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Berkeley Residents – Show Off Your Water!

Pacific Institute and Google Test WeTap Drinking Water Fountain Crowd-Mapping App in Berkeley, California

April 20, 2011: Drink the water! Safe, free drinking water at your fingertips is what public water fountains are all about, and **Berkeley, California** is the testing ground for a new mobile phone app that tells you where to find it. Berkeley resident Dr. Peter Gleick, president of the Pacific Institute in Oakland and one of the world's leading experts on water issues, is collaborating with Google to launch **WeTap**, a free smartphone application that could help address a major water challenge: finding, supporting, and expanding the nation's public drinking water fountains.

With **WeTap**, smartphone users will be able to find a working water fountain when they want one – and they can quickly and easily add public drinking water fountains they encounter to a national database of fountains right from their smartphones, with information on the fountain's location, condition, and quality, and even add comments and upload a photo. Berkeley will be the first city to crowd-source map its water fountains.

The test version of **WeTap** is ready and volunteers are being sought to show the world where Berkeley's drinking fountains are. The Pacific Institute is recruiting volunteers who own Android-capable phones and have gmail and Picasa photo accounts to test the application by finding water fountains and uploading them on their phones, and to provide feedback on the application. People interested in participating should send an email to wetap@pacinst.org.

Why map drinking fountains? Public spaces need to provide public water fountains, and municipal systems must continue to improve the quality of the water they deliver and to educate consumers about the bargain we are getting with tap water. We need our public water fountains to be maintained, cleaned, and made even more widely available, and to be vocal in fighting the trend to eliminate public water fountains.

Dr. Gleick, who authored *Bottled and Sold: The Story of Our Obsession with Bottled Water*, said, "The average American now drinks nearly 30 gallons of commercial bottled water per year, up from 1 gallon in 1980, creating plastic waste and wasting energy. One of the reasons for this explosive growth in the sales of bottled water is the disappearance of public drinking water fountains."

WeTap makes the public water fountain a find – and helps you find one. Valuing tap water – both the quality and access – is an important step to ensure our water remains safe, tasty, and protected. For more information, visit www.wetap.org.

Based in Oakland, California, the Pacific Institute is a nonpartisan research institute that works to create a healthier planet and sustainable communities. Through interdisciplinary research and partnering with stakeholders, the Institute produces solutions that advance environmental protection, economic development, and social equity – in California, nationally, and internationally.
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