



The Florida Flow

NEWS TO USE

JANUARY 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your Calendars NOW!!

**FWQA Legislative Visits and Board Meeting
March 10 & 11, 2025
DoubleTree by Hilton
Tallahassee, FL**

**WQA Legislative Fly-In
March 25 & 26, 2025
Washington, D.C.**

**WQA Convention
April 22– 24, 2025
Long Beach, CA**

**FWQA Convention
Trade Show
50th Anniversary Year
June 18-20, 2025**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



FWQA President
Cindy Schieber

Dear FWQA Members,

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Fall Education Seminar in Ocala! For those who couldn't make it, you missed out on some fantastic topics. Don Grace gave an in-depth presentation on Advanced Clack Programming, and I had the chance to help by showing how to wire and program a chemical feed pump to the valve.

We also had a great group session on visual problem-solving for Florida's water issues, led by John Ladue, Jeff Sadonis, Don Grace, Ray Gregory, and Todd Mosteller. Using props and real-world examples, the session sparked lots of "aha!" moments around the room.

Chris Lawrence gave a helpful overview of UV disinfection, covering how it works and best practices for installation to ensure 24/7 peace of mind. Finally, the Southwest Florida Water Management District shared an informative update on their operations. The day flew by with engaging discussions, opportunities to reconnect with industry friends, and plenty of networking with new faces.

Looking ahead, your Board of Directors is gearing up for Legislative Day in Tallahassee on March 11. This is our chance to introduce FWQA to state legislators and highlight our organization as a valuable resource on water quality and regulatory issues. Our main focus will be meeting with members of the new Water Quality, Supply & Treatment Subcommittee. We encourage everyone to join us! Let us know if you're interested, and we'll share the details and help set up meetings with your representatives.

On another exciting note, plans for the FWQA's **50th Anniversary Annual Convention** are well underway! Our committee – Jami West, Amanda Moore and Doug Haring – is working hard to make this a fun and memorable event. Past President & Education Committee Chair, Jeff Sadonis, is already lining up some excellent speakers for the educational sessions. Be sure to register to attend our very special **50th Anniversary Celebration Event** at the Convention on Thursday June 19, 2025.

Stay tuned for more updates, and I hope to see you at these upcoming events!

-Cindy Schieber, FWQA President



Retain Water Knowledge and History with 'Retirement Light'

As the baby boomers continue to retire, many leave the workplace with a large amount of resident knowledge and organizational history. They possess a career's worth of data that is irreplaceable. Is letting these employees leave without sharing their insight a wise practice? Are there ways to capture the wisdom of industry pioneers and pass it along to an eager generation of newcomers and middle management?

Sixty-five is the new 45. More than four million baby boomers will turn 65 in 2024, and many are looking to continue working in some capacity. Retirement at this age carries uncertainty for many people who would welcome supplemental income while still being able to enjoy more time with family and friends. Neither the retiree nor the organization should be quick to say a final goodbye without considering mutually beneficial options by which the retiree can pass the proverbial torch.

One option is to move willing retirees into "retirement light." In this arrangement, they would work as independent 1099 contractors a few days a week for their current employer. The water industry knowledge pool is filled with baby boomers who wish to be semiretired and doing something within the industry they know well while enjoying the independence of retirement.

These workers can be called semiretired, part-time workers, independent contractors, consultants, technical advisors, board members, outside advisors, or something else.

These workers would not be there to be hourly employees; they would thrive in an atmosphere where they are not asked to punch a time clock. In a 1099 relationship, the company is not the employer.

Here is legal language from an independent advisor agreement spelling out the relationship between a company and its advisor:

The Advisor is an independent contractor and is not an agent or employee of, and has no authority to bind, Company by contract or otherwise. The Advisor will perform the Services under the general direction of Company, but Advisor will determine, in Advisor's sole discretion, the manner and means by which the Services are accomplished, subject to the requirement that Advisor shall at all times comply with applicable law. The Company has no right or authority to control the manner or means by which the Services are accomplished. Nothing contained in this Agreement is intended or should be construed as creating a relationship other than Independent Contractor between the parties.

The Internal Revenue Service closely monitors 1099 work arrangements. If the worker is directed, managed, or supervised by the company, then that person is considered an employee with the rights afforded other employees of the company. In addition, the company is responsible for all payroll taxes and filing associated with this person.

The advantage to the company in a 1099 relationship is having an expert available without the expenses of payroll taxes and benefits. The company has additional resources to hire and train new people; workers under a 1099 arrangement are there to pass knowledge to the new hire through training, coaching, and mentoring. They are there when issues arise outside the common knowledge of the current team. When that 500-pound gorilla crashes through the door and everything is in chaos, the company has someone who knows how to navigate the situation and calm the beast.

A company needs an active, productive workforce to drive commerce and cash flow. It also needs senior-level experience from someone who's seen it all and has come away with a wealth of knowledge and wisdom.

Look into the return on investment in retaining institutional knowledge. With 1099 contributors on the roster, the organization can handle a wider range of opportunities, and its people can learn from experienced company alumni how to handle the unknowns while keeping the practices that made the organization successful.

Another positive aspect of having continued access to historically valued personnel is that “retirement light” suppresses organizational noise. This type of noise can occur if customers and vendors are unaware of or are concerned by company structural changes and unclear communication within an organization.

Make sure customers and others who are affected by an employee’s retirement understand that the organizational culture and level of support they will receive remain solid. Communicate that key contacts will remain as a bridge, a resource, while a competent, talented staff person steps into the role vacated by the retiree. State, “We appreciate and understand the value our retirees bring to supporting a steep learning curve for their replacements—support that remains available as the retirees step away to enjoy more free time while remaining engaged with the organization and its people.”

Don’t be afraid to communicate future plans so that the focus is on your message and not assumptions, negative press, or fear of the unknown.

Stop competitors from capitalizing on noise—the organization drives the messaging and direction. This results in positive public perception and gives everyone time to transition. Fear of change is a common human experience. Work carefully through the transition to avoid hindering growth or disrupting institutional peace of mind. Embrace change.

Retiring from a career is both exciting and stressful. Something as simple as announcing one’s retirement date becomes a point of concern. In an at-will employment relationship, an employee’s announcement of upcoming changes in employment can result in an immediate end to current employment. Having a communicated structure for personnel retirement allows the company time to transition and plan. A two-week notice of retirement can create a reactionary scenario when both parties should be looking to be proactive. Offering a program that allows for several months’ notice of retirement and an opportunity to discuss the future makes sense for the company and retiree.

Imagine the scenario: One day you arrive at the office, and it is clear your time with the company is coming to an end—an end delayed because the clients and coworkers still need your years of experience and knowledge. Being the resident expert, you know every detail of how the company systems configure and why unconventional situations require thinking outside the box. You understand why a previous system was installed at a location, why that equipment no longer fits the need, and that the latest water-treatment best practice makes sense. No one else remembers what the older systems were or can speak to why the new technology is superior in water savings and environmental impact.

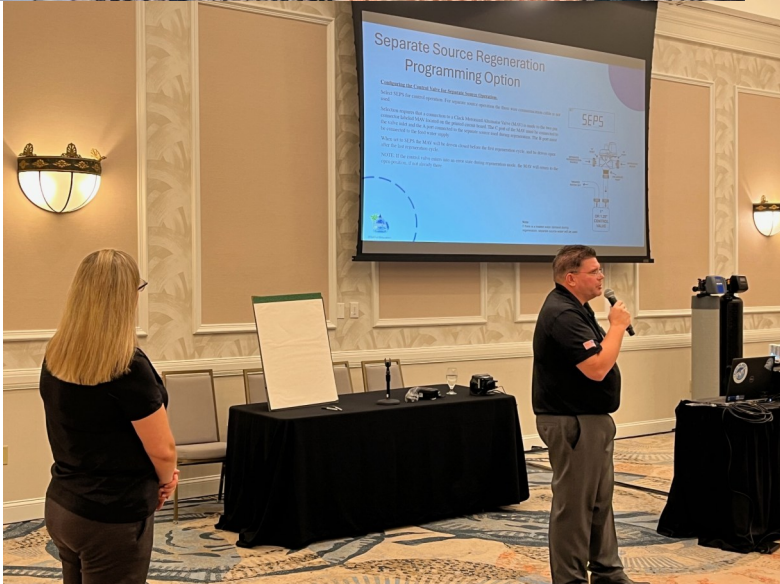
Technical and historical knowledge that provides perspective and facilitates deep understanding of the latest advancements in water treatment will lead the water industry into the future. Without it, the discovery of new best practices will stall, and progress will be delayed. Companies cannot lose their lifeline to the past. If you are part of the historical and technical expertise, finding a way to remain engaged while enjoying your newfound independence is a win-win.

A 1099 retirement-light arrangement costs a company about 40 percent of what it paid for the same employee as a full-timer, because no payroll taxes are paid on the 1099 contributor’s behalf. Remember, in a 1099 arrangement, the past employer is now the worker’s customer. The contributors will be there, on the phone, possibly in the field, able to explain technical details and solutions and share the relationship dynamics of the company’s oldest and best clients. More importantly, they can hand off their valued connections and contacts to new employees and still be there for a while to calm the waters as needed.

And here’s something for current employees to remember: If you’re nearing retirement and your employer is not interested in entering a 1099 relationship, you still have considerable value to another company. Make it known that you’re available, and the phone will ring. If you need help with marketing yourself, there are resources available.

About the author *Matthew Wirth is a water professional with 45 years of experience working at multiple levels in the water industry. He is the owner of Wirth Water LLC, working as an independent business and technical advisor to the water industry. You can reach him at wirth@wirthwater.com.*

2024 Fall Education Seminar



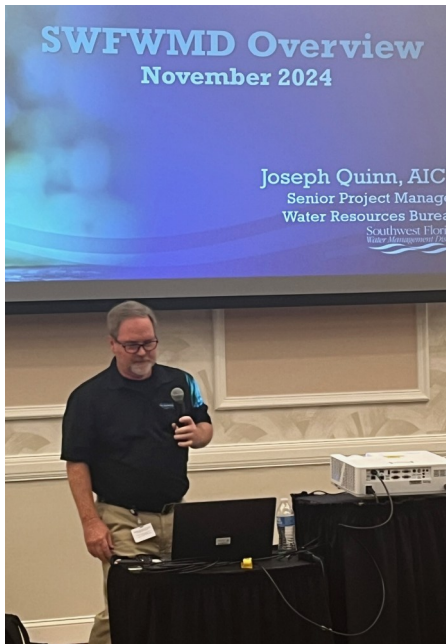
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**FWQA CONVENTION
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JUNE 18-20, 2025**

**WEDNESDAY
GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**THURSDAY
EDUCATION SEMINARS
ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS
TRADE SHOW
SCHOLARSHIP AUCTION
50TH CELEBRATION EVENING**

**FRIDAY
EDUCATION SEMIANRS**

Welcome to Our NEW Members!

● Mr. Joshua Myers
● All County Water
● 12718 NW 77th Terrace
● Alachua, FL 32615

● Mr. Kent Nichols
● Engineered H2O LLC
● 2010 51st Avenue E, Suite 105,
● Palmetto, FL 34221

● Mr. Derek Mauro
● FreshWater Direct LLC
● 1803 Coastal Bay Blvd
● Boynton Beach, FL 33435

● Mr. Daniel Seror
● H2O4 Life USA
● 800 SE 4th Ave, Suite 120
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Mr. Thomas Meeks
Meeks Water Treatment Inc
6752 W Gulf To Lake Hwy #508
Crystal River, Florida 34428

Mr. Ivan Maldonado
Multiple Repair Solutions LLC
9615 Glenox Lane
Riverview, FL 33569

Mr. Sotirios George Kaminis
NS-Industries, LLC
4000 Ponce De Leon Blvd. #470
Coral Gables, FL 33146

Julie and Stephen Payne
Preferred Water Filtration Inc
P O Box 281
Jupiter, FL 33468

Wildfires can contaminate drinking water systems with harmful chemicals

Analysis by Andrew J. Whelton January 17, 2025

<https://www.cnn.com/2025/01/17/health/los-angeles-wildfires-water-systems-conversation-partner>

The wildfires in the Los Angeles area have destroyed thousands of structures, many of them homes, and firefighters continue to battle the infernos. Parts of Pacific Palisades, Altadena, Pasadena and other California communities are now unrecognizable.

As evacuation orders are lifted, safe drinking water should be top of mind for those residents able to return to their homes. What many people don't realize is the extent to which their community drinking water systems can be damaged by fire, how their water is affected and what they can do about it. As an environmental engineer, I work with communities affected by wildfires and other disasters. Over the years, my team and I have been called in to help after some of the most destructive wildfires in U.S. history. In some cases, we have advised state and local officials from afar.

Several local water systems in the Los Angeles area have begun issuing warnings about not using the potentially unsafe drinking water. Here's what residents in the area, and anyone else living near where a wildfire burns, need to know.

How fires can make water unsafe

Fires can make drinking water, and the water pipes and tanks themselves, unsafe. This occurs for a number of reasons. One cause is when high water use from firefighting drains the water system. Water systems are not designed to fight wildfires. Damaged and destroyed structures also prompt uncontrolled water leaks. Power loss also prevents water from being replenished fast enough into the draining water systems. Combined, these factors can depressurize the water system, leaving no water available. When water is depleted, the system is vulnerable to chemical contamination. Drinking water contamination can also come from the air and from damage to water system infrastructure. Heat can partially melt plastic pipes and water meters, releasing chemicals; smoke can be sucked into water systems; and breaks in the water infrastructure can introduce contamination. A host of cancer-causing chemicals have been found in damaged water systems after wildfires. Sometimes these chemicals, such as benzene, can cause someone to become immediately ill if they drink or use the water. Symptoms can include nausea, headaches and rashes. These chemicals stick to the infrastructure surfaces and can even penetrate some plastic pipes and gaskets. Removing them can take days to months. Some plastics can adsorb chemicals like a sponge and release them into clean drinking water slowly, making that water unsafe for long periods of time.

Water systems can recover

It can be frustrating waiting for information, but immediately after fires it's often unsafe for water officials to enter the affected areas to begin testing. As history has shown, safe water can be restored. Assistance from experts who have helped others respond can expedite the recovery. In my experience, communities that recover rapidly and stronger are those where they work together and support one another.

FWQA Legislative Visits in Tallahassee

Your FWQA Board of Directors invite you to join us on our Day at the Capitol!

We will be visiting Legislators on
Tuesday March 11, 2025

Please let us know if you can join us
Contact Suzanne at Suzanne@fwqa.com



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We continue to update and correct our mailing list. If you have an error in the address of this mailing, please fax or email us the correction.*

Our Mission

To promote increased use of industry products and services, to foster and maintain the professional competency of water treatment professionals, and work with governments, other organizations and the public on issues affecting water quality. Serving the water industry since 1975

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