



# Media Release

## App Targeting Best Habitat for Juvenile Salmon Wins White House Council on Environmental Quality and State of California Water Data Challenge

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Dec. 15, 2016**

**Contacts:**

Water Boards: Greg Gearheart  
[Greg.Gearheart@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Greg.Gearheart@waterboards.ca.gov)

Department of Water Resources:  
Christina McCready  
[Christina.mccready@water.ca.gov](mailto:Christina.mccready@water.ca.gov)

**SACRAMENTO** – The 2016 White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and State of [California Water Data Challenge](#) announced FlowWest’s Sustainable Floodplain Habitat Finder application as the winner of the data challenge. The data challenge was a first of its kind collaboration between the White House CEQ and three California state agencies; Natural Resources Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Government Operations Agency.

FlowWest’s winning [Sustainable Floodplain Habitat Finder app](#) uses four different datasets to provide insights into where and when to target the best floodplain habitat for juvenile salmon. The judges were impressed by the team’s ability to find a unique and important problem ripe for a data driven solution, and then develop a prototype of a tool with live data connections in such a short time frame.

“It was nothing short of extraordinary to bring that level of thought, data and effort to bear on an important problem in such a short timeframe,” said Mark Gold, event judge and assistant vice chair for sustainability at the University of California at Los Angeles.

The event, which concluded with the judging of projects on Dec. 9, 2016, challenged participants to leverage open source technology and available water information to support decisions around California water reliability and sustainability of resources. Inspired by President Barack Obama’s commitment to improving open data and government, the Water Data Challenge demonstrated the potential for collaboration and transparency and innovation to solve our challenging water management problems.



FlowWest was among eight finalists. The judges also recognized four other finalists:

- The California Data Collaborative team had two entries in the finals and one of them, the [Water Efficiency Explorer](#), was given special mention in the Urban Water Supply category.
- Point Blue and the United States Geological Survey (USGS)'s [Automated Water Resources Tracking System](#) was given special mention in the Ecosystem Health Category.
- Two citizen volunteer teams were recognized as Rising Innovators and were awarded professional development time with each of the three California agencies involved. Their entries were Team Will Work for Froude's [Water Supply App](#), and Team Storage AF's entry, [Providing Context to a Proposed Shasta Dam Expansion](#).

All the finalists and exhibition submissions can be found [here](#). There were 34 submissions to the challenge, including entries from citizen volunteers, consulting firms, student teams and non-governmental organizations.

The judges for the challenge hailed from a diverse background and represented the State Water Board, the California Natural Resources Agency, Moulton Niguel Water District, the University of California at Los Angeles, the Civic Technology and "Nerds for Nature" community, the Bay-Delta Science Program, and the Public Policy Institute of California.

The judges, a mix of data science experts and water policy leaders, evaluated the entries based on technical competence and capabilities, use of data to provide effective outcomes, creativity and innovation, and valuable information and insights regarding data.

The platform supporting the challenge is run by the California Government Operations Agency as the main hub for open government and open data efforts by all state agencies. For more information on this effort please visit [data.ca.gov](http://data.ca.gov).

For more information on the Water Boards' open data efforts please visit the Water Board Data and Databases [website](#), or visit the competition's website: <http://waterchallenge.data.ca.gov>. Follow the State Water Board's open water data team on Twitter [@CaWaterDataDive](#) or using the hashtag #thirsty4data.

###