



Water Restoration Certificates

A guide for business buyers

Water Restoration Certificates are BEF's market-based instrument for investing in freshwater health — each WRC restores 1,000 gallons to a freshwater source in need. Below are the questions corporate buyers ask us most often.

01. What is a BEF Water Restoration Certificate® (WRC)?

A Water Restoration Certificate, or WRC, is a market-based instrument developed by BEF that represents 1,000 gallons of water restored to a freshwater source in need. Each WRC directly contributes to the economic, recreational, and ecological vitality of freshwater resources across the United States, and all WRC projects are certified by a third-party verifier using a strict set of criteria to ensure water is restored where it will generate the greatest benefit.

WRCs are designed to make water stewardship accessible to businesses of every size. Rather than requiring a company to fund an entire restoration project, WRCs use a credit-based accounting system that allows organizations to participate in watershed restoration at any volume, making it a practical and scalable financial mechanism for businesses looking to invest in freshwater health.

Purchasing WRCs allows your company to make credible, volumetric water stewardship claims. Depending on your goals and the nature of your water use, common claims include balancing, offsetting, mitigating, or compensating for your freshwater footprint. Our team can help you determine the right language for your specific situation.

WRCs also represent an entry point into a broader collective impact. Every purchase contributes to a growing movement of businesses taking meaningful action on freshwater, one of the world's most critical and threatened resources. Learn more at our [Water Restoration Certificates page](#) or reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org to get started.

02. Is a WRC third party verified, tracked, and registered in a registry like a carbon credit or REC?

Yes! When BEF created Water Restoration Certificates®, we drew on the best aspects of established environmental commodities like RECs and carbon credits and innovated a product that meets many of the same rigorous standards. Each WRC is third party verified, tracked, and registered in the S&P Global registry, ensuring transparency and credibility for your water stewardship claims. At the same time, WRCs go further by providing quantified, volumetric water benefit claims that deliver meaningful impact for freshwater ecosystems.

03. Does a WRC have any greenhouse gas benefits?

Many WRC projects do contribute to broader environmental health, and some may have greenhouse gas co-benefits as a result of the restoration work involved. However, the measurable environmental benefit accounted for in each WRC applies exclusively to water. WRCs do not include verified greenhouse gas metrics, and purchasing a WRC should not be used to make greenhouse gas reduction or offset claims.

If your organization is looking to address both your water footprint and your carbon footprint, BEF can help you find the right combination of products to meet both goals.

04. What is the difference between Water Restoration Certificates® and the Business for Water Stewardship Program?

Both are BEF programs, and together they represent a continuum of water stewardship options for businesses at different stages of their water journey.

WRCs are the entry point — a straightforward, credit-based way for any business to measure and balance its freshwater footprint by funding verified water restoration projects. They are accessible, scalable, and a meaningful first step toward corporate water stewardship.

Business for Water Stewardship goes deeper. It is designed for businesses ready to take a more comprehensive approach, working collaboratively with community and policy stakeholders to advance solutions that protect water at a systems level. This includes developing corporate water stewardship strategies, engaging in water policy, and funding restoration projects in water stressed regions where your company's impact can be most meaningful.

If you are just getting started, WRCs are a great place to begin. If you are ready to go further, Business for Water Stewardship can help you build a broader strategy.

05. What can I expect after I place my WRC order?

Once your purchase is complete, you'll receive a certificate documenting the key details of your environmental products — including the project name and description, volume, registry, and vintage. But our support doesn't stop there. BEF's team is available for ongoing customer service to answer questions about your purchase, help you understand how to use and report your credits, and provide guidance on making accurate environmental claims. We want to make sure you feel confident communicating the impact of your purchase to your stakeholders, customers, and team.

06. Where can I learn more about your Water Restoration Certificate projects?

You can explore our full portfolio of WRC projects at bef.org/bef-wrc-portfolio. There you'll find details on where we have projects, the types of restoration activities we fund, and descriptions of each project. For a current menu of projects with pricing, please reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org.

07. Can BEF's WRCs be used to earn points for LEED certification?

Yes! BEF's Water Restoration Certificates (WRCs) can be used to earn points toward LEED certification. You can learn more about the LEED WRC Credit and how to apply it to your project at usgbc.org. For questions about how WRCs can support your specific LEED goals, feel free to reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org.

08. How often do you add new projects to your portfolio?

We typically add new projects to our portfolio on an annual basis, though we are always open to adding high quality projects as they become available. For the most current list of available projects and pricing, please reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org.

09. How does BEF choose where to develop WRC projects?

We evaluate potential projects based on several key factors, including the volumetric water benefit, the broader impact on the watershed, and cost. Our goal is to ensure that every project in our portfolio delivers meaningful, measurable restoration outcomes. For more information about our project selection process, feel free to reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org.

10. Can I request a location? Why are there no projects near my location?

WRCs are a proprietary environmental product created by BEF. As a foundation, we are fortunate to support a handful of projects each year, but there isn't yet enough funding to cover every watershed across the US or globally. That's why your purchase matters. The more WRCs we sell, the more funding we can put back into the program, potentially supporting projects in more locations over time.

If you have a specific location in mind, or a large enough volumetric need, our Business for Water Stewardship team would love to talk through the possibility of a custom project or portfolio of projects. Reach out to them directly at bws@b-e-f.org.

11. Do you have project photos or other assets I can share internally/externally?

Yes! You can request photos of our WRC projects and use the project descriptions that are publicly available on our project portfolio.

We also have a program called Change the Course which, at a certain level of funding, provides you with graphic assets, a logo, and the opportunity to join a growing community of leaders in water stewardship. To learn more about Change the Course and how it could support your organization's water stewardship journey, please reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org.

12. I'm concerned about the health of the Colorado River and what it means for the western U.S. Does BEF have a WRC project that benefits this river?

You are not alone in that concern! The Colorado River Basin is one of BEF's priority basins, and we typically have at least one WRC project supporting this important watershed at any given time. To see our current Colorado River Basin projects and pricing, please reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org or explore our project portfolio at bef.org/bef-wrc-portfolio.

13. What types of organizations buy WRCs?

WRCs are designed to make water stewardship accessible to businesses of every sector and every size. Our clients include data centers, independent consultancies, law firms of all sizes, fashion companies, architects, sports teams and venues, and many others. Whether you are a small local business or a large global corporation, WRCs offer a meaningful way to invest in water restoration. If you are wondering whether WRCs are a good fit for your organization, we would love to talk. Reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org.

14. I'm planning an event and I want to offset its water consumption. How many do I need to purchase?

Calculating the water footprint of an event can be challenging! We recommend working with a trusted consultant to help determine your water footprint or consider using WRCs as a broader commitment to sustainability by tying your purchase to a simpler metric, such as 1,000 gallons per attendee. This approach gives your organization a clear, communicable goal while still making a meaningful contribution to water restoration. For help figuring out the right approach for your event, feel free to reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org.

15. My event needs a water stewardship sponsor. Who should I contact at BEF?

We would love to help! BEF has served as the Water Restoration Sponsor for a wide range of events, from leading sustainability conferences including Trellis, GreenBiz, Sustainable Brands, Green Sports Alliance Summit, and Music Sustainability Alliance Summit, to events across many other sectors and industries. If you are interested in bringing a water stewardship sponsorship to your event, please reach out to us at customerservice@b-e-f.org and we will be happy to explore the possibilities with you.

QUESTIONS? customerservice@b-e-f.org

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