



## And We Thought We Had It Bad!

**By: Frank Dunmire, Executive Director**

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**Water  
Quality  
Protection  
Association  
of  
Illinois**

For the first time since Hurricane Wilma in 2005, Florida has been hit by a hurricane. If you are like me, you probably couldn't believe that it had been 11 years since the last hurricane had made landfall in Florida. In my mind anyway, Florida is constantly getting pounded by hurricanes on an annual basis and that is why I was surprised that it had been that long since the last one had hit. Unlike most of us here in the Midwest, those in the hurricane zones usually have several days' notice that they may be in harm's way and start boarding up windows and filling sandbags before seeking shelter or evacuating the area. In the Midwest we are more accustomed to the occasional tornado, devastating ice storm or blinding blizzard. In comparison all of these natural disasters pale in comparison to hurricanes that may devastate an area for hours. When this hurricane finally made landfall, Florida Rural Water Association was prepared.

Equipment from FRWA/FlaWarn was being staged near predicted impact zones well in advance of the storm's arrival as widespread power outages were expected. In addition to staging equipment throughout the area FRWA was also busy preparing their office with an emergency power supply that would enable them to be up and running within a matter of minutes. Having computers, communication abilities (which include cellular phones, satellite phones, and two way radios) is crucial during widespread disasters. Just to give you an idea of the amount of equipment FRWA/FlaWarn has at their disposal when needed I am including an excerpt from FRWA's Executive Director's, Gary Williams, daily update during disasters. In his report he said, "*We have FRWA travel trailers for emergency responder personnel available for deployment. We currently have three large generators out in the field (150 kW generator in St. John's County, 80 kW genera-*

*tor in Holly Hill and 65 kW at Alligator Point which could be ground zero). We have two smaller generators with VFD's in Pasco County and Trenton. We have seventeen large generators and eight smaller ones with VFD's ready in the warehouse. We also have two 6" bypass pumps and three 4" trash pumps."* He later reported that they had deployed almost all of the emergency response equipment they had available. Everything always goes out full of fuel, conductor wires attached, and GPS locators on all equipment activated.

As hurricanes go, Hermine was only a Category 1 but it goes to show you the amount of emergency equipment that is needed when a natural disaster covers such a large area. FRWA has been a leader in emergency response and has been fortunate over the years in being recipients of several grants and equipment donations. Through these grants and donations, FRWA has been able to amass a huge warehouse full of equipment which is available to water and wastewater systems free of charge.

To hone their skills, as well as the skills of others, an emergency response training session held on an annual basis. This year's session was held in Kinder, Louisiana and approximately 50 Rural Water staff from across the nation attended the two-day session.

So when we think we have it bad, just think of those that live in the hurricane zone and what they have to go through each time the "big storm" hits.

**Unlike most of us here in the Midwest, those in the hurricane zones ...**

## **IRWA'S MISSION STATEMENT**

**"Protecting and preserving the water and wastewater resources of Rural Illinois through education, representation and on-site technical assistance"**



**By: John Bell, Wastewater Technician**

I got a call the other day from a waste water operator about a high pH being discharged from his lagoon system. Could I please stop by and take a look at the treatment facility. Sure will. I told the operator that I was going to be in the area the next day and I will stop by and see what I could see.

I stopped by the next day and met with the operator. I made a quick tour of the waste water lagoon facility. The facility looked well groomed. The grass was cut, aeration pattern was excellent, no odors, sand filters were clean, and the chlorine contact tank, you could wash your face with the effluent. The facility looked good. As you well know, pH can be a funny animal. The operator mentioned that the pH had changed quickly and he had done numerous operational changes to get the pH in range and the pH had not changed. This was starting out to be a "head scratcher" of a problem. Had the lagoon "turned over" recently? No, it had not turned over and the operator had

not noticed any of the normal problems with the lagoon.

Next step was to grab a sample and take into the lab and see what the pH was doing while I was present. Grabbed the sample, went into the lab and I had asked the operator to calibrate the pH instrument while I was collecting the sample. When I got back to the lab the operator stated that he was having a problem with calibrating the meter. The pH meter was not operating correctly. The operator mentioned that it had been a few tests back that he had calibrated the meter and could it possibly be that the meter was the problem. After further investigation the operator and I were searching through the Blue Book catalog for a new pH probe.

When all else fails, check your tool, or instrument or you know what I mean.



**2016 IRWA Fall Administrative Conference**

**By: Phil Donelson, IRWA Training Division**

Kids are back in school and summer is almost behind us and it is time to start planning now to attend the IRWA 4th Annual Fall Administrative Conference! It will be held on November 17 & 18, 2016 at the Par-A-Dice Hotel and Casino in East Peoria again this year. Look for registration information coming soon on our website. You can also register on line, complete the flyer you receive in the mail and return to our office, or from one of the several email blasts I will be sending to your system. If you do not see any of those options, please feel free as always to contact me or the IRWA office if you have questions.

If you are unfamiliar with the Administrative Conference, it is a full day of speakers on Thursday, and a half day on Friday concluding by noon. We will have a well-rounded variety of topics that are directed at administrative staff, board members, city officials, and any other clerical staff who work for municipalities or water systems. The sessions are always full of wonderful Q & A to the benefit of all in attendance. It has always been a great learning environment and we expect more of the same this year! I have changed up the topics and speakers quite a bit this year so please look for the agenda in the near future. If you have not yet been able to attend one of these events, you really should try hard to take part in one soon! I do my

best to have good food, fun raffles, giveaways, and as much fun as legally possible each year...and over the course of the two days; you just may learn a thing or two!

We really hope to see you there! Also, as we have done in the past, there will be a Buy One, Get One Half Off registration promotion. If a system pays for one regular priced registration, the second person from the same system is 1/2 off!! What a deal!

In closing, please keep checking our website, print our e-mails, and respond to our fliers to register for upcoming sessions of all types. Thanks again to all of you who support the training we do, whether it is through speaking or attending as a student! See ya soon in class!!

I wish you a safe and wonderful fall!!





**By: Heather McLeod, Membership Services Assistant**

Let me just start by saying that if you are one of the 130 million people who do hunt these elusive little critters, I mean no offense to you. I just personally find this Pokémon craze ridiculous. Maybe I am just getting too old and either don't like it because I don't understand, or I just don't know what fun is anymore.

Now, I don't know who decides where these Pokémon live, but it seems from hearing the stories that people apparently will stop at nothing to "capture" one. While doing some research for this article, by a Google search leading me to US magazine, I found that some of the odd incidents related to this game have been: a dead body found, armed robbers using the app to lure players to secluded areas, Pokémon appearing at the Holocaust Museum and Auschwitz, a sex offenders residence, and the front line of war in Iraq.

Recently, I was talking to someone about this "game" and my thoughts, and I was told that this person was aware that a very "special" or rare Pokémon is "living" inside a fenced in area near a water tower (obviously, I won't be disclosing where!) and the water department employees are being approached by people begging to get into the fenced area to get it because of course, you can't get

close enough to catch it from the outside of the fence. I am all for people having a good time, but when it leads to endangering yourself or breaking laws, be it something as small as trespassing on other people's property or federal laws like entering a protected water area, I just have to wonder what the heck this world is coming to and how it can possibly get any weirder.

I have found out that you can ask to have a Pokestop, (I didn't make that word up. . it's official lingo, and I hate that I know that) removed by request but as people charged with the safety of our water and wastewater, and all the paperwork and worries that come with that, you shouldn't have to worry about whether a Jigglypuff or Charizard is living at your treatment plant too.

I am stepping off my soapbox now.  
Thanks for listening and get off my lawn!



### **GPS/GIS MAPPING SERVICES**

Through the implementation of GPS & GIS technology, IRWA can effectively produce hard copy and digital maps. With this new service available from IRWA, utilities can attain new and accurate maps to better manage their infrastructure assets.

The printed maps can be large-scale wall maps up to 36"x48" showing major water and wastewater features with the desired layers (aerial photos, streets, topography, etc.). The printed maps can also be generated into a map book format. The map book is a bound 11"x17" book of high-detail maps printed at the best available scale.

The digital map file on a CD, can be viewed and printed with free software that IRWA will provide. The software allows you to click on a waterline with a leak and highlight which valves need to be closed to isolate the line. There are also tracing features to show the direction of water flow, and other useful features.

Payment for services is determined by a charge per each system feature located. The amount charged for a Map Book will be \$50 plus \$5 per page; and a wall map is billed at \$100 per map. More information is also posted on our website at [www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org) or you may call our office at 217-287-2115.



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**VIDEO INSPECTION SERVICES**

Video inspection technology can help you identify and prioritize maintenance issues, while improving service and reducing emergency maintenance costs.



IRWA is excited to introduce our new Video Inspection

Service to our members. The normal fee for this service is \$350.00 for small projects, larger projects requiring more than 1 day will be based on cost per foot.

A contract must be signed in advance of the inspection. Upon completion, your system will be invoiced for the services and will also receive a detailed report including diagrams of the inspection features, and a DVD for your references.

For more information, or to schedule an inspection of your system, please call our office at 217-287-2115 or visit our website: [www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org)