

Ronald Beaulieu of the National Freshwater Foundation Recently Featured on Close Up Radio

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Freshwater Foundation has outlined a national-scale water strategy designed to accomplish two urgent objectives through one integrated system: reduce deadly, costly flooding along America's great rivers and deliver dependable freshwater to drought-prone regions of the West. The plan—developed by Foundation founder and emergency-management and nuclear safety expert Ronald Beaulieu—converts surplus floodwater into a strategic resource, aligning saving lives with economic resilience, and long-term water security.



"Every year, the Mississippi fights to shed water while western communities fight to find it," explains Beaulieu. "With one coherent infrastructure program, the National Smart Water Grid™ can make flood-prone communities safer and deliver reliable supplies to the West—turning a liability into an asset."

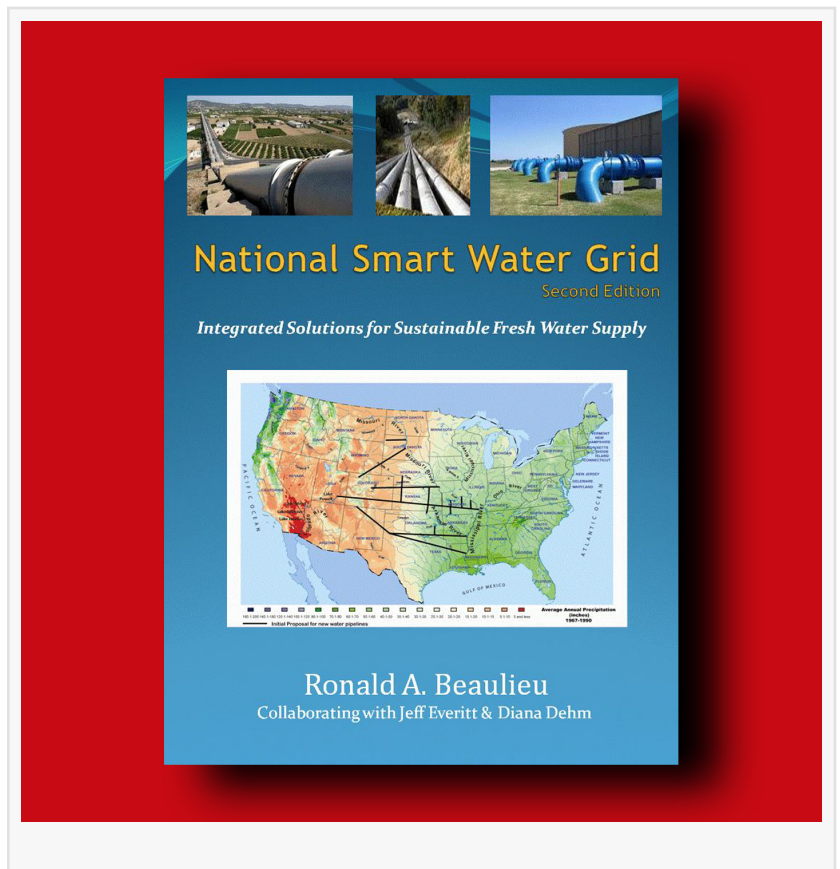
An engineer's solution informed by field experience, Beaulieu's perspective was shaped by decades in emergency management and high-hazard facility safety, including support to the Nevada National Security Site and deployments to New Orleans after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. "Touring levee breaches, overwhelmed pump stations, and devastated neighborhoods made one lesson unmistakable: we can't just react to extreme events; we have to build systems that anticipates them," he emphasizes.

The proposal, documented in Beaulieu's book, "The National Smart Water Grid," peer-reviewed by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the Southern Nevada Water Authority, calls for

a coordinated network that:

- Diverts a portion of above-flood-stage flows along the Mississippi River and key tributaries through modified levees that incorporate collector channels and buried conduits;
- Stores this water in adjacent floodplain retention basins sized to local geography;
- Treats captured water to national standards at co-located facilities; and
- Conveys supplies via large-diameter pipelines and high-capacity pump stations to strategic reservoirs, aquifers (where suitable), and demand centers in the West.

“Think of it as the interstate for water,” Beaulieu explains. “We route surpluses from where they’re dangerous to where they’re indispensable—reliably, repeatably, and at scale.”



Two Compelling Outcomes, One Integrated Build

- Lower flood crests and reduced damage: By drawing off water at action stage—before rivers crest—collector channels and floodplain basins remove energy from the flood, ease pressure on levees, and reduce over-topping events that endanger life, property, and infrastructure.
- Reliable western supplies without reallocations: Analyses of NOAA’s 7,500-station stream-gauge network and long-term precipitation records indicate that 20–60 million acre-feet of flood-stage water could be captured in an average year without touching normal allocations relied upon by approximately 40 million people along the Mississippi system. “We take only the excess—above flood stage—so downstream supply remains intact,” Beaulieu notes.

Proven Components, Deployed at National Scale

The engineering toolbox is mature. Southern Nevada’s network of detention basins and channels demonstrates how communities can tame intense storm events while banking water as a resource. California’s Wind Gap pumping complex north of Los Angeles shows scalable capacity: each set of four parallel 12-foot-diameter pipelines and pumps can move more than a billion gallons per day per station. “With multiple stations in series and parallel, the volumes become nationally meaningful,” Beaulieu says. “We know how to do each piece. The opportunity is to integrate them across river basins.”

Fiscal Prudence and Legal Drivers

Recent legal clarity has sharpened the need for proactive flood mitigation. In *Ideker Farms, Inc. v. United States* (2024), the Supreme Court affirmed federal liability for damages when Mississippi River floods overtop levees. “A system that reliably lowers flood peaks isn’t just sound engineering—it’s sound fiscal stewardship,” Beaulieu asserts. “Every avoided over-topping event protects lives today and taxpayer dollars tomorrow. Save Water, Save Lives!”

Partnerships and Pathway to Pilots

To accelerate from concept to construction, the Foundation is assembling a cross-sector coalition:

- Legal and governance: Pro bono counsel from Wall Street attorney Brett Kotler to structure public-private and philanthropic participation and ensure durable governance.
- Industry: Partnership with Hukari Ascendent (Wheat Ridge, CO) and active discussions with Tetra Tech and other national engineering firms to support corridor studies, environmental review, and phased design-build pilots.
- Government: Ongoing dialogue with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leadership in the Mississippi Basin and the Southwest to align with levee modification authorities and basin-wide planning.

The Foundation’s strategy is designed to avoid reallocation battles. By capturing only above-flood-stage flows, the program adds water to western systems rather than reshuffling existing rights. Western water-rights holders—including agricultural districts and Tribal Nations—have signaled support for additional, legally introduced supplies that improve reliability, bolster food security, and stabilize economies.

Measured, not speculative, the National Smart Water Grid is rooted in data: century-scale precipitation, flood, and hurricane analyses; NOAA stream-gauge records; and demonstrated infrastructure performance. “The National Smart Water Grid proposal is practical hydrology and standardized treatment, delivered through proven civil works,” he explains. “We’re engineering to the measurements, not to wishful thinking.”

A National Project in the American Tradition

“America has a track record of building connective infrastructure that multiplies value—railroads, interstates, and power grids,” Beaulieu adds. “A national water network that delivers two national benefits with one build is the logical next step.”

Call to Action

- Policymakers: Fund Lower Mississippi pilot projects to validate flood-crest reductions, ecological performance, and conveyance economics.

- Industry: Join the Foundation's consortium to deliver corridor studies, environmental review, and phased design-build segments.
- Philanthropy and impact investors: Underwrite pre-development, permitting, and community engagement to compress timelines.
- Communities and Tribes: Partner on siting retention basins, treatment facilities, and conveyance that deliver local safety and regional water reliability.

About Ronald Beaulieu and the National Freshwater Foundation

Ronald Beaulieu is a former emergency-management leader and senior nuclear safety analyst who has supported national security and resilience initiatives. A recipient of the University of Maine's Francis Crowe Engineering Award, he founded the National Freshwater Foundation to advance the National Smart Water Grid—an integrated, dual-benefit system that transforms destructive floodwater into a strategic freshwater asset.

Close Up Radio recently featured Ronald Beaulieu, founder of the National Freshwater Foundation in an interview with Jim Masters on Tuesday September 23rd at 12pm EST

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For more information about Ronald Beaulieu and the National Freshwater Foundation, please visit <https://www.natwaterfound.org/>

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