

**CLIMATE ADAPTATION
RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM**

MEASURING & REDUCING SOCIETAL IMPACTS

Quantifying and Minimizing Water Quality Impacts

Thanks for joining us!
The session will begin shortly.

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Allison Lassiter

University of Pennsylvania



Ryan Sinclair

Loma Linda University



Nate Jones

University of Alabama



**CLIMATE ADAPTATION
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MEASURING & REDUCING SOCIETAL IMPACTS

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Allison Lassiter

Assistant Professor, University of Pennsylvania,
@allisonlassiter

Managing Salinization in a Coastal
Watershed: Critical Infrastructure and
Partnerships for Climate Adaptation

Managing salinization in a coastal watershed: critical infrastructure and partnerships for climate adaptation

Allison Lassiter, Scott Moore, and Zoe Covello

Presented by:

Allison Lassiter

Assistant Professor

City and Regional Planning

University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design

alass@design.upenn.edu

1. **Motivation + research questions**
2. **The case of Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority**
 - Trends in Total Dissolved Solids
 - How interviewees define successful projects and partnerships
3. **The problem of chloride**
4. **Conclusions and next steps**

Motivation and research questions

Challenge: Increasing salinity in freshwater sources

- “Freshwater salinization syndrome”
 - Anthropogenic (fertilizers, road de-icers, contributions from wastewater)
 - Geologic
 - Often measured in aggregate as Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)
- Sea level rise bringing ocean salts inland
 - Captured in TDS measurements, but best isolated through chloride measurements
- Converging challenge in cities and towns around the globe, with vulnerability depending on: location of water sources, type of water source (surface or groundwater), land use, geology, and local climate shifts (timing and quantity of precipitation).

What will we do about widespread salinization?

Desalination will not work everywhere



- High-cost (scales with concentration of salt)
- Necessitates a good energy source
- Typically requires large land area
- Does not provide large volumes of water
- Waste brine disposal can present challenges

Is watershed-based salinity management a viable alternative?

- In the United States, two watershed-based, regional management organizations have salinity as a management target
 - Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA), located in Southern California
 - Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), located in the mid-Atlantic region
- What are the possibilities of regionalization as a salinity management tool? This research first focuses on SAWPA

Research Questions and Methods

- What are SAWPA's most successful salinity management strategies?
 - Can we observe these through salinity monitoring data?
 - How would water managers define successful projects and partnerships?
- Evaluate Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), the primary management target in SAWPA, in the Santa Ana River over time
- Interview people from:
 - SAWPA
 - SAWPA member agencies
 - Regional Water Quality Board (Santa Ana, Central Valley)
 - SAWPA Mediator
 - SAWPA-adjacent agencies (Bureau of Reclamation, Metropolitan Water)

The case of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA)

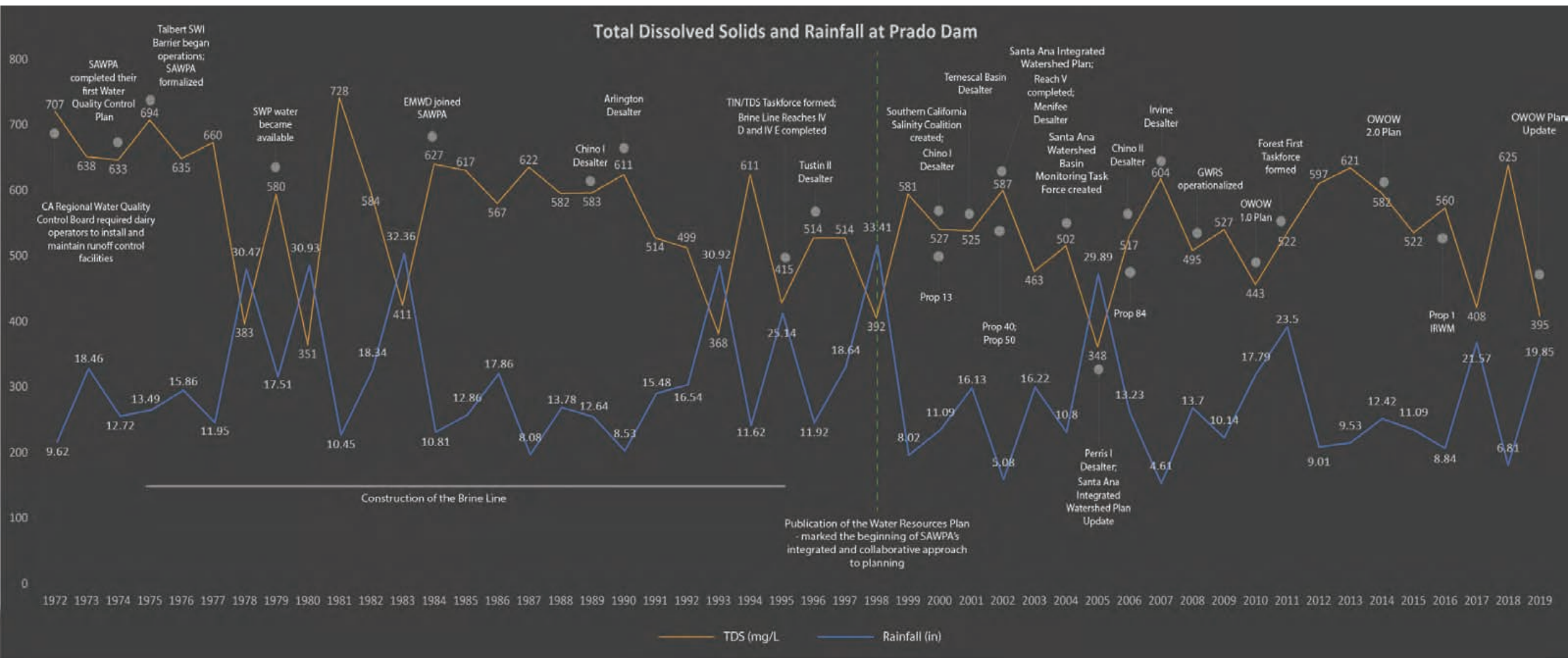


SAWWPA as a case of water management regionalization

- 4 member agencies:
 - Orange County Water District (OCWD)
 - Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD)
 - Western Municipal Water District (WMWD)
 - San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SBVMWD)
 - Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA)
- Spans 4 counties: Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, and a portion of Los Angeles County

Trends in TDS

Tracking TDS (orange) and Rainfall (blue) at Prado Dam

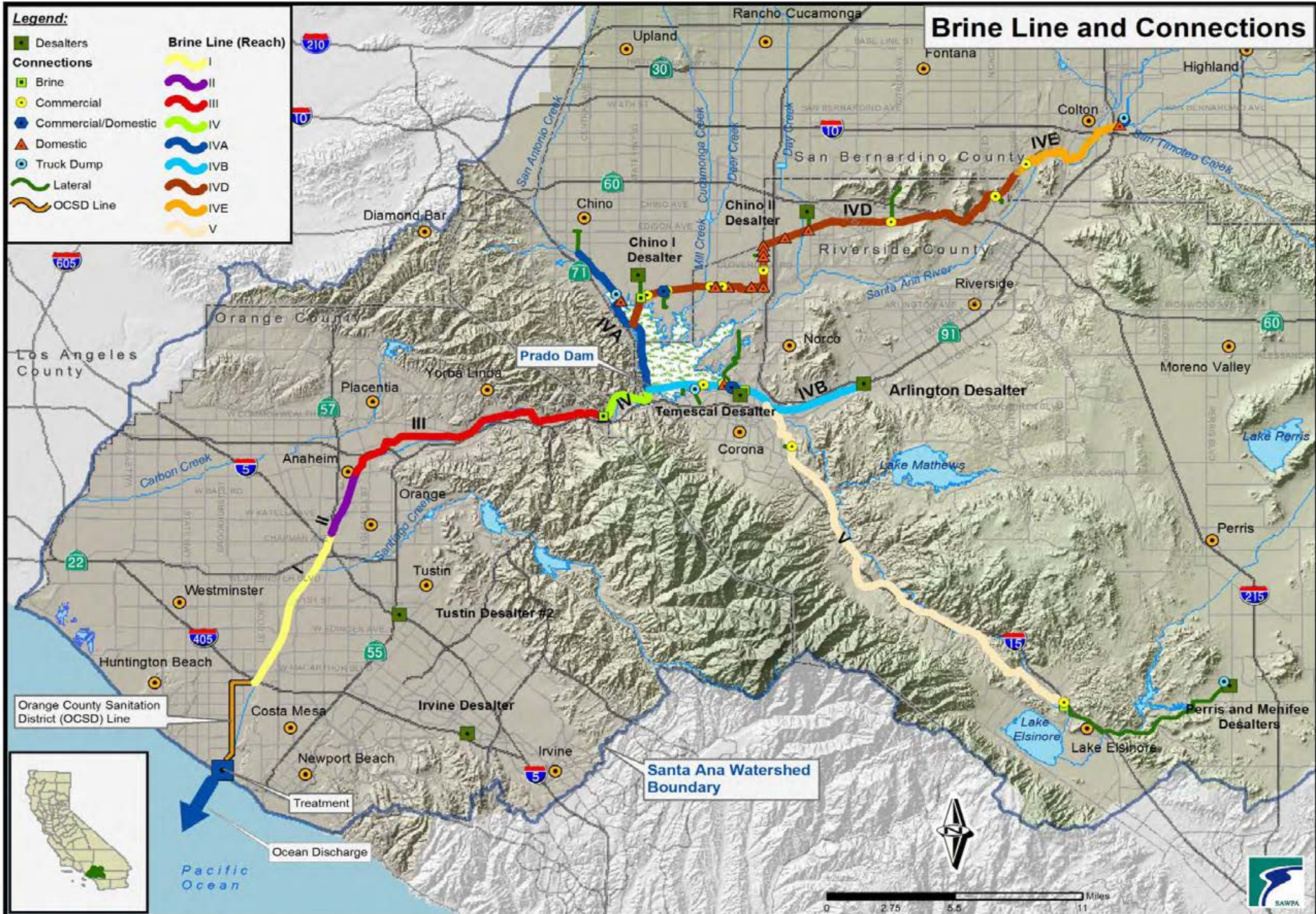


Interviewees' perceptions of success

What is the most successful project?

The Brine Line

Brine Line and Connections

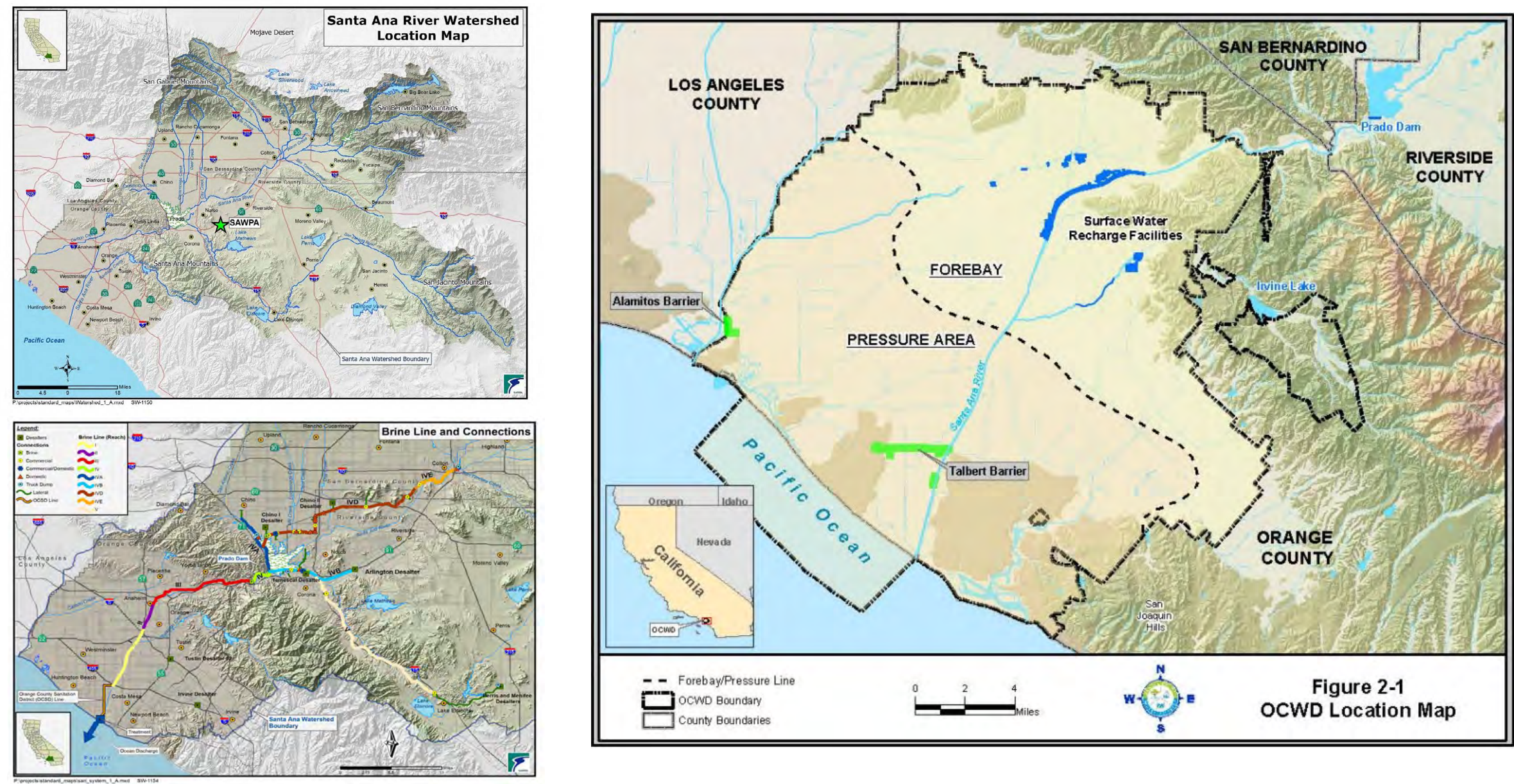


What is the most successful partnership?

- SAWPA itself and its five members → lack of litigation
- Relationship with the local regulator → cooperation while working to meet management targets
- Relationships with state and federal senators → bringing funding into SAWPA

The problem of chloride

Seawater intrusion in Orange County's groundwater, a source of drinking water



Orange County's seawater intrusion barriers

- Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS): create highly treated, low-salinity wastewater
- Inject low-salinity wastewater at interface with ocean, protecting fresh drinking water
- Historically attempted to do this with Colorado River water, which proved to be too saline
- GWRS Funding Sources:
 - State Water Bond (\$37M)
 - CA Department of Water Resources (\$30M)
 - State Water Resources Control Board (\$5M)
 - US Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI program (\$20M)
 - California Energy Commission (\$300k)
 - EPA (\$500k).
 - The remainder of the costs are shared between OCWD and OCSD

Conclusions and next steps

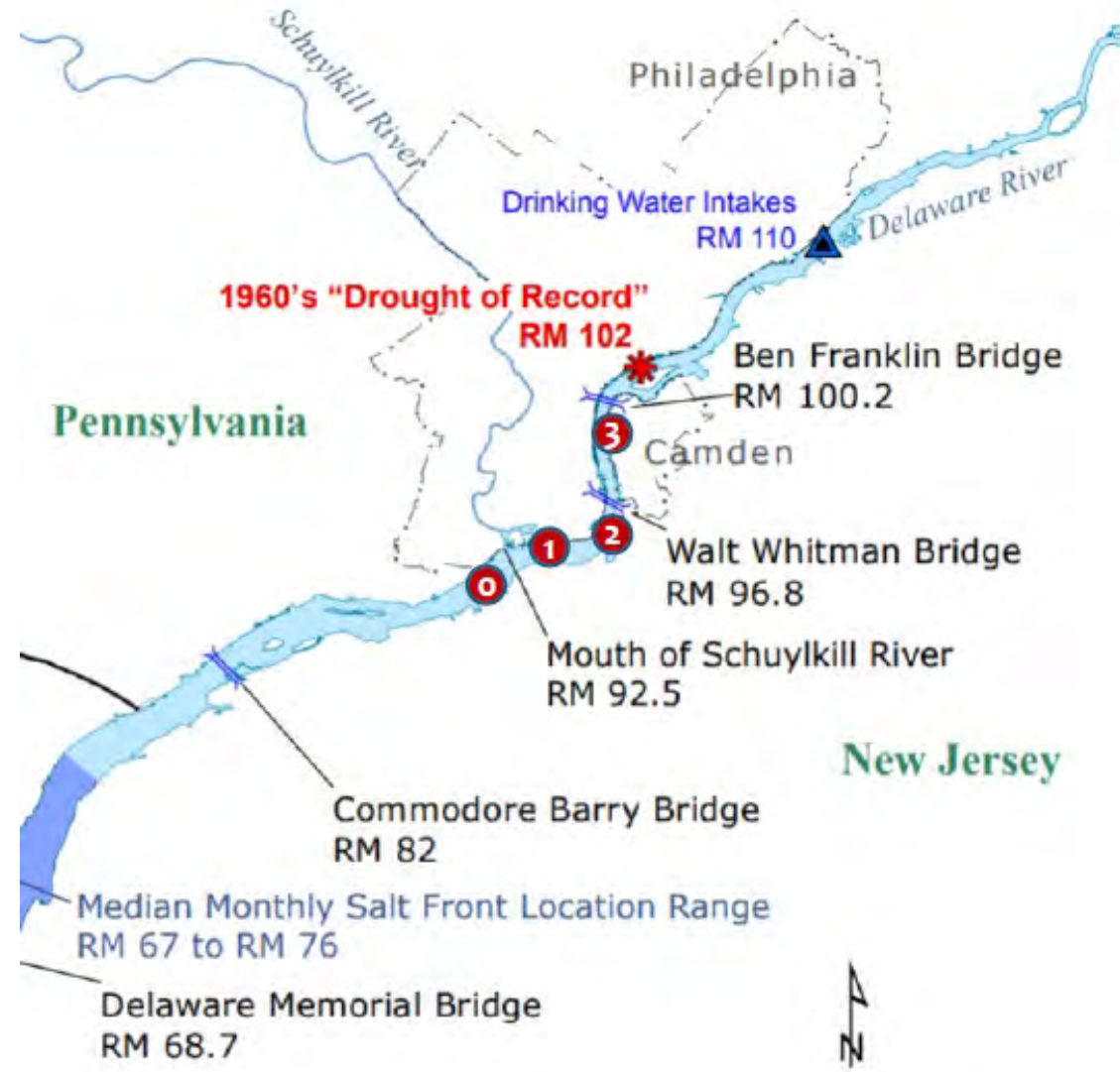
Will ongoing challenges push limit of cooperation?

- External environmental stresses likely to worsen
 - High salinity in Colorado river water
 - Variability in State Water Project deliveries
- Upstream-downstream misalignment on importance of chloride
- Will brine disposal become a challenge?
 - More saline brine
 - Consequences of increasing brine disposal along the cost
 - Relationship with sewage management entities

Takeaways and Conclusions

- Regionalization is a good management strategy and can promote cooperation, but it is difficult to capture all relevant scales and actors in salinity management
- Regionalization is perhaps most effective in securing funding and resources to support collaborations
- Coastal salinization imposes political and institutional challenges that have yet to be addressed either by SAWPA or elsewhere

Next steps: Comparison with the Delaware River Basin Commission



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@Ryan_Gaia

Arsenic Contaminated Ground Water
Prompts a Community to Buy Water From
Poorly Maintained Drinking Water Vending
Machines

Arsenic contaminated ground water prompts a community to buy water from poorly maintained drinking water vending machines.

Ryan Sinclair PhD MPH, Nataly Escobedo Garcia MA, Thomas Hile MA



LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY
School of Public Health

Oasis Mobile Home Park – Case Study

- » Oasis Mobile Home Park – Case Study
 - ~ Many environmental health issues
 - ~ Water testing and federal agencies
- » Drinking water vending machines
 - ~ An EJ compromise
 - ~ What is needed to improve this H₂O quality?
- » Arsenic and Drought
 - ~ Did drought increase concentrations of arsenic in ground water?
 - ~ Water Scarcity and climate impacted communities
- » Conclusions



Oasis Mobile Home Park

- ▶ 1,900 people near Salton Sea in the ECV of Southern California
- ▶ About 250 mobile homes
- ▶ Estimate MHI - \$16,945
- ▶ Residents living in Oasis are majority Latino, with many Purépecha residents.
- ▶ Agriculture workers and several other occupations.
- ▶ Large family-centric households



Drinking water

- **Arsenic** Content
- Color
- Odor and residual chlorine
- Water Shutoffs
- Bacteria

Water Shut-offs

- Often more than 12 hours at a time
- Frequent water shut-offs without warning

EPA Emergency order - Arsenic

- Arsenic contamination (70-80ppb)
 - Declared Aug 2019
 - Lifted June 2020
 - Re-declared September 2020

Alternative water

- Issues with access and quality

Discolored water

- Possibly associated with super-chlorination or Fe.
- Yellow color or brown color

Bacteria Detected in several samples

- PVC pipes are often near surface
- Cross contamination



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Frequent water leaks and shutoffs

Illegal dump sites



Demolished house debris

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Habitability:

- Most are owned by residents
- Most trailers from 1960-1970s
- Mold, water leaks, insulation, dust



Water system leaks



Mold

Electrical
Infrastructure



Dumpsites and trailer debris

Habitability:

- Mold, water leaks, insulation, dust

TABLE 3: Average Environmental Relative Moldiness Index (ERMI) values in homes in the four types of housing in Mecca and Coachella City and the weighted-average ERMI values (WAEV) for all housing in each community. (*n* = number homes evaluated in each category).

	Mecca		Coachella City		<i>p</i> value
	<i>n</i>	ERMI	<i>n</i>	ERMI	
Apartment	16	7.1	17	4.9	
Modern home	18	7.8	22	6.1	
Trailer	7	17.2	18	7.0	
Mixed-use	10	15.3	3	5.9	
Total	51		60		
WAEV		10.3		6.0	<0.05

Two houses in Oasis MHP

ERMI = 14

ERMI = 17

Journal of Environmental and Public Health

+ Journal Menu

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Article Sections

Research Article | Open Access

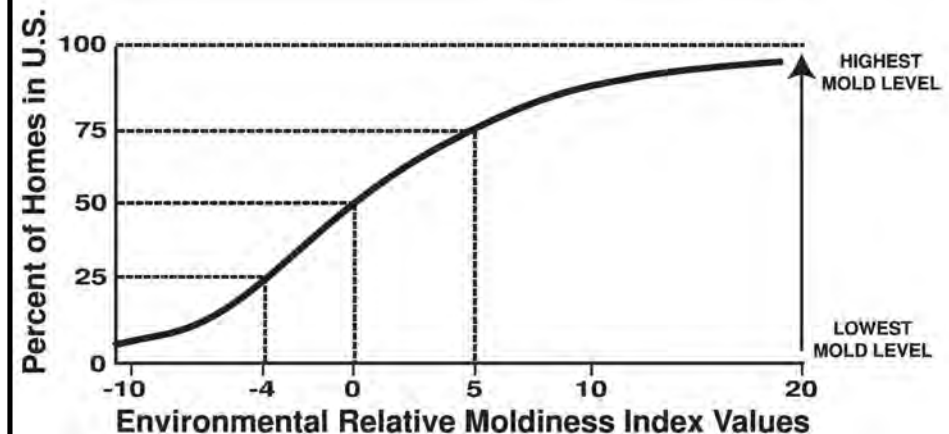
Volume 2018 | Article ID 9350370 | <https://doi.org/10.1155/2018/9350370>

Show citation

Asthma Risk Associated with Indoor Mold Contamination in Hispanic Communities in Eastern Coachella Valley, California

Ryan Sinclair,¹ Charity Russell,¹ Genevieve Kray,¹ and Stephen Vesper²

Show more



Wastewater exposure:

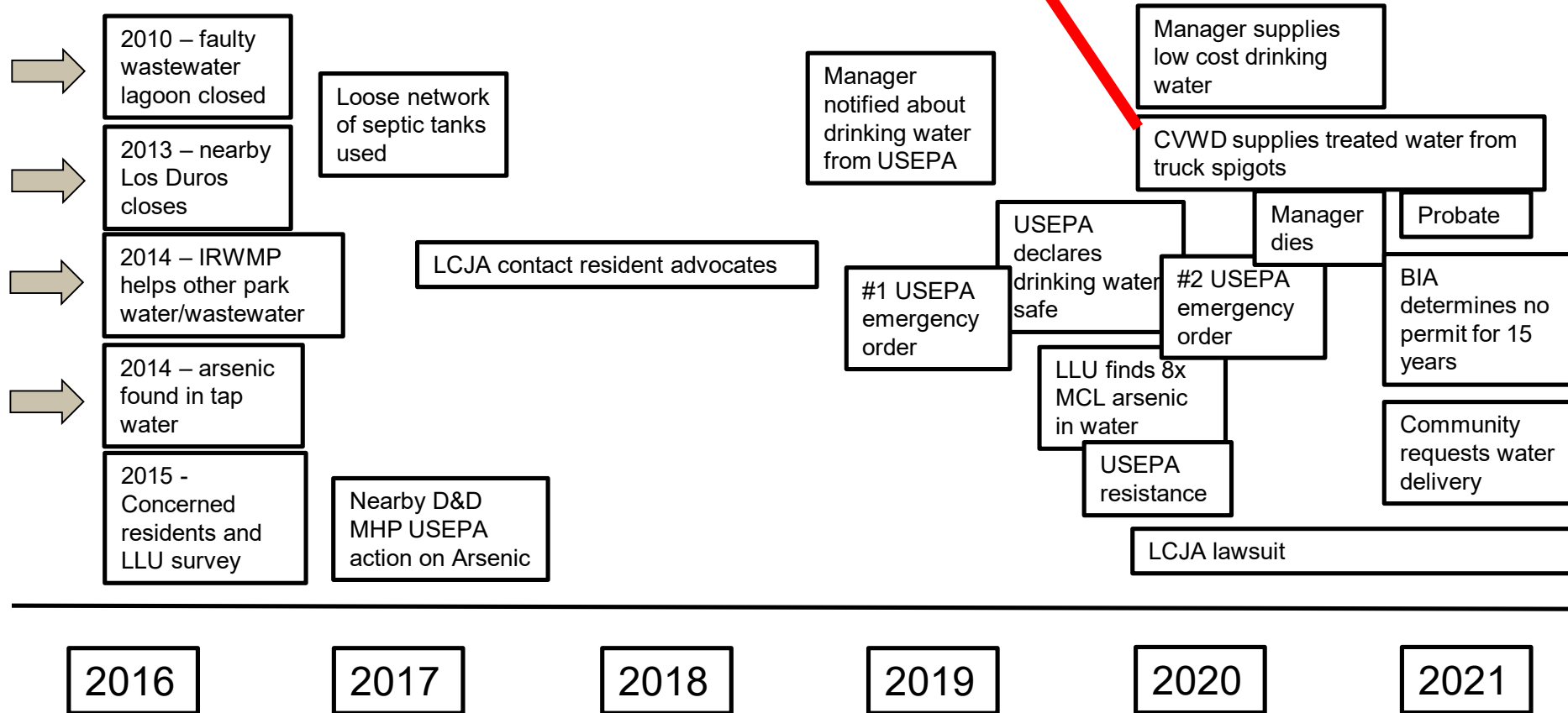
- Consolidated septic systems
- PVC and ABS near surface
- Many leaks
- Some “straight pipe”



Long-term straight pipe creates shady areas - attracts children and dogs.



Timeline of events



LCJA action and Advocacy

Locally...

1	Michael Claiborne (SBN 281308) Phoebe Seaton (SBN 238273)
2	LEADERSHIP COUNSEL FOR JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY (LCJA)
3	2210 San Joaquin Street Fresno, California 93721
4	Telephone: (559) 369-2790
5	Email: mclaiborne@leadershipcounsel.org pseaton@leadershipcounsel.org
6	Attorneys for Plaintiffs
7	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
8	IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
9	
10	JUNTOS POR UN MEJOR OASIS, an unincorporated association; PEDRO
11	ZACARIAS NICOLAS, an individual; MARIA DE JESUS DIEGO BAUTISTA, an
12	individual; GERARDO PEREZ, an individual; JOSEFINA PANTOJA REGALADO, an
13	individual; JESUS GARCIA CRUZ, an individual; JEANETTE AMAYA
14	GONZALEZ, an individual; PEDRO CRUZ FELIPE, an individual; CECILIA
15	HERNANDEZ CRUZ, an individual; BLANCA ESTELA GARCIA VERA, an
16	individual; RICARDO CRUZ CHAVEZ, an individual; IRMA ESTEBAN NICOLAS, an
17	individual; JOSE CARLOS VICENTE, an individual; MARIA de JESUS MULATO, an
18	individual; MARIA JOSEFA MULATO, an individual; ALBERTO AYALA, an
19	individual; LINDA ESPINOZA, an individual; IVETH ALANIS NUNEZ, an individual;
20	MARCELI PEREZ RUIZ, an individual; EUGENIA QUITERO, an individual;
21	NICOLAS MORAN, an individual; SUSANA NAVEDA, an individual; JUANITA
22	MAGDALENA ARROYO, an individual,
23	Plaintiffs,
24	vs.
25	SCOTT LAWSON, an individual dba Oasis Mobile Home Park; SABRINA LAWSON, an
26	individual; DOES 1-25, inclusive,
27	Defendants.
28	

State policy...

SB 129 signed

- Of the amount appropriated in Schedule (1), \$30,000,000 is available to provide emergency housing, develop quality affordable housing, and construct necessary infrastructure to relocate residents of Oasis Mobile Home Park in Riverside County.

Per USEPA

- ~30 families at risk of eviction

All the same issues remain +

- Probate
- Interim managers requiring cash rent payments

Congressman action

- ▶ *Federal...*
- ▶ BIA acknowledged
 - ▶ OMHP operated without a lease for at least fifteen years
 - ▶ Multiple deficiencies and risk factors present in the wells and water distribution systems since 2007
- ▶ BIA will not take actions to close down the park



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School of Public Health

Water Data from Household Survey in 5 Communities

Submitted to State Water Resources Control Board Region 9

By Gail Wadsworth

September 19, 2019

Eastern Coachella Valley

2016 Household Survey on water use in Oasis, Thermal, Mecca, Coachella City and North Shore.

Conducted by LLU, Alianza and the [California Institute for Rural Studies](#)

TABLE 1 HOUSEHOLD WATER USE

	North Shore	Mecca	Thermal	Oasis	Coachella City	ECV
Running Water at Home	96%	98%	98%	99%	98%	98%
Use Tap Water from Faucet for Cooking or Drinking	61%	78%	77%	53%	70%	70%
Tap Water from Faucet Treated before Use	35%	44%	29%	38%	71%	62%
Filter	93%	27%	30%	84%	75%	70%
Boil	9%	66%	70%	8%	18%	23%
Water Turned Off without Warning	2%	6%	8%	30%	3%	6%
Number of Times in Previous 12 Months	2.7	3.1	4.1	8.9	1.8	4.8
Buy Bottled Water	82%	74%	81%	67%	50%	58%
Fill Water Jugs from Vending Machine	100%	100%	100%	99%	93%	96%
Fill Water Jugs at a Market or Store	100%	100%	100%	99%	93%	96%
Buy small Bottles of Water at Store	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- Only 38% of people in Oasis drink from the tap

- Almost 30% of people in Oasis had water turned off.

Everyone

- Fills 5-gallon jugs at a drinking water vending machines
- Buys small disposable bottled water



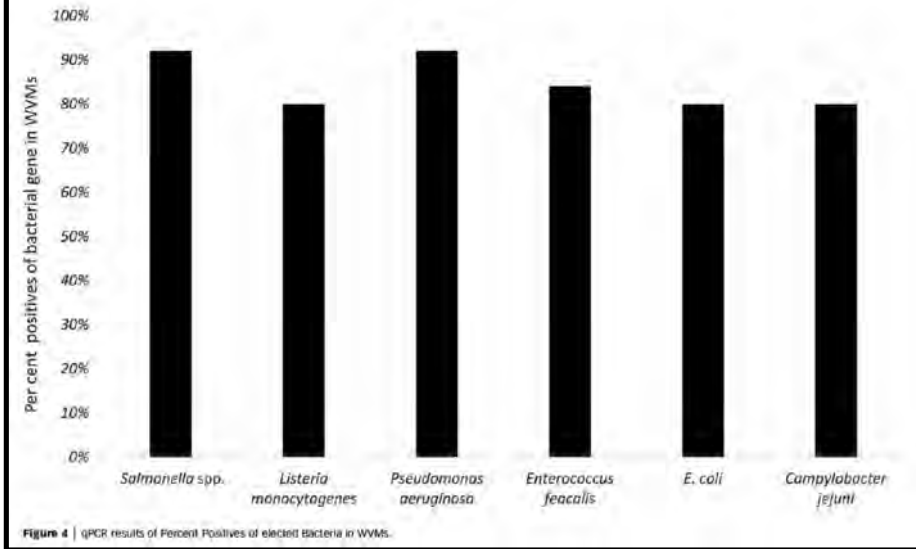
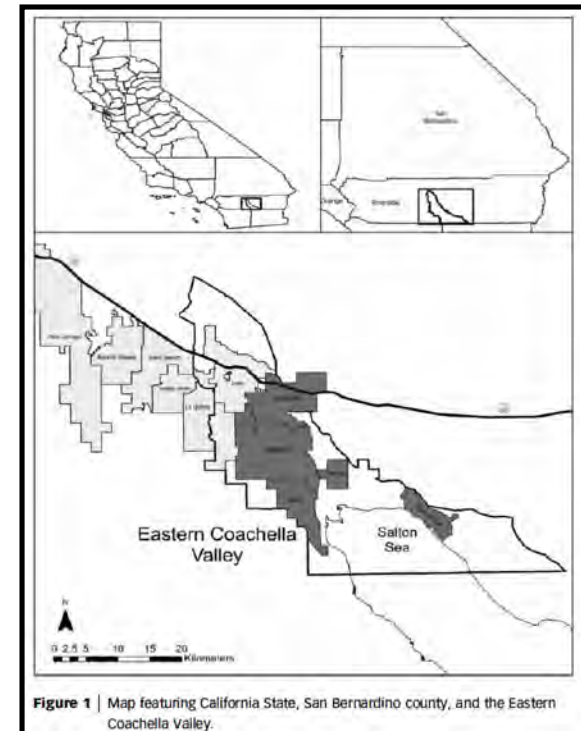
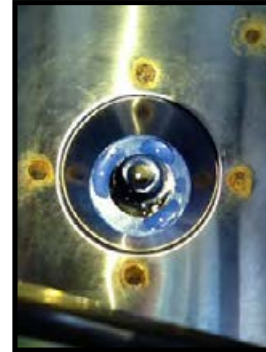
Findings:

- Most WVM in ECV are contaminated and neglected
- no visible record of maintenance
- Frequent occurrence of rust, biofilm, and damage
- Molecular detection of several pathogens

Recommendations to community

- Look for evidence of inspections and maintenance
 - County sticker and digital read out.
- Do not use if you see rust, biofilm, slime, mold, or broken equipment

Conclusion: Lack of maintenance represents an environmental injustice that exacerbates the already difficult drinking water situation in the ECV.



Conclusions

» Arsenic contamination in drinking water

- ~ Increases water stress and water scarcity
- ~ Motivates households to purchase other sources of water
- ~ Motivated the USEPA to consider the Oasis MHP situation
- ~ Motivated many others to tackle the

» Arsenic and Drought

- ~ Did drought increase concentrations of arsenic in ground water?
 - “We don’t know yet”
 - Models show a marginal increase in concentration, but not for the type of aquifer in the ECV.
- ~ More important message: Water Scarcity is pronounced in vulnerable climate impacted communities.
 - Residents of Oasis MHP are on front lines of climate change



Nate Jones

Assistant Professor of Ecohydrology, The University of Alabama

@FloodHydrology

Microbial Contamination of Drinking Water Supplied by Private Wells After Hurricane Harvey



Microbial Contamination of Drinking Water Supplied by Private Wells after Hurricane Harvey

Nate Jones

Assistant Professor
University of Alabama

Kelsey Pieper

Assistant Professor
Northeastern University

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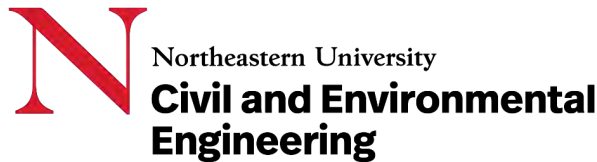


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Microbial Contamination of Drinking Water Supplied by Private Wells after Hurricane Harvey

Kelsey J. Pieper,* C. Nathan Jones, William J. Rhoads,* McNamara Rome, Drew M. Gholson, Adrienne Katner, Diane E. Boellstorff, and R. Edward Beighley



Cite This: *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 2021, 55, 8382–8392



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ACCESS |



Metrics & More

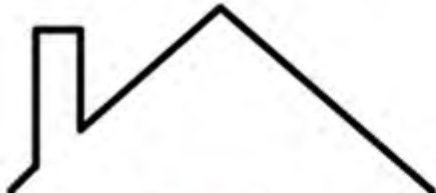


Article Recommendations



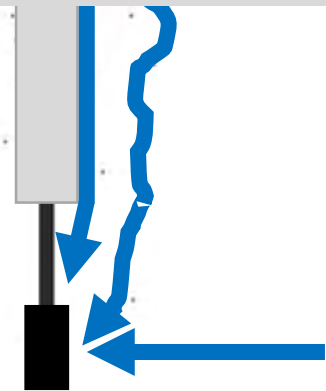
Supporting Information

What happens to a private well during a flood?



Limited research about well water quality after flooding

Even more problematic if the well system is damaged and/or the septic system flooded



Neighboring private wells

Well water needs after a flood



“water was 7 feet over our well...under water for about a week”



**Is my water safe?
What do I do?**

Well water quality one week following the flood



August 27, 2016 sampled five wells in Livingston Parish

Pathway(s) likely existed for surface water to influence well water during flood

- 3 wells were positive for total coliform bacteria



Beliefs that water was safe because wells are deep



Hurricane Harvey

1. Impact of flooding on private wells
2. Drivers of well water contamination
3. Well disinfection and natural attenuation

Study Objectives



HOUSTON HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

campaign in Texas



BRAZORIA COUNTY
WHERE TEXAS BEGAN

More free testing available
for private water well owners
affected by Hurricane
Harvey

December 7, 2017



Extension Service and others are offering free testing for private water well owners in areas affected by Hurricane Harvey.

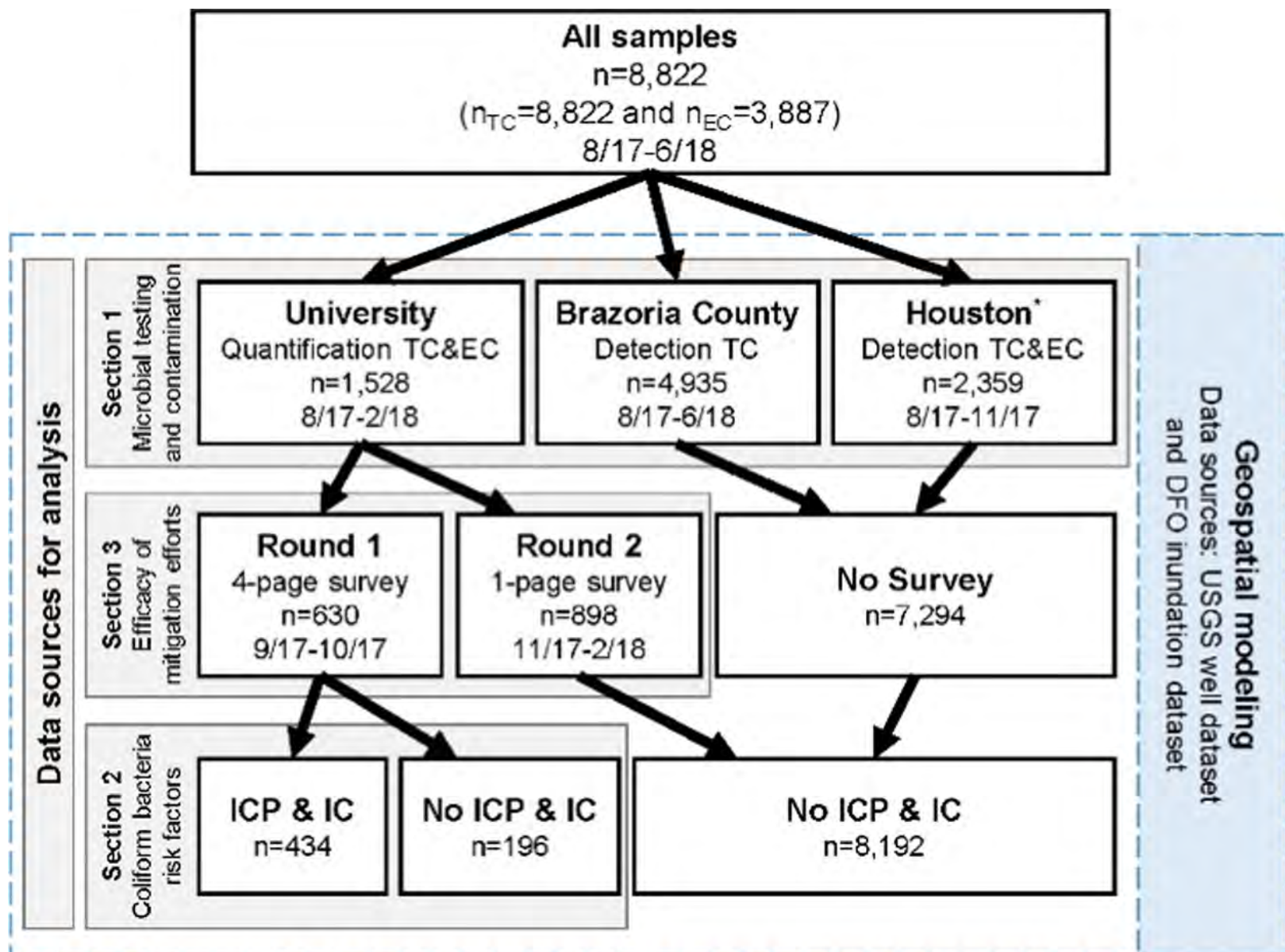
For more information, contact the Extension Service specialist, College Station. Do not use water from the well for drinking, cooking, or bathing until tested.

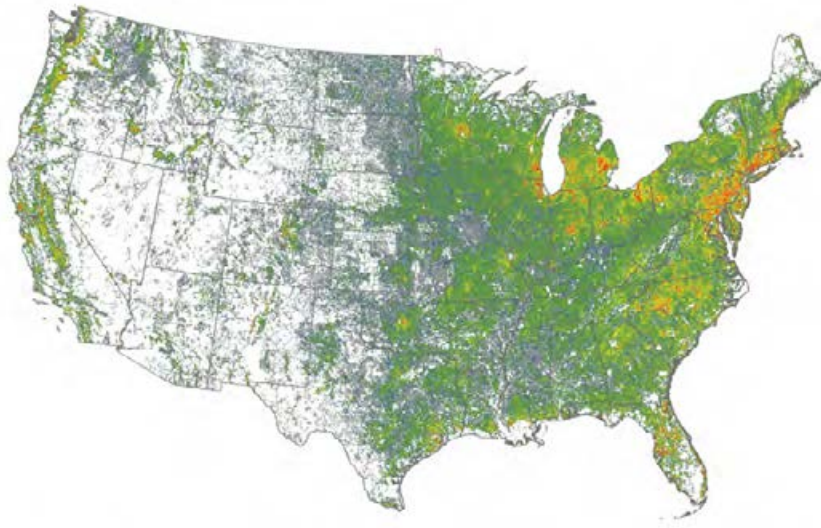
Bolivar Peninsula
Galveston County
Galveston Island



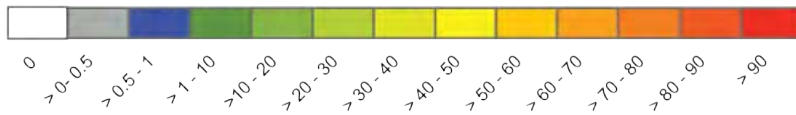
FEMA

8822 total samples
1528 NSF RAPID
4935 Brazoria County
2359 City of Houston

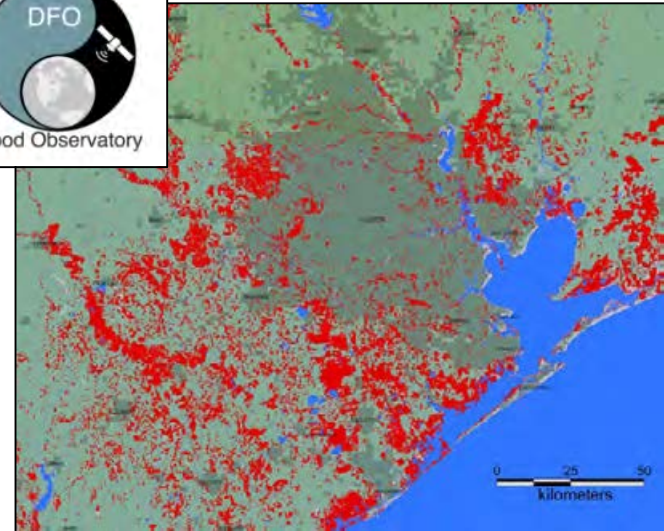




People using domestic supply wells per square kilometer

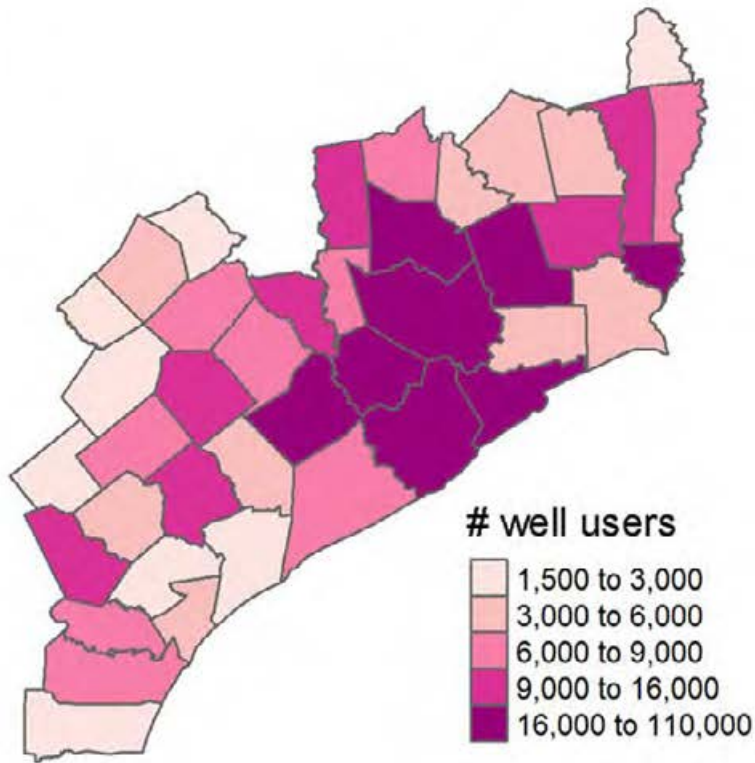


USGS Well Dataset

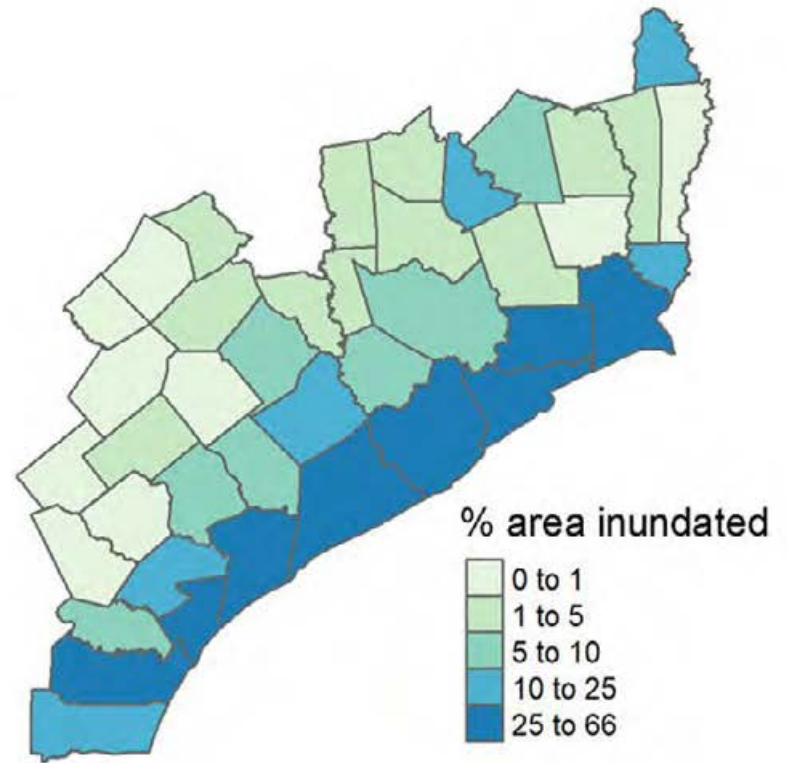


**Dartmouth Flood
Observatory
Inundation**

Geospatial Data



USGS Well Dataset



Inundation

Geospatial Data

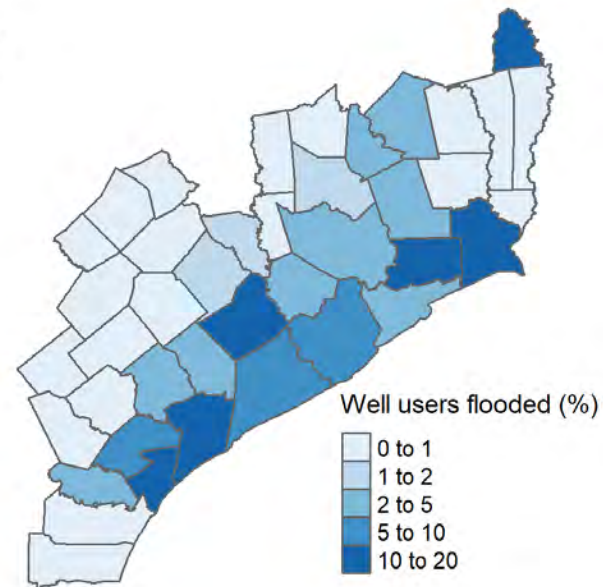
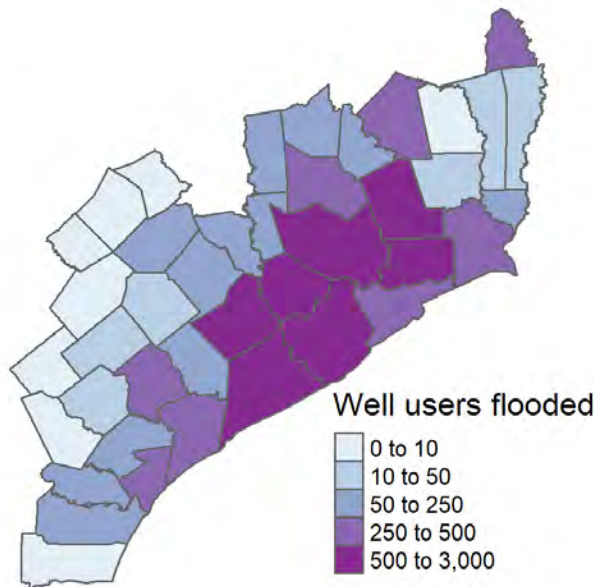
- 1. Impact of flooding on private wells**
2. Drivers of well water contamination
3. Well disinfection and natural attenuation

Study Objectives

Thousands of private wells were likely affected by flooding

Within 41 disaster-declared counties...

- 6.1% of population was reliant on private wells
 - But still an estimated 526,000 well users
- 2.9% (15,060 users) may have been inundated



Flood impacts were not isolated to private wells in rural counties

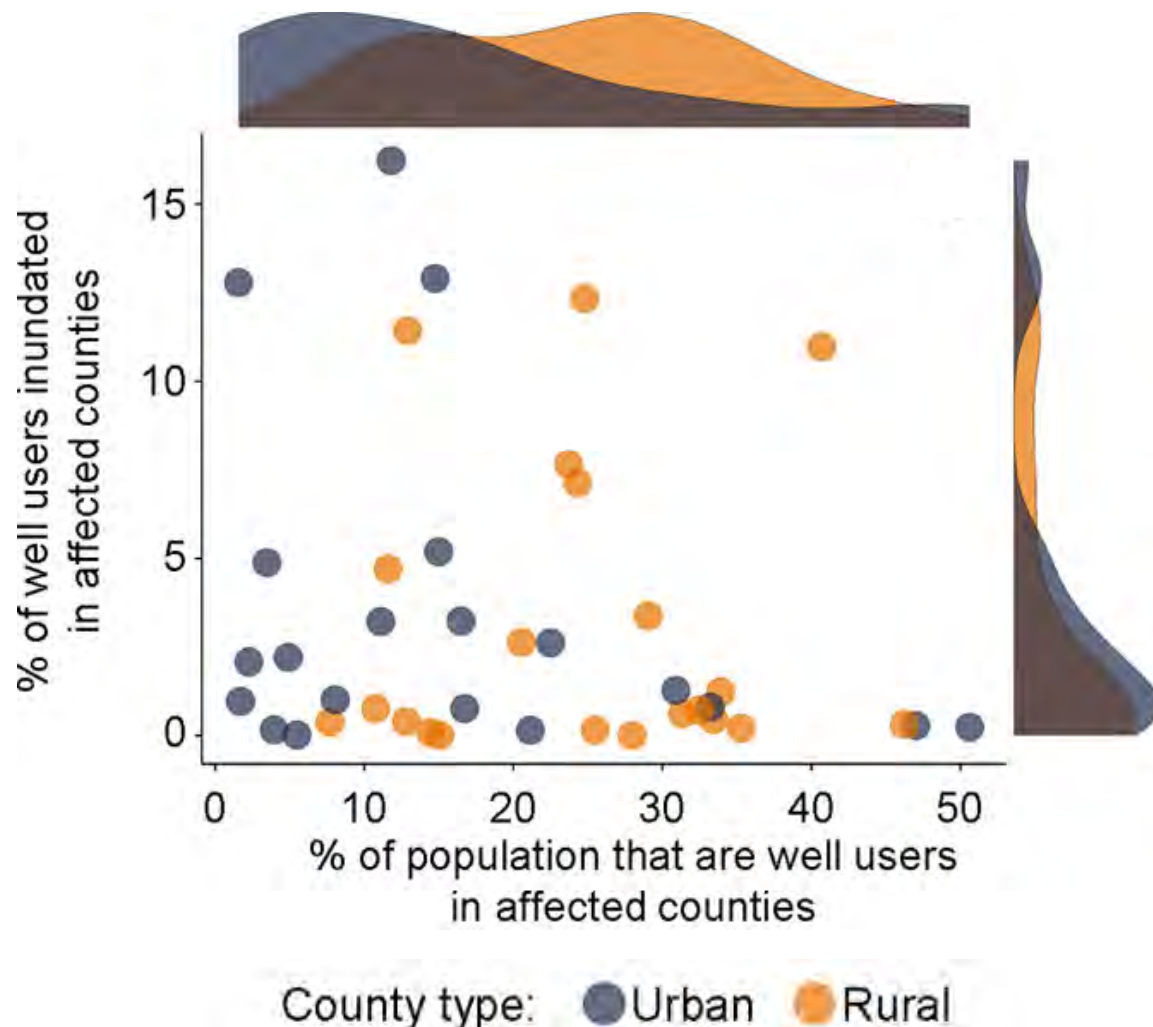
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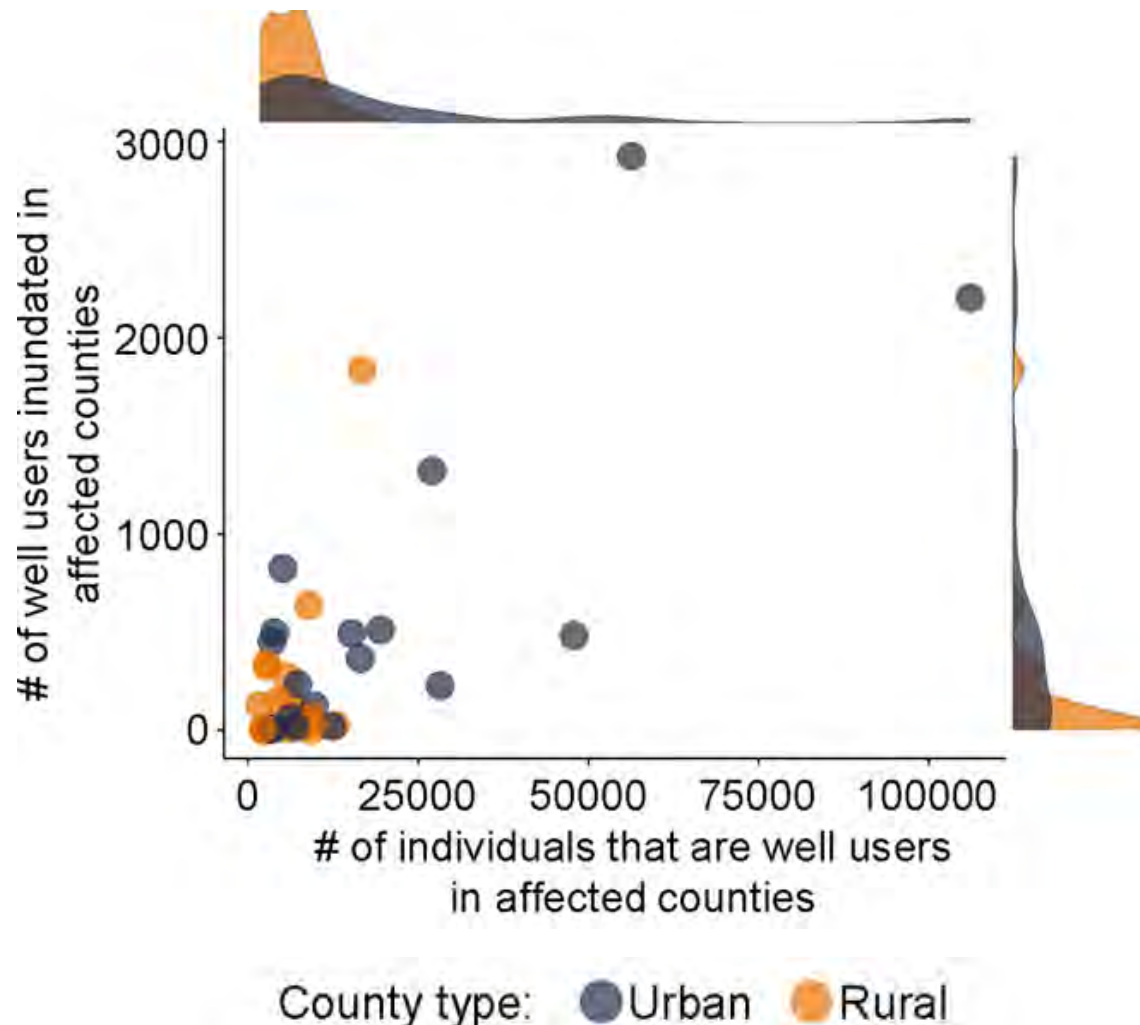
Rural > Urban

Rural < Urban

Flood impacts were not isolated to private wells in rural counties



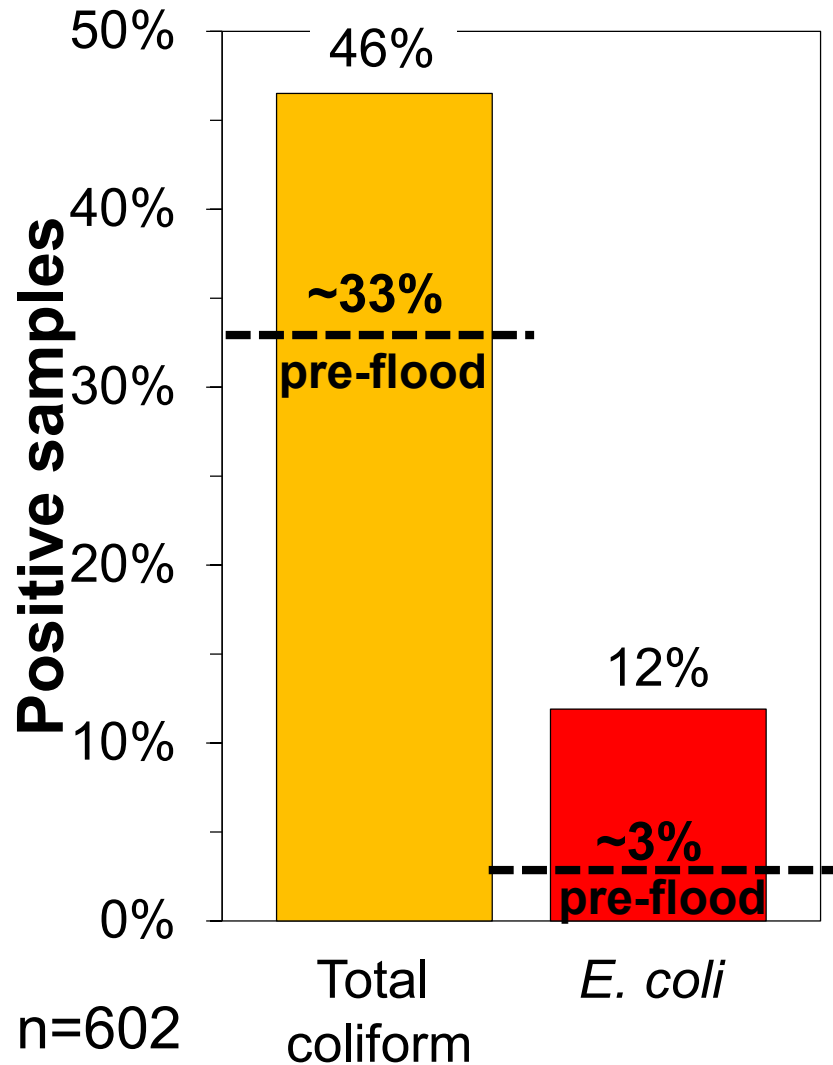
Flood impacts were not isolated to private wells in rural counties



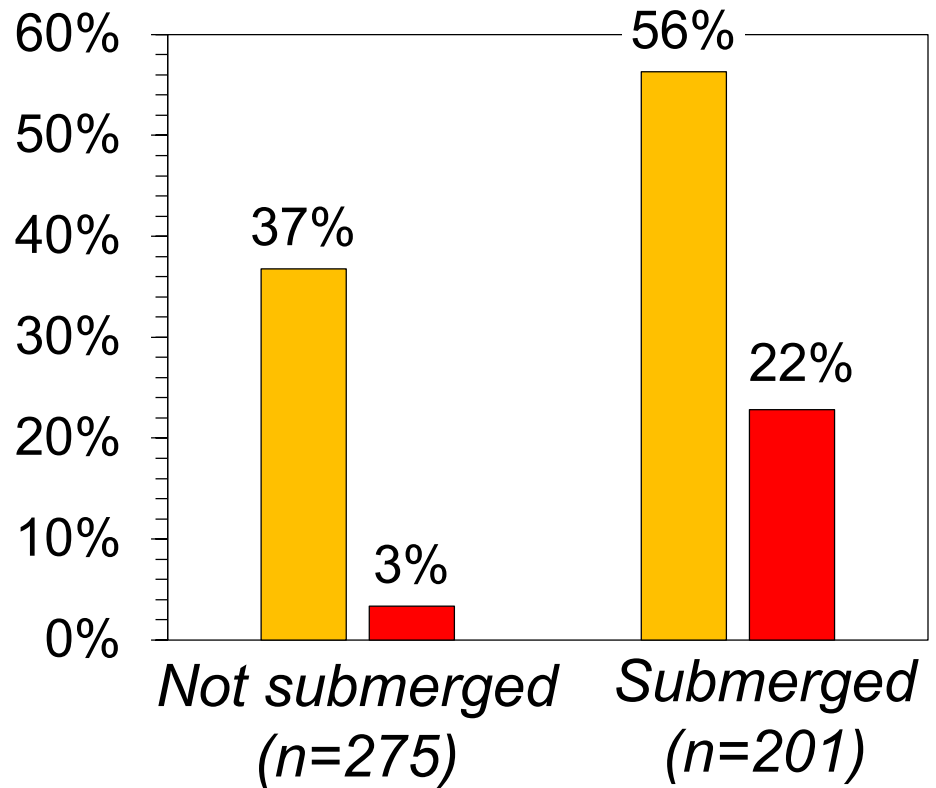
1. Impact of flooding on private wells
- 2. Drivers of well water contamination**
3. Well disinfection and natural attenuation

Study Objectives

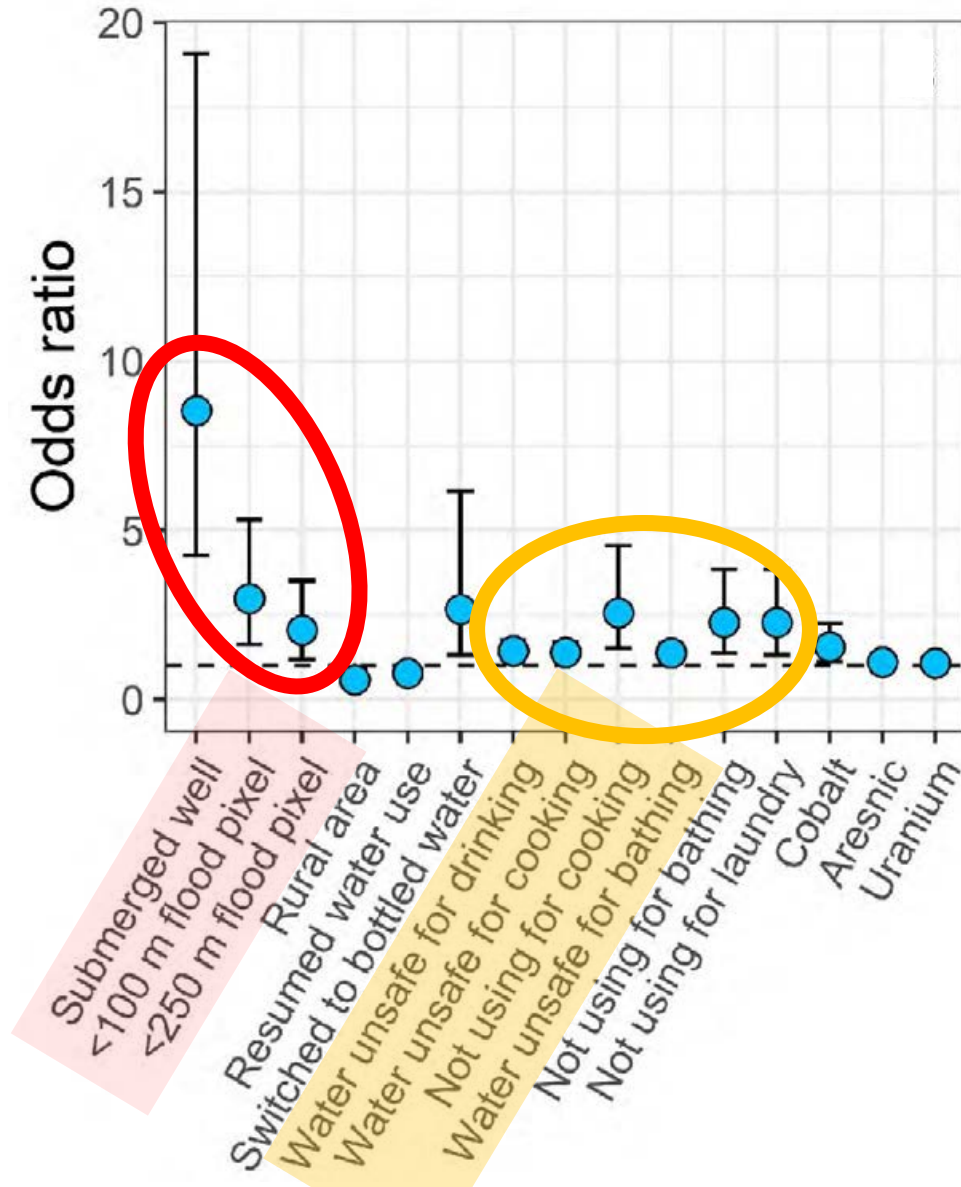
Well water was contaminated after Hurricane Harvey



Residents that reported their wellheads were...



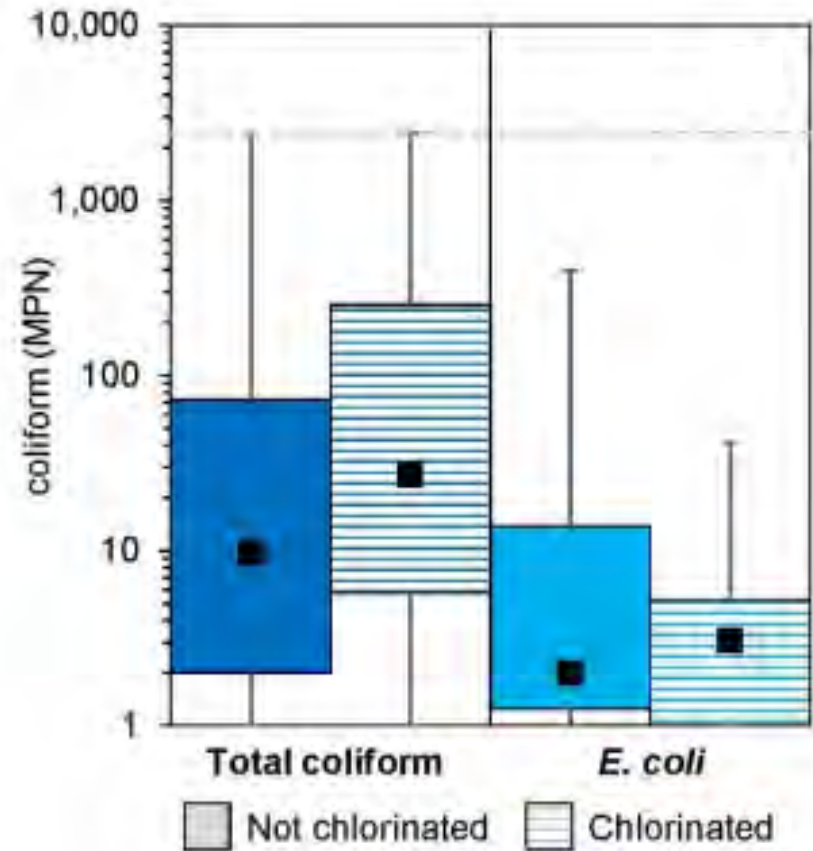
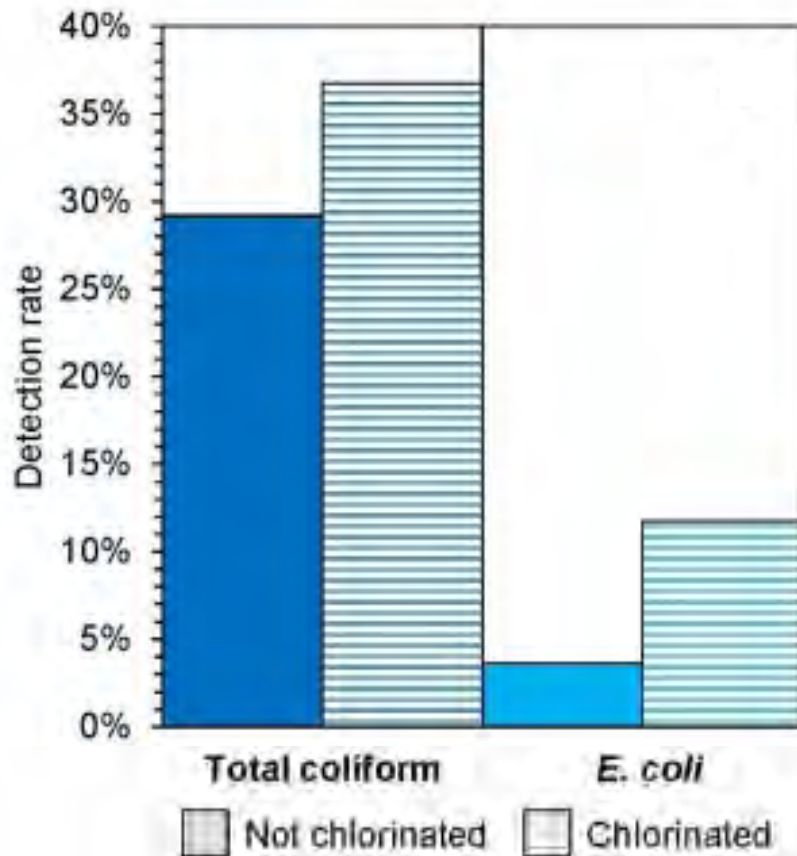
Safety concerns and flood impacts associated with *E. coli*



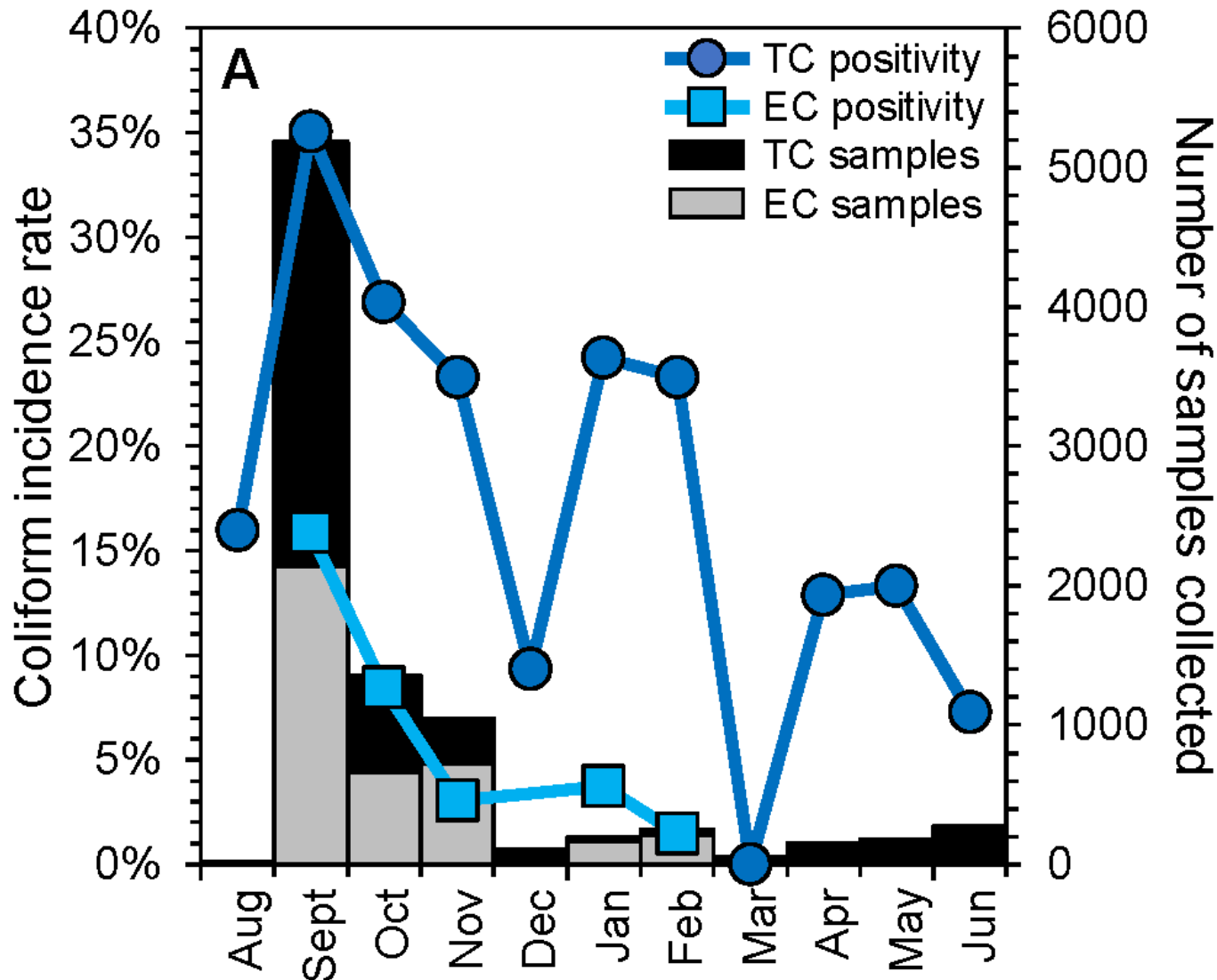
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Study Objectives

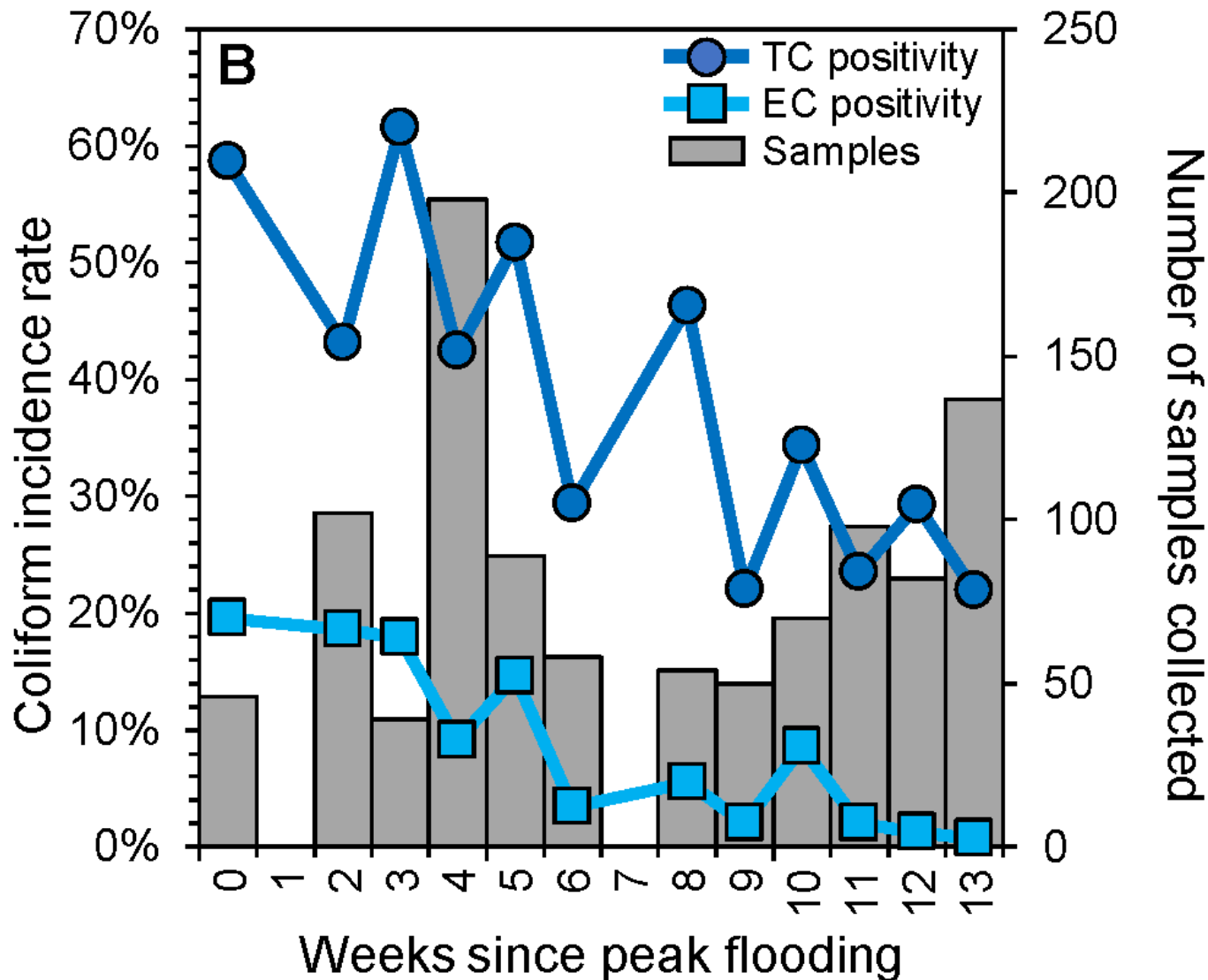
Chlorination did not always eliminate contamination



Sampling and contamination decreased over time



Contamination reduced by 1.5-2.7% each week



Take Home Points

1. Private well impacts contamination occurred in both urban and rural counties
2. Inundation (or proximity to inundation) correlated with contamination
3. Disinfection was not always effective, but we did observe natural attenuation over time

Next steps

1. Predictions of private well system locations!
2. Connectivity between floodwaters and well water
3. Physical, chemical, and biological drivers of well recovery

Thank you!

cnjones7@ua.edu
@FloodHydrology



FEMA

Coming up Tomorrow!

Break-out 5 | 8:30-10am PT

SESSION 5.1

The Cumulative Costs
of Climate Change

SESSION 5.2

Heat Vulnerability Affecting
Workers, Healthcare, and
Neighborhoods

SESSION 5.3

Innovative Toolkits
for Urban Heat
Adaptation

SESSION 5.4

Housing and Hazards:
How Should We Protect
Vulnerable Homes?

Break-out 6 | 10:15-11:45am PT

SESSION 5.1

Emerging Research on
Financial Adaptations
to Climate Impacts

SESSION 5.2

Wading into the
Economic Impacts of
Climate Change on
Water

SESSION 5.3

Equitable Adaptation
to Climate-Related
Flood Risks: Part 2

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