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Environmental Leaders, Fortune 500 Companies Announce Collaborative Investments to Protect California's Water Future

(SACRAMENTO, CA, October 13, 2016) – As California enters its sixth year of record-breaking drought, twenty leading organizations today announced their collaborative support for critical projects designed to protect California's water future. Together the groups form the [California Water Action Collaborative \(CWAC\)](#).

Formed as a working group of environmental organizations, food and beverage companies, non-profits, farmers, and local water districts, CWAC members now include Ag Capital Management, Ag Innovations, Anheuser-Busch, Alliance for Water Stewardship, Campbell Soup Company, the CEO Water Mandate, The Coca-Cola Company, Driscoll's, Ecolab, Future 500, General Mills, MillerCoors, The National Forest Foundation, Nestlé, OLAM, Pacific Institute, Sustainable Conservation, Sustainable Food Lab, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

"Water in California is ground zero for considering how we will meet the needs of people, business and nature in a crowded world and in dry times," said **Brian Stranko, The Nature Conservancy's California Water Program Director**. "CWAC provides a forum for the industry, non-profits and leading thinkers to take a big picture view of how we achieve a sustainable water future, as well as a conduit for testing ideas in real places on the ground right now to inform that future."

Members came together with the understanding that while no one company or organization can solve California's water challenges alone, together, they can help create a sustainable water future. The initial four projects CWAC has identified to collectively advance water security have now been launched. These projects are detailed below and at cawateraction.org.

[Farmland Groundwater Recharge](#)

Sustainable Conservation is leading a pioneering approach to boost San Joaquin Valley groundwater supplies. Extended drought has forced Central Valley farms and communities to turn to shrinking groundwater supplies to get by and left a record amount of farmland idle. The project involves applying excess floodwater to active and fallowed farmland, and allows water to percolate down to refill aquifers. The effort is supported by CWAC partners Campbell Soup Company, General Mills, MillerCoors, and The Coca-Cola Company.

[American River Headwaters](#)

The Nature Conservancy is leading an effort to test how landscape-scale restoration can improve watershed health and wildlife habitat, reduce the risk of megafires, and potentially increase water supply. The Nature Conservancy will conduct research on a 10,115-acre forested property in the Sierra Nevada to determine whether ecological thinning can measurably increase downstream water supply by allowing snowfall and rain to accumulate and replenish creeks and rivers. The effort is supported by CWAC partners MillerCoors, Nestlé, The Coca-Cola Company and Anheuser-Busch.

[Corporate Water Stewardship and the California Water Action Plan](#)

The CEO Water Mandate and Pacific Institute are facilitating a statewide collaboration with CWAC members Nestlé, Ag Innovations, Olam, WWF and others to identify opportunities where the private sector can accelerate progress toward the goals of the [California Water Action Plan](#), improving the measurement, management, and stewardship of shared natural resources.

[San Gabriel and Big Tujunga Watershed](#)

*In 2015, CWAC members The Coca-Cola Company and MillerCoors began a partnership with the National Forest Foundation and the US Forest Service to help restore hundreds of millions of gallons of water annually to the damaged San Gabriel and Big Tujunga watershed. By removing 50 acres of a water-intensive invasive species called *Arundo donax*, or giant cane, the project is returning significant amounts of water to area streams.*

These innovative projects will continue to develop and new projects will emerge as CWAC's membership grows and the state's water challenges evolve.

“Water is a shared resource – one that communities, industry, government and the agricultural sector all rely on to ensure our shared prosperity.” said **Nelson Switzer, Chief Sustainability Officer, Nestlé Waters North America**. “CWAC will help members uncover new and creative ways to work together and define and take actions that benefit us all. We’re excited to be part of a model for collective action with the potential to be replicated in other regions.”

“MillerCoors was a founding member of CWAC and continues to lead from the steering committee because the company recognizes that water is critical to life, nature, communities and business,” said **Jonah Smith, Sustainability Manager at MillerCoors**. “California is experiencing one of its worst droughts, and collaboration that truly focuses on collective action is an impactful and necessary way to address the state's water resource issues.”

About CWAC

The California Water Action Collaborative (CWAC) is a platform for diverse stakeholders to come together and pursue collective-action projects that will improve water security in California for people, business, agriculture and nature. CWAC is comprised of 20 organizations deeply committed to

California's shared water future. Visit our website at cawateraction.org.



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