

Water Restoration Partnership: Danone North America & Bonneville Environmental Foundation (Change the Course)

WHO



DANONE
NORTH AMERICA



BONNEVILLE
ENVIRONMENTAL
FOUNDATION

WHAT

Nonprofit organization BEF and food and beverage company Danone North America have a unique legacy of partnership on water spanning over 15 years. In 2009, the company was one of the earliest supporters of BEF's Water Restoration Certificates program, purchasing certificates in support of projects to balance their water use. This program led to the creation of Change the Course, an initiative that engages companies and individuals in water conservation and restoration.

Danone North America became the first Charter Sponsor of Change the Course, which was piloted in the Colorado River Basin. This campaign motivates people to pledge to conserve water, and for every pledge made returns 1,000 gallons of water to the environment. The company leveraged the power of their brand to engage the public in understanding the importance of the Colorado River, and helped to increase the project's visibility. In 2015, 20 more companies joined the movement, supporting 14 restoration projects in the Colorado River Basin alone. Building on the success of the Colorado River Basin pilot, Change the Course has now expanded into a nationwide initiative.

WHY

A strategic partnership between Danone North America and BEF is a mutually beneficial collaboration that enables both parties to achieve their goals and create a positive impact. By working with BEF, Danone North America can easily find and invest in local projects that replenish its corporate water use and improve watershed sustainability. For BEF, Danone North America's leadership and partnership has helped to create a movement of voluntary corporate action to adopt environmental solutions addressing corporate impacts on water.

WHERE



Change the Course was first piloted in the Colorado River Basin.



In 2017, Change the Course was awarded the US Water Prize, which celebrates innovative and sustainable approaches to water management.



To support recruitment for Change the Course, Danone North America commissioned a life-size, interactive art installation of the Colorado River in Chicago's Union Station, where Danone employees engaged people to make the pledge.

CHALLENGES

- **Geographic limitations:** Change the Course initially focused only on the Colorado River Basin, which hindered recruitment of corporate sponsors who were interested in supporting projects in other states.
- **Slow corporate uptake:** When Change the Course started, many companies were still in the early stage of developing water stewardship strategies and were not yet supporting water projects beyond their direct operations.
- **Project timelines:** Restoration project timelines do not always line up well with corporate goals; projects are planned years ahead, while corporate budgets are set quarterly or annually.
- **Communication:** Implementing project partners are sometimes ill-equipped to navigate the complexity of corporate decision making. On the flip side, companies are not always well equipped to translate technical project outcomes into understandable metrics for a broad public audience.

SUCCESSSES

- Danone North America, as a Charter Sponsor of Change the Course, has been supporting almost 40 water restoration projects, has restored over 7.8 billion gallons of water, and has leveraged their brands for stakeholder engagement and water conservation education and awareness. The company has advanced their water stewardship focusing on agricultural water use, operational efficiency quality and safety, as well as driving collaborative stewardship in targeted watersheds.
- Building upon the success of delivered projects, BEF is now seen by the business community as an independent nonprofit that can assist companies in scoping, vetting, and supporting projects material to their operations and/or value chain.

KEY INSIGHTS

BEF has seen a dramatic increase in companies seeking to support water projects as well as a desire to collaborate. As the interest in water restoration projects has grown, multi-benefit projects are becoming increasingly important, particularly as companies are setting targets that address multiple aspects of sustainability.

SCALING & REPLICATING

Expansion of BEF's portfolio of water restoration projects is enabled by the demand of Danone North America and other companies for water stewardship opportunities, as more businesses become aware of their water risks and aim to support projects in geographies material to their operations and value chains.

TAGS

Stewardship Strategies

Water Management
in Direct Operations

Value Chain
Engagement

Collaboration at
Watershed Scale

Nexus Approaches

SDG 6 Targets

TARGET 6-1



SAFE AND AFFORDABLE DRINKING WATER

TARGET 6-2



END OPEN DEFECCATION AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO SANITATION AND HYGIENE

TARGET 6-3



IMPROVE WATER QUALITY, WASTEWATER TREATMENT AND SAFE REUSE

TARGET 6-4



INCREASE WATER-USE EFFICIENCY AND ENSURE FRESHWATER SUPPLIES

TARGET 6-5



IMPLEMENT INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

TARGET 6-6



PROTECT AND RESTORE WATER-RELATED ECOSYSTEMS