edwards aquifer AUTHORITY

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PEPSICO'S INVESTMENT MAKES WAVES IN GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION

sustain

Nathan Phillips of McFadin Farms demonstrates the use of his newly installed center pivot irrigation system.

Ernie Schirmer rides through the terrain of his farm as his new pivot system waters his crops.

"Strip tillin' is what we're trying to go to, that was the benefit of getting this pivot over, you know, the flood irrigation. We've been, you know, shootin' to try to do this for a while and without y'all's help on the pivot there's no way possible to pay for it."

– Ernie Schirmer, Corn and Cotton farmer in South-Central Texas

Going into its 11th year of funding water saving irrigation practices for Edwards Aquifer permit holders, the Edwards Aquifer Authority's (EAA) Groundwater Conservation Grant Program received a generous investment from PepsiCo. This contribution gave four grant recipients the opportunity to upgrade less efficient irrigation methods with new water saving irrigation pivot systems.

Each year, the irrigation projects funded by the grant program save at least 400 acre-feet of water a year. To put that into perspective, 1 acre-foot of water is equivalent to approximately 325,851 gallons of water!

In 2024, PepsiCo invested over $1.8 million to help launch four new watershed replenishment projects in high water-risk areas within the U.S. where the company operates. Projects are developed with local partners in California, Colorado and Texas connected to the watersheds where they operate. Replenishing water in high water-risk areas is integral to PepsiCo's broader pep+ (PepsiCo Positive) journey towards becoming Net Water Positive by 2030.

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This past March, Jay Hruby, Sustainability Senior Engineer, for PepsiCo Foods North America, visited the EAA Field Research Park and the EAA Education Outreach Center, situated on the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone, to learn about how PepsiCo's investment can help conserve water within the aquifer system. During her visit, she and Pepsico representatives had the opportunity to preview the various land management practices being implemented and researched on the property.

Jay Hruby and Pepsico representatives received a presentation and tour of the EAA Field Research Park.

"Water stewardship has long been one of PepsiCo's top priorities, and by working with the Edwards Aquifer Authority to support the Ground water Conservation Program, we aim to make a positive impact on the Edwards Aquifer and the communities that depend on it. This initiative strives not only to help conserve water for agricultural practices but also to promote the health of local sensitive aquatic habitats and reduce carbon emissions. During our visit to the Edwards Aquifer Authority research park, our team had the opportunity to hear directly from the farmers who received this grant, and it is powerful to see how projects like this work not only to preserve such a precious resource but can also provide socio-economic benefits to local communities."

– Jay Hruby, Sustainability Senior Engineer, PepsiCo Foods North America

"The generous investment from PepsiCo not only helps to conserve our valuable resources, but it also helps to sustain the future use of the Edwards Aquifer for all that depend upon it – whether that use is agricultural, municipal, industrial or environmental in nature. The Edwards Aquifer Authority is grateful to have PepsiCo as a partner in our continuing mission to manage, enhance, and protect the Edwards Aquifer."

– Marc Friberg, Deputy General Manager, Edwards Aquifer Authority

Jay toured the EAA Education Outreach Center, met staff, and made a cloud at the center's cloud caster exhibit.

Hear from the EAA Groundwater Conservation Grant recipients on how their new pivot irrigation systems have positively impacted their ability to water their crops efficiently:

To learn more visit:
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyhM-whBT3CoxoqAYMSOAiG1RTQgx-QW5Uq&si=d5v-H475Pjy378iv

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