

Securing the Future of Water Through Water Stewardship: World Water Day Webinar

Transcript

22.03.2022

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the Land as the First Peoples of Australia. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and their connection to land, water and culture are enduring. We hope that together we can work towards treaty and reconciliation.

ROD KNIGHT: Today we're marking World Water Day, which has actually been celebrated annually since 1993. It's a day to reflect on the way we use water and to commit to ensuring its future is sustainable, equitable, and beneficial. In this webinar will be hearing firsthand how businesses are contributing to a secure water future through their involvement in water stewardship.

First up I'd like to introduce Harumichi Seta general manager of Corporate Sustainability for Suntory Holdings in Japan. Harumichi is general manager of the Division. Suntory is one of the leading global food and beverage companies based in Japan. His current portfolio focuses on pursuing the global water sustainability agenda for Suntory Group ranging from the Watershed Protection Initiative and the Water Education program globally.

Harumichi has 18 years' experience leading various research projects in the technology development and fundamental research divisions of Suntory and has been involved in research areas such as biochemical engineering, food chemistry and Health Science.

Before assuming his current role in 2020, he spent a year as principal researcher at Suntory's Institute for Water Science, where he led the development of the fundamental technologies necessary for Suntory to expand its water stewardship globally.

Harumichi holds a Masters degree in chemical and environmental engineering from the Tokyo Institute of Technology.

Suntory has three water stewardship plants certified in Japan, with its operations very heavily dependent on groundwater. I put that in because the theme for the UN theme for this year's World Water Day is in fact making groundwater a visible thing.

So hand over to Harumichi to give his presentation and he'll also be assisted by Sachiko Umai if we need any interpretation as we go along.

So over to you Harumichi.

HARUMICHI SETA: Hey, thank you Rod and Megan. I'm pleased to be given such a wonderful opportunity today. I'm sharing my screen.

[Title Slide: Suntory's Water Stewardship Journey]

Hey my name is Harumichi Seta from Suntory Holdings Japan. I'm responsible for promoting the global agenda of water sustainability for Suntory Group. Today I'm going to talk about Suntory's water stewardship journey.

[Slide 1: We are part of Natural Water Cycle]

First of all, I'd like to introduce Suntory's motivation for water stewardship.

Our history is deeply tied to water. Our founder, Shinjiro Torii, built Japan first distillery in Yamazaki, Kyoto in 1923. In such quality water source of groundwater suitable for whiskey production. Since then, we have delivered many quality products and they have continued to protect the water source.

Our business is the very history of our relationship with high quality water sources and sustainable use of groundwater. Our water sustainability efforts are based on the recognition that our business and value chain is part of the natural water cycle. Based on this idea, we are working to contribute to a healthy water cycle in nature.

This concept is our purpose and motivation for water stewardship initiatives.

[Slide 2: Our Philosophy & Vision]

To contribute to a healthy water cycle in nature, we established the sustainable water philosophy consisting of four pillars in 2017. We believe that the most basic philosophy is to understand the water cycle in each watershed based on the scientific approach.

Based on those understanding and the water cycle, we promote environmentally conscious water use, conserve local watersheds, engage with the local community. As a result, we aim to achieve net water positive.

And now our environmental vision toward 2050. We try to replenish more than 100% of the water used at all of our own plants globally through conservation of the surroundings ecosystem. To reduce the water intensity of production at our own plants by 50% globally. To achieve sustainable water use for all key ingredients.

Also, related to sharing our sustainable water philosophy to the communities where our business operates, we will expand water education programs and initiatives to provide safe water access for more than 1,000,000 people.

We know that net water positive at each water source recharge area of our plants is an aggressive target, but we would like to attain it by 2050.

[Slide 3: Natural Water Sanctuary Initiative]

Next, I talk about the impact of our initiatives and our resources. To protect groundwater, which is the materiality of our business activities we have been working to enhance the groundwater recharge fraction of water soil and groundwater recharge area of our plants in Japan for about 20 years.

Today we were engaged in forest maintenance activities in 21 locations in Japan covering a vast recharge area of about 30,000 acres. We have already achieved net water positive in Japan as a 30,000 acres has a recharge fraction of more than twice the amount of groundwater we use in our Japanese plants.

We call this initiative the Natural Water Sanctuary Initiative and we are expanding it to the rest of the world. To advance the Natural Water Sanctuary Initiative Suntory established the Institute for Water Science in 2003 and formed a functional unit for promoting Natural Water Sanctuary.

In addition, the Minami Alps Hakushu Water Plant, which received water stewardship certification at the end of last year, began calculated effort in 1999 to monitor groundwater levels in the surrounding area, together with the local government and community, and have now expanded its similar efforts to many other plants in Japan.

We believe that our experience and asset from these 20 plus years of prior water initiatives are the very resources that allow us to be AWS certified.

[Slide 4: Recognizing LINKS between INITIATIVES]

Finally, I talk about the learnings throughout AWS certification.

With the above initiative, I explained and I also the management of water in our plants, including the reduction of water use and wastewater management, Suntory has got the Alliance for Water Stewardship certificates at three mineral water plants. At the Okudaisen Bunanomori Water plant in Tottori Prefecture, at the Kyushu Plant in Kumamoto Prefecture, and Hakushu Water Plant in Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan.

In getting the AWS certification, we ourselves recognize that the links between each initiative, such as watershed conservation, water management, various engagements with the local governments and communities, are essential for water stewardship.

We also share the importance of each Suntory employee who involves water stewardship being aware of the linkage between their efforts and the outcomes. In addition, we couldn't implement initiatives without mutual understanding and cooperation with local stakeholders.

We realized that recognizing these links allows us to achieve our outcome of water stewardship. This is all about Suntory's water stewardship journey.

Thank you all for your attention.

[End Harumichi Seta's slideshow presentation]

ROD KNIGHT: Thank you Harumichi. I'm sure we'll get a few questions from that presentation at the end.

Just a quick reminder if you do wish to ask a question at the end, you can submit it through the chat function at any time during the webinar or we will give the opportunity at the end to speak directly and ask questions then. OK, so we move on now to our second presenter.

The second presenter is James John.

James is the legal and project manager for the Renmark Irrigation Trust. James has a strong interest in the local community, relocating to Renmark after working as a mergers and acquisitions solicitor at the Brisbane offices of Herbert Smith Freehills.

James has been involved in water stewardship since joining the irrigation trust in 2018, particularly in maintaining the trusts Alliance for Water Stewardship Platinum certification level and exploring opportunities for trust member growers to access the benefits of this certification.

Remark is the oldest irrigation trust in South Australia and is involved in many initiatives for the responsible use of water for economic production and the environment in the Renmark area.

We'll ask James to share his screen now, and we'll hear a bit about the journey of Renmark.

JAMES JOHN: Great, thanks very much Rod.

[Title Slide: Renmark Irrigation Trust: Securing the Future of Water through Water Stewardship]

How's that looking and am I coming through loud and clear?

MEGAN MCLEOD: We can see and hear you clearly, James.

JAMES JOHN: That's a good start, thanks. And so, as Rod said my name is James John and I am the legal and project manager here at the Trust. One of the projects I do look after is this water stewardship certification and direction of the program and we are actively exploring how we can extend the benefits of that to our growing member base.

Today I'll give a bit of a brief journey of the trust water stewardship journey at a bit of a fast clip, so please do feel free to reach out and get in touch outside of this presentation if something piques your interest and I can't get through it or don't give a lot of attention today.

[Slide 1: Renmark Irrigation Trust]

So the trust itself is located in Remark on the banks of the River Murray about 230 kilometers northeast of Adelaide, about 700 kilometers northwest of Melbourne, and about 1200 km west of Sydney. If that if that helps for wherever you're located.

A beautiful part of the world. We are the oldest irrigation trust in Australia established in 1893 and we're a membership based organization. Quite unique and established as a Statute of Parliament, but we do effectively operate like a rural co-op.

The Trust manages the water delivery infrastructure and the delivery of irrigation water to a membership base of just over 600 irrigators, uh, who irrigate approximately 5000 hectares or 12,000 acres of productive land.

The crop types grown by our irrigators are predominantly high value permanent plantings such as a nuts, grapes, citrus and stonefruit, and moving into some unique new crops at the moment with different types of vegetables as well.

Now the trust first achieved its gold water stewardship certification in 2018, and after a surveillance audit, or an audit in January 2020 the trust was awarded Platinum certification, which was a significant milestone for the trust.

So I guess the question is, is why did the trust do it? And why did we embark on this journey?

[Slide 2: Water – Political]

So in Australia we are the driest inhabited continent in the world and water scarcity in Australia seems as big an issue as ever though we have had a couple of wet years. However, as our climate does change and population grows with more agricultural production, more population mouths to feed domestically and globally, water becomes a focus.

So Australia is also a net agri exporter exporting about 2/3 of agricultural production around the world. And in this space, water continues to be a political issue and become more and more political.

So the trust thinking it as a responsible water user in an efficient deliverer of water wanted to find a third party certification that could establish it some credibility. Remark itself is located in the

southern part of the Murray Darling Basin. On the map there. Just my very crude arrow pointing to Remark here.

So, the Murray Darling Basin is a very large geographical area, uh, which accounts for approximately 40% by value of Australia's agricultural production, and most of the water that's drawn progression through the basin is from two rivers; the Murray and the Darling, and the trust being located on the Murray.

So water, being a political issue, there being the existence of water sharing and water trading agreements in the Murray Darling Basin Agreement and the effects of trade, there is some political friction with the other states further up the basin and effectively other irrigators watching water flow by in in dry times to make its way down to South Australia to the Murray mouth.

So for in an attempt to address this challenge or this sort of friction, the trust wanted to engage with an organization and a model where we could test ourselves against scientifically backed and a model to sort of see if we could walk the walk and not talk the talk in how we operate and how we manage our water and surrounding environment.

So implementing good practice water models in house at the trust has better positioned the trust to fill an advocate role for its membership base.

As an example of that, it was quantifying the data around our irrigation delivery systems in the fact that the trust does operate at an often over 99% water delivery efficiency based on metering at our main diversion point at the River Murray, metering throughout our system at the farm gate where the irrigator takes delivery of their water, and then our irrigators implementing water efficiency infrastructure on farm.

So we achieve that through our governance policies and our metering policies and having a framework and a standard and a water stewardship policy gave us some guidance in effectively collecting that data and being able to communicate it externally.

Armed with those credentials as well, the trust has found itself more often invited to have a seat at the table in advocating for our membership base.

It's I wouldn't say it's just, uh, I wouldn't say it's a shiny little badge or certification, but it's certainly something we can communicate and say, hey, we feel like we do know what we're talking about sometimes, maybe some other staff more than I do, but we can sort of hold it out and say we've done the work and we've stress tested this and we feel we have something to contribute in that space.

[Slide 3: Impacts – Water Stewards of Our Local Environment]

Now, the impacts of our water stewardship journey have been fantastic to see. I grew up in this area and look it's amazing what a relatively small amount of water can do and the impact it can have when managed effectively and when faith is given by external parties to deliver that water for some, for high impact.

So the trust was the first irrigation entity to sign an agreement to deliver Commonwealth environmental water. It has multiple benefits. You know, operationally for the trust, it allows us to flush our network and flush our pipes. Previously some of that water was going down a salinity drain and into a salinity drain scheme. So, enabling us to have a dual use of this water and allow the Commonwealth to deliver their water. The Commonwealth environmental water holder

becoming a sort of customer for the trust and being able to deliver water through our pipe network onto local important water related areas.

The AWS model again in this was useful for us in our communications with Commonwealth and other bodies in having a framework to report our data collection and monitoring statistics.

The flow on benefits from that environmental watering have been quantifiable and immense. Both the community and the tourism have benefit benefited from our environmental watering and the educational opportunities have expanded.

We have local primary schools and kids getting involved in the monitoring on these floodplains and wetlands that we've delivered water to with a couple of schools located at key environmentally watering sites which has been great.

The impacts you can see on screen and at the bottom left with the black Swans, you know hundreds of those return to some of our environmental watering sites, are fantastic and some local residents have now got a water view for the first time in decades. So I think they've been pretty pleased with where they're living now.

So, I think in summary it would be accurate to say in our journey that there is a bit of a lack of unity between states in Australia, the transboundary water sharing, and the treatment of the river and our water sources, and water stewardship practices and testing ourselves against global and sort of domestic best practice methods have helped the trust I think in a way both attempt and I think achieve some breaking down of barriers in being able to use this model as an example in our discussions with others as something worthwhile to engage with to help engage with industry and kind of all be on the same page in certain ways. And most importantly look it's great to increase the health of our local environment and see it come back with vigor.

So yeah, thank you and look feel free both with the questions in this format and to reach out in any other areas. Thanks, Rod.

[End James John's slideshow presentation]

ROD KNIGHT: Well, thanks, James, there's obviously a bit going on in your part of the world.

I hope everyone benefited from some of the insights there about how these two very different organizations are dealing with water in their areas.

We've now got time for some questions. I can see we've got a couple that have been submitted through the chat function, so we'll move to those in a moment. Remember if you do want to ask a question you can raise your hand by clicking on the reactions button in, on mine it's at the bottom of the menu and that way I'll know that I can then come to you for a question.

So the first is question from Carole Hammond. And rather than reading the question out Carole, I might ask that you unmute yourself and ask the question that you've submitted there directly to Harumichi.

CAROLE HAMMOND: OK, thank you and sorry Harumichi for spelling your name wrong. So yes, thank you for that presentation that was really great.

I was just wondering how you, I really liked that you have a goal of net water positive and I note that it's aspirational, but how do you communicate your progress towards that to your stakeholders?

HARUMICHI SETA: Oh, thank you for your question. I mean, yes, that's good question.

I think that there are several ways to do this.

One is by publishing the progress over environmental target. Yeah, I mean we have an improvement target toward 2030 and that including the overall net water positive initiatives, and so we provide the information about this on our website. And also we share our progress with the stakeholders in each watershed including government, forestry cooperatives, and university experts by setting up regular meetings with them individually.

CAROLE HAMMOND: Oh, good, thank you.

ROD KNIGHT: Alright, thanks Carole.

Now the next question we've got here in the chat, I don't know the person's name but its GWP SEA regional office with a question based on implementing, the role of government.

If that's you, you can unmute yourself and ask the question. If not, I'll ask the question for you.

FANY WEDAHUDITAMA: Hi Rod, that is because we are, I'm also having two hats here from the GWP SEA and from AWS Indonesia so I can, I can also help to ask the question yeah, from the regional office.

So yeah, the question from GWP SEA is related to the government contribution.

What kind of a government role and contribution that both of these organizations, the companies, that they would like to see in supporting these water stewardship initiatives on the ground. So that would be we would like to know.

And then because I'm also here, then the second question is also how to work with other companies working in the same area to address the common challenges or risks that everybody is facing on the ground.

So that is the two question, thank you.

ROD KNIGHT: And is that to Harumichi, or to James? Or to both, Fany?

FANY WEDAHUDITAMA: I think this is for both. Yes, for both presenters, thank you.

HARUMICHI SETA: Yes, thank you for your question.

I think that the, you know, for example our initiative in Yamanashi Prefecture in Japan, we collaborate the research of the forest situation. I mean the Yamanashi Prefecture has the Institute for Forest Research, so we collaborate with them to grasp the situation over our natural sanctuary areas - the forest situation. And also we now we are planning to set our initiative in this area. That's one of our example.

And ah, actually, we haven't collaborated with the other companies that belong to our industry or same industry. However, we collaborated with some consulting firm in our forest maintenance activities and also, we signed a cooperation agreement with the AWS Asia-Pacific to take a leadership roll in advocating water stewardship in Japan since 2021. So we are planning to hold a conference and training seminar for Japanese organizations in this year.

FANY WEDAHUDITAMA: Thank you.

JAMES JOHN: Yeah, thanks for the question.

Look on the ground here we would like to see you know at some point we feel some of these water stewardship frameworks and principles are getting some traction and getting some endorsement from government bodies across the states would be great, you know, recognizing it as an endorsed approach of affective and good water related practices.

In getting government and other companies involved, the Trust initiated a particular committee, an environmental watering committee, and seeking representatives from all bodies, from government and other interested stakeholders, and getting a getting people around a table not as a committee, which sort of votes, or you know, it's with a common goal in mind and all working together with the skills we can bring to achieve good results in managing water and important water related areas.

Uh, so look keeping in contact and putting ourselves out there to speak about our journey has been important and fortunately for us, our local government here, the Council was just recently certified. So they became the first Council globally and we are sort of trying to build that regional picture as a good water stewardship region and hopefully that helps with increasing that traction and penetration throughout the basin in what we're trying to do.

FANY WEDAHUDITAMA: Yeah, thank you. Thank you James and Harumichi.

ROD KNIGHT: Thanks James and Fany, I notice you've got another question already in the list there, but I might just jump in with another question before we go to that one.

To Harumichi: I mentioned that the UN have declared the theme for this year's World Water Day to be about groundwater and you mentioned groundwater quite a bit in your presentation. I'm just wondering if you could provide a bit more background as to how important groundwater is to your business.

HARUMICHI SETA: Thank you for question. Yes, I think that this is a good question.

Groundwater is our, we think that groundwater is our lifeline. Depends on our whiskey qualities or mineral quality and our brands. Sorry, the whiskey or mineral water brands depends on the quality of water sources.

We have a mission to provide a high quality or products and brands to our consumers, and so that is our business opportunities and business provision. So, our water management of groundwater is essential to our business and to our customers.

ROD KNIGHT: Thanks Harumichi. Reminder if anyone wants to ask any questions, just raise your hand with the reactions button. I've got another question here from Fany, another one to both presenters. So I'll hand back to you.

FANY WEDAHUDITAMA: Hi yeah, Rod, thank you. I think this question already answered also by both presenters before.

ROD KNIGHT: It's already been answered?

FANY WEDAHUDITAMA: Yeah, yeah it's already answered. Thank you.

ROD KNIGHT: OK, and it looks like we've got a question there from Peter Regan. Peter do you want to unmute yourself and ask your question please?

PETER REGAN: Thank you and hopefully the question is intended to be positive and hopefully I've framed it that way. So it is a question to Harumichi: I do think that it's really positive that you're planning to halve your water use for your production, which means of course you'll be doubling your level of water productivity. I see that as a really important and valuable thing.

But I guess the question is how you might respond if you do halve your water use per unit of output, but your market doubles?

So the amount of water consumption stays the same but you've got twice as bigger market. I'm wondering how you might, you know, respond if that's the case, and the reason why I'm asking is because we do work with the cotton industry in Australia and we've quantified as scientists, that the cotton industry now uses half as much water as it did 25 years ago to grow the same amount of cotton. So they've done what you're doing, but it's very difficult for them to get actual credit.

So I'm wondering how you might respond in a similar circumstance.

HARUMICHI SETA: Thank you for the question. Yes, as you know, the challenge is very difficult. Yes, we understand it.

Nowadays we set the environmental target for 2030. Now, we set the target for water intensity is 50% sorry, it's 35% reduction in our own plants globally and that target is very ambitious targets. However, now we are setting the road map to 2030. And also, toward 2050, we are involved in our business the new infrastructure and new technology to reduce to the water use in each plant. I mean, kind of recycling water, wastewater and so on.

So that's a big challenge for us. However, we'd like to achieve it.

ROD KNIGHT: Ok, thanks Harumichi. Is it a hand up I see from Carole Hammond?

CAROLE HAMMOND: Yes, in the absence of other questions, I've just got a question for James John and I was just wondering James, uh, if you had your time again and you're starting on the water stewardship journey, what would you do differently if you were starting this the certification process again.

JAMES JOHN: Thanks Carol for the question. Um, the Trust had very luckily got their gold certification just before I joined so. But look so something I think building with the water stewardship model we had the initial sort of three steps for the certification and then building in with our measuring our process and implementing the plan and engaging with stakeholders, I think the stakeholder engagement we found difficult. That was something we've worked on, and we've done some workshops and some education on how to engage with stakeholders.

Talking to irrigators and our membership about the benefit of delivering environmental water onto floodplains while there are adjacent properties or vineyards in dry times is a hard message to communicate effectively. In dry times particularly, but I think that sort of communication, and we run some workshops and seminars for our membership and water stewardship is a standing item now on our annual AGM agenda as an update on what's going on.

But I do think that engagement, we were from what I understand finding our feet, and it was more internal whereas now we're I think getting better at the external looking and engaging in with stakeholders.

CAROLE HAMMOND: And do you feel that communication focus now is really, I guess, opened up your organization to the community a lot more and made you more visible.

JAMES JOHN: Definitely, yeah, it's definitely something a few of our members who may not necessarily know what stewardship is or what the logo or the certification means still recognize it with a, you know, a sense of pride and within the trust here it could be a bit parochial, and it's a point of difference and pride for the organization, and by extension the community, and now with Council as well both certified.

CAROLE HAMMOND: Yeah great, thank you.

ROD KNIGHT: Thanks Carole. Thanks John. OK look, still anyone wishing to ask any further questions feel free to raise their hand and we'll put them in.

I've just got another question to you James, which is one of interest to me: Renmark Irrigation Trust is a piped irrigation scheme whereas a lot of irrigation schemes are delivered by, the water is delivered by, open channels. I just want to get your perspective on how common the use of a pipe scheme is, and also what sort of gains that gives you in terms of efficiency in relation to water use.

JAMES JOHN: Sure, thanks Rod. Yeah, the trust has just over, it's fully piped, it's just over 140 kilometers of pipes and that's a majority concrete. It sort of happened back in the 60s and 70s was the conversion from the old channels. Huge efficiency gains through things, you know, seepage banks, evaporation.

We operate the meter at the main divergent point at the river when it's reconciled with all our other meters we're about 99%, so only 1% loss through pipe breaks. Those old concrete pipes, and others.

We benefit from, even though we pump a lot of water when compare us to some of the other schemes, and so the Trust we sit on the National Irrigators Council with a lot of other irrigation infrastructure operators. Some of those schemes have thousands of kilometers of channels and the exercise for them to convert to pipes would be enormous. So we sort of benefited from going early and hard back in the day, and with a smaller network, but huge efficiency gains. And I know some other operators are lining channels and doing other conversions, but it's certainly a good thing and happy to have done that a long time ago I think is the feeling.

ROD KNIGHT: Alright thanks, James. I haven't got any more questions in the queue. I'm very happy to open it up for anybody who wants to ask a question, an impromptu question to either James or Hamachi there. I'm stunned I'm not being stampeded here.

So maybe James just one other quick question for you. I mean, you, Renmark's got platinum Water Stewardship certification, which is a pretty rarified bit of atmosphere to get into. What does that mean to the organization and the people who actually work in it on a day to day basis?

JAMES JOHN: Yeah, look great I think, Rod. Like, I was confused when I started at the Trust to be honest, only three years ago now. Why as an irrigation infrastructure operator we were delivering environmental water and why we were getting as involved in advocacy as we are? But that holistic picture of the Trust being 128 years old, initially the Council of the town, and that involvement in the community, it's a real sense of pride in this certification in that, you know, we're acknowledging and communicating that we don't just care about pumping water to growers, but recognizing that industry, the ag-industry, underpins the economic prosperity of the whole

community here and that, you know, irrigation can be a dirty word in Australia and farming and we want to show that actually, globally Australians are some of the most efficient irrigators in the world and we want to show that we need to produce agriculture and food and fiber, and we're conscious of the impact of that and want to certify ourselves and communicate that we're doing it as effectively as we can. And that is, yeah, a sense of pride certainly for the Trust.

ROD KNIGHT: Excellent. Alright, well look, I haven't got any more questions lined up in the queue, so unless anybody's got some other questions they want to raise just before we wind up? No, a quiet lot today.

MEGAN MCLEOD: I've got a question Rod. I've got one. And it's a little bit in follow up to Peter's question and a bit to yours to James. Uh, just wondering how water stewardship, by helping to understand your catchment context and limits, helps you to set context or catchment specific or locally specific targets and actions, um, as opposed to water efficiency targets or more broad based targets.

JAMES JOHN: So I'm really sorry Megan, I'm not trying to get out of this. If that was for me, I heard a start and then I had a smoke alarm goes off. Its stopped now, so if that was for me would you mind just repeating that?

MEGAN MCLEOD: Just how does water stewardship, by understanding your local your local catchment context and conditions help you to set more locally relevant targets and actions, rather than say broad based water efficiency or more corporate level targets and actions.

JAMES JOHN: Yeah, it definitely, the focus on building the full picture for your organization on where you are located in the catchment and your surrounding environment rather than I guess looking at water as just we use water and how do we use it effectively? Yeah, certainly helpful to have that structure for us to bring that.

You know, I think that was part of the reason for establishing the local environmental watering committee to go well, you know, yeah we can pump a lot of water, we've got a lot of big pipes, but what's our local key areas that we want to target and what groups do we get involved to help us who know a lot more than us about the ecology and the Riverina environment? So having a framework to help us put that together with none of us having an ecologist background, was yep, very very helpful.

MEGAN MCLEOD: Thanks. And Harumichi?

ROD KNIGHT: Sorry Megan?

MEGAN MCLEOD: Ah, that was just for Harumichi too if he as anything to say about that as well. But there is another question for Harumichi so we can go on to that.

HARUMICHI SETA: About your question? Yeah, I think that yes in Suntory Group, understanding the water cycle and each watershed is the most important aspect. Because, based on the understanding of the accurate situation in watershed is go to the good water stewardship initiative.

So, we have our institute for water science in Suntory Group and they conduct the hydrological survey in each watershed and they, uh, construct the consumption model by simulator and they provide the information to plan the forest maintenance in each watershed. But that's our, the base car research phase in the watershed.

ROD KNIGHT: OK thanks, thanks Harumichi. I notice we've got another question here from Mark Smith. Mark if you want to unmute yourself you can ask you're question direct to Harumichi.

MARK SMITH: Yes, hi everyone. Mr. Harumichi, how do you feel good water stewardship is perceived by the consumer and is it a competitive advantage from a consumer perspective as a beverage company?

HARUMICHI SETA: Yes. In Japan the consumer recognizes the company is a, uh, a company that cares about water. In 2005, we said that, uh, our Suntory Group's philosophy, Mizu Iku, which means living with water in Japanese, and so we promote the overall concept and our initiatives in Japanese market.

And also, we achieved the net water positive in our Natural Water Sanctuary Initiative. So many consumers are understanding our initiatives meanings. And also, they provide our mineral water brand, that names is Tennensui, Tennensui meaning is natural water, so natural water links to our Natural Water Sanctuary. So that recognition is contributing to our review from our consumer.

ROD KNIGHT: Alright, thanks Harumichi. Well, I think on that note that's probably a good point to wrap up for today. I hope everyone who's been on has got some valuable insights from effectively the firsthand experiences of Suntory Group and Renmark Irrigation Trust and how they are dealing with the shared water challenges that they have to face in managing their businesses.

I don't know how you do applause on Zoom, but I'd like to thank James and Harumichi for their presentations today. It really is much appreciated that you've given the time to take part in this. We really do appreciate it and I'm sure the rest of our participant appreciate that as well.

I was going to wind that up there, but I've just got one quick question if everyone has time from Fany again. Over to you Fany, we can just make this a short one.

FANY WEDAHUDITAMA: Yeah, sorry. I think this is just a quick question for both presenters.

How significant in implementing these water stewardship principles or standards can help to improve business continuity and, of course, how this business continuity can then lead to the economic continuity in the region.

How do you think, how significant do you think it is? Thank you.

JAMES JOHN: Yeah, sure, great. I can jump in there. Thanks very much for you question. For us, very important. We are a community-based right on the banks of the river. The efficient and responsible use of water and protection of our flood plains and surrounding environment is key to both the economic prosperity and the continuity of the Trust as a business and also the community.

Ecotourism is a very shiny new word or thing around here and, look, we love our floodplains, and we want to work with other industries as well in a master plan approach to, you know, to further diversify the industries in our local area and have opportunities tied in for, you know, walking trails and access to those areas.

So having established principles and certification certainly helps in our endeavors to seek grant funding and partners with those endeavors. So yeah, they're very important to us.

ROD KNIGHT: And Harumichi maybe a final say from you?

HARUMICHI SETA: OK, I thank you for your question. Yeah, along with my presentation, water stewardship is our lifeline to protect each water source and our watershed that each of our plant is located in.

And also, economic community, yes. We implement Mizu Iku, water education for elementary school children and their guardians in Japanese, and that initiative provides information about the ideas of caring a water cycles.

I mean, every people is a part of a natural water cycle and their each action impacts on the natural water cycle. I mean the water quality and water quantity. So we provide this concept and, uh, provide the question to the participants: What can you do yourself in each watershed?

That is our Mizu Iku concept. So I think that it's a good opportunity and impact to economic society.

ROD KNIGHT: Thanks for that.

FANY WEDAHUDITAMA: Thank you, thank you.

ROD KNIGHT: OK, well we've reached 2:00 o'clock so we'll close off any further questions and again I'd just like to thank James and Harumichi for coming on today and sharing their experiences with water stewardship. I'd like to thank everyone who's come on today for their participation, we hope you got something valuable from it.

Just a little plug for Water Stewardship Asia Pacific. If you want to find out anything more about the various types of services and support that we offer through our membership packages, please get in touch with us. Contact details are on our website.

We're here to help to take businesses forward on whatever their particular water stewardship journey might be.

So thank you everyone for your participation today. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon and we hope to have you on another webinar sometime soon.

Thank you.