

Scientist: Rain in New Orleans would help

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More rain would help New Orleans and Southern Mississippi, says an ecologist from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"People might think I'm kidding, but I'm not," said Dr. Seth R. Reice, an associate professor of biology. "The floodwater still covering much of New Orleans and elsewhere is full of coliform bacteria from backed-up human waste, plus gasoline, oil and countless other pollutants. It is a really toxic stew."

Dilution is needed and that could be accomplished by an intense rain that would dilute the water and could make it possible to varying degrees for organisms -- both large and small -- to cope with it better.

Reice -- author of "The Silver Lining: The Benefits of Natural Disasters" -- says hurricanes and other storms, volcanoes, earthquakes, floods and other apparently catastrophic events renew life and boost diversity in ecosystems throughout the world.

However, the biologist said the floodwater should have been pumped into the Mississippi or out to sea instead of Lake Pontchartrain where it will cause tremendous pollution and probably big fish kills.

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