**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

University of Arizona: $23 Million Grant Program Conserves Water, Funds Research Across Arizona

[CITY, Arizona, September 12, 2023]— The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension is proud to announce a monumental victory in the quest to preserve Arizona's most invaluable asset – water. With a groundbreaking $23,000,000 Water Irrigation Efficiency Program, the state has seen an extraordinary impact, saving an astonishing 36,418 acre feet of water to date. This achievement holds immense relevance, underscoring Arizona's ongoing struggle to protect its dwindling water supply.

These figures speak volumes about the determination of Arizona's farmers to secure a sustainable future. The Water Irrigation Efficiency Program has harnessed the spirit of collaboration, with a participant match of $16,515,088, amplifying the program's impact.

Dr. Ethan Orr, Associate Director of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Economic Development for the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, remarked, "In the midst of Arizona's enduring battle to conserve water, the Water Irrigation Efficiency Program's accomplishments are nothing short of revolutionary. Saving 36,418 acre feet is not just significant; it's a game changer for our state which offers us hope in our ongoing struggle to safeguard our water supply."

The Water Irrigation Efficiency Program, managed by the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, offers a lifeline to a parched land. The program, designed to increase water efficiency in crop production by at least 20%, has already exceeded expectations, transforming the agricultural landscape.

The impact is resonating across Arizona's diverse counties:

- Apache: 1 approved project at $315,000, covering 210 acres, saving an estimated 1,000 acre feet of water annually.

- Cochise: 2 approved projects at $144,000, covering 96 acres, with a savings of 208 acre feet.

- Graham: 1 approved project at $180,015, covering 120 acres, resulting in an impressive 363 acre feet savings.

- La Paz: 5 approved projects at $4,371,000, covering 2,914 acres, delivering a substantial water savings of 6,413 acre feet.

- Maricopa: 8 approved projects at $4,346,170, covering 2,897 acres, with an annual savings of 6,602 acre feet.

- Mojave: 1 approved project at $999,000, covering 666 acres, achieving a remarkable 2,850 acre feet savings.

- Navajo: 1 approved project at $370,000, covering 250 acres, contributing 500 acre feet in water savings.

- Pinal: 10 approved projects at $4,584,557, covering 3,056 acres, preserving an estimated 4,920 acre feet of water.

- Santa Cruz: 1 approved project at $199,200, covering 133 acres, with an annual savings of 105 acre feet.

- Yavapai: 2 approved projects at $303,600, covering 202 acres, yielding substantial annual savings of 1,364 acre feet.

- Yuma: A remarkable 30 approved projects totaling $7,182,458, covering 4,795 acres, conserving an astounding 12,093 acre feet annually.

In addition to conserving water, this grant also provided vital funding for research to assess the impact of these projects on water usage, soil health, pest management, crop production, and overall value.

*“This effort is a generational effort. We want to produce a healthy and productive crop for generations. If we conserve water for 5 years and destroy the soil, our conservation efforts are to no avail. We need to invest in ourselves and future generations by researching the impact and applying that research” - Dr. Ethan Orr*

By studying the intricate interplay between irrigation systems and agricultural sustainability, these projects lay the foundation for evidence-based practices that can shape the future of farming in Arizona.

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**About University of Arizona Cooperative Extension:**

The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension is at the forefront of providing research-based education and resources to empower communities in tackling challenges and seizing opportunities for economic, environmental, and social well-being. Through unwavering collaboration and innovation, the Cooperative Extension is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all Arizonans.