Are you an inspired person? Where and to whom do you look for inspiration? Are you a source of inspiration for others? What are your aspirations? Have you been able to achieve what you’ve aspired to do? I would contend that all of these are questions we should be asking ourselves—throughout our lives.

Inspiration and aspirations go together; they both drive our motivations. Motivations move us to do things. Having interesting, challenging, and beneficial things to do and then accomplishing what we set out to do make for an enriched life. And who doesn’t aspire to that!

So where does one go for inspiration? You might look to others who recognize and develop good ideas, have wisdom and good judgment, and have an established record of accomplishments. You might look for recurring problems that cause loss of life, property damage, or lost productivity. If something can be done at lower cost, easier, quicker, or more reliably, discover and develop a solution!

Here’s one issue to get you thinking, for practice. In Florida, it rains more than 50 inches a year, on average. During the rainy season, many areas that had collected standing water now drain the water downgradient from swales, ditches, canals, and rivers into lower elevation water bodies: lakes, estuaries, and the ocean.

The normal solution would be to get that water to drain downgradient quicker. What if, instead, areas upgradient were found to store and/or percolate the water before it drained downhill?

This very concept was used by the City of Cocoa to alleviate flooding episodes on both a state and a local road. Runoff from upgradient roadways and developed properties built prior to current stormwater rules overloaded the capacity of drainpipes. Frequent summer storms caused traffic backups and stalled vehicles. The cost of replacing the pipes, some located in downtown areas under the state road, was astronomical.

The solution chosen was to find areas located within the drainage basin and convert them to dry retention/percolation ponds. A number of city properties were identified, including a portion of a fire station site. Stormwater inlets were constructed to divert runoff into these excavated and sodded areas. Once completed, the roadways no longer flooded, the surficial aquifer received more water from rainfall events, and the volume of freshwater and nutrients going into the Indian River Lagoon diminished.

The main ingredient needed to accomplish this particular challenge is inspired water professionals. If this is something you aspire to do, start looking around for opportunities. If this isn’t it, that’s fine.

Recognize that the possibilities for improvements around you are endless and the satisfaction for making them is enormous. Constantly look for places to apply your knowledge and abilities. Seek out people to inspire you to do great things. While you’re at it, look for opportunities to inspire others along the way!