

Project Camellia: Water Done Right

How the project is designed to protect Effingham County's water resources through responsible sourcing, efficient use, and water reuse.

Project Camellia is being designed to keep ongoing water consumption low. Instead of using evaporative cooling that continuously consumes new water, the campus will use a closed-loop system that fills once and recirculates the same water.

How Closed-Loop Cooling Works

The system works much like a car radiator: water circulates through sealed pipes, absorbs heat from computing equipment, passes through equipment that transfers the heat to the outside air, and then returns to be used again. Because the water is recirculated rather than routinely evaporated or discharged, the system does not require a continuous supply of new cooling water.

- **Initial fill.** The site will require a one-time initial fill of water, the amount of which will be determined once the site design is final.
- **Minimal top-offs.** After the initial fill, cooling water recirculates continuously. The system will require only limited top-offs for maintenance.
- **Ordinary workplace needs.** The project's primary ongoing water use will be the same everyday uses found in any workplace — sinks, restrooms, kitchens, cleaning, and sanitation — comparable on a per-person basis to other workplaces with a similar workforce.
- **Surface water only.** Project Camellia will be supplied with surface water under an agreement with Effingham County. It will not use groundwater wells and will not draw from the Floridan aquifer.
- **Responsible discharge.** Water removed during commissioning, maintenance, or an infrequent system flush will be collected and managed in accordance with applicable water-quality requirements, permits, and local disposal regulations.
- **Formal safeguards.** The final water and sewer agreement with Effingham County will establish the quantities, conditions, and safeguards required to ensure the project does not adversely affect community water needs.

How Effingham County Compares

Effingham County: Doing It Right	Other Places: Did It Wrong
Surface Water Uses treated surface water instead of relying on local groundwater aquifers, helping protect underground water resources.	Ground Water Some data centers rely on groundwater wells, increasing demand on local aquifers and potentially affecting residential wells.
Closed-Loop Cooling Draws water once for an initial fill, then recirculates that same water continuously for the life of the system — rather than requiring an ongoing new supply, as evaporative systems do.	Evaporative Cooling Some data centers use evaporative cooling, where water is lost to the atmosphere and must be continually replaced — using over 1,000 times more water than modern closed-loop systems.

Accountability

OpenAI will publish actual water-use data once the campus begins operating, allowing residents to compare real performance against these estimates. Water use and compliance with the project's commitments will also be included in the annual independent public audit.

Project Camellia uses minimal water, protects our resources, and puts our community first — today and for generations to come.