer further stresses the springs, and legal and political battles have stalled progress on stronger protections.

Full Story: [The Associated Press](#) (8/29)



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Circular Water Economy

South Texas residents oppose proposed desal facility

Residents in Robstown, Texas, are voicing concerns about a proposed South Texas Water Authority desalination project that would treat up to 3 million gallons of brackish groundwater daily. Some are concerned that the project, which could be expanded to serve Corpus Christi, may result in higher taxes and water bills, as well as other challenges. Draft results of hydrological and discharge studies are expected by early September, says Seven Seas Water Group CEO Henry Charrabe.

Full Story: [KRIS-TV \(Corpus Christi, Texas\)](#) (8/28)



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Infrastructure Watch

Ohio county forms regional sewer district CLERWTR

Lorain County, Ohio, is regionalizing its collection systems through the Central Lake Erie Regional Water Reclamation District, or CLERWTR, to improve efficiency and centralize water reclamation. It also plans to consolidate nine smaller water resource recovery facilities into a pair of larger ones to help stabilize rates and manage collection system-related debt. "If we can get that bulk number up fast, we could actually treat more sewage for the same cost. So the more we treat, the lower our costs are," said Jeff Riddell of the Lorain County Board of Commissioners.

Full Story: [WEWS-TV \(Cleveland\)](#) (8/28)



Water Environment Research

Read more from Water Environment Research (WER) [here](#).



- **Effect of a Subinhibitory Benzalkonium Chloride Concentration on the Development of Antibiotic Resistance and the Performance of Activated Sludge Semicontinuous Reactors (8/27)**
- **A Multivariate Approach for the Treatment of Mixed Anodizing Coating Wastewater by Electrochemical Processes (8/27)**
- **Assessment of Microplastics in Pond Water and Sediments in Vadodara City, India (8/27)**

Funding and Financing

N.Y. allocates \$3.4B for water infrastructure projects

New York has allocated \$3.4 billion for water infrastructure projects in fiscal 2025, marking a 55% increase in year-over-year funding. The funding, which includes support from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, will support 328 projects to improve water quality and create 30,000 jobs.

Full Story: [WRGB-TV \(Albany, N.Y.\)](#) (8/27)

Stormwater

Urban swales help filter stormwater near Great Salt Lake



Great Salt Lake in Utah. (Frederic J. Brown/AFP via Getty Images)

Managing stormwater in the Great Salt Lake Basin is a complex process because leaders must strike a balance between improving water quality while ensuring sufficient flows are reaching the lake. Stormwater accounts for about 7% of inflows to Great Salt Lake, according to a 2023 study, and stakeholders are using low-impact development techniques such as urban swales, permeable pavement and bio-retention gardens to filter pollutants in runoff. Experts are optimistic that LID will also help restore the area's natural hydrological cycle, including aquifer recharge processes.

Full Story: [The Salt Lake Tribune \(Salt Lake City\)](#) (8/29)



Research, Innovation & Technology

Demolition robots aid in Toronto wastewater project

Southland Mole of Canada has used Brokk demolition robots to tackle the complex Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant Outfall project in Toronto. The project, which aims to expand the city's water resource recovery capacity, involves extensive underground tunneling and connecting 50 risers. The Brokk 120DII has been crucial in safely excavating upward through the lakebed, protecting operators from falling debris and water.

Full Story: [Compact Equipment](#) (8/28)



Workforce

Ask these questions to expand your self-awareness



(Luis Alvarez/Getty Images)

Leaders can boost their self-awareness by asking questions of trusted colleagues, writes Amber Johnson, a leadership development consultant, who relates an example of a general manager who intended to have an open-door policy but didn't support the policy with behavior that encouraged feedback. Johnson recommends asking: "What's something I do -- maybe without realizing -- that impacts the team, positively or negatively?" or "What assumptions do you think I tend to make about people or situations?" to increase self-awareness.

Full Story: [SmartBrief/Leadership](#) (8/28)



Question of the Day

What is your primary motivation for working in water/wastewater treatment?

Environmental protection - **40%**



Public health and safety - **23%**



Career stability and benefits - **15%**



Technical or engineering interest - **22%**



Today at WEF

Attend Student and Young Professionals events at WEFTEC



The WEF Students and Young Professionals Community (SYPC) develops several regular programs at WEFTEC. These programs drive innovation, enrich the expertise of water professionals and increase the awareness of the value of water. [Learn more and register today!](#)

(WEF)



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Recognizing top MS4 communities, WEF's National Stormwater Awards recognize high-performing communities that meet and exceed regulatory requirements in a technically effective and financially efficient manner.

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[Innovation category by August 31.](#)





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In Case You Missed It

- **Water waste detectives are on the case in Las Vegas**
[National Public Radio](#) (8/28)
- **Portland, Ore., a model for green stormwater solutions**
[Oregon Public Broadcasting](#) (8/27)
- **Real-time water quality system upgraded in SE Mich.**
[Michigan Public](#) (8/27)

Note From the Editor

SmartBrief will not publish Monday, Sept. 1

In observance of Labor Day in the US, SmartBrief will not publish on Monday Sept. 1.

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