



The Florida Flow

NEWS TO USE

JANUARY 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS

**FWQA Legislative Visits
to Tallahassee
February 5, 2026**

**WQA Convention
April 28– 30, 2026
Miami Beach, FL**

**FWQA Convention
Trade Show
June 17,18,&19, 2026
Caribe Royale Resort
Orlando, FL**

**FWQA Golf Tournament
Celebration Golf
Wednesday June 17, 2026
June 2026**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow FWQA members,
For **2026**, the **Florida Water Quality Association (FWQA)** is centered on a few clear, member-driven priorities that strengthen both the association *and* the water treatment industry across Florida. These focus areas build directly on FWQA's momentum and long-standing mission.

FWQA's Key Focus Areas for 2026

1. Education & Professional Development

FWQA continues to prioritize high-quality education to keep members informed, com-

pliant, and competitive. This includes:

- Technical training and certification support through WQA
 - Seminars and workshops on emerging technologies and best practices
- Ongoing education for both new and experienced professionals

The goal is simple: ensure members are equipped to deliver safe, effective, and innovative water treatment solutions.

2. Legislative Advocacy & Industry Representation

Advocacy remains a critical focus in 2026. FWQA works to:

- Represent the interests of water quality professionals at the state and local levels
 - Monitor and respond to regulatory changes affecting the industry
- Educate policymakers on the importance of clean, safe water solutions
Strong advocacy helps protect businesses, consumers, and the integrity of the profession.

3. Member Engagement & Growth

FWQA is committed to strengthening its membership base by:

- Encouraging volunteerism and committee participation
- Expanding mentorship opportunities

Welcoming and supporting new members

An engaged membership ensures long-term stability and fresh perspectives.

4. Leadership Development & Succession

Looking ahead, FWQA is focused on preparing the next generation of leaders by:

- Developing future board and committee leaders
- Promoting knowledge sharing between experienced professionals and emerging talent

In 2026, FWQA is focused on education, advocacy, member engagement, and leadership development to strengthen Florida's water quality industry. I look forward to seeing as many of our members as possible at our legislative visit to Tallahassee in February, our annual convention in Orlando in June, and our annual Fall Seminar in November. Let's make 2026 a year we will never forget!

Warm regards, **Jami West**, President, Florida Water Quality Association

Six times the recommended limit of PFAS were found in USF Tampa's drinking water

WUSF | By **Steve Newborn**

Published October 24, 2025 at 5:15 AM EDT

Testing at a well in Tarpon Springs was nine times the limit. A well in Holiday measured 19 times the limit. The science is unclear as of yet as to the health risks of drinking water contaminated with "forever chemicals."

A study by a national news organization has found that levels of so-called "forever chemicals" in area public water supplies are several times over the recommended limits.

The report by USA Today shows levels of PFAS in most regional municipal water systems are several times the limits that have been recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Testing at a well in Tarpon Springs was nine times the limit. A well in Holiday measured 19 times the limit. And one test of a well at the University of South Florida's Tampa campus, which has more than 40,000 students, showed six times the limit.

These synthetic chemicals don't break down easily and are found in firefighting foam, nonstick cooking utensils and some food packaging.

In May, the EPA rescinded drinking water limits it set on four "forever chemicals" last year. The science is still unclear about the health effects, said Marie Bourgeois, an associate professor at the USF College of Public Health.

"We don't have a firm handle on exactly how many there are. There are estimates that range from 12,000 to 15,000 compounds," she said, "so it's a challenge to talk about toxicity for any one chemical because you're talking about a very large group.

"One of the things that we are concerned about potentially are immune effects or developmental effects. And there are some strange things that we see. Sometimes there is a concern that they may make vaccinations less effective.

"A large-scale study that looked at PFAS in humans and rodents showed some evidence of nonalcoholic fatty liver damage," she said. "But it's still not enough for us to say, you know, we you shouldn't be able to manufacture these products anymore. You shouldn't be able to use them and things, and if it's in your drinking water, you should be drinking bottled water, which isn't much of a help, because bottled water is just somebody else's tap water, right?"

A statement from USF said it monitors drinking water according to federal and state regulations and that it is safe to drink.

"PFAS compounds are a complex and evolving topic that USF is closely looking into proactively," the statement read. "Currently there are no federal or state drinking water standards in effect for PFAS. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is actively studying PFAS to determine if additional national drinking water standards should be established. As part of this effort, USF participates in the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 5 program, which includes additional testing for 29 PFAS compounds. This nationwide testing helps the EPA gather data to determine whether future regulations are needed to protect public health."

The EPA is delaying the new compliance deadline for PFOA and PFOS, two types of PFAS substances, from 2029 to 2031, while simultaneously rescinding and reconsidering the regulations for four other PFAS (PFHxS, PFNA, GenX, and PFBS).

This new rule will significantly reduce the level of PFAS in drinking water across the United States." the EPA fact sheet says.

The only way PFAS can be removed from drinking water is through activated carbon filters or permeable membranes, which are similar to what is used to desalinate water.

And the filters would have to be incinerated at extremely high temperatures to destroy the chemicals.

Here's some of the higher numbers the USA today study found in the region:

- **David L. Tippin Water Treatment Facility, Tampa.** On average, PFOS was measured 1.4 times over the limit. Altogether, testing detected eight chemicals at two locations. The highest single measurement was **1.7 times over the limit.**
- **Hillsborough County/Seaboard Utilities, Tampa.** On average, PFOS was measured 1.2 times over the limit at Consecutive Connection. Altogether, testing detected eight chemicals at one location. The highest single measurement was **1.8 times over the limit.**
- **MacDill, Tampa.** PFAS over limit. On average, PFOS was measured 1.4 times over the limit at Consecutive Connection. Altogether, testing detected six chemicals at one location. The highest single measurement was **1.4 times over the limit.**
- **Pasco County Regional Public Water System, Land O' Lakes.** On average, PFOS was measured **1.9 times over the limit** at Southeast WTP. Altogether, testing detected six chemicals at five locations. The highest single measurement was 2 times over the limit.
- **Orangewood Water System, Holiday.** On average, PFOS was measured **19.5 times over the limit** at Orangewood Well 1. Altogether, testing detected nine chemicals at five locations. The highest single measurement was **20.2 times over the limit.**
- **Tarpon Spring Water System, Tarpon Springs.** On average, PFOS was measured **9.2 times over the limit** at Grosse Avenue Plant. Altogether, testing detected eight chemicals at two locations. The highest single measurement was **9.2 times over the limit.**
- **Royal Waterworks Inc., New Port Richey.** On average, PFOS was measured **4.3 times over the limit** at Royal Utility Co. Altogether, testing detected six chemicals at one location.
- **Lake Panasoffkee Water Association 2 WPS, Lake Panasoffkee.** On average, PFOS was measured **11 times over the limit** at LPWA Plant 1 (Well 1). Altogether, testing detected eight chemicals at two locations. The highest single measurement was **13.3 times over the limit.**
- **Port Richey Water Department, Port Richey.** On average, PFOS was measured **4.6 times over the limit** at Port Richey Plant. Altogether, testing detected five chemicals at one location. The highest single measurement was **5.0 times over the limit.**
- **Northeast, Winter Haven.** On average, PFOS was measured **3.1 times over the limit** at Polo Davenport. Altogether, testing detected six chemicals at five locations. The highest single measurement was **3.2 times over the limit.**
- **Lake Alfred.** On average, PFOS was measured **1.5 times over the limit** at Lake Alfred Water Plant. Altogether, testing detected two chemicals at one location. The highest single measurement was **1.7 times over the limit.**

Welcome to Our NEW Member!

FWQA members have over 50 years of setting the GOLD Standard!

- Mr Matthew Kepple
- Filterman Water Treatment Inc.
- 4129 34th Ave N.
- St Petersburg, FL 33713

FOCUS ON FLORIDA WELL WATER ISSUES

STANDING ROOM ONLY



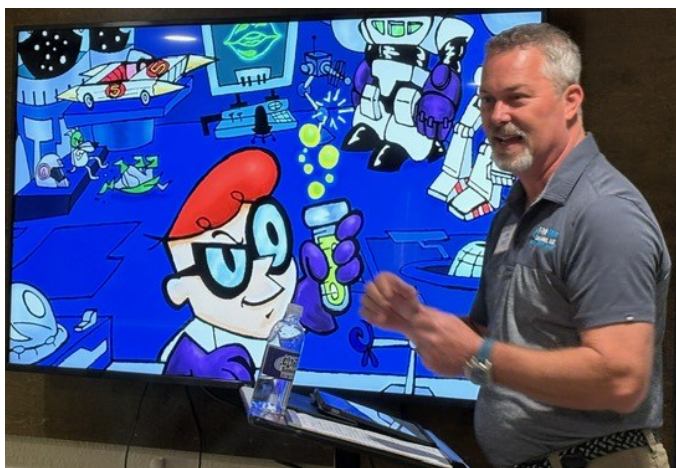
Welcome from



Best opportunities to learn come from exchanging information with others and networking while working.

Congrats to Kevin for winning the ProProducts test

Fall 2025 FWQA Seminar - a Success



Outstanding Seminars

from our President Jami West

From Sample to Solution—Water Testing (Chris West and Brent Burke) Panel Discussion - Solutions for Situations

Potential Solutions—Softeners, RO, DI, UV, Ozone

(Don Grace, Cindy Schieber, Josh Harris, Jeremy Greene, Jeff Sadonis)

Purifying Your Water Problems with Whole House RO (Jeremy Greene)

When the Tap Runs Dry? (John Ladue and Dennis Garcia)

Thank you to these speakers for sharing information and educating us on ways to serve our customer better.



Thank you to our Sponsors for making this an affordable seminar for attendees.



2025 CONSUMER DRINKING WATER INSIGHTS BY GREG REYNEKE

As we wind down 2025, water treatment industry sales continue to be fueled by consumer concern, the need for convenience, and an unwavering demand for trusted local experts.

The **2025 WQA Consumer Insights Report** reveals these evolving trends, offering valuable guidance for homeowners seeking cleaner water. More importantly, it underscores the critical role of certified products and certified professionals in delivering safe, reliable solutions and peace of mind.

A Growing Concern with Limited Knowledge

Over half (58%) of U.S. households worry about tap water safety, yet only 30% have read and understood their Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). This trust gap leaves many unsure where to turn—22% feel lost and seeking expertise. Purchases often follow *reactive* triggers like a move, bad taste, or a water alert rather than *proactive* education. For parents, concerns extend to water safety at schools and parks, making certified professionals essential to navigate these worries with credible and actionable advice.

The Rising adoption of in-home Water Treatment

Water treatment is becoming a household norm, with 54% of U.S. households using a product in 2025. This usage is up from 45% in 2023 and 40% in 2021, a 35% net increase over four years. Whole-house systems and softeners lead with 16% year-over-year growth, and 91% of users plan to continue ownership/use of these proven systems. Certified installers and service technicians ensure these systems perform optimally, safeguarding your investment with expertise backed by rigorous standards.

Values Drive Decisions

Health and safety dominate, with 58% citing tap water safety concerns and PFAS awareness jumping from 23% in 2023 to 36% in 2025. Environmental consciousness also matters, with 5% avoiding bottled water due to concerns over plastic waste. Trust in local providers is strong—53% rely on utility testing. Local WQA-certified water quality professionals complement the hard work done by local utilities with ethical, reliable solutions that follow industry best-practices. Smart consumers will choose certified products recommended by these experts to align with their values.

Quality Trumps Price

Cost challenges 32% of owners, but quality wins out: **63% prioritize better taste, and 65% investigate performance qualifications.** For replacement filters, 68% stick to certified brands, and **71% check certifications**, showing a preference for *trusted* solutions over cheap alternatives (only 16% opt for the lowest price). Certified professionals ensure you get high-performing, durable systems tailored to your needs, maximizing long-term value and providing you with water that you can trust.

The Hybrid Shopping Journey

Buyers blend online research with local purchases. While 22% buy filters online (down from 25% in 2023) and 28% visit big box stores, 6% consult local plumbers for personalized advice. Online reviews (10%) and searches (9%) inform decisions, but certified local experts seal the deal, especially for complex systems. Smart consumers rely on their training and experience to bridge digital insights with hands-on trust.

Convenience is King

Maintenance deters 12% of non-owners, but 52-68% of users have professional agreements for systems like softeners (52%) and RO (68%). If utilities managed upkeep, 53% would adopt systems (23% very likely, 30% somewhat). Certified service technicians offer worry-free care, while younger buyers favor DIY with certified guidance for control and savings. Smart consumers partner with local WQA-certified experts for seamless integration and support.

Transparency Builds Confidence

With only 30% understanding their CCR, transparency is vital. Third-party certifications sway 71% for filters, and 61% rate them as very important. Company reputation (61%) and performance certifications (58%) outrank warranties (58%). Certified professionals from utilities (25%) and health departments (24%) provide authentic education. Local WQA-certified professionals can tie that all together with their proven expertise, ensuring that Smart consumer can trust the products they recommend and install.

I want to drop in the RELATE page from the book last year. With a few additions. I'll give you a call.

(Continued from page 6)

Experience Over Equipment

Water treatment enhances daily life—63% value better taste, 63% odor removal, and 58% safety. Poor taste (42%) and odor (18%) drive distrust, pushing demand for clearer water (58% important) and better hydration. WQA-Certified experts highlight these benefits, tailoring solutions to lifestyle. With 91% of users committed long-term, their expertise ensures lasting results.

Why Certified Professionals Matter

The *2025 WQA Consumer Insights Report* emphasizes that a market shaped by confidence and credibility thrives on early engagement. WQA certifications—like Master Water Specialist (MWS), Certified Water Specialist (CWS), Certified Water Treatment Representative (CWR), and Certified Installer (CI)—equip professionals with the knowledge to assess water issues, design systems, and provide ongoing support. These credentials, earned through rigorous training, demonstration of skills, and proctored exams, ensure that the appropriate solutions are recommended, installed, and serviced with precision. From troubleshooting with Certified Service Technicians to advanced design by Certified Treatment Designers, local certified experts are trusted partners and an invaluable resource for ensuring the very best water quality. Professionals working in the water treatment industry can learn more about certification here: <https://wqa.org/grow/professional-certification/>.

Take Action Today

Don't leave your water quality to chance. Collaborate with WQA-certified professionals in your area to access certified products that meet the highest standards. Whether it's for safer drinking water for your family or a lifestyle upgrade, their expertise turns concern into confidence.

Visit BetterWaterToday.org to find certified experts near you and start your journey to cleaner water today.

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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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