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California Water Service Launches Third Annual Classroom Competition on Water Conservation

Cal Water H2O Challenge, in Collaboration With the North American Association for Environmental Education, Builds On Ongoing Statewide Efforts to Conserve Water

SAN JOSE, CA -- (Marketwired) -- 10/06/16 -- California elementary school students will have another opportunity to design innovative programs for saving water in their schools and communities as California Water Service (Cal Water), the largest subsidiary of California Water Service Group (NYSE: CWT), launches the third annual Cal Water H₂O Challenge for the 2016-17 school year.

The competition amplifies public awareness about how water conservation has been integrated into the daily life, business, and activities of many communities in the state. As an example of ongoing water conservation efforts, teachers and sixth-grade students at Downtown Elementary in Bakersfield, Calif. -- who were the grand-prize winners of the second annual Cal Water H₂O Challenge -- demonstrated the advantages of using a 50/50 greywater/freshwater mix as an alternative water source for keeping lawns green while complying with critical water conservation targets.

The competition was developed in collaboration with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). It is open to classrooms in grades 4-6 in Cal Water service areas, and follows a project-based learning model. The Cal Water H₂O Challenge incorporates Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Math and complements Next Generation Science Standards. Students apply these principles in studying the water cycle, how water quality affects the survival of plants and organisms, and how they can impact water conservation.

The grand prize includes a \$3,500 grant for the winning school and an all-expenses-paid tent-camping trip for the classroom students to the Santa Monica Mountains with NatureBridge for a nature and science education experience. Other winning classes receive grants and additional prizes for students and teachers.

"The competition has brought forward many creative and inspiring ways to save water that not only benefit our state but also encourage many communities to be actively involved in water conservation," said Martin A. Kropelnicki, Cal Water President and CEO.

Christiane Maertens, deputy director of NAAEE, also spoke to the benefits of the program. "The Cal Water H₂O Challenge has provided many examples of how involving students teaches them to understand water as a local and global resource," Maertens said. "It also encourages them to learn about the values of social responsibility and environmental stewardship as they become more active in their communities."

Rachel Lenix, the Downtown Elementary School teacher whose sixth-grade students took the grand prize last year, described how the students designed and built plant boxes for sod to be used in a greywater experiment, the results of which they presented to the school and the Bakersfield community.

"There were numerous successes observed through the project. Among the many was an internalization of the importance of water conservation," Lenix explained. "Students did research on their own time and shared their knowledge with their parents. The greatest success had to be the responsibility and the love of learning the students displayed during the project. I am amazed at the level of work the students did."

Cal Water H₂O Challenge

The Cal Water H₂O Challenge is a project-based competition for schools seeking to enhance students' understanding of water-based science concepts. The program offers a unique opportunity for teachers to facilitate students' learning of standards-based content, while developing the foundation of environmental principles necessary to becoming science-literate citizens. For more information about the program and eligibility, visit challenge.calwater.com, which provides extensive informational resources about the elements for a successful project.

Over the course of four to eight weeks, students, with their respective teacher's guidance, will:

- Initiate, develop, and implement a project focused on water through a community-based endeavor.
- Create and submit a portfolio including: project goals, student research, science and/or engineering experimentation, actions to solve a local water issue, public outreach efforts, and student and teacher reflections.

Participating teachers also will be provided with technical, expert, and monetary support through educational resources and consultants. Furthermore, teachers will be eligible to enter a lottery for one of 20 grants of \$500 each.

About Cal Water

California Water Service serves about 2 million people through 480,300 service connections in California. The company, which has provided water service in the state since 1926, was ranked "Highest in Customer Satisfaction Among Water Utilities in the West" in 2016 by J.D. Power in its inaugural Water Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study. Additional information may be obtained online at www.calwater.com.

About NAAEE

The North American Association for Environmental Education is a pioneering membership organization dedicated to accelerating environmental literacy through education. NAAEE supports a network of more than 16,000 educators, researchers, and organizational members working in environmental education across more than 30 countries through direct membership and 54 regional affiliate organizations. For more information, visit www.naaee.net.