



Florida Water & Pollution Control Operators Association

A Non-Profit Association Serving Water and Wastewater Professionals in the State of Florida

About Us - History

The "Florida Water and Pollution Control Operators Association" is an organization made up of members who are actively engaged in or deal with the production, treatment, or distribution of water and/or the collection, treatment, or disposal of wastewater, be it industrial or domestic. The FWPCOA was organized; to advance the professional status of Water and Wastewater Operators; to provide a system for licensing operators, and to arrange educational and training programs for operators. The FWPCOA works in close cooperation with the Florida Section of the American Water Works Association, the Florida Water Environment Association, the Florida State Department's of Health, Environmental Regulation, Professional Regulation, and the State's Educational System, including a special relationship with the University of Florida's TREEO Center.

The birth of the FWPCOA officially took place in May of 1940. However, the beginnings of the Association can be traced as far back as the late 1920's. It was during this time that a group of individuals from the Florida Section of the American Water Works Association approached the University of Florida to put on a short course for water works operators. This resulted in the first short course, which was organized by Dr. A.P. Black in April, 1930. With the growth of Florida and the demand for more and better water supplies, the value of the operator training provided by the short schools was recognized by the State Board of Health and encouraged.

In 1938, Bob Hoy of Jacksonville suggested a Water Works Operator's Association to, through education and training, upgrade the quality of operators, and to work for the certification of operators by the State Board of Health who were deemed to be competent. W.B. "Dick" Gibson, at the time superintendent of the water system at Fort Myers, was appointed chairman of a committee to investigate the feasibility of an operator's association and to him must go most of the credit for subsequent events. At the annual meeting of the FS/AWWA in May 1940, he presented a very comprehensive report recommending the formation of the Florida Water Works Operator's Association. Following the enthusiastic acceptance of Gibson's report a committee was formed to act on the formation of such an association.



Florida Water & Pollution Control Operators Association

A Non-Profit Association Serving Water and Wastewater Professionals in the State of Florida

During the next two years a voluntary certification plan was developed, and in March of 1943 three persons took and passed the first water exam. The next few years saw a steady increase in operators both in the water and wastewater field. Several discussions had taken place about changing the Association to include wastewater personnel and in June 1947 the Association became the "Water and Sewage Works Operators Association." In 1949 the Association officially went on record as supporting mandatory licensing.

The 50's saw the membership in the Association expanding. The need for local training for operators who could not attend the Annual Short School became apparent. As a result, Regional Short Schools began to take place. This movement also led to the formation of Regions. Initially the State was divided up into four broad regions. Gradually these four broad areas have been subdivided and modified to form the thirteen regions we have today.

The 60's saw a continued growth in the Association. This growth, along with increased activity from within the regions, helped to solidify the Association into a strong organization. Articles of Incorporation were drawn up and in 1964 the Association officially became the Florida Water and Pollution Control Operators Association.

The 60's also saw a renewed effort on the part of the operators Association to bring about mandatory certification. Several Bills were introduced before the Legislature calling for mandatory certification but none were accepted or voted into Law. It wasn't until 1971 that mandatory certification became a reality.

No one can predict the future, but it's certain that the Florida Water and Pollution Control Operators Association will continue to be a driving force in our industry, and provide the training and support for the improvement of our members and the industry as a whole.
