

The Florida Flow

The Official Newsletter of the Florida Water Quality Association | October 2026

NEWS • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • CONNECTION



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

If Water Could Talk

I have spent years testing hardness, checking resin beds, and watching scale form in pipes and appliances. Sometimes I wonder what the water itself would say if it could talk about its long journey to the glass.

Here is the story I believe it would tell, grounded in what we know:

"I began roughly 4.5 billion years ago when hydrogen and oxygen first combined on the cooling Earth, supplemented by the frozen water delivered by comets and asteroids. Since then I have never been created or destroyed—I only move through the hydrologic cycle. The sun lifts me from oceans, lakes, and the land. Trade winds carry me as clouds and storms. Cooling air returns me as rain or snow. Rivers deliver me back to the sea. In the atmosphere my time is usually measured in days. In the rivers I create, it may be weeks to months. Sometimes I am locked deep underground, creating unseen reservoirs where I can remain for centuries or longer. Eventually I reach the ocean, where I may stay for thousands of years on average, rising and falling within the deep currents. The same droplets that once fell on ancient forests and filled the seas that were home to the first dinosaurs still cycle today. Along my journey I dissolve whatever I contact. I pick up calcium and magnesium from sedimentary rocks such as limestone; these later form scale in pipes, water heaters, and fixtures. I also collect iron, manganese, sediment, agricultural nutrients, industrial residues, microplastics, and trace organic compounds. Some of these burdens are natural; many are the result of human activity. Even my rain is rarely pure; I wash the atmosphere and the land before I come to rest in your wells or surface sources. Nature's recycling process, sunlight, microbial action, filtration through soil and sand, and simple dilution, reduces many contaminants. Yet hardness minerals, salts, and metals often remain dissolved, and newer synthetic chemicals persist longer than the cycle can fully remove them. Modern demand is why I arrive at homes and businesses carrying both the chemistry of the earth and the signature of civilization."

As a water softener professional, my response to that story is practical. We test the water, measuring hardness, iron, pH, total dissolved solids, and other parameters that affect performance and health. Then we correct what needs correcting. Ion-exchange softeners replace calcium and magnesium ions with sodium or potassium, preventing scale and protecting plumbing, appliances, and skin. Where additional contaminants are present, we may add filtration, carbon, or other treatment stages. The goal is straightforward: we test and correct the water's chemistry to protect our systems, our equipment, and our health.

When the treated water finally reaches the glass—softened, clearer, and more compatible with daily life—it has completed another leg of an exceptionally long journey that began before human history. We cannot return it to its original state, but we understand its load, remove the burdens that cause harm, and send it forward safer for the people who use it—and ready to begin the journey again.

Warm Regards, **Don Grace**, FWQA President

Upcoming Events

Friday, November 6, 2026
Fall Education Seminar
Hilton, Ocala, FL

April 28–30, 2027 WQA
Convention & Expo
Phoenix, Arizona

June 22–24, 2027
Convention & Tradeshow
Caribe Royale Resort,
Orlando, FL

June 22, 2027
Golf Tournament
Orange County National
Golf Course
Orlando, FL

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LEARNING IS EARNING FALL EDUCATION SEMINAR



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6



8:30 AM-2:30PM



HELD AT HILTON OCALA, FLORIDA

**MORE EDUCATION. MORE OPTIONS. MORE WAYS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS.
THIS YEAR, WE'RE BRINGING YOU TWO EDUCATION TRACKS.
DESIGNED TO GIVE YOU MORE CHOICES AND MORE VALUE FROM YOUR DAY.**

BUSINESS BOOTCAMP

People, Profit & Planning: Build a stronger business for 2027.

Running a successful water treatment business takes more than technical expertise. It requires the right people, profitable decisions, and a plan for where the business is going next.

Join us for a practical, interactive Business Operations Bootcamp designed specifically for water treatment owners, managers and emerging leaders. We'll look beyond day-to-day operations and dig into three areas that directly influence the health and growth of the business:

- **PEOPLE** — Hire, Onboard & Retain the Right Team
- **PROFIT** — Know What the Job Really Costs
- **PLANNING** — Build 2027 on Purpose

TECHNICAL TRAINING

Fall Tune-Up: You and your technicians will hear from industry experts!

Bring your team members to refresh and learn more skills.

Classes include:

Pump Teardown and Troubleshooting – Dennis Garcia, MD Pumps and John Ladue, CI, Complete Water Systems

Ozone in Residential and Light Commercial Water Treatment Systems – Doug Haring, MWS, CI, CSR – Clack Corp

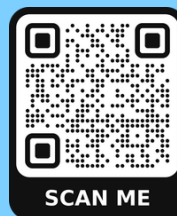
Black Opal Carbons | Where Purity Begins – Shawn Talley Black Opal Carbon, followed by a panel

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO VIEW SESSION DETAILS & REGISTRATION INFORMATION.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE & REGISTER

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN, CONNECT, AND GROW WITH INDUSTRY PEERS.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: NICOLE CHAPMAN

The FWQA Board of Directors is pleased to announce Nicole Chapman as the association's new Executive Director. Nicole is already a familiar face to many in the FWQA family. She has worked alongside the association at our annual convention for several years, giving her the opportunity to meet and build relationships with many of our members.

Nicole brings more than 15 years of association management experience, including her work with Florida's statewide hotel and restaurant association. Her background includes membership development, event management, government and regulatory affairs, and association operations. We are excited for the experience, energy, and fresh perspective she will bring to FWQA.

As we begin this transition, we also want to express our tremendous gratitude to Suzanne Trueblood for almost 40 years of service and dedication to FWQA. Suzanne has truly been the lifeblood of this association and the steady hand that has kept FWQA moving forward for decades. Her commitment to our members and the water treatment industry has made an immeasurable impact on the organization we are today.

Over the next few months, Suzanne and Nicole will work closely together to ensure a smooth transition. You will continue to hear from both of them as Nicole gets further acquainted with our members, programs, and priorities.

Please join the Board of Directors in welcoming Nicole to her new role and, most importantly, in thanking Suzanne for the extraordinary legacy she has built through more than four decades of service to FWQA. We are excited for this next chapter of FWQA!



Nicole Chapman
nicole@fwqa.com



Suzanne Trueblood
suzanne@fwqa.com

HEALTHY H2O ACT HIGHLIGHTS ROLE OF WATER TREATMENT SOLUTIONS

The water treatment industry received encouraging news this year as provisions based on the Healthy Drinking Water Affordability Act, commonly known as the Healthy H2O Act, advanced in Congress.

Major components of the legislation were included in the 2026 Farm Bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. The Water Quality Association (WQA), which helped develop the original proposal and has advocated for the legislation, continues to support its advancement through Congress.

The Healthy H2O Act is designed to help rural and underserved communities address drinking-water concerns by improving access to water quality testing and certified point-of-use (POU) and point-of-entry (POE) treatment systems.

The proposed program would provide grants through the U.S. Department of Agriculture to eligible households and organizations. Funding could be used for water testing and the purchase, installation and maintenance of certified treatment systems designed to address identified contaminants.

For Florida's water treatment professionals, the proposal represents more than a potential federal grant program. It demonstrates growing recognition of the important role that professional water testing, properly selected treatment technologies and certified POU/POE systems can play in addressing drinking-water concerns.

It also reinforces an important message for our industry: effective water treatment begins with understanding the water, identifying the concern and selecting the appropriate technology to address it.

The legislation has not yet completed the congressional process, and WQA continues to advocate for its passage. FWQA will continue to monitor developments that impact our members and Florida's water treatment industry.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION: PROTECTING FLORIDA'S WATER TREATMENT PROFESSIONALS



FWQA President, Don Grace, addressing the CTQB Board.

In September, FWQA brought the voice of Florida's water treatment industry directly to the City of Jacksonville Construction Trades Qualifying Board (CTQB) regarding a proposed change that could significantly impact water conditioning companies in Duval County.

The issue centers on a potential requirement that water conditioning companies utilize a licensed plumbing contractor as a qualifying agent to install and maintain water conditioning equipment. FWQA strongly opposes this requirement and believes Florida law provides clear protections for water conditioning operators.



Jacksonville member, Mark Kinder, Affordable Water sharing his message with the CTQB Board.

A huge thank you to our members who joined FWQA Board members at the CTQB meeting to represent our industry. Members shared firsthand perspectives on the specialized nature of water treatment, the industry's history in Duval County, the impact a plumbing qualifier could have on small businesses, and the additional costs that could ultimately be passed along to consumers. ***Our presence was seen and heard.***



Attendees enjoying a meal after the meeting.

The meeting resulted in a constructive discussion between FWQA members, the CTQB and City representatives. FWQA is now working with CTQB staff to better understand the City's concerns and explore potential solutions. We will keep members informed as we work together toward a pathway forward.

Advocacy Is Why Your Association Matters

This issue is an important example of the value of a strong industry association. When regulatory changes could affect how our members operate, FWQA has a seat at the table. We bring together industry professionals, legal resources and national partners to advocate for and protect Florida's water treatment industry.



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!- TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Election Day is your opportunity to have a say in the future of your community and our state.

Voting is more than a right, it's an important part of civic engagement.

Every vote counts, and every voice matters.

INSIGHTS FROM THE WQA MID-YEAR VOLUNTEER SUMMIT

**SUBMITTED BY: JAMI WEST, C-TECH WATER SOLUTIONS
FWQA IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**



In September, I had the opportunity to attend the WQA Volunteer Summit in Chicago. The two-day event provided an opportunity to step away from our day-to-day responsibilities and come together as an industry to share ideas, have meaningful conversations, and focus on where we are headed.

One of the sessions I attended focused on the current and future research needs of our industry through the Industry Research Committee, chaired by our very own FWQA member, Courtney Zukoski of Best Water Solutions. Courtney did a phenomenal job leading the discussion—and she somehow managed to make research FUN! More importantly, she made sure everyone in the room had an opportunity to participate and that ALL voices and opinions were heard. We discussed options for what future research could provide the greatest value to our industry. Research shouldn't happen in a vacuum. Dealers, technicians, manufacturers, suppliers, and other professionals working with water every day have valuable experiences that can help identify the questions our industry needs to be asking. It was exciting to see those real-world perspectives being brought into a conversation.

But for me, the highlight of the entire two-day Summit was the State & Regional Associations Engagement Network Strategy Meeting. Representatives from state and regional associations across the country came together with a common goal: finding better ways for our associations and WQA at the national level to communicate, collaborate, and work together for the benefit of our collective future. As someone who has the privilege of serving both FWQA and WQA, this conversation was especially meaningful to me. Our state and regional associations have a unique understanding of what is happening locally. At the same time, WQA provides resources, leadership, and a national voice for our industry. Finding ways to better connect those two worlds creates opportunities for all of us. There was some very good—and very honest—discussion in the room about where we are today, where we would like to go, and what we can do better together. Most importantly, the conversation didn't end when the meeting did. It resulted in the formation of a task force committed to continuing the work and turning those conversations into progress.

That was probably my biggest takeaway from Chicago. It is easy to sit in a meeting, share great ideas, and then return home to our busy schedules. It is much more meaningful when those conversations lead to action. I am excited to see representatives from across the country committed to continuing this work and strengthening the relationship. The Summit reminded me once again that one of the greatest strengths of the water treatment industry is our willingness to come together. Whether we are discussing research, education, association leadership, or the future of our industry, progress happens when we listen to one another, share our experiences, and then take the next step together.

I returned home from Chicago encouraged, energized, and excited about what lies ahead. I am proud to represent FWQA and WQA in these conversations and even more proud to see our members actively helping shape the future of our industry.

BOCA RATON WORKING ON FIX TO REMOVE FOREVER CHEMICAL FROM WATER, LEVELS TOP FEDERAL LIMITS

By Luis F. Perez, [Tap into Boca Raton](#)

Published June 29, 2026



BOCA RATON, FL — Every glass of water poured from a Boca Raton faucet meets today's federal drinking water standards. But the city is spending tens of millions of dollars to remove a group of chemicals that federal regulators say should be present at even lower levels. A recently released report shows that every Boca Raton water sample tested since the Environmental Protection Agency established a new limit for PFOS — one of the so-called "forever chemicals" linked to cancer and other health concerns — has exceeded that new threshold.

The city's 2025 Annual Water Quality Report, released earlier this month, shows PFOS measured 7.1 parts per trillion in January 2025. A follow-up sample taken in March 2026 measured 4.9 parts per trillion, while an August 2024 sample measured 5.8 parts per trillion. All three readings are above the EPA's new limit of 4.0 parts per trillion, adopted in April 2024. The city is not in violation of federal regulations. Water utilities nationwide have until 2029 — with a possible two-year extension — to meet the new standard.

City officials said the differences between the test results are expected because Boca Raton blends water treated through different processes and because different production wells are operating when samples are collected. Still, the readings have consistently remained above the new federal limit, ranging from 4.9 to 7.1 parts per trillion over the past 19 months. To meet the stricter standard, Boca Raton has begun designing a new filtration system expected to cost about \$55 million. The city received a \$32 million settlement from chemical manufacturers tied to PFAS contamination, which will offset part of the cost.

According to city officials, Boca Raton's existing treatment system already removes about 90 percent of PFAS from the drinking water supply. The new filtration facility is designed to remove the remaining contamination and bring the system into compliance before the federal deadline. Last year, Utilities Director Chris Helfrich told TAPinto Boca Raton the city already meets most of the EPA's future drinking water requirements and is on track to satisfy the remaining standards once the new filtration project is completed.

Welcome!



NEW MEMBERS!

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THE P-TRAP PROBLEM

WHAT IS INCUBATING IN THE SINK?



BY: GREG REYNEKE, MWS, RED FOX ADVISORS
CURRENT WQA PRESIDENT
SEP 27, 2026

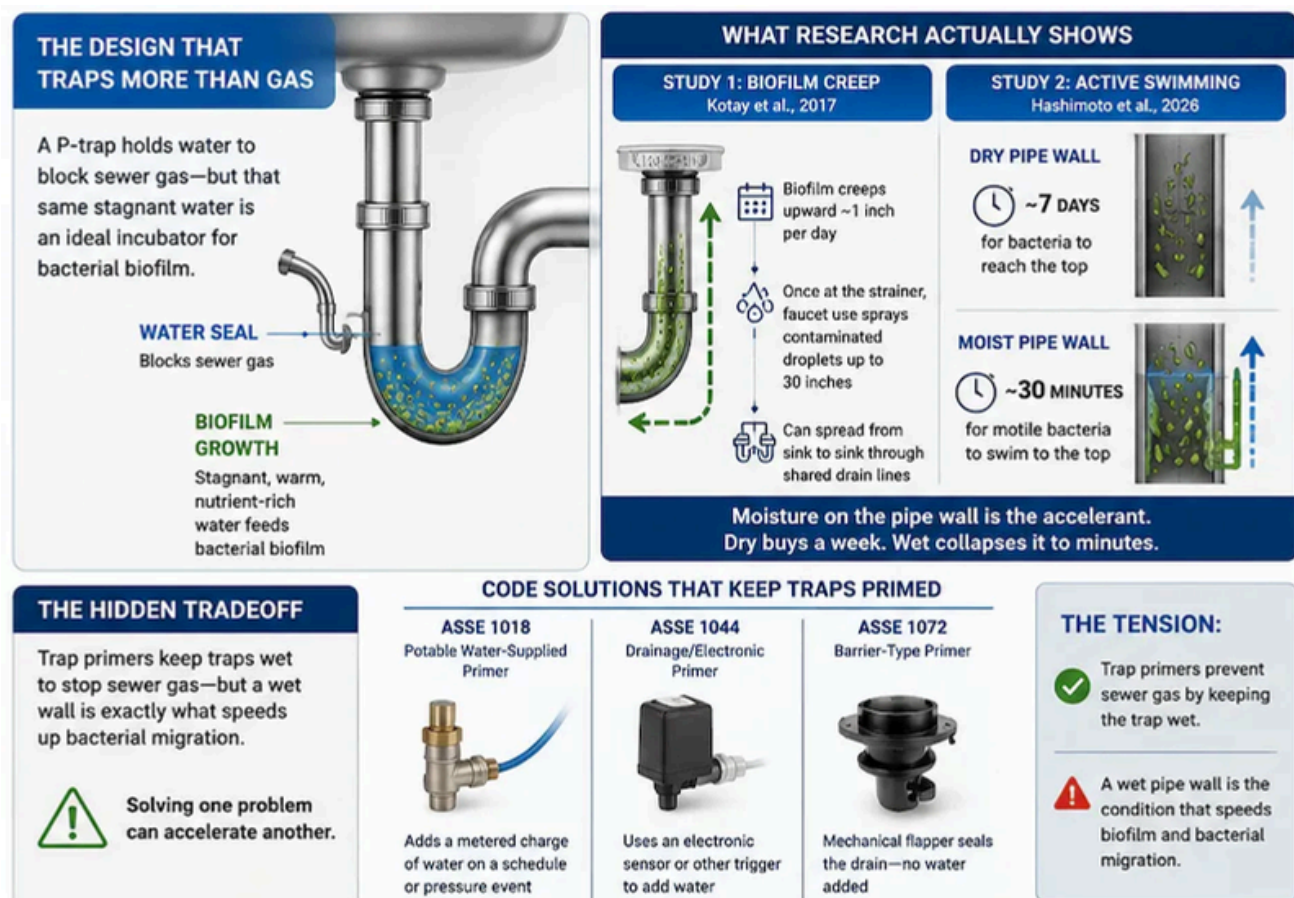
There is a piece of plumbing under every sink in your building that hasn't changed in any meaningful way in seventy years. It was designed to solve one problem, and it solves that problem well. In solving it, it created a second problem that almost nobody accounts for.

THE DESIGN THAT TRAPS MORE THAN GAS

A P-trap holds a permanent pool of water in a U-shaped bend of pipe. That water seal is there to block sewer gas from venting back into the room. It's a good solution to a real problem, and it's why the shape is required by plumbing code everywhere in the developed world.

The tradeoff nobody built into the original design: a permanent pool of stagnant, nutrient-rich water sitting at building temperature is also close to an ideal incubator for bacterial biofilm. You've solved the gas problem by creating a petri dish under every sink.

See graphic below for more information and subscribe to Greg's substack blog to learn more and for the full article.



SUBSCRIBE



[HTTPS://GREGREYNEKE.SUBSTACK.COM/](https://gregreyneke.substack.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 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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