Milo's Tea Company Protects Its Most Important Ingredient – Water

Milo's Tea Company has prioritized water stewardship as one of its most significant sustainability initiatives to protect one of its most important ingredients – water – as the company scales its operations amid a period of massive growth.

To establish a water stewardship plan, the team entered a yearlong process to benchmark water certifications. WAVE: Assess stood out as a framework that would allow Milo's to understand water risks from an enterprise level, highlight where it could have the greatest impact in its operations and watersheds, and connect with a peer network for technical assistance and guidance.

Milo's Tea Company

Milo's is a family-owned, certified women-owned business crafting delicious, high-quality, fresh beverages since 1946.

Milo's has manufacturing and distribution facilities located in Bessemer and Homewood, Alabama; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Spartanburg, South Carolina – its newest and largest facility that opened in 2024. Milo's invests in sustainable manufacturing practices, focusing on excellent water stewardship, carbon reduction, and waste recycling and reduction.

Process

WAVE: Assess provides a five-step process to guide organizations through assessing water use, impact and risk across their enterprise.

"Water is the primary ingredient in our teas and lemonades, so protecting this resource is mission critical – not just for our products, but for our people and planet. The WAVE process helped us align our operations with our values and make a verified, transparent commitment to sustainable water management."

-Chris Droney, Chief Operations Officer, Milo's Tea Company

Through WAVE, Milo's built a cross-functional team to investigate and understand water uses throughout the business, utilizing their knowledge and understanding of challenges to document opportunities. The company conducted watershed risk assessments using two tools, the WRI Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas and the WWF Water Risk Filter. Its goal was to analyze the various watershed risk indicators to learn where and why certain categories were higher risk than others and identify its most material water risks.

Next, Milo's combined the knowledge from its cross-functional team with the insights gained from the watershed risk assessments to create clear snapshots of how Milo's affects and is affected by water at its sites.

It documented the risks and opportunities across its manufacturing sites and then developed a matrix to prioritize sites, using key criteria to evaluate where watershed efforts would have the greatest impact.

"The section of the WAVE process that was most helpful for us was developing an enterprise-wide statement on water stewardship (informed by every enterprise function) and aligning it with our executive team," said Shannon Wilson, Milo's sustainability program manager. "Not only did this inform and align our executive team to the watershed risks for the business, but it was the first step in truly integrating water stewardship into our business decisions."

After completing the five steps, Milo's underwent independent verification by SCS Global Services, the exclusive verification partner of The Water Council.

Outcomes

Through WAVE, Milo's developed clear action plans to address water use in its operations and further empower associates as water stewardship advocates both internally and externally.

The plans call for Milo's to establish water stewardship metrics and goals to support its rapid growth in the near term and for generations to come.

Milo's identified mapping and quantifying all aspects of water usage in its operations as foundational to its water stewardship journey. It is currently designing a modeling tool to help the company quantify water usage and evaluate reduction opportunities based on cost and impact. This tool will be used as a framework to provide insights for future target-setting.

Milo's Water Stewardship Statement

Milo's recognizes water as an essential ingredient to both life and our products. We are committed to pursuing best in class water stewardship throughout our operations and the communities we call home.

We will continue to engage with our stakeholders on understanding water-related challenges and work across our enterprise to ensure our growth is informed by these understandings. Milo's is committed to the following:

- **Educating and empowering our team members to support Milo's commitments to water stewardship.**
- **Assessing how we impact and are impacted by water challenges in our operations and supply chain.**
- **Embedding water stewardship into decision-making processes enterprise-wide.**
- **Implementing water stewardship solutions in the communities we call home.**