



State Water Resources Control Board

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Date: November 8, 2010

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SWRCB

Water Quality? There is an “App” for that!

Sacramento—The California Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and IBM have developed an Apple iPhone application designed to help citizens monitor water quality wherever they go.

The Creek Watch application is aimed at everyday citizens and environmental and community groups with a need or desire to monitor the quality of the waters around them. It was developed by IBM with the assistance of the State Water Board’s Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP). SWAMP provided the data models and questions a user answers while monitoring with the application.

A user snaps a picture with the iPhone camera and answers three questions to describe the water quality:

1. The amount of water: empty, some, or full.
2. The rate of flow: still, moving slowly, or moving fast.
3. The amount of trash: none, some (a few pieces), or a lot (10 or more pieces).

The data will eventually be used by the State Water Board as part of its overall water quality monitoring program.

“For the past several years, the Water Board has been making data easier to access with on line sources such as GeoTracker and the My Water Quality website,” said State Water Board Chair Charlie Hoppin. “The app takes this effort one step farther. Now we are making the data gathering process more accessible as well. There are many Californians who want to help measure the improvement in our state’s water quality and identify places where further improvements are needed,” Hoppin added.

An IBM spokesperson says the company hopes volunteer and community groups will use the application to provide a fuller picture of California's water quality.

"Increasingly, effective water management will revolve around data," said Josephine Cheng, IBM Fellow and Vice President. "IBM is happy to apply its long-standing leadership in data collection and management, analytics, and now crowdsourcing to help governments and environmental groups make more informed decisions about how to best protect our waterways."

The State Water Resources Control Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources, and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Creek Watch application can be downloaded at:
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/creek-watch/id398420434?mt=8>

The results can be seen at: www.creekwatch.org

For more information about Creek Watch, including a video demonstration of the app, please visit:
http://www.ibm.com/smarterplanet/us/en/water_management/article/creek_watch.html?re=ussph1.1

