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California Water Service Launches Second Annual Classroom Competition on Water Conservation

Cal Water H2O Challenge, in Collaboration With the North American Association for Environmental Education, Ties Into Statewide Efforts to Conserve

SAN JOSE, CA -- (Marketwired) -- 12/02/15 -- Following its successful inaugural classroom competition in which California elementary school students designed innovative programs to practice water conservation and heighten awareness about the impact of the state's historic drought, California Water Service (Cal Water), the largest subsidiary of California Water Service Group (NYSE: CWT), today launched its Cal Water H₂O Challenge for the 2015-16 school year.

The competition echoes statewide efforts to conserve water, particularly as California is in its fifth consecutive month of mandatory cutbacks in water usage. As an example of water conservation efforts, teachers and students at Shasta Elementary School in Chico, Calif. -- who were the grand-prize winners of the first Cal Water H₂O Challenge -- designed a rain collection system to water plants in a native garden they created on school property that would have an enduring impact on the school's efforts to conserve water.

The competition, developed in collaboration with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), is open to classrooms grades 4-6 in Cal Water service areas, and the winning class will receive an all-expense paid, three-day camping and hiking trip at Circle X Ranch as part of the NatureBridge environmental science education program.

"All of the entries in last year's competition set an impressive benchmark," said Martin A. Kropelnicki, Cal Water President and CEO. "We were encouraged by the ingenuity and enthusiasm students demonstrated. They put into practice real-life applications and coordinated efforts to save water during one of the worst droughts we have endured as a state."

"The Cal Water H₂O Challenge is an outstanding example of what experiential, interdisciplinary education programs can accomplish," said Christiane Maertens, Deputy Director, NAAEE. "High-quality, hands-on programs such as these not only push students' boundaries to engage with science and environmental education but also encourages them to experience first-hand the values of cooperation, teambuilding, and community networking."

The Cal Water H₂O Challenge builds on principles linked to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) learning, as well as Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Students learn how principles can be applied in the study of the water cycle, how

water quality affects the survival of plants and organisms, and how they can impact water conservation.

Kelli Voss, the Shasta Elementary School teacher whose students took the grand prize last year, said the students immediately took the science and language arts lessons about the water cycle and the California drought to heart. "The students truly made this project their own creation," she explained. "Our class took a field trip to a local nursery, which taught the students a lot about gardening and native plants. We also sought the expert advice of a longtime local rancher about building our rain collection system. It was so great for the students to hear from local professionals directly affected by the drought."

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***.

Over the course of four to eight weeks, classrooms 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.

To ensure educators have access to the support they need, teachers will be provided with technical, expert, and monetary support through educational resources, consultants, and up to 20 \$500 teacher grants chosen by lottery.

About Cal Water

California Water Service serves about 2 million people through 478,000 service connections in California. The company has provided water service in the state since 1926. 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.