



The Florida Flow

NEWS TO USE

OCTOBER 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Seminar
November 7, 2025
Comfort Inn & Suites
Sarasota, FL

FWQA Legislative Visit to
Tallahassee
February 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,

As we move into the final months of 2025, I continue to be inspired by the energy and dedication that make the Florida Water Quality Association so special. Our **50th Anniversary Celebration** this summer reminded us just how much we've accomplished together—and how much potential lies ahead when we stay connected and engaged.



In my last message, I spoke about *the power of giving back*—how every act of participation strengthens not only our association but our entire industry. Over the past few months, I've seen that spirit in action through members volunteering, mentoring, and supporting one another. That same energy is what makes our upcoming **Fall Seminar in November** such an exciting opportunity to continue learning, collaborating, and building momentum together.

The seminar is always one of my favorite FWQA events because it captures the heart of who we are: professionals committed to quality, integrity, and innovation in water treatment. It's a chance to exchange ideas, hear about the latest developments in our industry, and recharge for the year ahead. Whether you're attending for the first time or returning for another great session, your presence makes a difference—and I encourage everyone to take part.

As we prepare for 2026, FWQA remains focused on strengthening our foundation through:

- **Education and professional development** to keep members informed and competitive.
- **Legislative advocacy** to ensure our industry's priorities are represented at every level.
- **Member engagement and mentorship** to welcome new faces and sustain the passion that drives our success.

Each of us plays a role in shaping the future of this association. So, I invite you to stay involved—volunteer on a committee, contribute your expertise to a seminar, or simply reach out to another member to share insight or encouragement. Small actions create lasting impact.

If you're looking for ways to get involved or aren't sure where to start, reach out. We're stronger when we grow together.

As we gather this November for the Fall Seminar, let's continue the spirit of connection, learning, and service that has carried FWQA through fifty years of excellence. I'm grateful for your continued support and can't wait to see many of you there.

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

In September, I had the privilege of attending the Water Quality Association’s Mid-Year Leadership Conference (MYLC) in Chicago. The conference brought together leaders from across the industry to focus on strategic planning, collaboration, and education—always with an eye toward how we can better serve customers and strengthen the water quality profession.

A session that stood out to me was the BRATLAB workshop, “Leading Across Lines of Difference,” led by Dr. Hanlie van Wyk, a global social scientist. The focus was on how to recruit, engage, and retain the next generation of employees – particularly Gen Z. A few insights:

Technology is second nature. As digital natives, they expect seamless hiring processes, collaboration tools like Slack, and bold, authentic branding.

Other sessions explored issues like the looming funding cliff for water infrastructure, rising concerns about contaminants like lead, arsenic, and microplastics, and the importance of educating consumers in simple, relatable ways. I especially enjoyed discussions around creative outreach to help fill the knowledge gap for consumers that want water treatment but don't know what to do – ideas included short “Did you know?” videos or an app that lets consumers see local water quality data by entering their zip code.

Overall, MYLC is more than just a leadership meeting – it’s a chance to learn, network, and bring back ideas that can shape our businesses here in Florida. I’d encourage FWQA members to consider attending next year. Whether you’re interested in policy, consumer education, or workforce development, there’s always something valuable to bring home.

Past President, Cindy Schieber, MWS, Stenner Pump Company

Welcome to Our NEW Members!



FWQA members have 50 years of setting the
GOLD Standard!

- **DFM Water Wizard LLC**
- Anabel Fernandez
- 16967 92nd Ln. N
- Loxahatchee, FLI 33470
- dfmwaterwizard@gmail.com

L & S Inaqua LLC
Larry and Sandy Eaton
3757 Kosten Place
Sarasota, FL 34240
www.lsinaqua.com

Veteran Air
Joshua Gendron
6720 33rd Street E
Sarasota, FL 34243
www.veteranair.com

Florida Well Water and Water Conditioning: Safeguarding a Vital Resource

Florida's vast aquifer system provides a lifeline to millions, especially the 2.5 million residents who rely on private wells for their daily water needs. Beneath the sandy soils and limestone bedrock lies a complex network of groundwater sources that demand careful stewardship and smart conditioning to ensure safety and quality.

Understanding Florida's Groundwater

Florida's primary source of drinking water is groundwater drawn from aquifers—natural underground reservoirs formed by porous rock and sediment. The Floridan Aquifer, one of the most productive in the world, supplies much of the state's water. However, its quality can vary depending on location, depth, and nearby land use.

Common challenges include:

- **Hard Water:** High levels of calcium and magnesium, especially in central and northern Florida.
- **Contaminants:** Nitrates, bacteria, and chemicals from septic systems, agriculture, and stormwater runoff.
- **Saltwater Intrusion:** A growing concern in coastal areas due to over-pumping and sea level rise.

The Role of Water Conditioning

Water conditioning refers to the treatment processes that improve water quality for household use. For Florida well owners, this often includes:

1. WATER SOFTENING

Removes hardness minerals (calcium and magnesium) that cause:

- Scale buildup in pipes and appliances
- Dry skin and hair
- Reduced soap effectiveness

Softener systems use ion exchange to replace hardness minerals with sodium or potassium ions. These systems are common in areas like Bithlo, where residents report significant improvements in water feel and appliance longevity.

2. FILTRATION SYSTEMS

Target specific contaminants such as:

- Sediment and rust
- Chlorine (if added)
- Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Iron and sulfur (which cause staining and odor)

3. DISINFECTION

Essential for removing bacteria and viruses. Options include:

- UV light systems
- Chlorination
- Ozonation

Maintenance and Testing: A Personal Responsibility

Unlike public water systems, private wells are not regulated by the EPA. That means:

- **Annual Testing** is recommended for bacteria and nitrates.
- **Post-Storm Testing** is critical after hurricanes or floods.
- **Routine Maintenance** of pumps, tanks, and conditioning units ensures consistent performance.

Environmental engineers like Dr. Yilin Zhuang at UF/IFAS are working to bridge the knowledge gap among well owners, offering webinars and resources to promote safe practices.

Stewardship for the Future

Protecting Florida's groundwater requires a community-wide effort:

- Maintain septic systems and avoid over-fertilizing lawns
- Dispose of hazardous waste properly
- Monitor water quality and aquifer health

Understanding the interplay between well water and conditioning systems is key to preserving Florida's most precious resource. And helping your customers have quality water.



FOCUS ON FLORIDA WELL WATER ISSUES

THE 2025 FALL FLORIDA WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION Education Seminars—

Giving you the Tools You Need!

Friday, November 7, 2025 8:30 am—3:30



Comfort Inn & Suites 5931 Commercial Way, Sarasota, FL34212 Call 941-342-8778 for FWQA Room Rate : \$157.05 incl. tax (Rate good through <u>October 15, 2025</u> Book your Room 	Seminar Registration Cost \$70.00 FWQA Members Each additional member \$60 \$100.00 Non FWQA Members Includes Breakfast and Lunch Sign up early, Seating limited !!! 
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We are excited to offer these outstanding seminars this year...
Hope to see you there!

From Sample to Solution—Water Testing

Presenters Chris West -Ctech Water and Brent Burke -Pro Products

PRO to PRO Panel Discussion - Solutions for Situations

Moderator—Jeff Sadonis - Aqua Wholesale Potential Solutions—Softeners, RO, DI, UV, Ozone
Don Grace- Safeway Water, Cindy Schieber -Stenner Pump, Jeremy Greene -FSHS, Josh Harris-Custom Water Solutions (dealer)

Purifying Your Water Problems with Whole House RO

Presenter— Jeremy Greene, FSHS

When the Tap Runs Dry?

Presenter - John Ladue, Complete Water Systems, Dennis Garcia ,MD Pumps

Wrap-Up and Review—A Panel of all Speakers addressing your questions

Sponsors as of 9-26-25



The Ripple Effect: How Water Quality Impacts Finances, Health, and Residential Properties

Water is the lifeblood of communities, but its quality can create a cascade of consequences for finances, public health, and residential properties. Poor water quality doesn't just affect what comes out of the tap—it influences economic stability, medical costs, and property values in profound ways. This article explores how water quality shapes these critical aspects of life and why addressing it is essential for individuals and communities alike.

Financial Impacts of Water Quality

Poor water quality can strain both household and municipal budgets. For households, contaminated or hard water often necessitates additional expenses, such as purchasing bottled water or installing filtration systems. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Americans spend approximately \$16 billion annually on bottled water, much of which is driven by distrust in tap water quality. Home filtration systems, while effective, can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$5,000 upfront, with ongoing maintenance adding to the expense.

At the municipal level, poor water quality demands costly infrastructure upgrades. Aging water systems, like those in Flint, Michigan, have shown how neglect can lead to crises requiring billions in remediation. The American Water Works Association estimates that the U.S. needs \$1 trillion over the next 25 years to repair and replace water infrastructure to ensure safe drinking water. These costs often translate into higher utility bills or taxes for residents.

Businesses also face financial burdens. Industries reliant on clean water, such as agriculture or food processing, may incur losses due to contamination or restrictions. For example, in 2018, a PFAS contamination incident in Michigan led to significant losses for local farmers unable to sell tainted crops or livestock. Poor water quality can also deter tourism and economic development, as communities with unsafe water struggle to attract visitors or new businesses.

Health Consequences of Poor Water Quality

The health implications of water quality are stark. Contaminated water can introduce pathogens, heavy metals, or chemicals like lead, arsenic, or PFAS into the body, leading to both acute and chronic conditions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) links waterborne pathogens to diseases like giardiasis and cryptosporidiosis, which cause severe gastrointestinal issues. Long-term exposure to contaminants like lead can impair cognitive development in children and increase risks of cardiovascular disease in adults.

The Flint water crisis, beginning in 2014, is a glaring example. Residents exposed to lead-contaminated water faced irreversible health damage, including developmental delays in children and increased rates of kidney and heart issues. The crisis also highlighted how marginalized communities often bear the brunt of poor water quality, exacerbating health disparities.

Even less severe issues, like hard water high in minerals such as calcium and magnesium, can affect health indirectly. Hard water can dry out skin and hair, potentially worsening conditions like eczema. While not life-threatening, these effects can lead to ongoing costs for treatments or specialized products, further straining household budgets.

Impact on Residential Properties

Water quality directly influences the value and desirability of residential properties. Homes in areas with clean, reliable water supplies are more attractive to buyers, while those in regions with known contamination issues often see depressed property values. A 2017 study in the *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* found that properties near contaminated water sources can lose 10-15% of their value, particularly if the contamination is publicized.

Poor water quality also increases maintenance costs for homeowners. Hard water, for instance, causes limescale buildup in pipes and appliances, reducing their lifespan and efficiency. The Water Quality Association estimates that hard water can increase energy costs by up to 24% for water heaters and shorten the life of appliances like dishwashers and washing machines. These ongoing expenses can make homes less appealing to prospective buyers.

Moreover, water quality issues can affect insurance and lending. In areas with known contamination, insurers may raise premiums or exclude water-related damage from coverage. Lenders may also hesitate to finance properties in affected regions, perceiving them as higher-risk investments. For example, after the Camp Lejeune water contamination (discovered in the 1980s), affected properties faced long-term stigma, complicating sales and financing.

Solutions and Moving Forward

Addressing water quality requires coordinated efforts at individual, community, and policy levels. Homeowners can invest in certified filtration systems or water softeners to mitigate immediate risks, though these come with upfront costs. Communities must prioritize infrastructure upgrades and regular water testing to prevent crises. Federal and state policies, such as the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule revisions, aim to reduce contamination risks, but funding and enforcement remain challenges.

Public awareness is also key. Residents should stay informed about local water quality reports (available through the EPA or local utilities) and advocate for transparency and action. Grassroots movements, like those in Flint, have shown the power of community advocacy in securing funding and policy changes.

Conclusion

Water quality is more than a technical issue—it's a determinant of financial stability, public health, and property value. Poor water quality imposes hidden costs on households, strains public resources, and undermines community vitality. By investing in clean water solutions, from household filters to national infrastructure plans, we can protect our wallets, our health, and our homes. Clean water isn't just a resource; it's the foundation of thriving communities.

Family, Filtration, and the Future: Keeping Water Conditioning Businesses Flowing” The Future of Generational Water-Conditioning Businesses

For decades, America’s water-conditioning companies have been the quiet guardians of clean water — installing softeners, filtration systems, and reverse osmosis units for homes and small businesses. Many of these companies are family-owned, built on reputation, handshake deals, and deep local roots.

Today, however, those same family firms stand at a crossroads. As technology transforms the industry and ownership transitions to new generations, the question becomes: *how do traditional water-conditioning businesses modernize without losing the trust and community ties that made them successful?*

Market Tailwinds: A Growing Industry

The good news is that water conditioning is a growth market. Rising awareness of water quality, aging infrastructure, and demand for convenience are all fueling expansion. Analysts project steady growth across the next decade — particularly in “smart” softeners and connected systems that can self-monitor, alert owners to maintenance needs, and even order salt automatically.

For family firms, this isn’t a threat; it’s an opening. The same homeowners who once called for a repair now expect remote diagnostics, eco-friendly options, and seamless service. Companies that adapt early will ride this wave of modernization while maintaining their reputation for reliability.

The Generational Challenge

Passing a water-conditioning business from one generation to the next isn’t simple. Studies across industries show that only about one in three family businesses successfully transitions to the second generation, and even fewer survive into the third.

The reasons are often emotional as much as financial: unclear succession plans, family disagreements, or overreliance on founders who “know every bolt and valve” but never wrote anything down. Without a structured handoff, decades of expertise can vanish — along with the trust that customers built over years of service calls.

Three Forces Reshaping the Industry

1. **Smart Technology & Data-Driven Service** The Internet of Things is transforming water treatment. Smart softeners and monitoring devices can report leaks, measure salt levels, and alert customers — or dealers — before issues escalate. Dealers who integrate these systems can create new revenue streams through remote monitoring and subscription-based maintenance plans.
2. **Environmental Regulations & Sustainability** As municipalities tighten rules on salt discharge and water waste, low-salt and salt-free technologies are gaining traction. Forward-thinking dealers are diversifying their offerings, positioning themselves as eco-conscious partners rather than just equipment providers.
3. **Consolidation & Competition** Private equity firms and national service networks have started to enter local markets, buying up family-run operations. While this trend increases competition, it also creates opportunities: family owners who modernize and formalize their operations may command premium valuations if they decide to sell — or find ways to compete at scale.

What Successful Family Firms Are Doing

The next generation of thriving water-conditioning businesses shares a few key habits:

Formalizing Operations: They document procedures, from installation standards to customer follow-ups, ensuring the business doesn't depend solely on one or two people's knowledge.

- **Building Recurring Revenue:** Instead of relying on one-time sales, they create predictable income with filter replacements, maintenance contracts, and remote monitoring subscriptions.
- **Selective Technology Adoption:** They invest in smart tools that provide clear ROI — remote sensors that reduce truck rolls, digital scheduling systems, or CRM software to strengthen customer relationships.
- **Professional Governance:** Families set up advisory boards and define roles clearly. This prevents conflict and helps successors take ownership confidently.
- **Partnerships and Growth Strategies:** Some family firms are exploring partnerships with local plumbers or regional distributors to expand capabilities without losing independence.

A Succession Checklist for Owners

If you're a current owner planning a transition, consider these practical steps:

1. Start Planning Early — ideally five to ten years ahead of retirement. Training, mentoring, and financial restructuring take time. **2. Identify Key Roles and Gaps** — who will handle operations, customer relations, and finances in the next generation?

3. Value the Business Professionally — get an independent valuation to understand what your company is truly worth and how to plan taxes and estate matters.

4. Build Recurring Revenue — recurring income smooths cash flow and raises company valuation.

5. Engage Advisors — accountants, attorneys, or family-business consultants can help mediate and formalize the process.

Looking Ahead

Over the next five to ten years, three scenarios may emerge:

- **Best Case:** Family firms blend their legacy strengths with digital tools — improving efficiency and customer engagement — while preserving personal service. These businesses either grow regionally or become highly valued acquisition targets.
- **Middle Case:** Companies adopt technology unevenly, resulting in inconsistent service and increased vulnerability to larger competitors.
- **Worst Case:** Owners delay planning, struggle to recruit skilled technicians, and are forced to sell under pressure — often at a discount.

The Bottom Line

Generational water-conditioning businesses have weathered decades of market shifts, new regulations, and changing customer expectations. Their foundation — community trust and technical expertise — remains solid. But to thrive in the next era, they must embrace change with the same hands-on dedication that built them.

The future won't belong to the biggest companies — it will belong to the most adaptable ones. Whether you plan to pass your business down, sell, or scale, the key is to start preparing now. After all, clean water isn't the only thing worth preserving — so is the legacy that keeps it flowing.

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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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