



About Us – the History of IWEA:

In the late 1970s, Illinois wastewater treatment community saw need for an organization to address environmental issues and challenges unique to their state. This group of determined professionals from the MSDGC (Chicago), Illinois EPA, local POTWS, and consulting firms petitioned the Water Pollution Control Federation to form an Illinois member association. WPCF officially recognized the Illinois Water Pollution Control Association in 1980.

During the 1980s, the Association developed programs and services to establish the organizational framework, provided educational opportunities for members, and shared its enthusiasm for our water environment. Professional outreach emphasized technology transfer workshops, i.e. Government Affairs, Laboratory, Industrial Pretreatment, and Safety Workshops. Members launched the *The Clarifier*, our MA newsletter, with the goal of providing pertinent information by, for and about IWEA members. Our young Safety Committee was recognized by WPCF in 1985 with a MA Safety award for excellent efforts with safety education. The active Public Education Committee judged projects and sponsored “Clean Water Awards” at annual Illinois Junior Academy of Science Fair. (They continue to do so today.) This Committee also developed a Ten Day Water Environment curriculum aimed at sharing water environment knowledge with middle school students. This curriculum, now in its third major revision, is as relevant as it was when it was first developed, and used in schools throughout Illinois and other states.

In the 1990’s, as the Association matured, it became more involved with the Federation activities. In August 1990, the Association co-hosted the WPCF specialty conference: Water Quality Management of Landfills in Chicago. In 1992, to coincide with the WEF name change, the association changed to Illinois Water Environment Association (IWEA). The Association, along with co-host CSWEA, served as the Local Arrangements Committee for Chicago WEFTEC in 1994 and 1997. In June 1997, IWEA launched a website www.iweasite.org. The website has been named by WEF twice as the website of the month. The website has undergone three upgrades as it became the major source of information and the main communication link and contact for our members.

In the 2000’s, the Association continues to be as active and involved as ever – and is still functioning based primarily on volunteer efforts. The association formed new committees to address member interests and organizational needs. The Marketing Committee was developed to enhance member communications. The Electrical Power, Energy & Controls Committee addresses efficiency, economic, and green issues. The Young Professionals Committee provides educational and social activities for those in their early career years. In 2002, the Association again co-hosted WEFTEC Local Arrangements with CSWEA. That same year, our Public Education Committee introduced newly, revised 10-Day Water Environment Curriculum during WEF-Teach. To further encourage water environment careers, IWEA, in conjunction with CSWEA and ISAWWA, sponsors student chapters at three universities. In 2006, the Association held their first joint water conference with ISAWWA. The enthusiastic reception to this event led to another joint conference in 2009. Plans are under consideration to making the joint conference an annual event. In 2007, IWEA successfully hosted the WEFMAX in Chicago. In 2008, IWEA co-hosted the WEF-Teach seminar, Local Arrangements and co-sponsored a successful WEF-YP rain garden building project at the WEFTEC in Chicago. In 2009, IWEA was selected to host the Stockholm Junior Water Prize Competition in Chicago in the summer of 2011.

In the 2010, the IWEA board developed a Strategic Plan with specific goals to attain and expand on our mission “to enhance and protect the Illinois water environment through education and collaboration.” This mission is remains our focus and is as important today as it was thirty years ago.